

**ORIGIN AND THE EVOLUTION OF SRI LANKAN BUDDHA IMAGE
INDEPENDENT OF THE INDIAN PROTOTYPE**

by

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I do hereby certify that this exercise has not been submitted to any other institution or as part of any other examination, and it is entirely an original submission.

.....
Prashanthi Narangoda

Dedication

To my husband Shantha
With great respect
For his
Unconditional love and boundless care
and
For my children
Anjanie, Navindya, Pankaja, and Indrapa
For giving me
The utmost happiness
in life

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ABSTRACT**ORIGIN AND THE EVOLUTION OF SRI LANKAN BUDDHA IMAGE
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University of the West, 2012

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This dissertation focusses to examine the independent origin and the evolution of the Sri Lankan Buddha image of its Indian prototype.

The scholars studying the development of the Buddha image in the Indian sub-continent assume that it was originated in India from the aniconic form to the anthropomorphic form during the period of Kushans in the first century CE, and influenced the origin and evolution of the Buddha image in neighboring regions, in that, Sri Lanka was not an exception.

Contrary to this assumption, there are sufficient facts and evidence that testify to the independent evolution of the Sri Lankan Buddha image from at least second century BCE, despite the fact that Buddhism was introduced to the country from India. Literary and archaeological evidence has been analyzed in detail to ascertain which theory is acceptable. In addition, the vast number of images found from various locations in Sri Lanka demonstrates indigenous iconographical and iconometric characteristics to establish that Sri Lankan Buddha image originated and evolved independently of Indian prototypes.

Although, the scholars have highlighted the authentic nature of the Sri Lankan Buddha image, none of them have attempted to conduct a detailed examination, and, as a result, have concluded that the Sri Lankan Buddha images was an influential outcome of those of India, simply underlining the constant socio-cultural and political relationships between India and Sri Lanka.

The questions of how, when, and where it was originated is to be addressed alone, the present study, thus, aims to examine the constantly highlighted authentic characteristics of the Sri Lankan Buddha image without prejudice, to identify its independent evolution.

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Abbreviations

<i>A.S.C.</i>	<i>Archaeological Survey of Ceylon</i>
<i>An.</i>	<i>Aṅguttara Nikāya</i>
<i>Ap.</i>	<i>Apadāna</i>
<i>BM.</i>	<i>Bimbamāna[†]</i>
<i>BM (2).</i>	<i>Bimbamāna^{††}</i>
<i>BS.</i>	<i>Brihat Samhitā</i>
<i>Bv.</i>	<i>Bodhivaṃsa</i>
<i>CS.</i>	<i>Mañjusrībhāṣita citrakarma śāstra</i>
<i>Cu.</i>	<i>Cullavagga</i>
<i>Cv.</i>	<i>Cūlavaṃsa</i>
<i>Dha.</i>	<i>Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā</i>
<i>DN.</i>	<i>Dīghanikāya</i>
<i>DnA.</i>	<i>Dīghanikāya Aṭṭhakathā</i>
<i>Dv.</i>	<i>Dīpavaṃsa</i>
<i>Dt.</i>	<i>Dhātuvavaṃsa</i>
<i>EZ.</i>	<i>Epigraphia Zeylanica</i>
<i>Jātaka.</i>	<i>Jātaka stories</i>
<i>JātakaA.</i>	<i>Jātakatthavaṇṇanā</i>
<i>KS.</i>	<i>Kriyāsamuccaya</i>
<i>Lv.</i>	<i>Lalitavistara sūtra</i>
<i>Ma.</i>	<i>Mahāvagga</i>
<i>MBv.</i>	<i>Mahābodhivaṃsa</i>
<i>Md.</i>	<i>Madhuraṭṭhaviḷāsini</i>
<i>MN.</i>	<i>Majjhima Nikāya</i>
<i>Mp.</i>	<i>Manorathapūraṇī</i>
<i>Mv.*</i>	<i>Mahāvavaṃsa</i>
<i>Mv (WG)**</i>	<i>Mahāvavaṃsa</i>
<i>Mv (AG)***</i>	<i>Mahāvavaṃsa</i>
<i>PML.</i>	<i>Pratimā-māna-lakṣaṇa</i>
<i>Pp.</i>	<i>Pārūpanapāli,</i>
<i>Pv.</i>	<i>Pūjāvaliya</i>
<i>Rv.</i>	<i>Rājāvaliya</i>
<i>S.</i>	<i>Saṃyutta Nikāya</i>
<i>Sn.</i>	<i>Suttanipāta</i>
<i>SK.</i>	<i>Sukranītisāra</i>
<i>Sp.[§]</i>	<i>Samantapāsādikā</i>
<i>Sp (NAJ).^{§§}</i>	<i>Samantapāsādikā</i>
<i>SPL.</i>	<i>Samyaksambuddhabhāṣita Buddhapratimālakṣaṇam</i>
<i>Sv.</i>	<i>Sumaṅgalaviḷāsini</i>
<i>SR.</i>	<i>Sārāratha-ppakāsini</i>
<i>Tv.</i>	<i>Thūpavaṃsa</i>
<i>Vm.</i>	<i>Visuddhimagga</i>
<i>Vp.</i>	<i>Vavaṃsattappakāsini</i>

- [†] *Bimbamāna*. Edited and translated by E.W. Marasinghe. Gangodawila: Piyasiri Printers, 1993.
- ^{††} *Bimbamāna* alias *Śāriputra*. Edited and translated by Ananda Coomaraswamy in *Medieval Sinhalese Art: being a monograph on Medieval Sinhalese arts and crafts, mainly as surviving in the eighteenth century, with an account of the structure of society and the status of the craftsmen.* (Broad Campden, Essex House Press, 1908), Appendix to Chapter VIII.
- * *The Mahāvamsa*, Edited by W. Geiger, 1908. Reprint. London: Published for the Pali Text Society by Luzac and Company Ltd. 1958.
- ** *The Mahāvamsa or the Great Chronicle of Ceylon*. Translated by W. Geiger. Pali Text Society Translations Series No. 3. 1912. Reprint. London: Pali Text Society, 1980.
- *** *Mahāvamsa, the Great Chronicle of Sri Lanka: Chapters One to Thirty-Seven: an Annotated New Translation with Prolegomena*. Edited and translated by Ananda W. P. Guruge, Colombo: Sri Lanka: Associated Newspapers of Ceylon, 1989.
- [§] *Samantapāsādikā*, Vol. I (1975), IV (1998), V (1982). Edited by J. Takakusu & M. Nagai. Pali Text Society.
- ^{§§} Jayawickrama, N.A., trans., and ed., *The Inception of Discipline and the Vinaya Nidāna: Being the translation and edition of the Bāhiraṇidāna of Buddhaghoṣa's Samantapāsādikā*. London: Luzac & Company, 1962.

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VOLUME I: TEXT

CHAPTER 01

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Statement of problem and the hypothesis

An in-depth study of the Buddhist art of Sri Lanka, which I had pursued over a decade or so, had drawn my attention to the following observations pertaining to the Buddha image:

1. Sri Lanka had not gone through the aniconic phase that India had gone through over four to five centuries from the *parinirvāna* of the Buddha and, therefore, had no evidence of the use of such symbols as the footprints (*buddhapāda*), the *Bodhi tree*, the parasol (*catra*), the sacred throne (*vajrāsana*), the wheel of Dharma (*dharmacakra*) etc., as in Indian sites like Bhārhut, Sānchi and early Amarāvati;
2. The only evidence of any aniconic symbolization of the Triple Gem are: a composite stone carving of a parasol over the footprints to symbolize the Buddha, a wheel of Dharma to represent the teachings and two lotus buds to signify the Saṅgha, of which no similar examples have been found from anywhere in India;
3. In several sites where a single footprint is found carved on rock, it appears to be an object of veneration or a decorative element where no evidence to prove the aniconic presence of the Buddha;
4. The early statues of the Buddha had the heads fully shaven unlike the Indian prototype, which had curly snail shell-like hair;
5. They were in the meditative (*samādhi*) posture and gesture with eyes half-closed and no other *mudrās* like preaching (*dharmacakra*) or touching the earth calling it as a witness (*bhūmisparśa*) had been used in Sri Lanka;

6. The posture was not *padmāsana* with crossed legs with soles up, but in the *yogāsana/vīrāsana* in which the legs were placed more comfortably;
7. The robes were almost invisible and lines across the chest and the ankles hinted indicating the presence of a robe;
8. No evidence of colossal standing Buddha statues (and also Bodhisattva images) of 38 to 50 feet as in Sri Lanka are found in India;
9. Later Indian innovations such as the crowned and ornament-wearing Buddha images, *dhyāni* Buddhas or Tantric images with Tārās in erotic posture as in Tibet are not found in Sri Lanka;
10. Sri Lanka provides literary evidence of the prescriptions of iconometric proportions of the Buddha images, for which no clear evidence can be found in India, other than with reference to the statues of Hindu deities.

When and where the Buddha image originated remains a moot point in Buddhist research. Some scholars believe that it originated in India during the 1st century BCE-1st century CE under the patronage of Kushans in two geographical regions: 1) Gandhāra, the west, comprising the present day Pakistan and Afghanistan, including Swat valley, as a result of the influence of Graeco-Roman art, and 2) Mathurā, in north-central India close to Agra in the east, where the cult image worship of *yakṣa* exerted its influence.

As regards the Buddha image in Sri Lanka, early scholars in general assumed that it was based on prior Indian prototypes and was even imported from India or made by Indian artisans. Only a minority of scholars examined the possibility of an independent origin of the Sri Lankan Buddha image. The possibility that the close relationship of Buddhist communities of India and Sri Lanka could have resulted in cross-pollination and

the artistic influences could have been two-way rather than one-way has been hardly investigated. Therefore, the views of all scholars who had taken either side of the debate have been carefully examined in Chapter Six of this study. Taking all the evidence and data utilized by them for their conclusions, the research question to be explored was identified as **“How does the Sri Lankan Buddha image differ from its Indian prototype?”**

Preliminary research resulted in the formulation of the following hypothesis for this study: **“The Sri Lankan Buddha image displays iconographical characteristics different and distinct from the Indian and Hindu prototypes and therefore suggests an independent origin unrelated to either the Graeco-Roman model of Gandhāra or the *yakṣa* cult modeled in Mathurā, both of which influenced the evolution of the Indian Buddha image.”**

1.2 Objective of the present study

The objective of the research is to examine as deeply as data permit

1. Whether the Sri Lankan Buddha image displays different and distinct iconographical characteristics from the Indian prototypes and therefore suggests an independent origin unrelated to the Graeco-Roman model or that of the *yakṣa* cult which influenced the Indian Buddha image.
2. Whether such iconographical differences could result from the improvements, or refinements, which the Sri Lankan artists could have made to the Indian prototypes.

3. Whether any similarities between the images of India and Sri Lanka could be explained as resulting from two-way cross-pollination rather than borrowing from India.
4. What evidence does the Sri Lankan *śilpa* literature with its distinct theory of iconometry support the independent origin and evolution of the Buddha image in Sri Lanka?

To resolve these issues, the present study concentrates on the following:

- I The development of indigenous techniques and skills in order to develop a tradition of iconography which is distinct and specific to the Sri Lankan Buddha image.
- II The extent of Indian influence on the iconographic attributes of Sri Lankan Buddha image.
- III The extent of the influence from Hindu iconography and iconometry on the evolution of Sri Lankan Buddha image.

1.3 Review of Literature

As the extensive bibliography at the end of this dissertation would show, the literature to be surveyed in this study proved to be plentiful. These belonged to three main categories:

1.3.1 Primary sources of data

With an unbroken written history extending to at least twenty-three centuries, Sri Lanka has a wide variety of original primary sources relevant to the study in question. The foremost among them are the Pāli chronicles, the *Dīpavaṃsa* and the *Mahāvāṃsa*

and the Pāli commentaries on the *Tripitaka*. Equally important is the *vaṃsa*-literature which consists of historical accounts, in both Pāli and Sinhala, of sacred shrines such as the *Bodhi Tree*, the *stūpas* and the relics. The works consulted include *Bodhivaṃsa*, *Thūpavaṃsa* and *Dhātuvāṃsa*. Also studied within this category were the Brāhmi and later rock inscriptions of Sri Lanka as well as those of India such as those at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa and Bodh Gayā, as published in the *Epigraphia Zeylanica* and *Epigraphia Indica*.

1.3.2 Review of current studies

The pioneering Sri Lankan archaeologist, epigraphist, and art historian Senarat Paranavitana (1928) was among the earliest to make a major contribution to the study of Buddhist art through his in-depth research on Mahāyānism and Buddhist images.¹ But his study focused on neither the origin and evolution of Sri Lankan Buddha image, nor its typical iconography. His later studies, as examined in Chapter Six have dealt with the origin and the development of the Buddha image, as dependent entirely on India as revealed by his statement with reference to the mention of a third century BCE Buddha statue in Sri Lanka: “But the statement refers to a period anterior to that which the Buddha image first appeared in India itself, no credence can be attached to them... The Buddha images from Ruwanvālisāya are identical types of the Amarāvati Buddha, whereas the types of seated Buddha derived from Mathurā.”² With the exception of Ananda Coomaraswamy (though he assumed that there is a semblance between pre-Gupta Buddha images), early scholars like Vincent A. Smith (1911), J. Ph. Vogel (1936),

¹ Senarat Paranavitana, “Mahayanism in Ceylon,” *Ceylon Journal of Science*, Sec. G., Vol. II, Part I, (Colombo, Ceylon Government Press, 1928) 143-78

² Senarat Paranavitana, *History of Ceylon*, Vol. I, Part I. (Peradeniya, Sri Lanka: University of Peradeniya, 1959), 266

Heinrich Zimmer (1955), Benjamin Rowland (1963), Nandadeva Wijesekeara (1962), W.M. Sirisena (1978), and Ulrich Von Schroeder (1990) appear to have been influenced by him.

In 1942, Nandana Chutiwongs conducted a study on *The Avalokiteśvara in Mainland South East Asia*, extending her study to identify the characteristics of the Buddha image as well, in order to prove that it is a popular movement towards the cult of bodhisattva. “The reason probably was that while the Theravada doctrine is marked by an austere discipline, the Mahayana faith is comparatively free from rigidity and preached compassion and willingness.”³ Wittingly or otherwise, her assumption was that the Buddha image in the country evolved under the inspiration of Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition where the image was considered an object of worship.

D. K. Dohanian (1964) in his *Mahayana Buddhist Sculptures of Ceylon*⁴ broadly elaborated some iconographical characteristics of Indian Buddha images as well as the Hindu sculptures that were popular in later periods without noting the distinct features of the Sri Lankan Buddha image. Such studies instead provided necessary backgrounds to study the iconographical elements in Sri Lankan Buddha images from the perspective of Indian *śilpa* texts.

Nandasena Mudiyanse (1967) carried out an extensive study on the Buddha images in Sri Lanka beginning with Mahāyāna Buddhist sculptures.⁵ His entire analysis of iconographical features of some selected Sri Lankan Buddha and bodhisattva image in conjunction with the Indian religious background by comparing them with early *śilpa*

³ Nandana Chutiwongs, *Avalokiteśvara in Mainland South East Asia*. (New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 2002), 64

⁴ D.K. Dohanian, *Mahayana Buddhist Sculptures of Ceylon*. (New York & London: Garland Publications, 1964), 30

⁵ Nandasena Mudiyanse, *Mahayana Monuments in Ceylon*. (Colombo: Gunasena Publications, 1967)

texts such as *Sāadhanamālā* and *Niṣpaṇṇayogāvalī* reach the conclusion that Sri Lankan Buddhist sculptures must have had an Indian inspiration.

A major work on the Sri Lankan Buddha image was conducted by Ulrich Von Schroeder in 1990 in his detailed study of *Buddhist Sculpture of Sri Lanka*, identifying the iconographical characteristics of the Buddhist sculptures of Sri Lanka. But he fails to recognize the typical iconography of the Sri Lankan Buddha image and in a chapter that examines the different views on the origin and the evolution of the Sri Lankan Buddha image,⁶ finally agrees with scholars who favor the Indian inspiration for the origin while acknowledging its unique characteristics; “No one can underrate the extent to which India and the region comprising modern Andhra Pradesh in particular, had influenced the Buddhist culture of Sri Lanka. However, in a comparative study, one cannot fail to recognize the local innovative genius of the Sinhalese craftsmen, who created the Buddha image of a quality never accomplished in South India.”⁷ He had not, however, explained how or why “Sinhalese craftsmen created the Buddha image of a quality never accomplished in South India.”

Among the studies conducted on the same subject, there are several scholars who hypothesize an independent origin for the Sri Lankan Buddha image. Of them, Ven. Walpola Rahula states, “If we accept the evidence of the Chronicle, Ceylon had the earliest Buddha image in the world. Merely because we do not find Buddha images among the early sculptures at Sānchi and Bhārhut.”⁸ D.T. Devendra agrees, “*Devānampiyatissa*’s image might well be one of the several images found from

⁶ U.V. Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*. (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications, 1990), 97-146

⁷ Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, Introduction, 17

⁸ Walpola Rahula, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon: Anuradhapura Period: 3rd century CE-10th century CE*. (Colombo: M.D. Gunasena, 1956), 122-24

Anuradhapura today.”⁹ Siri Gunasinghe proposes that the image cult of Buddha would have been exported to India from Sri Lanka.¹⁰ Martin Wickramasinghe in his *Development of the Buddha Image in Ceylon* describes its independent development: “as Buddhist Culture was developing in Ceylon in isolation, the Ceylon sculptors had ample opportunities to develop independently the image of the Buddha according to the tradition of Theravāda Buddhism.”¹¹

Nandadeva Wijesekara agrees with Gunasinghe and Wickramasinghe and believes that Sri Lanka would have created its own Buddha image in isolation, because they had the knowledge and the skill of making images even before the arrival of Buddhism to Sri Lanka.¹² He, however, contradicts his opinion with another of his statements: “The mainland of Asia was the source of all its art and the styles and techniques that evolved in the vast sub-continent naturally and inevitably came to be absorbed and accepted by the Sinhalese artists and there can be no exception to this.”¹³

John Clifford Holt has contributed to the study of Buddha image in Sri Lanka, some of which have also been translated into Sinhala by P.B.Meegaskumbure (1994). In his study, *Buddha in the Crown*, he makes a deeper analysis on the image of Avalokiteśvara in Sri Lanka as a distinct local authentication.¹⁴ He does not, however, address the questions raised by the present study in order to identify the distinctive characteristics of the Sri Lankan Buddha image.

⁹ D. T. Devendra, “The Buddha Image in Ceylon,” *Ceylon Today*, Vol. V. No. 5. (May-June 1956/57), 37

¹⁰ Siri Gunasinghe, “Ceylon and the Buddha Image in the Round,” *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. XIX, No.s 3 & 4, (1956): 258.

¹¹ Martin Wickramasinghe, “The Development of the Buddha Image in Ceylon,” *Buddhist Annual*, 2511-1967. (Colombo: M.D. Gunasena, 1967), 51

¹² Nandadeva Wijesekara, *Early Sinhalese Sculpture*. (Colombo: M.D. Gunasena Publishers, 1962), 200

¹³ Wijesekara, *Early Sinhalese Sculpture*, 224

¹⁴ John Clifford Holt, *Buddha in the Crown: Avalokiteśvara in the Buddhist Traditions of Sri Lanka*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991)

The iconographic studies carried out on the Buddha images in Sri Lanka by Chandra Wikramagamage have revealed some important facts affecting in Buddha images.¹⁵ His major studies concern those of certain indigenous elements, and the particular measurements (*tāla*) employed in making the Buddha images, which particularly made the Sri Lankan Buddhist image a perfect icon.¹⁶ Of his major works on the Buddha image in Sri Lanka, the recent most study is the *Sri Lankāve Buddha Pratimā Kalāva* (2007), in which he details the iconographic elements of Sri Lankan Buddhist images including those of bodhisattvas as well.¹⁷ Those include identifying the different postures; seating positions and attributes, gestures, symbols, and decorative elements etc. He also attempts to identify different kinds of Buddhist images that persisted in Sri Lanka throughout its history. Although his attempt is noteworthy in identifying the particular characteristics in Sri Lankan Buddha image, he does not focus on identifying the distinctive character of the Sri Lankan Buddha image as of independent origin and evolution *vis-à-vis* India.

An important investigation into the Sri Lankan Buddha image has been conducted by Nandana Chutiwongs, P.L. Prematilleka and Roland Silva in 2007 under the title, *The Buddha* and reached the conclusion that “it represents the Buddha Śākyamuni, the central figure of the Theravāda faith. Only occasionally does one encounter representation of the Buddha of the past and of the ‘Thousand Buddhas’ which are the multiplication of the one Buddha form, radiating in all directions of the universe.”¹⁸ Although this assumption

¹⁵ Chandra Wikramagamage, *Sri Lankāve Bodhisattva Saṅkalpaya*, Cultural Book Series No.4. (Colombo: Department of Cultural Affairs, 1996), 21

¹⁶ Chandra Wikramagamage, *Pratimā Pramāṇa Mūladharma*. (Colombo: Taranga Printers, 1990)

¹⁷ Chandra Wikramagamage, *Sri Lankāve Baudha Pratimā Kalāva*. (Colombo: Godage Publishers, 2007)

¹⁸ Nandana Chutiwongs, Leelananda Prematilleka and Roland Silva, *Sri Lanka Sculpture: The Buddha*. (Colombo: Central Cultural Fund, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, 2007), 35

leads further studies with regard to the Sri Lankan Buddha image, the study, however, lacks adequate analysis despite its reference to well-known examples found in different periods.

The contribution of A. Lagamuva, in his recent study of *Sri Laṅkāve Bauddha Pratimā Lakṣaṇa* is to identify iconographical attributes of Buddha and bodhisattva images of Sri Lanka.¹⁹ The significance in his study is the identification of regional development of images in relation to the cult practices that typically influenced the creation of images in broader terms. Though his examination is of noteworthy, it does not deal with necessary investigations of Sri Lankan identity, which the present study aims at.

Siri Nimal Lakdusinghe (1978) and P.L. Prematilleke (1966-1995), and Charles Godakumbura (1960-64) have dealt particularly with the bronzes found in Sri Lanka and focused on identifying and analyzing the technical and artistic aspects of Buddha images, with a major emphasis on neighboring traditions, particularly those from India.

Despite very useful information these publications provide, they have not pursued in earnest the issue under study. As emphasized by D.T. Devendra, “the task before the serious student is to isolate the essentials of Sri Lankan Buddha image, arrive at a reasonable chronological datum and test for the possible origins of the Buddha image in the Island by evaluating all data including the *written records*.”²⁰

¹⁹ A. Lagamuva, *Sri Laṅkāve Bauddha Pratimā Lakṣaṇa*. (Colombo: Central Cultural Fund, 1999) 37-41

²⁰ D.T. Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*. (Colombo: K.V.G. Silva & Sons, 1957), 81

1.3.3 Technical treatises or *śilpa* texts

The third category of literature subjected to survey comprised technical treatises on image-making which are called *śilpa* texts. These manuals meant for the artists are immensely helpful in a historical survey of iconographic elements of Buddhist images, particularly from the perspective of Southern Buddhism. Among the studies of Buddhist and Hindu iconography, *The Elements of the Hindu Iconography* by Gopinatha Rao (1914), *Pratimā-māna-lakṣaṇa* edited and translated by Panindra Nath Bose (1927), *The Elements of Buddhist Iconography* by Ananda Coomaraswamy (1935), *The Development of Hindu Iconography* by Jithendra Nath Banerjea (1956), *The Indian Buddhist Iconography: mainly Based on Sādhanamālā* (1924) and *Niṣpaṇṇayogāvalī* (1972) by Benoytosh Bhattacharyya are important even though they examine the elements of images from the Indian perspective. *Mañjuśrībhāṣita vāstuvidyāśāstra* and *citrakarmasāstra* (1991), and *Bimbamāna* ascribed to *Śāriputra* (1993) by E.W. Marasinghe, *Pratimā Pramāṇa Mūladharma* (1990) by Chandra Wikramagamage on the contrary are the studies conducted on Sri Lankan *śilpa* texts. A comparative study of Hindu and Buddhist images discussed in them show significant variations in iconometry in the sense of measurements, proportions and plumb line arrangement, and provide further evidence in support of the hypothesis that the Buddha image of Sri Lanka originated and evolved independently of any Indian prototype.

1.4 The importance of the present study

The importance of the current study lies in the fact that a detailed examination of iconographical and iconometric elements of the Sri Lankan Buddha image has

undertaken and accomplished for the first time. As D.T. Devendra states “The evolution of the Buddha image and the adoration of this image in Ceylon, which is today regarded as the Land of Pure Buddhism, are subjects that have not received due attention. Studies of the aspect of Buddhist art in the Island and of the cult have been concentrated in India.”²¹ This study has covered all available data from a variety of primary sources and all current views and conclusions of archaeologists, historians, and art critics, and has been subjected to meticulous scrutiny. As suggested by Ananda Coomaraswamy in 1913 that the issue could be resolved only through stylistic criticism, the study concentrated on a comparative investigation into the stylistic variation between the images of India and Sri Lanka, and discovered that the elements which distinguish the Sri Lankan Buddha image cannot be explained in any other way than resulting from independent origin and evolution. It has been thus possible to establish most convincingly the hypothesis: **“The Sri Lankan Buddha image displays iconographic characteristics different and distinct from the Indian and Hindu prototypes and therefore suggests an independent origin unrelated to either the Graeco-Roman model of Gandhāra or that of *yakṣa* cult in Mathurā, which influenced the Indian Buddha image.”**

1.5 Research methodology

My preparation for this research commenced with an in-depth study of the theories of art in both the West and East. The following insights proved to be the most helpful:

²¹ Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, 1

1.5.1 Meister Eckhart's Theory of Art

Meister Eckhart's idea of the human life in operation and attainment is aesthetic; it runs through all his thought that man is an artist in the analogy of the "Exalted workman," and his idea of "Sovran good" and "immutable delight" is that of a perfected art." According to him, art is religion and religion is art.²² Eckhart emphasizes: "The teaching of our school is that anything known or born is an image."²³ According to him, the image in the object, and that in the artist's mind are the same. The reason is the inspiration he gets from his innate nature. What the artist makes sure is to take out the mind image by using his medium. When the artist makes a statue out of wood or stone he does not put image in the wood, he chips away the wood which hides the form. "He gives the wood nothing, he takes it away; carves it out where too thick, pares off overlay, and then there appears what was hidden."²⁴

As Eckhart emphasizes, the origin of the image is the same as proclaimed in the religion: the image reveals the religious truth, doctrine, or its philosophy. Whereas the artist's effort is to represent the religious values at his best through the image, the ordinary follower sees the religion through the same image. This particular process is therefore, unique to each religion, because, the human senses, first accomplish the values of the religion through nothing but the image. The evidence of the particular process can be traced from the primitive societies to the modern day temple and church art where the

²² Meister Eckhart constantly explained the undeniable nature of Art and Religion in his Sermons. Though he speaks from the point of view of the Catholic religion, it equally applies to western as well as eastern concepts of art. Ananda Coomaraswamy compares the similarity between these two concepts from the quotations of *Brihadāranāyaka Upanisad*, 1 2, 3 and *Taitriya Upanisad* 1, 3. See Franz Pfeiter, ed., C de B. Evans, trans., *Meister Eckhart*, Vol. I & II. (London: John M. Watkins, 1956), 268, 366-9: Ananda Coomaraswamy, "The Theory of Art in Asia," *Transformation of Nature in Art*. (New York: Dover Publications, 1934), 62-3

²³ Pfeiter & Evans, *Meister Eckhart*, Vol. I, 258

²⁴ Pfeiter & Evans, *Meister Eckhart*, Vol. II, 82

religious aspiration is first transmitted through the image. Therefore, the significance of image as means of conveying religious understanding cannot be eluded simply as a piece of art which developed in the mind of artist. It always perceives such symbolic values that represent its unique ethical, moral, and supra-mundane dignity. This religious perspective of image as the central theme has been taken into consideration in the present study especially in exemplification of religious understanding in India and Sri Lanka.

While Eckhart observes the relationship between religion and art as such, there were opposing cultures whose objective of making an image was not mainly a matter of contemplation. They were meant for different religious and artistic purposes that formed the core of each culture. While some cultures marked the presence of the religious leader of the kingdom by an image, some cultures made the image of the king to deck his tomb with the aim of recalling his soul (*kā*) back into the body. The best example is related to the Egyptian Pharos.²⁵ R. G. Collingwood states this theory in his *Principles of Art*;

The portraits of ancient Egyptian sculptures were not designed for exhibition and contemplation; they were hidden away in the darkness of the tomb, unvisited, where no spectator could see them, but where they could do their magical work, wherever precisely that was, uninterrupted. Roman portraiture was derived from the images of ancestors which, keeping watch over the domestic life of their posterity had a magical or religious purpose to which their artistic qualities were subservient. Greek drama and Greek sculpture began as accessories of religious cult. And the entire body of the medieval Christian art shows the same purpose.²⁶

In the case of Sri Lankan Buddha image, the same theory can be applied. The image of the Buddha in the Sri Lankan context was not meant as an object of worship or did not represent any divine being or a deity. According to the literary and archaeological

²⁵ “In Egyptian reliefs and paintings, the *kā* is shown standing protectively behind the king, acting as a sort of guardian angel in life. Examples of this sort have led to an interesting interpretation of the *kā* as the spiritual body within the physical body.” in Raymond O Faulkner, Carlo Andrews and James Wasserman, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead: The Book of Going Forth by Day*. 1972. Reprint. (CA, USA: Chronicle Books, 2008), 152

²⁶ R.G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art*. 1938. Reprint. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), Introduction, 11

evidence so far found, it was a relic depository or a ceremonial object that received the utmost majestic care of the country. Thus, it was either placed in the precinct of the religious monasteries or deposited in the dark chamber of the *stūpa* where no one could see. But, this did not mean that the honor or the veneration for the relic was diminished in the particular community. And, simply because it was deposited in a dark tomb, and no one could see the portrait afterwards, does not mean that the tradition of making images was not established in the country until sometime. That was the way they looked at the Buddha image; a different way than it was looked at by the Indian sculptor.

1.5.2 Theory of Asian art

Similar to the perspective of Eckhart, the Asian art viewed the image as a product of contemplation was created in the mind of the artist. According to *Sukranītisāra*, the artist should first accomplish the visual-formulation of the lineaments of the image; only an expert of this practice could achieve the particular visualization.²⁷ The concept has been viewed from that of western eye due to certain reasons: 1) the development of the mathematical and scientific concepts in western culture, and 2) the presentation of Asiatic thoughts and concepts to the western culture with a renewed understanding.²⁸ From that point of view, the Asiatic art is not merely a craftsmanship, but purely a mental activity (*citta saññā*), which was solely based on the mental vision of the artist that was formed in the mind cognition of the craftsman. This process is particularly evident in the image-craft where the icon of the deity, which was described in the canonical texts (*sādhana*,

²⁷ *Sk.* Ch. IV, 70-1

²⁸ Coomaraswamy, "The Theory of Art in Asia," 4

śilpa, mantra, dhāraṇa) which prescribed the particular methods of image making.

Ananda Coomaraswamy states:

When, on the other hand, a material image is to be produced for purposes of worship in a temple or elsewhere, this as a technical procedure must be undertaken by a professional craftsman, who may be variously designated *śilpin*, “craftsman,” “*yogin*: yogi,” “*sōdaka*,” “adept,” or simply *rūpakāra* or *pratimākāra*, “imager.” Such a craftsman goes through a whole process of self-purification and worship, mental visualization and identification of consciousness with the form evoked, and then only translates the form into stone or metal. Thus, the trance formulae become the prescriptions by which the craftsman works, and as such they are commonly included in the *Śilpa Śāstras*, the technical literature of craftsmanship. These books in turn provide invaluable data for the modern student of iconography.”²⁹

1.5.3 Cultural and geographical inter-relationship

Although this view of art as a divine and contemplative act from western and eastern perspectives, the traditions of image making in each religion, has its own roots and processes, which reflect numerous factors in the history. In fact, this involves cultural and geographical inter-relationships, inspirations, and influences as well as well-developed native craftsmanship. Ruth Benedict’s description of the patterns of culture is significant in this respect:

The diversity of culture results not only from the ease with which societies elaborate or reject possible aspects of existence. It is due even more to a complex interweaving of cultural traits. The final form of any traditional institution, as we have just said, goes far beyond the original human impulse. In great measure this final form depends upon the way in which the trait has merged with other traits from different fields of experience... A wide trait may be saturated with religious beliefs among one people and function as an important aspect of their religion. In another area it may be wholly a matter of economic transfer and be therefore an aspect of their monetary arrangements. The possibilities are endless and the adjustments are often bizarre. The nature of the trait will be quite different in the different areas according to the elements with which it has combined.³⁰

²⁹ Coomaraswamy, “Origin and Use of Images in India,” *Transformation of Nature in Art*, 166

³⁰ Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, Sentry edition. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1959), 37

According to him, while there are endless means and measures that the cultures combine together, the most important is to identify its function, or otherwise, the temptation is to surmise that all cultures emerge from one universal phenomenon, which is not factual. The truth behind this statement is the understanding of traits in each individual culture. He continues;

Traits having no intrinsic relation one with the other, and historically independent, merge and become inextricable, providing the occasion for behaviour that has no counterpart in regions that do not make these identifications. It is a corollary of these standards, no matter in what aspect of behaviour, range in different cultures from the positive to negative pole.³¹

The particular cultural distinction always brings up art traditions that inspire the neighboring traditions, which in turns get inspired *vice versa*. However, what is remarkable in this relationship is the evolution of distinctive styles, traditions, techniques, and skills that may never coincide with its predecessor at all. J.C. Van Dyke explains this distinction in relation to western art, which may also be true with the oriental art, too.

Art is what its age and its environment makes it; and if it be spontaneous, it is true art, no matter whether it conform to the line of Raphael or and the color of Titan or not. The Dutch painters cannot be tried by the Laws of Leonardo and Michael Angelo; nor the modern French sculptors estimated by the methods of Phidias and Praxiteles. There is and can be no law applicable to all alike.³²

The emphasis of this quotation is equally applicable to the Asian art, since all the traditions of art that spread over the Asian region portray their own characteristics despite the fact that all, or many of them have intermingled with major religious and art traditions evolved in and around the region from time to time. On the other hand, art can be recognized as the means of primary communication in all the civilizations; religion, culture, and their society etc., Thus, no single society can be recognized as influential on

³¹ Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, sentry edition, 45

³² John Charles Van Dyke, *Principles of Art*. (New York: Ford, Howard, & Hulbert, 1887), 173

the other society or its culture, simply due to the fact that there is a semblance among each society and culture. That does not mean that *influential* or *inspirational* because there is individuality that dominates each culture's identity. As R.C. Collingwood emphasizes:

Originality in art, meaning lack of resemblance to anything that has been done before, is sometimes nowadays regarded as artistic merit. This, of course, is absurd. If the production of something deliberately designed to be like existing works of art is mere craft, equally so, and for some reason, is the production of something designed to be unlike them. There is a sense in which any genuine work of art is original; but originality in that sense does not mean unlikeness to other works of art.³³

With respect to the Indian art, it is true that India provided the base for many of the ancient religious as well as art traditions, being one of the major civilizations evolved in the Asian sub-continent. Evidently, Indus-valley civilization was the principal man-made culture in which evolved many a traditional skills and traits that India developed and enhanced over the period to date. At the same time, India was able to be the pioneering country to give birth to some of the major religious traditions i.e. Vedic Religion, Jainism, Hinduism, and Buddhism that evolved in the Indian sub-continent. With the spread of Buddhism in and around the country, India became the most resourceful *center* in spreading Buddhism and Buddhist art with all its wealth. However, despite its inspiration on neighboring countries, literary and archaeological evidence prove that all such regions that became part of the Indian traditional skills had distinctive socio-cultural traditions where Sri Lanka is not an exception.

Martin Wickramasinghe in his *Aspects of Sinhalese Culture* argues the existence of a strong tradition of art despite the borrowing of certain characteristics through the course of time. He stresses; “these countries have an ethnological affinity is correct, but it

³³ Collingwood, *The Principles of Art*, 43

would be inaccurate to say that Indian culture is dominant in these countries.”³⁴ He continues, “As Buddhism and the culture that originated and developed with it disappeared a long time ago from India, it is important that this distinction should not be ignored.”³⁵ According to him, borrowing cannot be recognized as copying, since there is integration in every piece of art that has been created throughout the history.

Originality in cultural invention is nothing but the change, partial or complete, of a borrowed element in re-adaptation. The cause for the change may be man, environment, or both. Creation or invention does not mean making something out of nothing. An idea or a material thing has a history. This history of idea or the thing becomes the borrowed element in the new creation or the invention.³⁶

Thus it is with a full understanding of the prevailing concepts of originality versus borrowing and copying that the comparison between the Buddha images of India and Sri Lanka was undertaken in attempting to prove the hypothesis.

1.6 Collection of Materials

Accordingly the present study primarily utilized the historical research methodology in that both a literature survey and a field study were carried out to investigate the particular developments and the innovations in representing the Buddha in human form along with supernatural qualities, which were later attributed to him.

1.6.1 Literature survey

1.6.1.1 Library studies

The literature review mainly carried out in a library survey consulted the primary sources as well as scholarly studies, and would also focus on reviewing and analyzing the

³⁴ Martin Wickramasinghe, *Aspects of Sinhalese Culture*. (Colombo: Tisara Prakāśakayo, 1973), 7

³⁵ Wickramasinghe, *Aspects of Sinhalese Culture*, 7

³⁶ Wickramasinghe, *Aspects of Sinhalese Culture*, 10

perceptions of scholars pertaining to particular historical evidence that favored the construction of Sri Lankan Buddha image with its specific characteristics.

1.6.1.2 Map studies

The present study also focused on the maps and illustrations in relation to the history and geographical expansion of India and Sri Lanka when and where possible, and available in order to identify the expansion of Buddhism over the centuries. The outcome was the discovery of many unidentified sites as well as sources of information where some rare facts and data were available. The result will focus on creating a database of the places and sites where Buddha images of Sri Lanka are found (due to the particular limitations, the project will not be undertaken at this stage).

1.6.1.3 Archival and museum studies

Materials and data were also sought from several archives and museums. Some important documents and manuscripts relevant to the present study are at present in several archives around the world and many images are displayed in museum collections. These are distributed practically in all continents. Some recent findings are under the protective custody of the Archaeological Department of Sri Lanka, and are yet not utilized for research studies.

1.6.2 Field visits

With the evidence found from the literature and the maps available, the present study was carried out in a field survey to identify and analyze the Buddha images

belonging to relevant periods. These visits provided the base to compare the *śilpa* texts that were popular. These visits also enabled the exploration of the distinct iconographical elements of Sri Lankan Buddha images which were not previously examined by scholars.

1.7 Limitations of the present study

The present study, though extensive, is limited to an investigation into only the Buddha image in the round (free standing sculptures) in stone, clay, and wood. The Buddha image in paintings, bas-reliefs and the like have not been included, except the examples of those that have been used as supportive evidence. Also excluded are the images of Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna origin such as those of bodhisattvas like Avalokiteśvara, Maitreya, Jāmbhala, Mañjuśrī and their respective female counterparts (*śaktis*) such as Tārā, Brūkuti, Vasudharā, and Māmaki.

There is also an inherent question of chronology as the dating of a particular image has to be purely conjectural. It is noted that in Sri Lanka no inscriptions honoring the names of the donors, sculptors, or dates, or of a donated image to the monastic community have hitherto been found.

1.8 Presentation of research results

The dissertation is organized in nine chapters. Chapter One, as an introduction to the study, spells out the problem, the hypothesis, survey of literature, methods of research, limitation of the study and the presentation of results. Chapter Two investigates the antiquity of the Indian art from the pre-historic period to the period of the King Aśoka (304 BCE-232 BCE) to uncover its various stages. The particular stages: art of pre-

historic cave man, and the evidence of Indus-valley civilization, which provide plausible background of the representation of the human figure in Indian art are examined. This raises the question why the Buddha was not represented in the anthropomorphic form in Indian Buddhist art. Abundant of evidence found from the Indian Buddhist art during the reign of the king Aśoka did not portray him in the human form. Instead, he was represented in various symbols that marked his presence. While the popular assumption was that the Buddha himself might have objected to or discouraged his depiction in human form, the early Buddhist canon provides ample evidence to testify the Buddha's appreciation of art.

Chapter Three examines the geographical distribution (Bhārhut, Sānchi, Amarāvati, Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, and Gandhāra) of the application of symbols i.e. footprint (*buddhapāda*), wheel of Dharma (*dharmacakra*), the sacred Bodhi Tree, the parasol (*catra*), the sacred throne (*vajrāsana*), the *stūpa* as well as the elephant, the lotus (*padma*) in Indian Buddhist art to represent various aspects of the life of the Buddha.

Chapter Four focuses on the particular stages of the evolution of Indian Buddha image, geographically and chronologically, to examine the particular iconographic elements with reference to possible socio-cultural, and political factors that enabled the Buddha to be presented in the anthropomorphic form in Buddhist art. Subjected to study are four main centers i.e. Mathurā & Gandhāra of the Kushan reign, the southern school developed in Amarāvati & Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, Mathurā & Sārnāth of the Gupta period, and Bihār & Bengal of the Pāla-Sena period, of which the last school developed a typical tradition with the influence of Hindu iconography, and with the impulse of Vajrayāna Buddhism.

Chapter Five proceeds to discuss the background of Buddhism in Sri Lanka through a detailed analysis of literary and archaeological data. Despite the fact that Buddhism was introduced to Sri Lanka from India, and early Buddhist art and architecture evolved in the country with the inspiration of Buddhism, much of the evidence traced from the chronicles, epigraphs, ancient travelers' records reveal that Sri Lanka has established a particular tradition of Buddhist art in that the Buddha image perceived a distinct place. It was an object of veneration, a part of relic, or a ceremonial object, thus deposited in the *stūpa* relic chambers, or promoted by the kings.

Chapter Six begins with a detailed study of the innovations in Buddhist art and architecture in Sri Lanka and proceeds to discuss the current theories of historians, archaeologists, and art historians on the origin and evolution of the Buddha image. It is thus in this chapter that the distinct iconographical evidence in support of the hypothesis is marshaled as regards the independent origin of the Sri Lankan Buddha image.

Chapter Seven contains a detailed examination of the iconographic elements of the Sri Lankan Buddha images from the earliest to the eighteenth century to establish that the Buddha image evolved in Sri Lanka with typical iconographical characteristics that were not evident in those of India.

In Chapter Eight is a comparative study of the application of the iconometric proportions, measurements, and plumb line assignments in Sri Lankan and Indian images. This is done based on the *śilpa* texts belonging to the two countries to examine the usage of such proportions. While India is rich in the composition of such *śilpa* texts that prescribe the proportions for making the images, the few texts i.e. *Samyaksambuddha-bhāṣṭa-pratimā-pramāṇa-lakṣaṇam* and *Pratimā-māna-lakṣaṇam* discuss the proportions

of *daśatāla* and *navatāla*, yet no archaeological evidence can be found. On the contrary, Sri Lankan *śilpa* texts i.e. *Mañjuśrībhāṣita citrakarmasāstra* and *Bimbamāna* ascribed to *Śāriputra*, prescribing the measurements of *uttama daśatāla* for the Buddha images, provides the examples of its application in a number of monumental Buddha images.

Chapter Nine summarizes the conclusions. Since the present study was conducted under certain limitations, the concluding chapter suggests the need for further studies.

The study also includes a detailed bibliography, glossary of terms, and five Appendices: 1) the chronology of Sri Lankan kings, 2) Thirty-two major characteristics of the Great Person 3) Eighty minor characteristics of the Great Person 4) The gestures employed in the Buddha images, and 5) the postures employed in Sri Lankan Buddha images.

CHAPTER 02

ANICONIC OR NON-HUMAN REPRESENTATIONS OF THE BUDDHA

2.1 Antiquity of art in the Indian sub-continent

The hunting and ritual scenes in prehistoric Indian sites take the history of Indian art back to the Paleolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic cultures dating as far back as 8000 BCE. Archaeologists have also identified that the oldest paintings of these sites may date back at least 12,000 years. The evidence found from the paintings of Bhimbetkā and Shamlā Hills near Bhopal, Pāchmarhi, Nigali Sāgar, Hoshangbād, Karabād in the Raisen District, Chambell Valley, Mirzāpur, all belonging to Madhya Pradesh, as well as the Himalayan plateau and the forest tracts of Kerala, Orissa, and Rajasthan are of particular importance in this regard. The subject matter of these paintings extends from plants and animals to human figures with various proportions. Particularly in the Karabād, though the sandstone shelters are rather shallow, the illustrations prove to be the introductory phase of pre-historic art in India. The subjects popularly employed are the herds of bovids, elephants, rhinos, deer, big cats, as well as human figures with elongated limbs (fig.2.1).¹

At Bhimbetkā (exposed by V.S. Wakankar in 1957), about 500 caves have been discovered with various illustrations depicting hunting and ritual scenes which belong to Mesolithic, Chalcolithic as well as the historical period, and described them in 1975.² In 1998, Yashodar Mathpal identified two types of drawings — “one very clear, bright and fresh looking, while others underlying them are faded, fragmented, and hardly visible.

¹ Jean Clottes, *The Rock Arts of Central India*, Indian Rock Art Society, [www. Bradshadowfoundation. com](http://www.Bradshadowfoundation.com) (accessed: 02/16/2010)

² V.S. Wakankar, “Bhimbetka Excavation,” *Journal of Indian History*, Vol. 8 (1973), 24-5; V.S. Wakankar, “Bhimbetka: the Pre-Historic Paradise,” *Prachya Pratibha*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (1975), 8-10

The fresh ones feature mainly marching and fighting soldiers, cavaliers being chased and aimed at by masked hunters equipped by bows and arrows and barbed spears (**fig.2.2**).³ According to Mathpal, two thousand three hundred and thirty human figures belong to twenty-eight sub groups depending on their subject matter, elaborating various activities. Accordingly, he has identified nine major phases of development of which **man** is depicted in different forms (**fig.2.3a, 3b, 3c & 3d**).⁴ Mathpal has also observed a variety of human figures, individual and in clusters that testify to the compositional skill of the native cave man. The 6214 human figures, in singular and cluster paintings, provide a vast array of evidence of the presence of human figure in ancient Indian art. D. L. Kamat has observed some men of Bhimbetkā proficient in the particular skill of creating the human figure. According to him, man is a predominant object of rock shelter paintings, in day to day life, which they communicated through paintings (**fig.2.4a & 4b**).⁵

In addition to the depiction of human figures, the application of religious symbols is visible in pre-historic Indian rock caves. The rock cave of Sabarakāntha of Gujarat, belonging to Madhya Pradesh, depicts an engraving of a *stūpa* inside a shelter (**fig.2.5**).⁶ The engraving is clearly a primary depiction of a domed structure in that the peculiar characteristics of the Indian *caitya* i.e. the base, two or three stepped *pesā*, the dome (*garbha*), and particularly the parasols, which were seven to nine in number, in Buddhist *stūpas* are significant.

³ Yashodhar Mathpal, *Pre-Historic Rock Paintings of Bhimbetka, Central India*. (Varanasi: Abhinav Publications, 1998), 55, 225-6

⁴ Mathpal, *Pre-Historic Rock Paintings of Bhimbetka*, 11, 93, Table I, 2 and 3

⁵ D.L. Kamat, *Pre-Historic Rock Paintings of Bhimbetka*, www.kamat.com/kalranga/rockpain/betaka.htm Last updated 7/9/2011. Accessed 01/26/2010), fig.3 & 6

⁶ Kalyana Kumar Cakravarthy & G. Bednarik, *Indian Rock Art and its Global Context*. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1997), 43, fig. 38

It is apparent that the paintings and engravings of the pre-historic caves were not created for decorative purpose or entertainment. They depict the daily activities of primitive society, which include hunting, dancing, rituals, domestic life, and recreation, collection of food and transportation as well as copulation.⁷ In fact, they elaborate the independent skill of expression of the pre-historic native man in India and his ability of illustrating the human and animal figures to preserve a permanent record of the life he experienced. D.L. Kamat has stressed the cave men's ability and skill through which they drew animals and birds with two or three strokes along with an abundance of symbols and highlights. However, they were not aware of the sexual distinction of male and female when presenting the human figure in the early paintings. Such distinction appears in later drawings (**fig.2.6**).⁸ Whether the primitive man employed the stick figures or two-dimensional figures to indicate the dynamic nature of the activities, it represents the energy of illustrating the human figure through the visual experience. The skills of expressing symbolic and abstract ideas developed for such a purpose must have extended the scope of the subject-matter, which continued into later periods as civilization expanded and was represented in illustrations that needed to be depicted and preserved through art.

Such a long period of artistic tradition should have preceded the Indus-Sarasvati civilization (Indus-valley civilization) of the third millennium BCE. Not only the sophisticated city-planning and architecture of this civilization, but the objects of art so far discovered reflect a long period of development. Particularly important for the current study is the maturity displayed in the representation of the human figure. Both male and

⁷ Ali Javid & Tabassum Javeed, *World Heritage Monuments and Related Edifices in India*. Vol. I.(USA: Algora Publishing, 2008), 19

⁸ Kamat, *Pre-historic Rock Paintings of Bhimbetka*. fig.4

female figures, made out of clay, stone and bronze found from Mohenjo-Dāro, Harappā, Kālībaṅgan and other locations display the maturity and proficiency of Indus-Sarasvati artists and their skills and techniques of craftsmanship. The sandstone head of a priest king, the bronze figurine of a dancing girl, both of which were found from Mohenjo-Dāro and the two male torsos: one standing and the other displaying the dancing posture, found from Harappā, are considered the exclusive pieces of sculpture of a great civilization. Equally sophisticated are the terra-cotta images depicting the mother goddess or a female deity and the large number of seals which have been used for numerous purposes.

The portrait of the **Priest King** (6.8in. X 4.3in.), made out of steatite, found from DK-B area of Mohenjo-Dāro, though incomplete, is clad with a robe with a decoration of three petal flowers that draped over the left shoulder and under the right arm (**fig.2.7**).⁹ The trefoil is combined with circles which makes it more likely a geometric design. The statuette also represents a yogic posture in that the eye lids are closed and eyes look downwards.¹⁰ Similar iconographic elements can be seen in later images of Mathurā and Amarāvati Buddhist Centers (**see fig.4.3, 4.23b, & 4.24b**). Significantly, the features of the robe were similar to the dress adopted by the monks, ascetics, and other religious sages in India during the later period. Even today, the Buddhist monks and lay devotees when approaching a religious sanctuary wear the robe in the same way. John Marshall suggests that the images of this kind have influenced a number of images through generations for the elements of the images of Jain Tīrtaṅkara, Buddha, Viṣṇu, Kriṣṇa as well as bodhisattvas.¹¹

⁹ The image was obtained by the courtesy of National Museum, Karachi, Pakistan. (3/11/2010).

¹⁰ John Marshall, *Mohenjo-Dāro and the Indus Civilization*, Vol. I & II. 1931. Reprint. (New Delhi & Varanasi: Indological Book House, 1973), 44, Plate XCVIII

¹¹ -ibid-

One of the captivating sculptures-in-round, found from the HR area of Mohenjo-Dāro, is the bronze image of a **Dancing Girl** (6 ½ in.) with ‘lost wax process’ (**fig.2.8**).¹² Though the image depicts the rough workmanship of the sculptor who had disproportionately carved arms and legs, the impression of a young aboriginal girl is highlighted. The figure stands up-right with the head tilted back, and left leg bent from the knee. What is remarkable in this image is the capacity of revealing the slender anatomical characteristics of the limbs and joints “which is a stylistic nature of later Indian sculptures.”¹³

Apart from these master pieces, the massive numbers of female terra-cotta figurines that are found from the civilization suggest that every household might have possessed a feminine figurine for some purpose, possibly a religious norm or ritual connected with the cult of Mother Goddess. The variety of these figurines is vast: from simple and small figures to larger decorated images.¹⁴ Such statuettes have large breasts, hips, or genital areas which symbolize re-productive fertility (**fig.2.9a, 9b, 9c, 9d, & 9e**). These figurines resemble the Mother Goddess “familiar in Mesopotamia and in ancient Mediterranean cultural standards.”¹⁵ In most cases, the attention is drawn to the head-dress because of its elaborated and over proportioned characteristic.¹⁶

The skill of stone carving of Indus-Sarasvati sculptors, evidently displayed in the two torsos of the **dancing males** made out of red and yellow sandstone, found from

¹² Marshall, *Mohenjo-Daro and the Indus Civilization*, 44-45, Plate XCIV, fig. 6-8

¹³ Gregory L. Possehl, *The Indus Civilization: A Contemporary Perspective*. (CA, USA: Altamira Publishers, 2002), 113-14

¹⁴ Heinrich Zimmer, *Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. I, ed. and trans. Joseph Campbell, 1955. Reprint. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), 21

¹⁵ -ibid-

¹⁶ David R. Kingsley, *Hindu Goddess: Vision of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*. 1987. Reprint. (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1998), 215

Harappā, is significant for their realistic appearance (**fig.2.10a & 10b**).¹⁷ According to Sir John Marshall, the underlying quality of these torsos is the ‘refined and wonderfully truthful modeling of the fleshy parts.’¹⁸ The three-dimensional appearance of the sculptures along with the anatomical characteristics which reveal the median line of the body, presenting a natural balance to the organization of the form, display finer qualities than other sculptures that have been discovered from the Indus-Sarasvati civilization. The modeling of the considerably heavy abdomen is, however, said to have influenced later Indian sculpture.¹⁹ Thus, it is apparent that all these sculptures portray the skill of the native Indian sculptor “to depict the human figure dynamically with purposeful action.”²⁰ Nonetheless, their inspiration to the later developed Indian art is evident in almost all the art traditions i.e. Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain.

The capacity and skills already displayed by the pre-historic cave artist in scenes of hunting and rites that had already developed in the Indus-Sarasvati civilization to represent action with a very high level of sophistication can also be observed in the numerous miniature seals. The square shaped stamped seals with different motifs and inscribed messages might have been used for internal and external trade, and decorative purposes as well as religious customs relating to fertility cults. However, neither the pictographic scripts nor the vocabulary of the inscriptions on these seals have hitherto been conclusively established. Nonetheless, such animals as elephants, rhinoceros, water buffalo, humped bull, short-horned humpless bull, crocodiles, goat, antelopes, tigers, and unicorns, used as common objects of seals, must have had associated with different clans

¹⁷ Zimmer, *Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. I, 28

¹⁸ Marshall, *Mohenjo-Daro and the Indus Civilization*, 46.

¹⁹ A.L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India: A Study of the History and Culture of the Indian Sub-continent before the coming of the Muslims*. (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1963), 21

²⁰ Zimmer, *Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. I, 3

of the civilization. Jonathan Mark Kenoyer identifies at least ten social clans that have been represented by the animals.²¹ Heinrich Zimmer, in his study of these symbols, which reflect the religious concepts and practices, states; it “becomes apparent that the religious civilization of the Indus in the third millennium BCE was the source of many of the traditions prevalent in Central and Southern India today... Their return to the surface can be studied in the early Buddhist monuments in Bhārhut and Sānchi.”²²

Particularly important are the seals inscribed with figures that are considered to be prototypes of later Hindu religious effigies i.e. Śiva paśupati. Three seals have been discovered with the repeated motif of a man sitting in a yogic position surrounded by animals: two sitting on a decorated throne under which is a depiction of a horned animal (**fig.2.11a & 11b**), and the third seated on a simple bench which is touched by a decoration of leafs, above which are shown the inscribed letters (**fig.2.11c**). Particularly in **fig.2.11c**, the asymmetrically arranged three leaflets of the pipal tree²³ of the headdress has developed to a considerable degree as one of the common symbols of Buddhism: the trident (*triśula*), as represented in Sānchi at which it symbolizes the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha (**fig.3.11a, & 14e**).²⁴ A different depiction of the seated posture is evident in **fig.2.11d** in which the *yogi* is seated on the ground unlike the other images, alongside of which is a scene of hunting man. This may depict a particular ritual scene of the hunting and gathering society. However, the most important characteristic of these images is the *yogic* posture of the oriental religious traditions by which a sage or saint is seated. The

²¹ Jonathan Mark Kenoyer and Kimberley Heusten, *Ancient South Asian World*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 83

²² Zimmer, *Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. I, 24-5

²³ Gautama Vajracarya, “Pipal Tree, Tonsured Monks, and *Uṣṇīśa*” *Buddhist Art: Form and Meaning*, ed., Pratapaditya Pal. (Mumbai: Marg Publications, 2007), 15

²⁴ Zimmer, *Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. I, 27; John Marshall & Albert Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol II. (Delhi: Swati Publications, 1982), Pl. 51a & 21c

particular posture elaborates the nature of the person “who is in control of breath, senses and mind, concentration of inner vision, and the realization of the supra-mundane spiritual states as in later Buddhist, Hindu and Jain art to represent the religious teacher, who superseded the life, and thus named “*Vīra*.”²⁵

Fig.2.12a & 12b depicting the combat between the human figures (in **fig.2.12a** is a female figure while **fig.2.12b** is a man above whom is the inscriptions), and the tigers on either side may be a ritual act of the civilization. Significance is the wheel with six spokes which resembles the later employed symbol: the Wheel of Law (*dharmacakra*), employed in Buddhist art in Bhārhut and Sānchi (see **fig.3.13a & 13b, 3.14a, 14b, 14c & 14d**) with different numbers of spokes. **Fig.2.13a** depicts a horned deity in a tree, worshipped by a figure wearing a horned-headdress. In front is laid an animal and the graphic scene so exquisitely carved in detail consisting of an animal sacrifice is in progress with attending priests and participants. Seals with similar characteristics, yet with different associations are also important in this respect (**fig.2.13b & 13c**). When enlarged to the size of sculptures in early Buddhist sites, one cannot but be impressed with the similarity in composition that exists between the particular scene and the panels of sculpture depicting the life of the Buddha and other stories. Equally significant is the shape of the leaves of the tree in **fig.2.13b** and several other symbols which resemble those of the pipal tree (*Ficus religiosa*). Was this particular tree chosen by the Buddha for his meditation in view of the sanctity assigned to it from the time of the Indus-Sarasvati civilization?

What becomes clear from the above examination of the pre-historic Indian art and those of the Indus-Sarasvati civilization is that the artistic talent and skills that had

²⁵ Zimmer, *Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. I, 26

undergone a steady progress over many millennia and the skills so developed that it reached a very high level of sophistication at least two millennia before Buddhist art made its appearance. The question which needs examination is why the evidence of such development is not available in the form of artifacts over a period of at least two millennia from circa 2250 BCE to 250 BCE, even though the Indus-Sarasvati art tradition seemed to have “endowed the animation, dynamic as well as compact, constituting the essential element of the classical Indian art beginning from the 200 BCE.”²⁶

2.2 Reasons for the apparent hiatus in artistic activity during the pre-Aśokan period

No solid evidence has hitherto been discovered about Indian art between the decline of the Indus-Sarasvati civilization and the emergence of the Maurya dynasty, particularly until its re-appearance under the reign of Aśoka. Yet, the techniques and the skills employed in the carvings of early Buddhist sites suggest that the sculptor was exceptionally skilled in his craftsmanship. According to Albert Foucher, “Indian civilization had at its disposal the services not only of the carpenter, the wheel-wright and the blacksmith, of the potter, the weaver... but also of those whom we call art-workers, painters, goldsmiths, carvers in wood and ivory.”²⁷ The highly developed literary heritage i.e. *Samhitās*, *Brāhmaṇas*, *Aranyakas* and *Upaniṣads* evidently reflect the highly developed narrative and ritual literature and the intellectual activity. The description of a temple made out of post and thatch, and covered with mat is described in the story of Satapata Brāhmaṇa, for the purpose of ritual performances, yet not proving as a temple of

²⁶ Raj Kumar, “Art and Architecture of Northern India” *Essays on Indian Art and Architecture*, ed., Raj Kumar. (New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, 2003), 40-1

²⁷ Alfred A. Foucher, *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art and Other Essays in Indian and Central-Asian Archaeology*, trans. L.A. Thomas and F.W. Thomas. 1917. Reprint. (Varanasi: Indological Book House, 1972), 3

a later sense.²⁸ Thus, it is very unlikely that a society capable of creating such a vast literature including the philosophical sophistication of the *upaniṣads* lacked artistic creativity. The human urge to produce objects of beauty could not have been hampered by any means. Just as the teachings of Mahāvīra and the Buddha show the continuation of such intellectual and philosophical activity, there could have been no hiatus in the artistic traditions of this civilization. But the question is “why is it that no artifacts have been found?”

Many are the possible explanations. The earliest offered reason, namely that the archaeological survey of the subcontinent was in its infancy, is no longer applicable.

Ananda Guruge in 1967 raised the question;

Why the developments in literature were not accompanied by corresponding achievements in art and architecture during this long period remains an enigma. Many explanations have been offered. It may be that the people of Indus Valley or Indus-Sarasvati Civilization migrated elsewhere without seeking new homes to the east in the Indian Subcontinent. It has been held by many scholars (though now disputed) that the Aryans replaced their urban commercial culture with a rural agricultural culture, which had no place for grandiose cities or public monuments. It is also suggested that the hiatus in the discovery of artifacts of any significance could be due to a change in building materials. Could it be that successors to Indus Valley or Indus-Sarasvati Civilization used timber for buildings and wood and clay for objects of art and the tropical climate of the Indian Subcontinent wiped them out completely? The timber structures of the Mauryan capital Pataliputa (modern Patna), ascribed to the times of Candragupta Maurya, and the accounts of Palibothra by Megasthenes as quoted in later Greek works are held out as evidence.²⁹

While the above assumption provides some identical reasons for the absence of artistic evidence during the early phase, the nomadic life style of the early Indo-Aryans

²⁸ See Ananda Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*. (New York: Dover Publications, 1965), 42, n43

²⁹ Ananda W.P. Guruge, *Facets of Buddhism*. (Singapore: Samadhi Buddhist Society, 1967), 99-100. Note: the article was recently published by the same author as “Buddhism and Aesthetic Creativity,” in *Buddhism Today and Aesthetic Creativity: A Miscellany of Recent Articles, Essays, and Speeches*. (USA: Lulus Publishing, 2010), 98-157

and the persuasions of the Vedic Brāhmaṇism to the ritual of sacrifice must have precluded the need for structures like temples and their absence could be another plausible cause, though not totally an acceptable explanation.

Remarkably, the Buddhist canonical literature provides information of luxurious palaces and well-appointed monasteries. Prince Siddhārtha was born with royal affinities in the modest Śākya kingdom with all the comforts including three palaces namely Ramya, Suramya, and Subha. According to *Buddhavaṃsa*, these palaces were erected by the king Suddhodana, the father of prince Siddhartha, outside Kapilavastu, as the residences to be occupied during the three seasons. “One was of nine storeys, one of seven storeys, one of five storeys, though there was a difference in the number of storeys the three palaces were equal in height.”³⁰ These residences “consisted of beautiful gardens decked with ponds...and sprays of cool water from the fast-flowing streams and miniature water falls.”³¹ *Buddhavaṃsa* also refers to another palace namely Paduma as a palace occupied by the Buddha before his renunciation.³²

In addition to such information, which reveals the comforts of the lay life of Prince Siddhārtha, the canons also provide evidence of having artistic implementations in monastic dwellings. The monastery of Jetavanārāma, according to *Cullavagga*, consisted of “dwelling-rooms, porches, attendance halls, fire halls, huts for what is allowable, privies, places for pacing up and down in, halls in the places for pacing up and down in, wells, halls at the wells, bathrooms, halls in the bathrooms, lotus ponds, and open-roofed

³⁰ *Md.* 398

³¹ *Dha.* 194: David J. Kalupahana, *The Way of Siddhārtha: The Life of the Buddha*. (Colorado, USA: Shambhala Publications, 1982), 46, n 232

³² *Md.* 321

sheds.”³³ What is important to note is that the amenities of Jetavana monastery were identical to those which well-to-do lay people had constructed as their luxurious residences,³⁴ and consisted of all such elements enjoined by the Buddha.³⁵ Such secular buildings with objects of art had no doubt been an integral part of the urban sites such as Rajagaha and Giribhajja whose gigantic fortifications, being 4 ½ and 3 miles respectively, are still in existence.³⁶ The stone walls of Giribhajja are an exclusive evidence of stone buildings in early India.³⁷ As convincing are the records of Megasthenes, who was the ambassador of Greek ruler Selucus Nicator to the Maurya court of Chandragupta I:

But of their cities it is said that the number is so great that it cannot be stated with precision,...but that cities are made of wood instead of brick...while those cities which standing on commanding situations and lofty eminences are built of brick and mud; that the greatest city in India—Palimbotra...stretched in the inhabited quarters to an extreme length on each side of eighty stadia, and that its breath was fifteen stadia, and that a ditch encompassed it all round, which was six hundred feet in breath and thirty cubits in depth, and that the wall crowned with 570 towers and had four and sixty gates.³⁸

Megasthenes’s description of Pāṭalīputra (Palimbotra)³⁹ is further borne out by the wooden ramparts of Chandragupta Maurya’s Pāṭalīputra, which was unearthed at Bulandi Bagh in Patna, and the fragments of Mauryan stockade and the massive teak-wood platforms held by iron dowels which supported the foundations of the façade of Mauryan

³³ *Cu.* VI. 4.10: *Ma.* III. 5.5

³⁴ *Ma.* III. 5.9

³⁵ *Cu.* VI. 3.6-10

³⁶ *JātakaA.* 37

³⁷ T.W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*. (London: G.B. Putnam & T. Fisher Unwin, 1903), 38

³⁸ J.W. McCrindle trans. *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian*. (London: Trubner, 1877), 66

³⁹ Sir James Emerson Tennent, *Ceylon: An Account of the Island Physical, Historical and Topographical, with Notices of its Natural History, Antiques, and Productions*, Vol. I. (London: Longman, Green, and Roberts, 1859), 318 Google eBook.

Palace.⁴⁰ They stand as solid evidence of the use of timber in city-building. “The palace walls, the splendid towers and pavilions, were all constructed of brick or baked clay that has long been crumbled to dust or been swept away by periodic inundations of the waters of the Ganges.”⁴¹ Further evidence of the widespread use of wood comes from the Sudhama, Viśvamitra, and Lomas Rīṣi caves of Barābar hills (**fig.2.14a & 14b**),⁴² for which the craftsmen have “copied the framing and joining of timber work,” as Ferguson has pointed out the mechanics of the caves.⁴³ According to A.L. Basham, the Viśvamitra Cave, though incomplete, has four socket-holes near the entrance to hold timber framing.⁴⁴ The significance of the Lomas Rīṣi Cave is the highly decorated entrance with a frieze of elephants, carved in slavish imitation of timber construction.⁴⁵ Benjamin Rowland describes: “It is an imitation in relief sculpture in stone of the entrance of a free standing structure in wood and thatch, with the sloping jambs of the doorway supporting a tympanum of repeated crescent shapes under an ogee arch that presumably represents the profile of a thatched roof.”⁴⁶ Thus, the most probable reason for the total absence of the building structures may be that they were made from perishable materials i.e. wood, thatch, bamboo, and clay. Such materials still remained in Rajagaha during the period when the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-Tsang (Xuanzang) was in India from 629 CE-645 CE.⁴⁷

It is also recorded that Aśoka replaced the wooden walls and buildings of his capital with

⁴⁰ Benjamin Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India: Buddhist, Hindu and Jain*. 1953. Reprint., ed., H.C. Harle. (TN, USA: Kingsport Press, 1977), 60-61, fig. 17

⁴¹ Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India: Buddhist, Hindu and Jain*, 60

⁴² A. L. Basham, *History and Doctrines of Ājīvikas: A Vanished Indian Religion*. 1951. Reprint, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 2002), 152-3

⁴³ James Ferguson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, Vol. I. (India: Coronet Publications, 1910), 131; Foucher, *The Beginning of the Buddhist Art*, 3; Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture*. (Bombay: D.B. Taraporevala, 1954), 13

⁴⁴ Basham, *History and Doctrines of Ājīvikas*, 153

⁴⁵ Brown, *Indian Architecture*, 13

⁴⁶ Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India*, 64-5, fig. 18

⁴⁷ Samuel Beal, trans. *Si-Yu-Ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World from the Chinese of Hiuen Tsiang (A.D. 629)*. 1884. Reprint. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1994), Vol. II Book II, 110

permanent works of masonry, and caused hundreds of edifices to be erected, both brick and stone, throughout the empire.⁴⁸

Thus, the only possible explanation for the non-availability of such evidence in corresponding quantity is that the material they used for artistic expression prior to the emergence of Mauryan art did not last due to fragility, climatic conditions, replacement, or vandalism. The use of stone and the examples of stone artifacts are the only acceptable turning points which make lasting evidence available. Ananda Guruge in 1967 offered the following explanation:

Aśoka, of course, seems to have made a lasting contribution to the Indian art by adopting more durable building materials.... Some scholars explain that this change was due to the influence of Greeks. This is somewhat doubtful. It is very clear that Greeks could not exert as strong an influence on the whole of India as was imagined by the earlier scholars. Besides, any influence of Greek Architecture should be seen in the works of Chandragupta rather than in those of Aśoka. What is specifically new in the works of Aśoka should naturally be the result of the cultural influence to which he alone and not the earlier members of his dynasty were subjected. The only such influence known is Buddhism. It is therefore, interesting to find out whether Buddhist tradition had anything which could subscribe to the change of building materials.”⁴⁹

Thus, the reasons for the apparent hiatus are not the restrictions by Buddhism which developed as an ascetic religion or lack of knowledge of the sculptor, but the usage of materials that are fragile in nature. Such a disappearance is possible due to various destructions, even if the artistic creations were of long lasting materials.

2.3 The beginning of the Buddhist art in India

While the availability of works of art during the time of Aśoka is thus explained on the use of stone in constructing permanent structures for Buddhism as an established

⁴⁸ Vincent A. Smith, *A History of Art in India and Ceylon: From the Earliest Days to the Present*. (London: Clarendon Press, 1911), 13

⁴⁹ Guruge, *Facets of Buddhism*, 107-8.

faith, it is still necessary to examine how Buddhism encouraged art. With the earliest available historical evidence, it is apparent that Buddhism was the prime motivator for Aśoka to embark on wide use of stone in permanent structures. It may also be important to examine whether the Buddha himself was a promoter of artistic creativity, since the early Buddhist texts provide certain consolidated evidence regarding building constructions, whether shrines or monasteries. This evidence raises the question: Did the application of art for embellishment and/or instruction begin with the Buddha?

The Buddhist literature makes abundant reference to painting, sculpture, and architecture as well as all kinds of performing arts i.e. music, dance, drama. Of particular interest are the injunctions on monasteries and dwelling places for monks. According to *Mahāvagga* I.30.4, the religious life has had dwelling “at the foot of a tree for its resource,”⁵⁰ which according to *Cullavagga* V1.1. 1-2 is as follows;

[N]o permission had been given to the Bhikkhus by the Blessed One with respect to dwellings. So the Bhikkhus dwelt now here now there: in the woods, at the foot of trees, on hill sides, in grottoes, in mountain caves, in cemeteries, in forests, in open plains, cattle-pens, caravans, a hollow of a Nimba tree, under an earthen-wear vessel, or in heaps of straw.”⁵¹

When a merchant (*setṭhi*) offered to provide dwelling places, the Buddha not only permitted five kinds of buildings: “the *vihāra*, *Ādḍhyayogas*, storied buildings, attics and caof (a dwelling-place, a curved house, a long house, a mansion, a cave),”⁵² but also appreciated his generosity in the following verses:

Cold he ward off cold and heat, so also the beasts of prey,
And creeping things and gnats, and rains in the wet season.
And when the dreaded heated wind arises, they are kept off.
To give Vihāras to the Saṅgha, wherein in safety and in peace,
To meditate and think at ease, the Buddha calls the best of gifts

⁵⁰ *Ma.*I.30. 4

⁵¹ *Cu.*V.1.1

⁵² *Cu.*VI. I. 2

Let then the able man, regarding his own weal,
 Have pleasant monasteries built, and lodged there learned men
 Let him with cheerful mind give food to them and drink
 Raiment, and dwelling places, to the upright in heart
 Then shall they preach to him the Truth—The Truth dispelling every Grief—
 Which Truth when here that man perceives
 He, sins no more, and dies away.⁵³

Cullavagga further records that the merchant had built sixty dwelling places within one day for the benefit of Bhikkhus of the Four Directions.⁵⁴ At another instance, when the king Seniya Bimbisāra dedicated the Veḷuvana Park (Bamboo grove) to the Buddha, he declared, “I allow you, O Bhikkhus, to receive the donation of a park (*ārāma*).”⁵⁵ The advantages accruing to the Saṅgha by such dwelling places included the ability of monks to practice meditation etc. without being disturbed by heat or cold, rain or wind, wild animals or insects. The Buddha’s injunction concludes with the statement: “Therefore the wealthy men of wisdom should construct *beautiful* and *charming* monasteries and gift them to the monks (*vihāre kāraye ramme vasay’ettha bahussute ti*).”⁵⁶ According to *Dīghanikāya*, the Buddha stated Ananda that the hills of Gijjakūta at Rajagaha and Sattapaṇṇi Cave, the mango grove of Jīvaka, Vesāli and its ancient *cetiya*s were charming and beautiful (*ramaṇīya*).⁵⁷ Ananda Coomaraswamy emphasizes: “It need hardly be pointed out again that *caitya*, *cetiya*, signifies any kind of holystead such as a sacred tree, grove or temple, not necessarily a *stūpa*.”⁵⁸ The emphasis was the beauty of the buildings that made the place so pleasing that the monks could engage in religious practices with no disturbances.

⁵³ *Cu.* VI.1.5

⁵⁴ *Cu.* VI.1.3-4

⁵⁵ *Ma.* I.22.16-18

⁵⁶ *Cu.* VI.1.5

⁵⁷ *DN.* II.116-18

⁵⁸ Ananda Coomaraswamy, “Origin of the Buddha Image” *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 9, No.4 (June, 1927), 299, n23

The Buddha had also recommended that such a monastery may include an *uposatha* hall (for the chanting of the *pātimokkha*), and such other facilities as stated below:

In case, O Bhikkhus, an Upāsaka has built for the Saṅgha an Ādhyāyoga, has built a storied house, has built an attic, has constructed a cave, a cell, a store-room, a refectory, a fire-room, a ware-house, a privy, a place to walk in, a house to walk in, a well, a well-house, a ganthāghara, a ganthāghara-room, a lotus pond, a pavilion, a park, or has prepared the site for a park. If he sends the messenger to the Bhikkhus (saying), “Might their reverences come hither; I desire to bestow gifts (on them) and to hear the Dhamma and to see the Bhikkhus,” you ought to go, O Bhikkhus, if the affair for which you go can be accomplished in seven days, and if he sends for you, but not, if does not send for you. Within seven days you ought to return.⁵⁹

With regard to the Upāsaka Udena’s gift of dwelling places during the rainy season (*vassa*), the Buddha had permitted all kinds of dwelling mentioned above and drawn attention to separate dwelling places for Bhikkhus and Bhikkunīs.⁶⁰

Evidence for such extensive and comfortable monastic establishments, which were donated for the benefit of the Buddha and the Saṅgha and the promotion of religion during his life-time come from literary references and archaeological findings associated with Veḷuvana of Magadha,⁶¹ Ghoṣitārāma of Kosambi,⁶² Pūrvārāma, Isipatanārāma, and the most elegant among them Jetavana, which the greatest benefactor of the Buddha, Anāthapiṇḍika⁶³ had built in Sāvatti on a land purchased, by paving it with gold coins.⁶⁴ (See **fig.3.27, 28 & 29**). According to Sukumar Dutt, this must be the largest and the most famous monastery where the Buddha spent nineteen *vassa* seasons.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ *Ma.*III.5.5-8

⁶⁰ *Ma.*III.5.8

⁶¹ *Ma.*I.22.18

⁶² *Cu.*I.31

⁶³ *Ma.*I.55

⁶⁴ *Cu.*VI.4.9-10

⁶⁵ Sukumar Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India*. (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1962), 67

Attention was paid even to such amenities as toilets: “I allow you. O Bhikkhus, to enclose it (bathroom) with three kinds of enclosures—brick walls, stone walls, and wooden fences.”⁶⁶ Not only the enclosures, once the antechambers of the bathrooms were too low and were inundated with water, the Buddha instructed to spread the gravel over the basement and flag it with stone,⁶⁷ which testifies to the Buddha’s architectural as well as technical perspective of building construction. That such establishments embellished with highly decorated architectural and sculptural motifs such as verandahs (*ālinda*), supported pillars with capitals of elephant nails, is alluded by the description of the donation of storied buildings (*pāsāda*) by Viśākhā.⁶⁸ However, as the canon describes: the halls with high basements, which were lined with three kinds of facing— brick, stone, wood, with three kinds of stairs—brick, stone, wood, with balustrades, and many other architectural elements were enjoined in monastic architecture by the Buddha in the process of sewing the kaṭiṇa robes.⁶⁹ In *Cullavagga* V.11.6 and 16.2, he allowed the Bhikkhus to “cover the shed with skins, and to plaster it within and without; and the use of whitewash, blacking, red-coloring, wreath work, and creeper work, and bone hooks, and cupboards, and bamboos and strings to hang robes on.”⁷⁰ The Buddha’s attitude towards the beautification and art is best illustrated by the sequence of rules pertaining to the following:

Now at that time the sleeping places of members of other sects were white-washed, the ground was colored black, the walls were treated with red chalk. Many people went to see the sleeping places. They told this matter to the Lord. He said: “I allow you, monks, having applied lumps of grain husks, having kept some back with a spoon to put on the white wash.”

⁶⁶ *Cu.V.14.3*

⁶⁷ *Cu.V.14.5*

⁶⁸ *Cu.VI. 14*

⁶⁹ *Cu.V.11.6 & V.16. 1*

⁷⁰ *Cu.V.11.6 & V.16.2*

The white wash would not stick on. They told this matter to the Lord. He said, “I allow you, monks, having applied soft clay, having kept some back with a spoon, to put on the whitewash.” The whitewash would not stick on. They told this matter to the Lord. He said, “I allow you, monks, what exudes from trees and flour-paste.”

Now at that time the red chalk would not adhere to the rough walls... The red chalk would not stick on. They told this matter to the Lord. He said: “I allow you, monks, having applied the red powder of rice husks (mixed with) clay, having kept some back with a spoon, to put on the red chalk.”

The red chalk would not stick on. They told this matter to the Lord. He said: “I allow you, monks, mustard powder, oil of bees wax.” It was too thick. They told this matter to the Lord. He said: “I allow you, monks, to sponge it over with a piece of cloth.”

Now at that time the black coloring did not adhere to the rough walls... The black coloring would not stick on. They told this matter to the Lord. He said: “I allow, you monks, having applied clay (mixed with the excrement of) earthworms, having kept some back with a spoon, to put on the black coloring.”

The black coloring would not stick on. They told this matter to the Lord. He said: “I allow, you, monks, what exudes from trees, an astringent decoration.”⁷¹

The particular reference shows how the Buddha gradually relaxed the rules focusing on aesthetic importance. Relevant to the present study are the Buddha’s rules pertaining to human figures that the monks were allowed to draw with certain restrictions:

Now at that time the group of six monks (*cabbaggiya*) had imaginative drawings (*patibānacitta*) painted on their Vihāras—figures of men, and figures of women.

People when they saw them on going to visit the Vihāras, murmured and, saying, ‘Like those who still enjoy the pleasures of the world.’ They told this matter to the Blessed One.

“You are not, O Bhikkhus, to have imaginative drawings painted—figures of men, and figures of women. Whoever does so, shall be guilty of a wrong-doing (*dukkatā*). I allow you, O Bhikkhus, representations of wreath-work, creeper-work, and bone hooks, and cupboards.”⁷²

While he did not make any restrictions to the lay devotees, the Buddha, who permitted painting and possibly sculpture even in bedrooms by monks, had to deal with

⁷¹ *Cu. VI.3.1*

⁷² *Cu. VI.3.2*

questionable forms of erotic art. Once the Cabbhaggiya Bhikkhus painted the bottom linings of their begging bowls with painted figures, the Buddha restricted such acts: You are not, O Bhikkhus, to have painted circular supports to the bottoms of your bowls, covered with figures, and painted in patches of color... I allow you, O Bhikkhus, only ordinary lines.”⁷³ His rules entirely related to “imaginative designs” or *patibhānacitta* which comprised drawings, designs, paintings or sculptures with a sexual import. “You are not, O Bhikkhus, to have imaginative drawings painted—figures of men, and figures of women.”⁷⁴

The execution or display of such erotic art by the Saṅgha was not permitted. Despite such restrictions, the encouragement given by the Buddha to the use of art for ornamentation of monastic dwellings is to be consistently noted.

His comments and appreciations of the aesthetics, nature, and the beauty of human figure are even described in Pāli canon. According to *Dīghanikāya*, when the divine musician Pañcasikha was singing and playing his lute in front of the Buddha, he listened and adorably appreciated it.⁷⁵ His appreciation of the beauty of the human figure is also described in the analogue of the Liccavi rulers. He expressed his favorable attitudes among the monks when he told, “If they had not seen *devas* in the Tāvatiṃsā heaven, they should look at the handsome Liccavis, who are beautifully and elegantly dressed in different colors.”⁷⁶

⁷³ *Cu.V.9.2*

⁷⁴ *Cu.VI.3.2*

⁷⁵ “*Paṭisammodatī ti: Saṅsandati kho te ti, ādīni vandato Bhagavā sammodati, Pañcasikho paṭisammodati, gāthā bhāsanto Pañcasiko sammodati, Bhagavā paṭtisammodati.*” *Dn. II 269: DnA. III,704*

⁷⁶ “*Yesam bhikkave bhikkhūnāṃ devā Tāvatiṃsā adiṭṭhā olokketha bhikkave Licchavi-parisaṃ avaloketa bhikkhave Licchavi-parisaṃ upasaṃharatha bhikkhave Licchavi-parisaṃ Tāvatiṃsa-parisaṃ’ti.*” *Dn. II. 96-7 DnA. II.545*

Sarvāstivāda vinaya texts more-fully describe this restriction of painting or sculpting of human figures by monks. Once the elder Anāthapiṇḍada (Anāthapiṇḍika) erected a stūpa with the pair of hair and nails that he received from the Buddha at his request to venerate the Buddha at the time he is away from the monastery, he was willing to decorate the building with paintings and sculptures.⁷⁷ However, according to the particular *vinaya*, laymen were permitted to do so, “to coat the walls with red, black and white colours.”⁷⁸ With regard to the paintings on the *stūpa*, his answer was to save the space “for the figures of men and women coupling, all else you may paint.”⁷⁹ However, it was not permitted for nuns to go and see buildings with paintings and sculptures, since it was a sin “that will cause her to fall into purgatory.”⁸⁰ The illustrations and the sculptures that were expected to be shown in the interior of the monastery (Jetavana) were as follows;

[O]n two sides of the gate should be made *Yakṣas* holding maces. In the next bay on one side will be the Grand Miracle [of Srāvastī], and on the other the wheel of the Five Senses that bring Life and Death. Under the eaves [of the cloister] will be painted episodes from the Jātaka, beside the doorway to the Buddha hall will be *yakṣas* holding garlands. At the [proper?] place in the Lecture Hall will be painted an aged monk expounding the essentials of the Law. Beside the door to the storehouse will be *Yakṣas* holding cakes. At the [proper?] place in the well-house will be *Nāgas* holding water vessels and wearing fine jewelry. The bathhouse and kitchen are to be painted in accordance with the precepts of the *Sūtra of the Divine Messengers* and with scenes of the Hells. The infirmary will be painted Tathāgata tending the sick in person. The latrines will have repulsive corpses, and in the cells should be whitened bones and skulls.⁸¹

According to the particular reference, the Buddha had permitted drawings and sculptures in the building, but the act was restricted for monks.

⁷⁷ Alexander C. Soper, “Early Buddhist Attitudes Toward the Art of Painting,” in *Art Bulletin*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Jun., 1950), 147-148; Soper summarizes passages that occur in the *Shisong lu* (Taisho no. 1435), a fifth century Chinese translation of the *Daśa-bhāṇavāra-vinaya*, the *Vinaya* of the *Sarvātivādin* sect.

⁷⁸ Soper, “Early Buddhist Attitudes toward the Art of Painting” 147

⁷⁹ -ibid-

⁸⁰ -ibid-

⁸¹ Soper, “Early Buddhist Attitudes toward the Art of Painting,” 149

The employment of such illustrations and decorative elements, either for ornamentation or in murals as visual aids for instruction is evident from an incident connected with Jetavana monastery, as also recorded in the Sanskrit Buddhist work *Divyāvadāna*. A monk (Moggallāna) is said to have used a diagram of a wheel to illustrate the discourse on Dependent Origination.⁸² The Buddha approved it and had it painted on the outer wall of the monastery for public display. This is regarded as the origin of *bhavacakra* (wheel of existence) used at Ajanta and on Tibetan Tangkās.⁸³

Equally important is the Buddha's own attitude to art and his encouragement of art for both ornamentation and instruction which provided the necessary impetus for the development of shrines in honor of the Buddha. A deeper investigation of the Buddhist literature and the legends reveals that many of the aniconic symbols were associated with the Buddha during his life-time. Significant encouragement and the appreciation of establishing beautiful monastic residences possibly resulted in introducing the *caitya*, or the *stūpa* as a central Buddhist shrine. In the *Mahāparinibbāna sutta*, the Buddha stated that the last rites for the Tathāgata should be the same as for a universal monarch; "and at crossroads a *stūpa* is raised... for the Tathāgata."⁸⁴ The funeral status of the universal monarch according to the particular treatise is as follows;

The body of a universal monarch, Ananda, is first wrapped round with new linen, and then with teased cotton wool, and so it is done up to five hundred layers of linen and five hundred of cotton wool. When that is done, the body of the universal monarch is placed in an iron oil vessel, which is enclosed in another

⁸² E.B. Cowell and R.A. Neil ed., *Divyāvadāna: A Collection of Early Buddhist Legends*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1886), Chap. V. 196-7: Andy Rothman, trans., *Divine Stories: Divyāvadāna* Vol. I. (USA: Wisdom Publishers, 2008), 35, 329-32: John Strong, ed. and trans., *The Legend of King Aśoka: A Study and Translation of the Aśokāvadāna*. (NJ, USA: Princeton University Press, 1989), 46-9

⁸³ Guruge, *Buddhism Today and Aesthetic Creativity: A Miscellany of Recent Articles, Essays and Speeches*, 106

⁸⁴ *Dn. II.16, Mahāparinibbāna sutta*, Part V.11: T.W. and C.A.F. Rhys Davids trans., *Dialogues of the Buddha*, from the Pāli of the *Dīgha Nikāya*. Vol. II, 1910. Reprinted 4th edition. (Oxford: Pāli Text Society, 1989), 155-56

iron vessel, a funeral pyre is built of all kinds of perfumed woods, and so the body of the universal monarch is burned; and at a crossroads a *stūpa* is raised for the universal monarch. . . And even, Ananda, as with the body of a universal monarch, so should it be done with the body of the Tathāgata; and at a crossroads also a *stūpa* should be raised for the Tathāgata. And whosoever shall bring to that place garlands or incense or sandal-paste, or pay reverence, and whose mind becomes calm there — it will be to his wellbeing and happiness for a long time.⁸⁵

Accordingly, there are four persons, who are worthy of being venerated by a *stūpa*: 1) A Tathāgata, Fully Enlightened One, 2) a Paccekabuddha, 3) a disciple of a Tathāgata (Upāsaka), and 4) a Universal Monarch (*cakravarti*);

"And why, Ananda, is a Tathāgata, an Arahant, a Fully Enlightened One worthy of a *stūpa*? Because, Ananda, at the thought: 'This is the *stūpa* of that Blessed One, Arahant, Fully Enlightened One!' the hearts of many people will be calmed and made happy; and so calmed and with their minds established in faith therein, at the breaking up of the body, after death, they will be reborn in a realm of heavenly happiness. And so also at the thought: 'This is the *stūpa* of that Paccekabuddha!' or 'This is the *stūpa* of a disciple of that Tathāgata, Arahant, Fully Enlightened One!' or 'This is the *stūpa* of that righteous monarch who ruled according to Dhamma!' —the hearts of many people are calmed and made happy; and so calmed and with their minds established in faith therein, at the breaking up of the body, after death, they will be reborn in a realm of heavenly happiness. And it is because of this, Ananda, that these four persons are worthy of a *stūpa*."⁸⁶

Thence forth, the ashes or relics for the Buddha's funeral pyre were divided among eight claimants and *stūpas* were constructed to enshrine them.⁸⁷ Ananda Guruge explains its development "from the simple burial mound, to a specific Buddhist monument evolved as a symbol of the presence of the Buddha in Buddhist worship and persists worldwide to this day. Its variations in design, size, ornamentation and symbolism—as seen all across the Asian Continent—are a testimony to the aesthetic creativity in Buddhist architecture."⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Dn.II.16, *Mahāparinibāna sutta*, Part V.11

⁸⁶ Dn.II.16. *Mahāparinibāna sutta*, Part V.12

⁸⁷ Dn.II.16. *Mahāparinibāna sutta*, Part VI. 25-28

⁸⁸ Guruge, "Buddhism and Aesthetic Creativity" in *Buddhism Today and Aesthetic Creativity*, 107

A further encouragement for the development of sacred sites of Buddhists came from the Buddha himself when he enjoined pilgrimages to the four important places associated with his life;

[W]ith feelings of reverence... reflecting: 'Here the Tathāgata was born! Here the Tathāgata became fully enlightened in unsurpassed, supreme Enlightenment! Here the Tathāgata set rolling the unexcelled Wheel of the Dhamma! Here the Tathāgata passed away into the state of Nibbāna in which no element of clinging remains!'"⁸⁹

These four places thus came to be adorned with architectural and artistic creations as we see from the archaeological findings in Lumbiṇi, Bodh- Gayā, Isipatana and Kusinārā. Such evidence testifies to the Buddha's encouragement of the places of worship, also stressing the most suitable way to respect of the body of the Buddha as that of a universal monarch. The essential fact is the innovation of the aesthetic creativity by the Buddha himself.

A further feature contributing to the development of shrines for veneration was the initiative attributed to the Buddha by providing symbolic representations of him for the worship by the disciples. This also became a major factor for establishing the centers of art with a variety of decorative elements. The earliest shrine to be mentioned is a *stūpa* built by surrounding a handful of Buddha's hair. The Buddha gave the hair to Tapassu and Bhalluka who offered him his first meal after enlightenment.⁹⁰ The outcome was the erection of a *stūpa* for veneration of Buddha's relics.

The next is when Anāthapiṇḍika requested a symbol of the Buddha's presence at Jetavana for devotees to pay their respect when the Buddha was not residing there. As stated in the introductions to Paduma and Kāliṅgabodhi Jātakas, the solution found was

⁸⁹ *Dn.* 16, *Mahāparinibāna sutta*, Part V.18-21

⁹⁰ *Ma.* I.4.3-5: *Jātaka*A.110

for Ananda to get a berry from the Bodhi Tree at Bodh Gayā and plant it at the gate of Jetavanārāma.⁹¹ Thus the Bodhi Tree became a symbolic representation of the Buddha not only in art but in the Buddhist shrines of South and Southeast Asia, sharing equal veneration with the *stūpa* (**fig.3.9, 3.10, 3.11a, 11b, 11c, 11f, & 11g**).

How the footprint became a symbolic representation of the Buddha is hinted in the story of Brahman Māgandiya as narrated in *Dhammpadaṭṭakathā*:

Māgandiya, seeing the Buddha, told him of his daughter and begged him to wait till she could be brought. The Buddha said nothing, and Māgandiya went home and returned with his wife and daughter with all the splendors. On arriving, they found the Buddha had gone, but his *footprint* was visible. Māgandiya's wife, skilled in such matters, said that the owner of such a footprint was free from all passion. It is said that they gave their daughter into the charge of her uncle, Culla Māgandiya, retired from the world, and became arahants.⁹²

Another narrative regarding the Buddha's descent to earth at Saṅkassa, after preaching the *Abhidhamma* to his mother who was living in Tāvatiṃsā Heaven, refers to the veneration of the footprint: "A shrine was erected on the spot where the Buddha's right foot first touched the ground at Saṅkassa."⁹³ (See **fig.3.23 & 24**). Later legends narrate how the Buddha sanctified certain places by inserting his footprint as in Sri Lanka where a depression in a rock (generally identified as the Adam's peak, or Sripāda—Samanala Kanda—) at the top of a seven-thousand foot high mountain is so venerated even today.

The representation of the Buddha as a column of fire is similarly associated with the account of the conversion of the Kassapa brothers of Gayā. According to *Mahāvagga* I.15.3, the Buddha defeated the "savage Nāga King of Great magical power" with the fire created by him, thinking, "What if I were to leave intact the skin, and hide, and flesh, and ligaments, and bones and marrow of this Nāga; but were to conquer the fire, which he

⁹¹ *Jātaka*, III. No. 479, 142-3

⁹² *Dha.* I-II, 274-5

⁹³ *Dha.* V-VI 52-4

will send forth, by my fire.”⁹⁴ According to the reference, “the Blessed One, *converting his body into fire*, sent forth flames. When they both shone forth with their flames, the fire room looked as if it were all in flames.”⁹⁵ After defeating the Nāga King by his *fire*, the Buddha also uttered the group of Kassapas, “Here you see the Nāga, Kassapa; his fire has been conquered by my fire.”⁹⁶ This apparently testifies that the Buddha represented himself as fire, a parabolic symbol which represented as the Supreme Power that can conquer all the evils. Stanley Tambiah supposes this as the “radiance” and the “firey energy of the Buddha” which was represented through the images and amulets in later Buddhist art,⁹⁷ particularly in India (see fig.3.15a & 15b).

It is also important that the Buddha’s teachings came to be symbolically represented by a wheel, more specifically called *dhammacakka* in Pāli and *dharmacakra* in Sanskrit. The simile he utilized to describe his first discourse to the five ascetics was “Turning the Wheel of Righteousness or Doctrine.” (*Dhammacakka-ppavattana sutta*). In it is said, “And when the Blessed One had set the Wheel of Dhamma in motion, the earth devas cried out: ‘At Vārānasi, in the *gāme* Refuge at Isipatana, the Blessed One has set in motion the unexcelled Wheel of Dhamma that cannot be stopped by priest or contemplative, deva, Māra or God or anyone in the cosmos.”⁹⁸ How the symbol of the doctrine could also represent the Buddha may well be explained by reference to the

⁹⁴ *Ma.* I.1.5.3

⁹⁵ *Ma.* I.15.4-5

⁹⁶ *Ma.*I.15. 4-5

⁹⁷ Stanley Tambiah, *The Buddhist Saints of the Forests and the Amulets*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 203

⁹⁸ *Ma.*I.6. 29-30

statement attributed to the Buddha, “He who sees the dhamma sees me.”⁹⁹ (see **fig.3.13a, & 13b, 3.14a, 14b, 14c, 14d, & 14e**).

In his Rock Edict IV, Aśoka mentioned how he used art as a means of conveying his ethical teachings to the masses. He said, “Representations of celestial abodes (*vimānadarśana*) and elephants (*hastidarśana*), columns of fire (*agikandāni*) and other celestial forms (*anāni cā divyāni rūpāni*) were exhibited to the people today, due to King Devānampriya Priyadarśi’s Dharma admonitions have increased as never before in many hundred years.”¹⁰⁰ Such evidence agrees with the Buddha’s descriptions about him as the fire he created to elude the evil powers, which he already explained in his First Sermon. The manifestation of fire in this regard is obviously the “energy” and the supreme power that the Buddha displayed through his Teaching.

The association of the parasol and the lotus as representations of the Buddha cannot be related to similar events. The parasol had been the insignia of royalty. In an autobiographical snippet attributed to the Buddha, it is said in one of the stories of his past life: the Brāhman Saṅkha, after his return from Vesāli, explained the unparalleled honors he had received during the journey. “Because he had uprooted the grass around Susima’s shrine, a road of eight leagues was prepared for him to journey comfortably; because he had spread sand, his route was also so spread; because he had scattered flowers, his route was covered with flowers; because he had sprinkled water, there was a shower in Vesāli on his arrival; because he had raised a banner and set up a parasol, the

⁹⁹ Jacob N. Kinnard, “The Field of the Buddha’s Presence” *Embodying the Dharma: Buddhist Relics Veneration in Asia*, ed., David Germano and Kevin Trainor. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 143

¹⁰⁰ Ananda W.P. Guruge, *Asoka the Righteous: A Definitive Biography*. (Colombo: Central Cultural Fund, The Ministry of Cultural Affairs and Information, 1993), 558

whole *cakkavāla* was gay with flags and parasols.”¹⁰¹ This obviously indicates that the parasol had been used as a symbol of royalty and that of veneration (see **fig.3.4b, 3.5, 3.6a, 6b, 3.7, 3.8a, 8b, 8c, & 8d**). Particularly, in the representations of the Buddha through the parasol, both of these aspects: royalty as well as the unsurpassed Buddhahood would have been evolved. According to *Aśokāvadāna*, Aśoka erected eighty four thousand *stūpas* and “beautified the earth everywhere with mountain-like stūpas of many colors, with lofty banners and bejeweled parasols”¹⁰² which is revealed in his conversation with Upagupta. The event is also described in the Sri Lankan Pāli chronicle *Mahāvamsa*: “On those spots which the Conqueror had visited the monarch built beautiful cetiyas here and there. On every side from the eighty-four cities came letters on one day with the news: “The vihāras are completed.”¹⁰³

The Buddha’s parable of a saintly person rising above the ordinary folk to a lotus arising in all purity from mud and water could have been the origin of its use as a symbol for the Buddha as well as Arahants. Ananda Coomaraswamy states: “[a]t a relatively early period the lotus may have represented Brahmā, for he is the successor of Prajāpatī, who is born of waters. The lotus pedestal appears already in Maurya or Sunga terracottas, and at Sānchi and Bhārhut as the seat of Māyādevi-Lakṣmi, and very soon employed in the case of all divine beings to denote miraculous birth and apparitional character; standing alone, already in Buddhist art, it seems to represent Nativity.”¹⁰⁴ (See **fig.3.1a, 3.2b, 2c, 2d, & 2e**).

¹⁰¹ *Dha.* V-VI, 174-6

¹⁰² Strong, ed. and trans., *The Legend of King Aśoka*, 80

¹⁰³ *Mv.* Ch. V, 175-76

¹⁰⁴ Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*. 43

The foregoing facts and evidence are significant, from the perspective of Buddhist art, because no information can be traced from the Pāli canon with regard to the representation of the Buddha as a human figure. Instead, the emphasis is on his representation through various symbols, which have a strong association with the Buddha's life for the representation in various quantities and qualities in Indian Buddhist art.

2.4 Aśoka's contribution to Buddhist art

Therefore, the representation of the Buddha in Indian art through symbols cannot be viewed as a consequence of lack of knowledge or skill of the Indian sculptor to portray the human figure. There was certainly either an expressed or an implied prohibition to represent the Buddha in the human form due to the highest sanctity attached to him or a strong sense of reluctance. But the Pāli canonical literature does not contain any such prohibition. On the other hand, later traditions of the Sarvāstivāda School, assert that the Buddha sanctioned the anthropomorphic representation of himself. According to *Divyāvadāna*, an image of the Buddha was initiated with the desire of king Udayana to make offerings to the Buddha, even at the times when he was absent. The Buddha said, "Having an image of the Tathāgata drawn on canvas and make your offerings hitherto." With the Buddha's permission, the king called upon his painters, yet they could not grasp the image of the Buddha. Then the Buddha asked for a canvas and "projected his similitude upon it and said "complete it with colors" also stressing the writing of texts regarding the iconography.¹⁰⁵ The legend that prevailed in India when Fa-Hsien (Faxian)

¹⁰⁵ E.B. Cowell and R.A. Neil ed., *Divyāvadāna*, Chap. XXXVII, 547: Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddhist Iconography*, 6

visited states: “When the Buddha went up to the Trāyatimsā heaven, and preached the Law for the benefit of his mother, (after he has been absent for) ninety days, Prasenajith longing to see him, caused an image of him to be carved in Gośīrṣa Chandana wood and put in the place where he usually sat.”¹⁰⁶ The same incident is recorded in the tenth chapter of the later composed (probably between 13th-14th centuries CE) Sri Lankan Pāli poetry, *Kosalabimbavaṇṇanā*, where the merit (*ānisaṃsā*) of making the Buddha images is highlighted.¹⁰⁷ Such legendary accounts have no historical basis,¹⁰⁸ and the continued use of non-human representations of the Buddha during almost the first five centuries of Buddhism bears out the late origin of the Buddha image.

The symbols for veneration, on the contrary, had become manifold while the Buddha was alive as he advanced as a holy person to be not merely followed as a teacher but also a saintly person to be worshipped. Thus, such symbols appear to have become a prominent object in Buddhist art—especially in sculpture—during the time of Aśoka, the third emperor of the Mauryan dynasty, according to the evidence so far found. Aśoka once converted as an ardent follower of Buddhism, used art and architecture as the prime medium to develop and establish the Buddhist faith in India as well as neighboring countries. His adoption of more solid and durable materials in building religious shrines and monuments evolved with a continuing tradition of Indian art rather than to the

¹⁰⁶ James Legge, trans. *The Records of the Buddhistic Kingdoms, being an Account by the Chinese Monk Fa Hien of His Travels in India and Ceylon, annotated with a Korean Recension of the Chinese Text.* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), 56-7. Google eBook.

¹⁰⁷ The description is located in an unpublished manuscript which is at present preserved in the National Archives in Sri Lanka. For details see Ananda Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddhist Iconography*, 6: K.R. Norman, *Pāli Literature: Including the Canonical Literature in Prākṛit and Sanskrit of all the Schools of Hīnayāna Buddhism.* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassovitz, 1983), 179-80, n458, 459 & 468; Chandra Wikramagamage, *Principles of Buddhist Iconology.* (Colombo: Academy of Sri Lankan Culture, 1997), 16

¹⁰⁸ Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 43

foreign influence as some scholars suggest.¹⁰⁹ There is no doubt that he was familiar with the Buddhist symbols which had come to represent the Buddha during his lifetime.

According to *Aśokāvadāna*, a subtext of *Divyāvadāna*, prophesy on Aśoka is ascribed to the Buddha: “[a]fter I die there will be an emperor; His name will be Aśoka and his name widespread, he will adorn Jambudvīpa with my reliquaries, and caused them to be honored by Gods and Men.”¹¹⁰ Once he was converted as a faithful follower of Buddhism, his primary pledge was to “resolve to adorn the earth with the Chief of Jina’s *caityas* that are as white as conch, the moon and the crane.”¹¹¹ The construction of 84,000 *stūpas* is of importance in this regard. *Aśokāvadāna* describes the particular incident as follows;

Then the king Aśoka, intending to distribute far and wide the Bodily Relics of the Blessed one, went together with the four fold arm to the Drona Stūpa that Ajātasatru had built. He broke it open, took out all the relics, and putting back a portion of them, set up a new stūpa. He did the same thing with the second Drona stūpa and so on up to the seventh one, removing the relics from each of them and then setting up as new stūpas as tokens of his devotion... Then Aśoka had eighty four thousand boxes made of gold, silver, and cat’s eye, and crystal, and in them were placed the relics. Also eighty-four thousand urns and eighty-four thousand inscription plates were prepared. All of these were given to the yakṣas to distribute in eighty-four thousand Dharmarājikās he ordered to build throughout the earth as far as surrounding the earth, ocean, in the small, great, and middle-sized towns...¹¹²

All Buddhist traditions, including most importantly the Pāli sources preserved in Sri Lanka, agree that Aśoka built 84,000 or 80,000 stūpas called Dharmarājikās.¹¹³ (See **fig.2.14c**). While the number may simply mean “innumerable” or “countless,” the

¹⁰⁹ Zimmer, *Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. I, 4-5

¹¹⁰ Strong, *The Legend of King Aśoka*, 204

¹¹¹ Strong, *The Legend of King Aśoka*, 218

¹¹² Strong, *The Legend of King Aśoka*, 219

¹¹³ “Having heard, “There are eighty-four sections of the Dhamma,” the lord of the earth said, “Each of them will I honor with a vihāra.” Then the king gave ninety-six crores and arranged administrators in each of eighty-four thousand cities on earth to start the Vihāras. He himself, began to get Aśokārāma built.” *Mv.* Ch. V. 78-80, 175-76.

monuments identified by Chinese pilgrims Faxian and Xuan Zang (Huiyen Tsang)¹¹⁴ in their travels and those hitherto excavated testify to the role of Aśoka as a builder of Buddhist shrines. According to *Vinaya Nidāna* he has spent ninety-six crores of wealth to build eighty-four thousand monasteries in every town and he himself initiated the building of Aśokārāma.¹¹⁵ Bodh Gayā is claimed to be the most important Buddhist shrine for Aśoka according to his Rock Edict VIII.¹¹⁶ His devotion to the Bodhi Tree at Gayā is established in the same edict, where he went on a pilgrim tour (*dharma yātrā*) on the tenth year of his consecration (*abhiśeka*).¹¹⁷ Accordingly, it is there that some of the works of Aśokan art are to be found. The better-known example found from the site is the square railing, called Aśoka-railing, where thirty pieces have been discovered. The sculptures of this railing are treated in low-relief and the subjects were the decorative elements i.e. animals, trees, and various scenes of human life as well as the stories and the incidents of the life of the Buddha.

One of the most important constructions is the platform of terrace, the Bodhimaṇḍa, where the Bodhi tree is centered. Under the Bodhi tree is a diamond throne (*Vajrāsana*), which has been erected to symbolize the Buddha and his Enlightenment (**fig.2.15a**).¹¹⁸ Xuan Zang has recorded that the *Vajrāsana* was still in existence, when he

¹¹⁴ Beal, *Si-Yu-Ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Vol. II Book XII, 309

¹¹⁵ *Sp.* I. 44-5: N.A. Jayawickrama, trans., and ed., *The Inception of Discipline and the Vinaya Nidāna: Being the translation and edition of the Bāhiraṇidāna of Buddhaghōṣa's Samantapāsādikā*. (London: Luzac & Company, 1962), 43

¹¹⁶ "In the past, king of Devānampriya went on pleasure tours. Then there was hunting and such other pastimes. King Devānampriya Priyadarśi who was consecrated for ten years, went to *Sambodhi*. With that commented these pilgrimages." Guruge, *Aśoka: A Definitive Biography*, 564

¹¹⁷ Guruge, *Aśoka: A Definitive Biography*, 595: Upinder Singh, *A History of Early and Mediaeval India: From the Stone Age to the 12th Century*. (Delhi: Dotling Kindersley (India) Ltd., for Pearson's Publishing in South Asia, 2009), 354

¹¹⁸ Alexander Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India, Vol. III, Report for the Year 1871-72*. (Calcutta, Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, 1873), 79-80: Janice Leoshko, "The Significance of Bodh Gaya," in *Pilgrimage and Buddhist Art*, ed. Adriana Proser. (New York: Asia Society Museum in association with Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2010), 11, fig. 5

visited the place in 637 CE.¹¹⁹ The inscription nearby emphasizes the respect paid by the devotees (**See Epi.2.1**).¹²⁰ Apart from those symbols, Alexander Cunningham also traced a broken slab of a *Buddhapāda* (footprint) of 5'.6" in length, from the roof (**fig.2.15b**).¹²¹ The aniconic representations of some incidents of Buddha's life are also evident from the site (**fig.2.16a, 16b, & 16c**). With regard to the present study, two other pieces are of importance (The place of preserve is not known). 1) A medallion that illustrates the Buddha's first meditation of which the empty throne is displayed where a traditional ploughman is driving his plough.¹²² 2) The figure of Indra in the form of a Brahman offering a bundle of grass, which is beautifully carved on a railing.¹²³ The later illustrates the story of Brahman Sotthiya who offered *Kusa* grass for the Buddha-to-be to sit at the Bodhi tree. This unique sculpture, which shows the man as if he is stepping out of the stone, suggests that the grass is being offered to the Buddha but the Buddha himself is not depicted.¹²⁴ Apparently the Bodhi-tree itself in whose direction is the grass is offered can be identified as the symbolic presence of the Buddha-to-be. The importance of such symbolic representations is the non-appearance of the Buddha in the human form even before his Enlightenment.

Epi.2.1. Railing Inscription of Bodh-Gayā

1.1 karito yatra Vajrasana-vrhad-gandhakuti
 [.] Prasadam = arddha-trikair = ddinara-
 satais-sudha-lepya-punar-nnavikaranena samskaritam[.]
 Atr = aiva ca pratyaham = a-candr-arkk-a-tarakam
 Bhagavate Buddhaya go-sata-danena ghrta-pradipa

¹¹⁹ Beal, *Si-Yu-Ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Vol. I Book 2, 114.

¹²⁰ B.M. Barua, "Old Buddhist Shrines at Bodh Gaya Inscriptions" *The Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. VI. No. I (March 1930), 26-28

¹²¹ Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India, Vol. III*, 99

¹²² Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. I, 329

¹²³ Guruge, *Facets of Buddhism*, 109

¹²⁴ -ibid-

akaritah[.] Prasade ca khanda-sphatita pratisamaradhane
 tat-pratimayam ca pratyaham ghrta-pradipo
 go-saten = aparena karitah[.] Vihare=pi Bhagavato
 raitya-Buddha-pratima(yam go-saten = aparepa
 ghrta-pradip..... [.]

1.2(ghrta)-pradipaksayanivini(ba)n(dha)h
 vihar-opayo(gya) karitas=Tatra =Pi (u) pavogaya mahantam=adharam
 khanitam, tad-anupurvam c = utpaditam [.]
 Tad=etat=sarvvam yan=maya puny-opacita-sambharam
 tan = matapitroh p(urvamgamam krtva...) [.]

Translation

..... has been made, where the great Gandhakuti(1) of Vajrasana
 (sc. Buddha)(1) is.

The temple(2) has been adorned with a new coating of plaster and paint, at the
 cost of 250 dinaras. And in the temple a lamp of ghee has been provided
 for the Lord Buddha by the gift of a hundred cows, for as long as the moon,
 sun, and stars shall endure. Also, by another hundred cows, in addition to the
 cost of small, perpetually recurring repairs to the temple, provision has been
 made for another lamp of ghee, to be burnt daily before the image inside the
 temple. By another hundred cows provision has been made for having a lamp
 of ghee burnt before the brass image of the Lord Buddha in the Monastery
 (vihara).....

1.2 a perpetual endowment of a lamp of ghee has been made for the
 benefit of the Monastery. There also.....a large water reservoir has been dug out
 for the use of the noble congregation of monks, and to the east of it a new field
 has been laid out. Whatever merit, may have been acquired by me by all this,
 may this be for the benefit of my parents at first

Equally important are the Aśokan pillars , spread all over the northern part of the
 Indian sub-continent, which some archaeologists believe as the best evidence so far found
 in both state of the art of sculpture and in the reliefs.¹²⁵ The evidence are found from
 Rummindei (Lumbiṇi) which marks the birth-place of the Buddha, Sānchi, Rāmpūrvā,
 Sārnāth where the Buddha delivered his First Sermon at the Deer Park, Louriā-

¹²⁵ Smith, *A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, 59

Nandangarh, Bakhirā *etc.* The significant character in the construction of all these pillars is the monolithic shaft: 40-45ft high with no base, comprising three elements: Persipolitan bell, abacus, and the crowning sculpture in the round.¹²⁶ The edge of the abacus was decorated with bas-relief designs, while the top crown of the capital occasionally embraced with a sacred symbol of Buddhism *i.e.* a wheel, an animal both combined, which exhibit the remarkable association of Buddhist art in its early phase. Significantly, the carvings of animals around the abaci testify the skill and the craftsmanship of the sculptor to create the bodily shapes which in no way we could see that they used to depict the Buddha in the human form.¹²⁷

Among many symbols incorporated with the Aśokan pillars, the four animals: the horse, the bull, the lion, and the elephant have a greater significance due to their symbolism. As being depicted on the top crown of the capital, they are either identified as symbolizing the four quarters of the world— namely the bull as the guardian of the west, the elephant: the east, the lion: the north, and horse, of the south,¹²⁸ or stages of the life of the Buddha: *i.e.* elephant-birth, bull-childhood, horse-the great departure, and lion-the mission and a preacher. It is believed that the Rummindei (Lumbini) pillar comprised of the horse, while Saṅkissa capital was crowned with an elephant. The two pillars found from Rāmpūrvā had their capitals decorated with the symbols of a bull and a lion. The abacus of the Louriā-Nadangarh pillar was decorated with the flying sacred geese in a

¹²⁶ -ibid-

¹²⁷ Frederick M. Asher, "Imperial State and Peripheral Kingdoms, 400-150 BCE" in *Art of India: Pre-History to the Present*, ed. Frederick M. Asher. (Printed in Hong Kong for Encyclopedia Britannica, 2003), 29

¹²⁸ Smith, *A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, 59-60

low relief, while the Rāmpūrvā pillar was decorated with a composition of “lotus and palmettos and crowned by an admirable statue of a humped bull in the round.”¹²⁹

An important pillar with significance to the present study is the Aśokan pillar located at Sārnāth—which is considered the emblem of the Republic of India—**(fig.2.17a)**. The pillar is believed to mark the site where Lord Buddha delivered his First Sermon, *dharmacakkappavattana sutta*, to the five monks, namely Koṇḍañña, Baddiya, Vappa, Mahānāma, and Assajee.¹³⁰ The pillar, being made of sandstone, bears an inverted lotus flower at the base, which forms a platform for the pillar. On top of the pillar are four lions sitting back to back facing the four main directions. The four lion heads are thought to represent the Buddha as a preacher propagating Dharma in four directions fearlessly as a lion (the roar of lion).¹³¹ This proves that apart from its connection to the direction of north by the symbol of a lion, it also proclaims the commemoration of the Good Law of Dharma of the Four Quarters.¹³² The sides of the abacus are carved with all the four animals which correspond with the four sacred events of the Buddha’s life: the nativity (elephant), childhood (bull), the renunciation (horse), and the attainment (lion). At the center of each side of the abacus are the *dharmacakras* (Wheel of Law) with 24 spokes which symbolize the Buddhist Teaching. It is also believed that the four lions on top have supported a granite wheel of 2’9” in diameter.¹³³

¹²⁹ Sailendra Nath Sen, *Ancient Indian History and Civilization*, 2nd ed. (Delhi: New Age International Publishers, 1999), 166

¹³⁰ *Ma. I.6*,.10-47

¹³¹ Guruge, *Facets of Buddhism*, 109

¹³² Smith *A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, 60

¹³³ F.O. Oertel, “Excavations at Sārnāth,” in *Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report for 1904-5*. (Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, 1908), 68-70, Pl. XX

Except for some artistic and iconographical elements, the pillar at Sānchi represents similar sculptural attainments (**fig.2.17b**).¹³⁴

Apart from such early examples, Khandhagiri and Udaigiri Caves, two of the early cave sites including several other caves near Bhuvaneshvar (Orissa) present as important for the present subject. The carvings of Anātagampā (Khandhagiri) stylistically and iconographically suggest the characteristics of Bodhi-Gayā, except the deeper engravings. Among the cave sites, the best restored examples are found from two-storeyed Rāni Gumpā caves, decorated with friezes and sculptures which inform the advanced techniques and style employed during the Mauryan period. “The compositions are more vital and better integrated, and the conception of the theme and its presentation are more harmonious... The reliefs represent a mature tradition; a local movement depended mainly on the art of Central India.”¹³⁵ Of many depictions on the walls of 18 caves of Udayagiri, an important example is the depiction of the worship of a tree, probably relating to early Buddhist carvings in Bhārhut and Sānchi (**fig.2.18**).¹³⁶ Apart from these symbolic representations, there are several male and female figures in the caves No.1, 3, 6, and 10; though faded due to weather conditions, they portray some unique iconographical characteristics, yet none portrays incidents with regard to the Buddha’s life.

Vincent Smith makes reference to two pieces of sculptures belonging to the early post-Aśokan period: a pillar stone illustrating a picture of a Buddhist shrine along with the *dharmacakra* (Wheel of Law), and a panel depicting the Bodhi tree around which a plain railing is drawn, both of which symbolizing the appearance of the Buddha without

¹³⁴ Guruge, *Aśoka the Righteous: A Definitive Biography*, Pl. 15

¹³⁵ Raj Kumar, “Art and Architecture of Northern India” 50

¹³⁶ Javid & Javid, *World Heritage Monuments and related Edifices in India*, Vol. I. 36, Pl. 15

inferring a human figure (**fig.2.19a & 19b**) in contrast to the highly decorative and fanciful elements in the coping stones.¹³⁷ The distinction is that while the sculptor elaborates the figures of animals, plants as well as the *yakṣa* and *yakṣini* in realistic manner, he represents the Buddha through symbols.

Similar characteristics can be observed in Taxilā, an ancient seat of learning, belonging to three successive cities during the 7th century BCE-7th century CE. Among the numerous evidence excavated from various Buddhist sites at Taxilā, the complex of Dharmarājikā is said to be the most important Buddhist center, which was founded during the 1st-2nd centuries BCE. Near Taxilā, is the excavated *stūpa* Menikyala, and there are many other unexcavated sites.¹³⁸ Apart from such common indications, an interesting example has been found from the Sirkap in Taxilā, where Buddhism was the prominent seat. Omchandra Hāndā develops several assumptions:

From the pattern of devices appearing on the Mitra-suffix coins found in Pathankot, it is indicated that the devices on those coins... depict standing male figure (Viśhvamitra) and an elephant, prominently beside 'a tree in the Buddhist railing' which has also been supposed to be an Audumbaran device- a fig tree, but may also examined as an emblem of the Buddha.¹³⁹

In another coin, the double-dome structure supported on multiple pillars belonging to Mitra rulers of Kuluta region proves that they embraced Buddhism before the association with Audumbaras.¹⁴⁰ Likewise, most of the circular pendants belonging to Mitra-suffix coins prove that they have employed the symbols rather than the figure of the Buddha. In many of the coins, the Buddhist railing surmounted by the Trident (*triśula*), the Parasol (*catra*), six-arched *stūpas* have become predominant symbols,

¹³⁷ Smith, *A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, 66, Plate. 32 & 33.

¹³⁸ Kurt A. Behrendt, *Buddhist Architecture at Gandhara*, Part II, Vol. 17. (Leiden, K.J. Brill, 2003), 25-6

¹³⁹ Omachanda Hāndā, *Buddhist Art and Antiquities of Himachal Pradesh: up to 8th century AD*. (New Delhi: Indus Publishing, 1994), 187

¹⁴⁰ Hāndā, *Buddhist Art and Antiquities of Himachal Pradesh*, 183

which not only indicate the employment of symbols in early phase of Buddhist art in Taxilā, but also the predominant, authentic characteristics of Buddhism in the area prior to the 1st century CE (**fig.2.20a &20b**).

2.5 Concluding remarks

The foregoing evidence from Aśokan and post-Aśokan Buddhist art, so far found, testifies to the fact that the Indian sculptors did not apply the human figure into the Buddha image on purpose when depicting a Jātaka story or a particular religious event. In particular, when the sculptor engraved such an event, they represented his presence through symbols and not as a human figure. The Bodhi Tree, the Wheel of Dharma, the footprint, the Sacred Throne, the *stūpa* or the Trident are reflected as living examples that were best fitted to represent the Buddha. Such symbols not only emphasized his presence, but also elaborated his supreme qualities that an ordinary person does not possess.

Significance of this evolution with regard to the present study is its non-appearance in Sri Lankan Buddhist art tradition in representing the Buddha. Apparently, the evidence of the efflorescence of Indian Buddhist art begin from the period of Maurya king Aśoka, and the introduction of Buddhism into Sri Lanka appears simultaneously during the 3rd century BCE by the Great Mahinda *Thero*. According to the Sri Lankan chronicle *Mahāvamsa*, he came with five disciple monks along with the *upāsaka* Baṇḍuka, and the king erected a *stūpa* at the site where the “Thera first alighted.”¹⁴¹ Once the *Therini* Saṅghamittā arrived with the sacred Bodhi Tree, the king Aśoka sent eight sects “from the weavers and potters and from all the handicrafts.”¹⁴² If the Indian artisans

¹⁴¹ *Mv* Ch. XII, 7-8, Ch. XIII, 16-17, Ch. XIV, 42-45

¹⁴² *Mv*. Ch. XIX, 1-6

influenced Sri Lankan arts and crafts similar to their introduction of Buddhism, such symbolic representations should be obviously be propagated in Sri Lanka, too.

Contrary to such an involvement with numerous murals and motifs found from India representing the Buddha through various symbols, Sri Lanka provides no evidence regarding the representation of the Buddha through aniconic symbols. The only symbol so far found is the **footprint** from many early Buddhist sites all of which supposing its unique application as a decorative element (**fig.5.15-5.19**). Those stone carvings neither represent the Buddha in narrative panels nor symbolize a particular event i.e. Great Departure, which was the major significance of the presence of the **footprint** in Indian aniconic symbols. Hence, what is highlighted from the foregoing Indian examples is its non-involvement in Sri Lankan Buddha images or Buddhist art, which assesses that Sri Lanka must have developed its own tradition through the ages. Thus, the following chapters will attempt to pursue a thorough examination of its unique evolution.

CHAPTER 03

TRANSITION FROM ANICONIC TO ANTHROPOMORPHIC REPRESENTATIONS OF THE BUDDHA IN INDIAN BUDDHIST ART

3.1 Representation of the Buddha through symbols to illustrate his life accounts.

The symbols to represent the Buddha and his teachings and possibly also the Saṅgha during the lifetime of the Buddha appear to have become entrenched in Buddhist art of India by the time of the Mauryan Emperor Aśoka. They had provided a usable medium of expression to the artist and assumed the role of artistic shorthand to which Benjamin Rowland refers to in the following terms:

The problem of the sculptor of the decoration of the stūpa railing was to present the worshipper with the more direct and easily readable symbols of the Buddhist legends, a problem in which the extreme simplification of the theme was conditioned in part, at least, by the shape and dimensions of the medallions. The necessity of simplification imposed the isolation of the individual elements of the composition like so many parts of a pattern against the plain background.¹

According to him, what is of much importance is the simplification of events, so that the observer can understand the particular incident within the worldly experience. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the widespread use of symbols that evolved during Aśoka's zealous promotion of Buddhism through the form of a *bhakti* movement must have encouraged the adornment of the Buddha in Northern India,² and in the outlying regions, which resulted in the spread of extensive architectural and artistic activity. With such activity, Buddhism which had hitherto been primarily a monastic way of life in India became a popular religion appealing to the masses³ and spread to neighboring regions

¹ Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India: Buddhist, Hindu and Jain*, 84

² Benjamin Rowland, *The Evolution of the Buddha Image*. (New York: distributed by Abrams, 1963), 6

³ A.L. Sirivastava, *Life in Sanchi Sculpture*. (Delhi: Mushiram Manoharlal, 1983), 116

Asia.⁴ Consequently, the use of art for both ornamentation and religious instruction, which as noted earlier had been a special feature of Buddhist education and propagation, not only became a standard practice but also spread to a wider area. Sites such as Bhārhut, Sānchi, Amarāvati, Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, Mathurā, Sārnāth, withstanding Bodh Gayā testify to the vast geographical distribution of early Buddhist art. Nevertheless, there are some other early Buddhist sites in which certain evidence has been found.

A special character of these Buddhist centers is the achievement of religious instruction by using art as a visual aid. The ideology of the themes employed was to recollect the stories relating to the present and the previous lives of the Gautama Buddha and several other incidents relating to Buddhism. Ratan Parimoo identifies eight major themes which can be divided into two groups: 1) the association of the place where the incident took place and 2) its significance as a pilgrimage center. Whereas the Birth of the Buddha at Lumbiṇi, the Dream of Māyā at Kapilavastu, the Great Departure at the Nairanjanā River, the Enlightenment at Bodh Gayā, the First Sermon at Gazelle Park (*mṛga-dā vana*) at Sārnāth, and the Great Demise (*mahāparinirvāna*) at Kusinagara belong to the first group, the Great Miracle at Srāvasti, the Descent from Tāvatiṃsā Heaven to Saṅkassa, the Monkey's offering honey to the Buddha at Vesālī, the taming of the elephant Nālāgiri at Rajagaha, conversion of Kasyapas etc., belong to the second group.⁵

Such stories could not be visually presented without depicting the Buddha since he is the principal character. But a prevailing prohibition or reluctance to represent the Buddha in human form stood in the artist's way. Such a prohibition or reluctance could

⁴ H. Kern, *Manual of Indian Buddhism*. (Strassburg: K. J. Trubener, 1896), 117-8

⁵ Ratan Parimoo, *Life of Buddha in Indian Sculpture*. (Delhi: Kanak Publications, 1972), 2

have come into existence due to a variety of reasons. But in the absence of any textual evidence as to whether the Buddha himself had any objection or whether the Saṅgha made a collective decision, one has to surmise with such reasons as several scholars had already assumed. Alesandro Della Seta stresses: “to assign a definite form to a figure of one who had denied the absolute value of all forms in the sphere of phenomena must have seemed the greatest insult to the spirit of his teaching.”⁶ Or, as Benjamin Rowland suggests, “the Buddha has gone beyond the fetters of the body [and] cannot be endowed by art with the likeness of the body.”⁷ This conception indeed belonged to the early Buddhist tradition, where his bodily representation was never encouraged. “The pertinent text for this tradition is that of Ceylonese *Sutta nipāta*: For him who [like the sun] has set, there is nothing any more with which he can be compared. There is nothing any more by means of which he can be represented: his footprint, like the twilight, only gives evidence of a vanished sun,” emphasizes Heinrich Zimmer.⁸ According to *Āṅguttara nikāya*, Buddha was neither a human being nor a divine being or a *yakka*.⁹ Commenting on such references Chandra Wikramagamage states;

“[A]t the beginning it was a great problem to portray in the likeness. Therefore, in the first period of Buddhist art, the Buddha was represented by the symbols such as Bodhi Tree, the Wheel of Law (*Dharmacakra*) etc. This also was the problem for Hindu and Jain artists. Thus, we see them using symbols to represent their god or religious leaders. The Sun god, for instance, was represented by the symbol of a disk and later it took its present form of anthropomorphic Sun god. In Buddhist art, similarly, the first representation of the Buddha was the Bodhi-Tree and the

⁶ Alesandro Della Seta, *Religion and Art*, trans. Marion C. Harrison with a preface by Arthur Strong. (London: T.F. Unwin, 1914), 306

⁷ Rowland, *The Evolution of the Buddha Image*, 6

⁸ Zimmer, *Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. I. 340

⁹ “*Devo no bhavaṃ bhavissatīti? Na kho ahaṃ brāhmaṇa devo bhavissāmīti. Gandhabbo no bhavaṃ bhavissatīti. Na kho ahaṃ brāhmaṇa gandhabbo bhavissāmīti. Yakkho no bhavaṃ bhavissatīti. Na kho ahaṃ brāhmaṇa yakkho bhavissāmīti. Manusso no bhavaṃ bhavissatīti? Na kho ahaṃ brāhmaṇa manusso bhavissāmīti.*” *An. II.38*

second was the Wheel of Law. Both have strong connections with the Buddha's Enlightenment and its anthropomorphism.”¹⁰

The objective of the enterprising artist was thus to find an alternative to mark his presence in the illustrations of the events belonged to the Buddha's life for the edification of the devotee. The alternative apparently was to use the symbols which had already been associated with the life stories of the Buddha. Thus, it is clear that the Bodhi Tree, parasol, footprint, column of fire, Wheel of Dharma, vacant throne, *stūpa* as well as animal motifs such as elephant, horse, and bull filled the space where the Buddha figured in the narratives. “As history shows, there was no such tree called Bodhi. The tree under which Siddhārtha Gautama attained *Bodhi*, Enlightenment, was called *Aśvatta* and since then the title ‘Bodhi-Tree’ was given to it, and became an object of worship.”¹¹ The *stūpa* enshrining the relic had similar significance. In the *Mahāparinibbāna sutta* of the *Dīgha nikāya*, the Buddha states that a *stūpa* may be erected at crossroads, for the Tathāgata.”¹² Thus, it was similarly important as the Bodhi Tree.¹³ The important events of the Buddha's life, which the Buddhist artist had to illustrate, were the birth, the great departure, the enlightenment, the first discourse, and the demise as well as incidents which highlight the Buddha's miraculous powers. It is for these narratives that the aniconic symbols were utilized whereas there had been no hesitation in representing his bodhisattva hood (Buddha to be or his previous births) as regards the Jātaka stories in the form of an animal.¹⁴

¹⁰ Wikramagamage, *Principles of Buddhist Iconology*, 13

¹¹ -ibid-

¹² *Dn.* II.16, *Mahāparinibbāna sutta*, Part V. 11-12 & VI. 25-8 (see Chap. 02. n.83-86).

¹³ Wikramagamage, *Principles of Buddhist Iconology*, 14

¹⁴ Sirivastava, *Life in Sānchi Sculpture*, 117

Alfred Foucher identified the Bodhi Tree (64 times), the *stūpa* (32 times) and the Wheel of Dharma (6 times) as the dominant symbols for the Buddha,¹⁵ while Benjamin Rowland noted the use the lotus or elephant to represent his birth, a tree or throne to represent his enlightenment, a wheel for his first teaching (the Four Noble Truths), and a *stūpa* (funerary mound) for his bodily demise.¹⁶ Also important is the Buddha's presence marked by a pair of footprints. What is emphasized is the motivation of the Buddhist artist in India to illustrate the life of the Buddha and its main events by inverting the use of standardized aniconic symbols. Historically this process could be dated between the time of Mauryan Aśoka (304 BCE-232 BCE) and the construction of the stone railing around Bhārhut and Sānchi of the Suṅga period (321 BCE-72 BCE), which is roughly about three centuries.

3.2 Geographically widespread use of aniconic representations

The examination of the geographically widespread and chronologically long lasting use of the aniconic representations of the Buddha in narratives illustrated in India is relevant to the hypothesis that this dissertation seeks to establish as regards the origin of the Sri Lankan Buddha image. This could be most conveniently accomplished by concentrating on four of the important centers, whose development spans at least three centuries from the Suṅga period to the first appearance of the Buddha image in human form during the period of Kushans (2nd century BCE-3rd century CE). These are Bhārhut, Sānchi, Amarāvati and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa. Their geographical location is shown in the map below:

¹⁵ Foucher *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, 15-6, n1.

¹⁶ Rowland, *The Evolution of the Buddha Image*, 6

Bhārhut stūpa in Satna District of Madhya Pradesh, first excavated by Alexander Cunningham, is dated in the mid-2nd century BCE. The *stūpa* was surrounded by a stone railing adorned with sculptures of which three pillars, three connecting rails, and a coping stone covering them have been identified.¹⁸ “Of all the Buddhist edifices, so far, at least, as they have up to the present time investigated, undoubtedly the oldest is the Bhārhut Stūpa which was probably built in the second or third century B.C.”¹⁹ Crossbars as well as the copings of the railing, which were simply confined to a rectangular or circular panel on a pillar,²⁰ link four gateways to make it a place for circumambulation. The sculptures illustrate 24 *Jātaka* stories including those identified by inscriptions as Mahākapi, Latuva, Mriga, Sujāta-Gahuto, Mahājanaka, Vidurapaṇḍita,²¹ and Chaddanta, and several events of the life of the Buddha. Pillars are abundantly sculpted with the images of *yakṣas* and *yakṣīs*. A sculpture of special significance relates to the famous Jetavana monastery at Srāvastī, with its mango tree and temples, and the rich banker Anāthapiṇḍika in the foreground emptying a cartful of gold pieces to pave the surface of the garden, and the Buddha that was represented by the Bodhi Tree accepting it from the donor.²² (See fig.3.28).

Sānchi *stūpa* in Reisen District of Madhya Pradesh dates from the time of Aśoka to commemorate several important events in his life that includes the religious

¹⁸ A. Cunningham, *Stūpa of Bhārhut: A Buddhist Monument Ornamented with Numerous Sculptures, Illustrated of Buddhist Legends and History in the 3rd century BC.* 1879, Reprint. (Varanasi: Indological Book House, 1962), 4

¹⁹ S.F. Oldenburg, “Notes on Buddhist Art,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, ed. Charles R. Lanmen and George F. Moore. (New Haven, Connecticut: American Oriental Society), Vol. XVIII, Part I January-June, (1897), 187

²⁰ Asher, “The Period of Mercantile Communities, c. 150 BCE-400 CE,” *The Art of India: Pre-History to the Present*. (Printed in Hong Kong for Encyclopedia Britannica, 2003), 34

²¹ Asher, “The Period of Mercantile Communities,” 34-35 & Pl. in p.35

²² Smith, *History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, 69-73

missionaries towards the neighboring countries.²³ Of the three main *stūpas* found from the site, the archways of the two *stūpas* belong to the Sātavāhana period of circa 70 BCE. On them are illustrated many *Jātaka* stories, incidents of the life of the Buddha and historical events: both secular and religious that are relatively similar to the themes employed by the Bhārhut sculptor.

The Amarāvati *stūpa* in Guntur District of Āndhra Pradesh too has a history commencing from the Aśokan period. The sculptures of this site are important to the present study because they date from the later Sātavāhana Period in the 2nd century BCE-2nd century CE and depict the evolution of the representation of the Buddha from the aniconic to anthropomorphic form. The Amarāvati sculptures not only illustrate the life of the Buddha along with historical and legendary events “using a variety of Buddhist iconography and imagery,”²⁴ but also provide a considerable volume of scenes depicting society. Above all, the natural rhythm of the details of human, floral, and, animal figures is significant in Amarāvati.²⁵ Robert Knox states; “the long history is complex and linked to the rise and fall of several dynasties as well as to the growth and decline of Buddhism in the particular region.”²⁶

The Nāgārjunakoṇḍa *stūpa* in the Nalgonda District of Āndhra Pradesh belongs to the period of the Ikṣvāku dynasty of the Deccan region and its sculptures are dated from 225 BCE -325 CE. This site also has witnessed the transition of the representation of the Buddha from the aniconic to human form. What makes this site most important is that it

²³ Javid and Javeed, ed. *World Heritage Monuments and Related Edifices in India*, Vol. I, 49-50

²⁴ Burjor Avari, *India, The Ancient Past: A History of Ancient Indian Sub-Continent from 7000 BC to AD1200*. (New York: Routledge, 2007), 152

²⁵ Robert Knox, *Amarāvati: Buddhist Sculpture from the Great Stūpa*. (London: British Museum Press, 1992), 33

²⁶ Knox, *Amarāvati: Buddhist Sculpture from the Great Stūpa*, 9

seems to have used aniconic symbols even after the Buddha image in human form had appeared in the northwestern region of India. That a Buddhist site geographically located diagonally at the farthest shore of the subcontinent at a distance of roughly 2000 miles from Gandhāra should still use aniconic representations of the Buddha over a century after the origin of the Buddha image in Gandhāra is a fact to be noted with special emphasis when the Sri Lankan situation is to be considered.

3.3 Illustrations of the life of the Buddha from the 2nd century BCE-2nd century CE

How the aniconic representations were utilized in the above-mentioned four sites and elsewhere in Indian sites will be discussed in relation to the main events of the Buddha's life that the artists had selected to depict in medallions or panels. Such a discussion that elaborates the particular themes is considered to be more informative than a site by site analysis. The examination will reveal the stylistic characteristics that distinguish the regional and chronological evolution of the aniconic symbols in Indian Buddhist art and how far it has influenced Sri Lankan Buddhist art.

3.3.1 The Conception and the Nativity of the Buddha

The conception of Prince Siddhārtha is mainly illustrated as the dream of Māyā-Devi in which he enters the womb of the queen as a white-elephant. Sir John Marshall accounts the event as the most prominent in such depictions with regard to the life of the Buddha where the lotus and the [white] elephant are the important symbols.²⁷

In Bhārhut, the Dream of Māyā-Devi is depicted in a medallion on the inner face of the eastern gate,²⁸ in which she reclines on a bed, while a large-sized elephant with two

²⁷ *JātakaA*, 63: John H. Marshall, *A Guide to Sānchi*, 3rd ed. (Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1955), 44

²⁸ Cunningham, *Stūpa of Bhārhut*, 83

tusks is hovering above (**fig.3.1a**).²⁹ The inscription below the scene, namely *Bhagavato rukrānta*, has been translated as “Buddha as the sounding elephant.”³⁰ **Fig.3.1b** shows a panel depicting footprints on the throne, and canopied by a parasol on the Ajātasatru pillar of the western Gateway. The inscription below describes the incident as *Mahāsāmāyikāya Arahadguto devaputo vokato bhagavato sāsani paṭisamdhi* (In the great assembly of the gods the angel Arhadgupta announces the conception of the Divine Being’s system).³¹ The distinction is the absence of the Bodhi Tree,³² unlike in the depictions of the Great Enlightenment when presented with the footprint (**see fig.3.10**).

In Sānchi, the incident is depicted variously, in which the footprint, the throne without a Bodhi Tree as well as the elephant are prominent. **Fig.3.2a**³³ is a panel from the exterior of the west pillar of the northern gateway in *stūpa* No.1 in that depicts the Buddha's descent from the Tuśita heaven to take birth as Prince Siddhārtha. The Buddha is visible as the Bodhi Tree in the lower left, attended above by a legion of celestial beings who are throwing flower garlands upon the earth in celebration. The king and queen are under the royal umbrella and the queen has her hand raised to grip a tree branch. Her gesture suggests she was holding onto a tree branch for support when the prince was born, as the tradition records. Though the event depicts a different stage of the Buddha’s birth, the form and style signifies that of Bhārhut as shown in **fig.3.1b**.

Fig.3.2b³⁴ of Sānchi North Pillar of the eastern gateway in *stūpa* No.1 shows that the queen is sleeping in an open compartment on the second floor of the palace and the

²⁹ Parimoo, *Life of Buddha in Indian Sculpture*, 6 & fig.1

³⁰ Cunningham, *Stūpa of Bhārhut*, 83; Parimoo, 6

³¹ *JātakaA*. 65: B.M. Barua, *Bhārhut: Part I, II, & III*. (Delhi: Indological Book House, 1979), Part II, 14, Pl. XLI, fig. 37

³² *Lv. 53*: Barua, *Bhārhut: Part II*, 15

³³ Marshall and Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II. 36. c3

³⁴ Marshall and Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II.56.a1

elephant is descending from the right of the relief. “The main figures of queen and elephant are wedged in various types of architecture...consistent in every part of Bhārhut, are here treated as a causal filling i.e. the palace of king Suddhodana.”³⁵ A different depiction is evident in **fig.3.2c**, the south end of the eastern gateway, and **fig.3.2d** from the northern end of the western gateway. In **fig.3.2c**³⁶ represents the white elephant (shown jumping into the picture) appearing above the head of the queen while she is bearing a lotus in her right hand. She is also sitting on a lotus sprouting out of a vase and apparently is given bath by two Nāgas.³⁷ The configuration of **fig.3.2d**³⁸ depicts that the queen Māyā is standing on a lotus between two Nāgas, likewise supported by lotus flowers while two elephants covering the head of the queen by their trunks are shown on either side of the queen. Since, the appearance of the lotus with the elephant marks the particular nativity, **fig.3.2e** of the ground balustrade of the *stūpa* No. II³⁹ can be summed up as an illustration of the same event with an elephant, holding lotus stalks.

The same theme is differently depicted at Amarāvati, in that the footprints, footstool, or the elephant is the main object. Significantly in **fig.3.3a** (presently exhibited in the British Museum), a series of scenes related to Buddha's birth, the symbol of elephant is missing. In it are portrayed four major events: 1) the dream of Māyā preceding the Buddha's birth where she is seen sleeping (top right corner), 2) at Lumbinī where she delivers the prince Siddhārtha under the Sāla tree while four Lokapālas, or the guardians of four directions appear with a silk sheet to receive the future Buddha on it

³⁵ Stella Kramrisch, *Indian Sculpture*, 1933, Reprint. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1981), 152, Pl. V, Fig. 23

³⁶ Marshall and Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II. 41.3. Similar depiction is evident on the top die of the north end. See Marshall and Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II. 44.2.

³⁷ Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sanchi*, Part I, 183 & Part II, Pl. 41.3 & 44.2

³⁸ Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II, 56.4

³⁹ Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sanchi*, Vol. III, 77.15b

(lower right corner); 3) the predictions of the Brahmans as a result of the king's enquiry where he heard about his supreme career as a universal monarch or the great renunciation as the Buddha (the upper left); and 4) queen Māyā offers the child to *yakṣa* named Śākya Vardhana, the chief deity of Śākya clan (lower left corner), after the birth. The central figure of the story, namely the prince, though not yet enlightened, has not been represented in the anthropomorphic form unlike all the other characters. He is represented by a small **seat** at the foot of queen Māyā. Some panels of Amarāvati depict the birth and the presentation to the sage Aśita using only his **footprints**.⁴⁰ However, the same event is seen in **fig.3.3b, 3c, & 3b** resembling the characteristics at Sānchi as in **fig.3.2b**.

The evidence of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa as in **fig.3.4a**⁴¹ shows queen Māyā carrying the prince to his father, king Suddhodana. The infant is represented by a horizontal cloth bearing the symbol of the footprint (*Buddhapāda*). The same symbol appears in the second section of the relief where the sage Aśita (Kāladevala) predicted the infant's future.⁴² In **fig.3.4b**⁴³ at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, queen Māyā stands on the left hand corner in *tribhaṅga* posture and the presence of the Buddha-to-be is indicated by a parasol (*catra*) flanked by two flywhisks (*cāmara*) above the head of the attendant who pays her respect by bowing her head and adoring him with the gesture of veneration (*anjalī mudrā*). The guardian deities of the four quarters are receiving the baby on a white cloth and seven miniature foot steps are marked to indicate the seven steps of the bodhisattva.⁴⁴

Compared to the reliefs at Amarāvati, the motif at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa depicts some transitional characteristics where parasol is used to indicate the presence of the prince in

⁴⁰ Foucher, *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, 5

⁴¹ Parimoo, *Life of Buddha in Indian Sculpture*, 7.fig.5

⁴² *JātakaA.* 68-9

⁴³ Parimoo, *Life of the Buddha in Indian Sculpture*, 11, fig.12

⁴⁴ Parimoo, *Life of Buddha in Indian Sculpture*, 11

the nativity scene, unlike the popular symbol of an elephant. One significant feature at Amarāvati (**fig.3.3c & 3d**)⁴⁵ and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa (**fig.3.4c**) is whenever the sculptor desired to present the descent, the conception, or the nativity of the Buddha-to-be; they also employed the symbol of elephant,⁴⁶ yet only with two tusks without the flower.⁴⁷ With certain other examples found from the Yusafzai district (Now at Lahore museum), a single bas-relief from the Dipalidina *stūpa* at Amarāvati (now at Calcutta museum) testify to the particular indication.

3.3.2 The Great Departure

The Great Departure of Prince Siddhārtha is the second major event in the Buddha's life. **Fig.3.5**⁴⁸ depicts the incident on a bas-relief of a gateway pillar at Bhārhut where the three subsequent stages of Great renunciation are illustrated: one below the other. In the first stage, the bodhisattva is stepping out by the main doorway of the royal palace, and subsequently passing out from the city gate of Kapilavastu in the second stage, finally riding ahead on the back of the horse along with his groom, Chandaka.⁴⁹ The presence of the prince is shown by a parasol (*catra*) held over the horse.

In Sānchi, the event is differently depicted in narrative style, marking the important events opposing the style of Bhārhut. **Fig.3.6a** evidently shows the sculptural panels on the middle architrave of the eastern gateway where every detail related to the event is depicted except the presence of the prince Siddhārtha, which is symbolized by a majestic looking rider-less horse, over whom is held a parasol. The same horse, when

⁴⁵ Image Courtesy: Chennai Government Museum, India

⁴⁶ Heinz Adolph Mode, ed., *Great Centers of Art*. (Leipzig: Barnes, 1973), 43

⁴⁷ *JātakaA*, 63

⁴⁸ Barua, *Bhārhut*, Vol.III, 59, fig. 18

⁴⁹ *JātakaA*, 81-2

depicted as returning after the prince renounced the world, is without the particular element, parasol. The symbol of a footprint in the upper left corner of the panel by the standing horse also presents the prince. “The soles of the feet are, of course, marked with the traditional sign of the wheel”⁵⁰ to indicate his sovereignty. In the center of the relief, is placed a Bodhi Tree, as a vertical element enclosed by a railing. This may suggest the Renunciation and the Enlightenment of prince Siddhārtha, simultaneously. The motif in **fig.3.6b**, located in the middle panel of the front face of West Pillar in the eastern gateway,⁵¹ depicts the four major events prior to his Departure; the second panel shows that he is departing in a chariot from the city gate. The event is indicated by a horse without a rider, suggesting the particular departure which resulted in attaining the Buddhahood.

Fig.3.7 at Piṭalkhorā (now in National Museum, Delhi) in the west of India, is the rider-less horse leaving the city gate. The forward movement of the horse is expressively indicated by the leg position. Two separate male figures: one in front of the horse and the other at the back, hold parasols and lead the horse. According the characteristics of the panel and the iconography applied, the panel is said to have been an earlier depiction than Sānchi and Amarāvati.⁵² However, in **fig.3.8a & 8b** at Amarāvati, the depiction appears in aniconic form as well as in the human figure. Whereas in **fig.3.8a**, the movement of the horse is rightward and, **fig.3.8b**, the same event is being represented leftward, both indicate the city gate,⁵³ having the rider-less horse over which a parasol is held. Contrary, **fig.3.8c & 8d**, two important reliefs from Amarāvati, belonging to 2nd century CE,

⁵⁰ Marshall and Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. I, 203, Vol. II, 40.2

⁵¹ Marshall and Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II, 50.a1

⁵² Parimoo, *Life of the Buddha in Indian Sculpture*, 76, P. 106

⁵³ *JātakaA*. 174

(British Museum), portray the same event in which presence of the prince is indicated by a human figure, above whom the parasol is held by an attendant to symbolize sovereignty. Whereas **fig.3.8c** depicts the event as a series of three events, **fig.3.8d** is depicted in a circular medallion.

At Amarāvati are other panels in which the Great Departure along with the Enlightenment is represented by footprints as in **fig.3.8e & 8f**.⁵⁴ Of the two parts of **fig.3.8f**, the former incident is marked by the footprint of the bodhisattva crossing the flooded river. There are two pairs of footprints on either shore of the river, and one in the middle suggesting the motion.

3.3.3 Great Enlightenment

The popular symbol to signify the Enlightenment of the Buddha was the Bodhi Tree under which the presence of the Buddha was symbolized by the vacant throne (*āsana*). According to Buddhist literature, the Buddha himself sanctioned the Great Wisdom Tree (*Mahābodhi Rukkha*) as a *cetiya* to be worshipped.⁵⁵ Railing at Bodh Gayā (**fig.3.9**) shows an early representation of the Bodhi Tree, which marked the Great Enlightenment.⁵⁶ The tree itself is depicted as surrounded by a stone railing, though no throne can be seen under it. Instead, two parasols, one above the other and decorated with garlands, mark the presence of the Buddha.

At Bhārhut, the Bodhi Tree as the central element or in combination with the vacant throne is variously illustrated to symbolize the Enlightenment as well as the

⁵⁴ Zimmer, *Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. I, 76-7, Vol. II Pl. 94, 96c

⁵⁵ See: Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddhist Iconography*, 4

⁵⁶ “My skin, in deed, and sinews, and bones wilt away, may flesh and blood in my body dry up, but till I attain to complete enlightenment this seat I will not leave” *JātakaA*. 96: Kramrisch, *Indian Sculpture*, Pl. IV, fig.18

Enlightened Buddha.⁵⁷ The panel in **fig.3.10** (outer face of the Prasenajith pillar) is labeled as *bhagavato saka munino bodho* (Bodhi tree of the Śākyamuni Buddha),⁵⁸ which defines the Enlightenment of the Buddha under the sacred Bodhi Tree. It is divided into two main compartments of which the upper section has a Bodhi Tree inside a circular chamber which is adorned with two parasols one above the other and decorated with garlands. The circular chamber is shown as an open-pillared circumambulation hall where devotees would pay homage to the Buddha. The lower compartment has a Bodhimāṇḍa (sprinkled with flowers), where the Buddha attained his supreme Enlightenment⁵⁹ at the foot of the Bodhi Tree to which the female devotees worship with the gesture of adoration (*namaskāra mudrā*). In addition, a pair of tridents (*trśūla*) has been placed to symbolize the Triple Gem: Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha. B.M. Barua supposes that the niches containing a parasol and a garland above the throne is a representation of *ratna-vedikā* or the jewel-seat; the elevated square platform.⁶⁰

Similar depiction is evident in **fig.3.11a**⁶¹ from Sānchi: a panel from the south pillar of east gateway where the trident is placed over the throne under the Bodhi Tree portraying the Enlightenment. This image is somewhat different from that on motif in the west end of the northern gateway (similar depiction is evident in the east end of the southern gateway) where the central object is the Bodhi Tree as in **fig.3.11b**.⁶² The vacant seat under the tree is filled with various objects of worship and there are two women on either side carrying something in their hands to offer to the Buddha. However, the

⁵⁷ Barua, *Bhārhut*, Vol. II, 5, Pl. XXXVII, fig. 32: Parimoo, 14

⁵⁸ Cunningham, *Stūpa of Bhārhut*, 45, Pl. XXX: Parimoo, fig 16

⁵⁹ Adrian Snodgrass, *The symbolism of Stūpa*, (Cornell: Cornell South Asia Program, 3rd printing, 1991), 257

⁶⁰ Barua, *Bhārhut*, Vol. II, 5

⁶¹ Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II, 51a

⁶² Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II, 31.4

fig.3.11c, on top of the west pillar of the northern gateway depicts the same event by a Bodhi Tree with a well-decorated Bodhighara, under which is placed a vacant throne decorated with streamers and garlands and covered by a parasol.⁶³ The particular attitude of the two female figures which is common to all three panels may suggest Sujātā's offering, recalling one episode of his Enlightenment.

Another episode of his Great Enlightenment that relates to the defeat of Māra is also depicted in Sānchi in the narrative style. **Fig.3.11d**⁶⁴ at the interior of the middle architrave of the northern gateway and **fig.3.11e**⁶⁵ on the middle section of the back of western gateway are better preserved with the particular occurrence. The presence of the Buddha in **fig.3.11d** is marked by the Bodhi Tree on the right, whereas the left half portrays Māra's horde of demons with large abnormal faces, and bulging bellies (sometimes with animal heads and one eye).⁶⁶ The second panel, as Sir John Marshall suggests, the *Sambodhi* or Enlightenment of the Śākyamuni Buddha is depicted by the Bodhi tree. In **fig.3.11e**, the Bodhi-tree in the upper half symbolizes the Great Enlightenment; while the panel is surrounded by a variety of incidents. However, the empty throne once again depicts the presence of the Buddha. Among the figures around the Bodhi Tree, the central one is probably Māra who is trying to tempt the Buddha while in any other theme, Sujātā is highlighted.

The Buddha being worshipped by various non-human beings after his

⁶³ Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II, 18.b1

⁶⁴ Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II, 29-2

⁶⁵ Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II, 61.3

⁶⁶ "Then Māra, the angel, mounted his elephant, two hundred and fifty leagues high named, "Girded with mountains." And he created himself a thousand arms, and seized all kinds of weapons. And of the remainder, too, of the army of Māra, no two took the same weapons; but assuming various colors and various forms, they went on to overwhelm the Great Being." *JātakaA*. 97

Enlightenment receives a significant attention at Sānchi. **Fig.3.11f**,⁶⁷ the back of the middle architrave of the eastern gateway shows the Buddha by the Bodhi Tree in the centre; while the lions, buffalos, deer, birds, some funky sheep with very human-looking faces flank by the right, a six-headed serpent figure representing the Nāgas along with other animals appear on the left side. Thus is illustrated the Buddha's Great Victory over the Māra, as elaborated in Nidānakathā.⁶⁸ **Fig.3.11g**⁶⁹ shows a panel from Sānchi's north pillar at the back of the western gateway in which "The Nāgas, Gāndharvas, etc., each urging his comrades on, went up to the Great Being at the Bo-tree's foot, and as they came they shouted for joy that the sage had won, that the tempter was overthrown."⁷⁰ The focus of all the rejoicing figures is the Bodhi Tree in the centre of the panel under which a throne is placed.

The episode of Sujātā's offerings to the Buddha on the day of his Enlightenment is a dominant portrayal at Amarāvati. **Fig.3.8f** thus symbolizes the Buddha with a Bodhi Tree to which she offers her bestowments.⁷¹ The relief consists of two parts: 1) The upper section depicts his departure by crossing the Neranjana River and 2) The lower motif indicates offerings by the female devotees. The second section of the relief is highlighted by the throne placed under the Bodhi Tree by which the presence of the Buddha is

⁶⁷ Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II, 45

⁶⁸ "...the company of Devas, when they saw that the hosts of Māra had fled, cried out: "Māras overcome! Siddhārtha the Prince has prevailed: Come let us honor the victor!" And the Nāgas, and the Winged Creatures, and the Devas, and the Brahmas, each urging his comrades on, went up to the great man at the Bo-tree's foot and they came..." *JātakaA.* 101-2

⁶⁹ Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II, 65.a2

⁷⁰ *JātakaA.* 101

⁷¹ *JātakaA.* 91-36

indicated. Douglas Barret emphasizes; “the panel bears a unique example of narrative composition and innovative genius on the part of the artist who created it.”⁷²

However, the defeat of Māra on the day of Enlightenment is differently illustrated at Amarāvati in **fig.3.12a** that it highlights his conversion to Buddhism. Here, too, the Buddha is depicted by a Bodhi Tree under which is placed the throne, whereas Māra rides on an elephant. Two figures having round eyes and another having the mouth on the belly (probably Māra’s sons) are hurling a club and an axe. The figure at the bottom right hand corner of the panel with the *vitarka mudrā* is assumed to be Māra having in verbal contest with the Buddha.⁷³ According to *Samyutta nikāya*, Māra sat down scratching the earth with a stick.⁷⁴ The standing female figure (with half of the face damaged) on the other side of the panel is regarded as one of the daughters of Māra.⁷⁵ **Fig.3.12b**,⁷⁶ a fragment pillar of Amarāvati (now in the Chennai Government Museum), depicts the same event, which highlights the Enlightenment in which the Buddha’s presence is marked by an empty throne and flaming pillar surmounted by a trident (*triśūla*). At the bottom left corner, Māra is shown twice before the empty throne. According to Nidānakathā, he first attacked the throne with the cudgel in his right hand; and next he prostrated himself before the throne.⁷⁷

⁷² Douglas Barret, *Sculptures from Amarāvati from the British Museum*, 1954. Reprint. (London: Trustees of the British museum, 1959), Pl., XXV: C. Sivaramamurti, *Amarāvati Mode of Sculpture*, Bulletin of the Madras Government Museum, New Series, General Section, Vol. xi, No.1, Madras: Government Press, 1976, 38, Pl. LIV

⁷³ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, “Buddhist Reliefs from Nāgārjunakonda and Amarāvati,” *Rūpam- Journal of the Oriental Art*, No.38-39. April-July (1929), 70-1: See also C. Sivaramamurti, *Amarāvati Mode of Sculpture*, Pl. XLII

⁷⁴ *SR*. Vol. I. *Māra Samyutta vagga*. 04. *Satta Vassa sutta*.185-6: T. O. Ling, *Buddhism and Mythology of Evil: A Study of Theravāda Buddhism*. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1962), 127

⁷⁵ Parimoo, *Life of the Buddha in Indian Sculpture*, 18 fig. 21

⁷⁶ Image courtesy: Government museum, Chennai, India.

⁷⁷ *JātakaA*. 100-101

3.3.4 The First Sermon

The Wheel is the symbol which marked the historical event of the Buddha's First Sermon: he "turned the Wheel of Dharma" by preaching his first sermon (The Four Noble Truths) at the Deer-Park in Isipatana (Sārnāth near modern Benares).⁷⁸ To mark the particular event, the sculptor employed the twelve-spoked wheel by which it is assumed that the twelve-linked Dependent Co-origination was represented. Ananda Coomaraswamy justifies the particular application with the term *Cakravartin* as an essential name for the Buddha, which emphasizes the 'First turning of the Wheel of the Word.'⁷⁹ Thus, when the Wheel (*dharmacakra*) is depicted in Buddhist art, it explores two aspects: 1) the general indication that symbolizes the Buddha's Teachings, 2) The notion of *cakravarti* which highlights the superhuman qualities of the Buddha. In addition to the wheel as the central element, the deliverance of the first discourse is signified by the presence of two deer below the throne with the Wheel of Dharma on either side, and worshipped by kinnaras as well as animals. It is occasionally combined with the trident (*triśūla*) as well as the central position of the Buddha's footprint.

At Bhārhut, there are two important illustrations of the First Sermon: 1) on top of the Prasenajit Pillar as in **fig.3.13a** and 2) a medallion in a mortise of an octagonal pillar as in **fig.3.13b** which contain a massive wheel. The inscription below the panel of the Prasenajit Pillar (**fig.3.13a**) describes the two major scenes of the panel a) *bhagavato dhammacakkam* b) *rājā pasenadi kosalo*.⁸⁰ A different depiction in **fig.3.13b** highlights a bell-capital bearing a large wheel on its top, along with the design of full-blown lotus

⁷⁸ *Jātaka*A.111-12

⁷⁹ Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddhist Iconography*, 25-33: Sivaramamurti, *Amarāvati Mode of Sculpture*, 57

⁸⁰ Cunningham, *Stūpa of Bhārhut*, 110-11: Barua, *Bhārhut*, Vol. II. 46, fig. 52

around the wheel. The abacus bears two antelopes that are the significant indications of the Deer-Park. The wheel has eighteen spokes and is decorated with large hanging garlands on either side. Similar objects can be seen in the hands of the devotees, who “worship the symbol on each side.”⁸¹

At Sānchi the Wheel of Dharma receives the highest position over the centre of gateways and many other architectural indications, thus giving it an important place among Buddhist symbols.⁸² **Fig.3.14a** (west pillar of the southern gateway)⁸³ & **14b**⁸⁴ (middle architrave of the western gateway) have the Wheel of Dharma, “worshipped by a number of devotees.”⁸⁵ The wheel in **fig.3.14a** contains thirty-two spokes and is covered by a parasol decorated with garlands of flowers. The eight deer below the symbol indicates Migadāya, the deer park, where the Buddha delivered the First Sermon. **Fig.3.14b** instead occupies the Wheel of Dharma on a throne on either side of which are devotees with the gesture of adoration (*namaskāra*) and two deer. The front of the upright pillar of northern gateway (**fig.3.14c**)⁸⁶ and the fragmentary section of the coping stone in west end of the northern gateway (**fig.3.14d**)⁸⁷ are decorated with four lions back to back, indicating the structural characteristics of the Aśokan pillar of Sārnāth. The lion symbols, decorated with two parasols and garlands on either side, signify the association of the Buddha’s discourses to the roar of a lion (*Sīhanāda*—as several discourses are named) and may mark the First Sermon. In the **fig.3.14d**, the *dharmacakra* on a pillar is set on an

⁸¹ Barua, Vol. II, 26-7, fig. 44

⁸² William Simpson, *The Buddhist Praying-Wheel: A Collection of materials bearing upon the symbolism of Wheel and Circular movements in custom and religious rituals*. (London: MacMillan and Co., 1896), 40

⁸³ Marshall and Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II, 18.a1

⁸⁴ Marshall and Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II, 55.2

⁸⁵ Debala Mitra, *Sānchi*, 2nd ed.(New Delhi: Archeological Survey of India, Department of Archaeology, 1965), 46

⁸⁶ Marshall and Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II, 22.3

⁸⁷ Marshall and Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II, 27.2

empty throne with a pair of footprints (*Buddhapāda*) on it, is similar to that in **fig.3.14b**. The wheel is distinguished by the number of spokes being twenty-seven. However, **fig.3.14e** on top of the northern gateway depicts the trident atop the Wheel of Law marking the three jewels, Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha.

At Amarāvati, the event is depicted in a medallion by a flame of fire as in the **fig.3.15a & 15b**⁸⁸ in which the presence of the Buddha is marked by a flaming pillar surmounted by the three jewels (*triratna*) above an empty throne with cushion surrounded by a double border of lotus petals. Seated and standing around the pillar are number of male figures, both monks and laity, mostly with hands raised in the gesture of “reverent salutation” (*anjali mudrā*). The two attendants stand on either side of the throne in **fig.3.15a** hold chowries (fly whisks) in honor of the Buddha.

3.3.5 *Parinirvāna*

The demise of the Buddha is described in detail in the *Mahāparinibbāna sutta* which refers to Lumbiṇi, Bodh Gayā, Isipatana and Kusinārā` as the four important places for pilgrimage making with regard to the four major events in the Buddha’s life (the Birth, the Enlightenment, the First Sermon, and the Demise).⁸⁹ Thus, the cremation of the Buddha’s bodily remains and the erection of *stūpas* to enshrine relics such as bones and teeth in the relic chambers became a popular Buddhist practice. Thus far, the *stūpa* was the symbol of the Buddha’s demise, which has been employed significantly in the early Buddhist art in India.

⁸⁸ Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddhist Iconography*, 10, Pl. II fig.4 & 6

⁸⁹ *Dn.II.16. Mahāparinibbāna sutta*, Part V.16-20

At Bhārhut, the passing away of the Buddha is signified by a *stūpa* decorated with garlands and flowers (**fig.3.16a**) in an upper bas-relief of the Prasenajith pillar. On top of the *stūpa* is a square platform while the hemispherical dome is decorated with a railing on the base and the two *dharmacakras* are decorated with two flags, and garlands respectively. In **fig.3.16b** (Freer Galley of Art, Washington), the *stūpa* is decorated with two lotus-like wheels, the symbol of *dharmacakra* with hanging garlands on either side. Significantly, in both panels, the frame of the *stūpa* stands out in front of the panel and in between the two Sāla Trees, highlighting its importance, probably marking the two trees in between which the Buddha is said to have passed away.⁹⁰ As remarked by Barua, “If the *stūpa* [is] taken as the mere symbol of the Buddha’s presence, the scene is more or less than that of the Buddha’s final passing away on a couch laid down between the twin Sāla Trees in the grove of the Malla.”⁹¹

The same symbol is differently employed at Sānchi, in the middle architrave of the southern gateway; the significance is the story connected with Aśoka's visit to the *stūpa* at Rāmagrāma where the Buddha’s relics were deposited when he demised (**fig.3.17a**).⁹² Similar depiction is evident in **fig.3.17b**⁹³ on the top architrave of the front of the eastern gateway. The incident is depicted by a *stūpa*; standing side by side with the *stūpas* and Bodhi trees of six previous Buddhas. The significance of the illustration is the Bodhi Tree of Śākyamuni Buddha (*aśvatta—figus religiosa*) and that of the Kāsyapa Buddha (*nygrodha—figus Indica*). However, **fig.3.17c**, from the eastern face of the west pillar of the northern gateway at Sānchi may represent an event after the demise of the

⁹⁰ DN.16. *Mahāparinibbāna sutta*. Part III, 1-4

⁹¹ Barua, *Bhārhut*, Vol. II. 54, fig. 54, 55

⁹² Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II, 11.2

⁹³ Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II,40.1

Buddha when the Malla kings of Kusinagara enshrined their share of the relics in a stūpa.⁹⁴ In this panel, the *stūpa*, with two terraces and three railings with a gateway at the outermost railing, suggests the chamber in which they deposited relics, does not mark the presence of the Buddha. The dramatic movement and the revering gestures purely suggest the veneration of the Buddha's relics by devotees, which is the final episode of his life. Similar depictions are evident; 1) on the back of the bottom die (east end) of the northern gateway (**fig.3.17d**),⁹⁵ in which the devotees pay their respect to the *stūpa* with the gesture of reverence (*namaskāra*). While two devotees are on the upper terrace of the stūpa, three remain in the lower terrace with the same gesture of respect. 2) On the bottom (left) die of the west end of southern gateway (**fig.3.17e**)⁹⁶ the Buddha's relics are worshipped by devotees (probably the nāga kings). Its *harmikā* is adorned as usual with merlons, and is surmounted by umbrellas at four corners, and topped by another umbrella of larger size in the center. 3) On the bottom (right) die of the back of the eastern gateway (**fig.3.17f**),⁹⁷ a male and a female devotee are adorning the relics of the Buddha with the gesture of veneration (*namaskāra*), which is marked by the symbols of *stūpa*. A different depiction of the same incident is evident in **fig.3.17g**⁹⁸ on the lowest architrave of the back of the eastern gateway indicating the adoration of the relics by animals.

What is special in Amarāvati in depicting the same event is its epitomized life of the Buddha. **Fig.3.18a** in a pillar relief belonging to the 2nd century CE highlights the *parinirvāna* by the symbol of the *stūpa* while presenting the three major events: the

⁹⁴ Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II .36.c1

⁹⁵ Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II. 32.3

⁹⁶ Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II. 12.5

⁹⁷ Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II. 48.4 Similar motifs are evident on the top two dies at the back of the western gateway.

⁹⁸ Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II. 46.3

Enlightenment, the First Sermon, and the Great Demise in one relief in an ascending sequence. The Enlightenment is illustrated by the throne in front of the Bodhi tree, the First Sermon by a throne in front of the pillar on which is placed the Wheel of Dhamma (*dharmacakra*), and the *parinirvāna* by a decorated *stūpa*, which is worshipped by devotees as well as non-human figures. **Fig.3.18b** illustrates another pillar relief from Amarāvati depicting the demise by a *stūpa* decorated with garlands and flowers, worshipped by non-human and divine beings in the air.

3.3.6 Miracles ascribed to the Buddha

Among the numerous miracles attributed to the Buddha by tradition, the twin miracle of emitting fire and water from the body of the Buddha (*yamaka-prātihārya*), the taming of the Kasyapas, the preaching of Abhidharma to his mother, queen Māyā, in Tāvatiṃsā Heaven (*Devārohaṇa*), and the descent to Saṅkassa from Tāvatiṃsā (*Devārāadhanā*) have received the attention of the early Buddhist artist in the sites discussed above as well as in few other places.

Fig.3.19 shows the **Twin miracle** as depicted in the Bhārhut *stūpa* on the right side of the lower bas-relief of the Ajātasatru pillar, in which the Buddha is represented by a jeweled seat. The throne or the cubical seat which bears numerous offerings of leaves and flowers made by the devotees is covered by a parasol, decorated with hanging garlands, at the foot of a full-grown mango tree.⁹⁹ Witnessing the particular miracle, nine men are standing in front of the seat, and six others on either side of the throne: some are

⁹⁹ According to the legend, the Buddha performed the Twin-Miracle under the mango tree of the Ganda's garden. See *Dha.* V-VI, 41: *JātakaA.* 114: Barua, *Bhārhut*, Part II, 34, fig. 46

in the gesture of adoration (*namaskāra mudrā*) while some are placing their hands below their chins.

Fig.3.20¹⁰⁰ shows a different episode of the miracle in pillar reliefs at Sānchi in the front of the east pillar of northern gateway. Whereas the symbolical presence of the Buddha is marked by the two vacant seats: one bigger seat above the panel and a small seat at a lower level.¹⁰¹ In between the two seats, the miraculous Mango Tree, weighed down with fruit, is depicted under a parasol with a throne placed underneath. The mango tree is placed in the middle of the composition, next to the throne under a parasol (*catra*), representing the Buddha. The devotees (probably the king Prasenajit in the right hand corner, his viceroy in the left hand corner, and two courtiers) venerate the seat and the Bodhi tree in the *anjālī mudrā* while two attendants are holding a parasol (*catra*) above the upper seat (*silāpatha*). **Fig.3.21**¹⁰² in the south pillar of Sānchi eastern gateway, portrays the hermitage of **Uruvela-Kassapa** where the Buddha visited and asked if he could spend the night in the hut in which the sacrificial fire was kept burning. The presence of the Buddha, in this panel, is marked by the stone slab between the five-headed serpent and the sacrificial fire.

According to the *Yamakaprātihārya vattu* of the *Dhammapada* commentary, the Buddha performed the twin-miracle at Srāvastī, and then went up to the Heaven of Thirty-Three gods **to preach the Abhidharma to his mother** and other gods.¹⁰³ **Fig.3.22** in the corner of the Ajātasatru pillar at Bhārhut illustrates this event where the Buddha's presence is marked by the jeweled cubical throne, covered up with a flower design

¹⁰⁰ Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II, 34.a1

¹⁰¹ Parimoo, *Life of Buddha in Indian Sculpture*, 44

¹⁰² Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol II. 52.a2

¹⁰³ *Dha.* V-VI, 47-8

between three leaf stripes or garland marks¹⁰⁴ under the sacred Bodhi Tree. The throne is also canopied by a parasol with garlands hanging from its rim. The event is particularly identified by the inscription below as the *Devārohaṇa* which is translated as the “Ascent of the Buddha to the World of Gods.”¹⁰⁵

The **Descent from Tuṣita Heaven to Saṅkassa**¹⁰⁶ was either depicted in connection with the miracle of Srāvasti as described or in isolation as individual panels. **Fig.3.23** in the Ajātasatru pillar at Bhārhut shows the Buddha’s arrival at Saṅkassa by three ladders accompanied by Śakra and Brahma.¹⁰⁷ But none of them appear in the human form. The Buddha’s appearance is indicated by a footprint with the Wheel of Dharma on the top step of the ladder and another at the bottom-step. A pillar motif of Sānchi northern gateway depicts the same event as shown in **fig.3.24**¹⁰⁸ by a single staircase with a three-dimensional view, presenting the Buddha’s descent by the Bodhi tree with the vacant throne on top as well as bottom steps resembling its gradual movement from heaven to the earth. John Marshall notes “It may be added that the trees shading the thrones are two *ficus*, and that the lower one is set between a Champaka (left) and a mango-tree (right): that we have no triple ladder...but an attempt at showing in perspective a single staircase edged with two rails...that we may identify Indra at the left and Brahma at the right, once or more represented on each side of the celestial tree, throne, and staircase...raising their hands.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ Barua, *Bhārhut*, Vol. II. 36, fig. 47

¹⁰⁵ Barua, *Bhārhut*, Vol. II 37-8

¹⁰⁶ *Dha*. Vol. V-VI 52-4 (See chap. II. n.92).

¹⁰⁷ Barua, *Bhārhut*, Vol. II. 38-9, fig. 48

¹⁰⁸ Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Part II. 34.c

¹⁰⁹ Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Part. I. 221

3.3.7 Other events in the Life of the Buddha

Several other events in the life of the Buddha are also illustrated in the sites under discussion. **The Buddha's Return to Kapilavastu** at the invitation of his father, king Suddhodana, after seven years of his Enlightenment¹¹⁰ is illustrated in a bas-relief at Amarāvati (**fig.3.25**) with Yaśodharā adorning the Buddha, represented by a jeweled throne with a pillar topped with a trident (*triśūla*). **Fig.3.26a**¹¹¹ (in a pillar of eastern gateway) & **26b**¹¹² (in the west pillar of the northern gateway) at Sānchi depict the same event in narrative style. In **fig.3.26a**, the trunk of an elephant appears between the roofs of the two houses and a woman sleeping in bed on the terrace, apparently to suggest the dream of Māyā. In the lower panel the presence of the Buddha is marked by the symbol of a Bodhi tree adorned by the king and his group.¹¹³ In **fig.3.26b** what is depicted is the Buddha's discourse at Nyagrodha-ārāma.¹¹⁴ The central object of the panel is the Nyagrodha (*ficus Indica*) tree under which the decorated vacant throne is placed.¹¹⁵ The King Suddhodana is identified by the parasol carried by the attendants. The courtiers and the king are shown approaching the Buddha represented by a Bodhi tree with a vacant throne under it while some devotees pay their respect to the Buddha. The depiction of **fig.3.26c** (west pillar of the northern gateway) on the other hand, is the gathering of king Suddhodana, and attendants, along with 'Devaputras or yakṣas of human type'¹¹⁶ to welcome the arrival of the Buddha to Kapilavastu.

¹¹⁰ *Jātaka*A.122-127

¹¹¹ Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II.50.a1

¹¹² Marshall & Foucher *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II. 35.a2

¹¹³ Parimoo, *Life of Buddha in Indian Sculpture*, 45

¹¹⁴ Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. I.205

¹¹⁵ Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II. 35.a2

¹¹⁶ Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II.36.c3

The Donation of Jetavana by Anāthapiṇḍika¹¹⁷ is a highlighted illustration at Bodh Gayā, Bhārhut, and Sānchi. **Fig.3.27** at Bodh Gayā, belonging to the 2nd century BCE, shows a number of trees representing the Jeta grove: a man bringing a basket of gold coins at the left corner. The man at the right is paving gold coins around the Bodhi Tree symbolizing the Buddha. **Fig.3.28** illustrates the same event in a pillar medallion at Bhārhut (now at the Calcutta Museum), which is labeled with an inscription: *jetavana anāthapiṇḍiko deti koti samattatena keta* (“Anāthapiṇḍika dedicates Prince Jeta’s garden after purchasing it with a layer of crores.”)¹¹⁸ The vihāras are named *Kosambakuti* and *gandhakuti*.¹¹⁹ The actual ritual of donating the monastery to the Buddha is marked with the pouring of water by Anāthapiṇḍika to the Bodhi tree which represents the Buddha.¹²⁰ **Fig.3.29** in the pillar of the northern gateway at Sānchi is identified as the same event with the figure in middle paving gold coins whereas the two figures on either side are identified as Anāthapiṇḍika and Jeta paying reverence to the two residences.¹²¹ Vacant thrones which are placed in front of each residence indicate the Buddha staying in the monastery.

In addition, some important events relating to the Buddha’s life are depicted in different sites: 1) **Fig.3.30** at Amarāvati depicts a rare illustration of **the Buddha’s subduing Nālāgiri**. The elephant is shown kneeling before the Buddha who is represented by a flaming pillar (now broken off), 2) **Fig.3.31** at the exterior of the northern gateway of Sānchi represents the **monkey’s offering honey to the Buddha** in the Parileyya forest wherein the Buddha’s presence is symbolized by the Bodhi tree with

¹¹⁷ *JātakaA.* 130-31

¹¹⁸ Cunningham, *Stūpa of Bhārhut.* 84: Barua, *Bhārhut*, Part II.27,fig. 45

¹¹⁹ Cunningham, *Stūpa of Bhārhut.* 85: Barua, *Bhārhut*, Part II. 27-8

¹²⁰ Parimoo, 47: Kramrisch, *Indian Sculpture.*27, Pl. IV, fig. 16

¹²¹ Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol. II.36.c2

a vacant throne under it,¹²² and 3) **Fig.3.32 & 33**, an early representation of **the visit of Nāga Erapatra**. **Fig.3.32** is a railing pillar at Bodh Gayā in which a Bodhi tree is depicted to the right of the panel on a higher base symbolizing the presence of the Buddha, while **fig.3.33** from Bhārhut represents the Buddha by an empty throne, surmounted by a Bodhi tree, and graced with a parasol. The panel is inscribed as *Erapato Nāga Rājo Bhagavato Vandate* (Erapata Nāga Raja’s worship of the Buddha).¹²³

Some important events relating to each site are the royal visits to the Buddha, which are differently depicted in the sites under examination. Evidently, **fig.3.34**, a corner pillar of the western gateway at Bhārhut, records **the Visit of King Ajātasatru** to the Buddha as narrated in the *Sāmaññaphala sutta* of *Dīgha Nikāya*.¹²⁴ Here the Buddha is represented by a Bodhi tree and a vacant throne on which are the footprints. The inscription: *Ajāta Satu Bhagavato Vandate* (Ajatasat worships of the Buddha) identifies the panel. Similarly represented at Bhārhut is **King Prasenjit’s Visit** to the Buddha on the inner face of a pillar at the south gate as in **fig.3.13a**. The main feature of the panel is a large wheel, decorated with a hanging garland that symbolizes the Wheel of Dhamma as described in the inscription: *Bhagavato Dhamma Cakkam*, (Buddha’s Dharma Cakra).¹²⁵ B.M. Barua states; “this Symbol is probably intended as a type of advancement of the Buddhist faith, thus become the emblem of the Buddha, the Teacher, in the same way that the *Bodhimāṇḍa* is used as the symbol of Buddha the Ascetic.”¹²⁶ The same incident is illustrated on a pillar of the northern gateway of Sānchi where the king

¹²² Mitra, *Sānchi*. 38

¹²³ Cunningham, *Stūpa of Bhārhut*. 11: Barua, *Bhārhut*. Vol. II. 64-5, fig. 69 (Note: The author describes in the text the relating image as scene 67. But the correct illustration when compared to Alexander Cunningham’s *Stūpa of Bhārhut* (1962) is the scene 69).

¹²⁴ See *DN. I Sāmaññaphala sutta*, 47-51: Cunningham, *Stūpa of Bhārhut*. 89: Barua, *Bhārhut*, Part II. 42, fig. 51

¹²⁵ Cunningham, *Stūpa of Bhārhut*, 11, 90, Pl. XIII & LIV: *JātakaA*. 111-12 (see chap. III. n.78)

¹²⁶ Barua, *Bhārhut*. Vol. II, 46

Presenajit visits the Buddha at Srāvastī, the capital of Kosala (**Fig.3.35**).¹²⁷ The presence of the Buddha is depicted by the vacant throne.

Typical representation of the Buddha's historical career is the **Buddha's meeting with God Sakra**. The place the particular meeting took place was the *Indrasāla* cave which is the prominent feature in the depictions. **Fig.3.36** indicates the Buddha's presence at the *Indrasāla* cave in a bas-relief on a pillar at Bhārhut where the presence of the Buddha is marked in the panel by a cubical throne decorated with flowers and garland marks. A parasol behind the throne is also decorated with garlands. Śakra and other figures are seated cross-legged with joined hands in the attribute of reverence (*namaskāra*). **Fig.3.37** is how the event is represented on the inner face of the east pillar of the northern gateway at Sānchi, in which the Buddha is depicted by a cubical throne decorated with flowers and garlands, and a parasol decorated with garlands behind the throne. "Here the cave is a semi-artificial hypogeum."¹²⁸ The cave is depicted in an upper level where the vacant throne is placed. The male figure with the turban on the head, is sitting in front of the throne in a dramatic position of a conversation with the person on the throne, though the person is invisible. According to Marshall, the Śakra is depicted here twice: in front of the throne as well as with his group.

Amidst this array of panels and medallions spanning at least three hundred years, in a set of geographically far-flung Buddhist sites are evident some specific depictions where the Buddha is represented in both aniconic and iconic form in the same panel, proving the intentional application of both aniconic and iconic elements in one piece. In **fig.3.38** from Amarāvati, the Buddha's presence is marked by the symbol of stūpa as well

¹²⁷ Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol II. 34.b1

¹²⁸ Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Sānchi*, Vol II. 35.b2

as in the anthropomorphic form: in the standing and seated posture. From the left is a splendidly active group leaving through an elaborate city gate in a brick wall indicating the visiting of king Suddhodana to the Buddha's birth place, which is symbolized by a *stūpa*. To the right of the *stūpa*, two incidents are evident 1) The Buddha performs the miracle of levitation before a group of adoring monks and laity. 2) The Buddha with his followers preaches to his father and the attendants, all of whom raise their hands in the gesture of veneration (*anjālī mudrā*).¹²⁹ In both incidents, the Buddha is represented in the human form. The significance is highlighted by Douglas Barret, "the Buddha is here represented three times symbolically and iconically, without his usual halo elaborated in Gandhāra art."¹³⁰ Contrary, in **fig.3.39a** from Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, the Buddha is seated in a particular posture of *badrāsana/ pralambhapādāsana* in which the legs are hanged down from the seat, preaching the disciples who are in the mode of revering the Buddha in the gesture of veneration (*namskāra/ anjālī*),¹³¹ particularly appearing for the first time in the Indian art. **Fig.3.39b**, on the other hand, depicts the Buddha in the cross-legged position (*padmāsana*), which is obviously evident in its northern regional development in Gandhāra and Mathurā. "What seems clear, at any rate, is that early Buddhists had a complex understanding of both the form and function of representation of the Buddha, and that any attempt to articulate a univocal theory of early Buddhist art is probably misguided, precisely because of the complex interactions of original intent, ritual and aesthetic context, and individual disposition."¹³²

¹²⁹ Knox, *Amarāvati: Buddhist Sculpture from the Great Stūpa*. 93, Pl. 36

¹³⁰ Barret, *Sculptures from Amarāvati from the British Museum*. 67

¹³¹ Verma, *Early Historical and Visual Flux at Bagh*, Pl. 22

¹³² Jacob N. Kinnard, *The Emergence of Buddhism*. (USA: Greenwood Press, 2006), 48-9

What is attempted in this section is to highlight that the Buddhist art of India as exemplified by the sculptures of Bodh Gayā, Bhārhut, Sānchi, Amarāvati, and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, is characterized by three very important features:

1. Using art for both ornamentation and instruction; stories from the life of the Buddha were graphically presented in a large number of panels and the same events have been repeated in all or if not many of the aforementioned sites.
2. Whatever restriction or reluctance that is applied to depict the Buddha image in human form did not preclude the artist from bringing the Buddha appropriately into each panel.
3. A number of symbols, on which a widespread and long-lasting consensus had been inexistence, were used in such panels to represent the Buddha and these symbols included the Bodhi Tree, the parasol, the vacant seat or throne, the footprints, the Wheel of Dhamma, the trident, and the column of fire.

The evidence from Amarāvati is particularly important because the use of symbols in place of the image of the Buddha had continued well until the third century CE. that is at least two centuries after the Buddha image appeared in the Gandhāra region to the west of India. It is also at Amarāvati that evidence is found for the transition from the aniconic to iconic representation of the Buddha in the same site. Considering this narrative elaboration of sequential events, some scholars argue that the particular nature is an influence of Theravāda School where they constructed their own image of the Buddha, referring to the Pāli chronicle, since they were fully interested in the cult of

image.¹³³ Some scholars even argue that the particular tendency was also acceptable to some Mahāyānists.¹³⁴

It is therefore suggestive that reproduction of the past events. Kanoko Tanaka emphasizes;

[I]f these were going in front of the [spectator's] eyes by the early Buddhist sculptors was of success by means of an artistic creation to visualize that we are seeing through our minds. Therefore, "the more the pilgrims of those days were moved by gazing at these places... and eventually it might have created a style of *Buddhist art*."¹³⁵

What should be examined in the present study is to scrutinize the Sri Lankan evidence to confirm any semblance or inspiration upon Sri Lankan Buddhist art.

3.4 Current theories on the origin of the Buddha image in India

The foregoing discussion on aniconic representations of the Buddha in the early phase of Indian Buddhist art clearly shows how the Indian artist had dealt with the challenge of portraying the life of the "Buddha without Buddha,"¹³⁶ that makes the Buddhist sources which date the image of the Buddha to his lifetime or near about less reliable.¹³⁷ The *vinaya* texts of the Sarvāstivādins are in that category and are contradicted by earlier Buddhist texts.¹³⁸ So is the account in the Chinese version of the *Āṅguttara nikāya*, which ascribes to king Udayana the initiative of having a Buddha

¹³³ Gregory Schopen, "Mahayana in Indian Inscriptions" *Indo-Iranian journal*, 21, No. 01 (January 1979), 16

¹³⁴ Lewis R. Lancaster, "An Early Mahayana Sermon about the Body of the Buddha and the Making of Images" *Artibus Asiae* 36, No. 04(1974), 291, accessed: 05/05/2010 Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3249700>

¹³⁵ Kanoko Tanaka, *Absence of the Buddha Image in Early Buddhist Art towards its significance in Comparative Religion*. (Delhi: D.K. Print World, 1998), 9

¹³⁶ Foucher, *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art*. 4-5

¹³⁷ J.C. Huntington, "The Origin of the Buddha Image: Early Image Traditions and the Concept of *Buddhadar Śānapunyā*" *Studies in Buddhist Art in South Asia*, ed., A. K. Narain. (Delhi: Kanak Publications), 1985, 27

¹³⁸ Rowland, *The Evolution of the Buddha Image*. 6

image made of sandalwood with the approval of the Buddha.¹³⁹ Lewis R. Lancaster in his *An Early Mahayana Sermon about the Body of the Buddha and the Making of Images* reveals an exceptional example of a Chinese *sūtra* namely *Tao-hsing-pan-jo chin*, being a translation from the *aṣṭasāhasrikā prajñā pāramitā sūtra* by a monk named Lokakṣema, providing the following literary information regarding the body of the Buddha which again originated in Mahāyāna circles:

The Buddha's body is like the images which men make after the Nirvāna of the Buddha. When they see these images, there is not one of them who does not bow down and make offering. These images are upright and handsome; they perfectly resemble the Buddha and when men see them they all rejoice and take flowers and incense to revere them. O Noble One, would you say that the Buddha's spirit is in the image?¹⁴⁰

However, in discussing the origin of the Buddha image, Alfred Foucher, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Benjamin Rowland, as well as many other scholars ascribe no credibility to these Sarvāstivādin sources.¹⁴¹ Their main argument is why it was necessary to accomplish aniconic symbols for such a long period if the antiquity of the Buddha image was already implied by these sources. Thus, the controversial subject among the scholars is to determine whether the Buddha image was first introduced in Gandhāra or Mathurā. Two theories have emerged:

- 1) The Graeco-Bactrian background which evolved during the 1st century CE under the influence of Kushans, in the region of Gandhāra.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ While the reference of Fa Xian emphasizes the intervention of king Prasenajith for making a sandalwood image and placed at Jetavanārāma at Srāvastī, the records of Xuan Zang claims its occurrence in a large vihāra at Kosambi where the king Udayana initiated the making of the Buddha image. See: Rowland, *The Evolution of the Buddha Image*. 1: Padmanabh S. Jaini, "On the Origin of the Buddha Image" *Collected Papers on Buddhist Studies*. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 2001), 331-2: Robert F. Sharf, "The Scripture on the Production of the Buddha Images" *The Religions of China in Practice*, ed., Donald S. Lopez. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 262 (see Ch.4. n.20 & 21)

¹⁴⁰ Lancaster, "An Early Mahayana Sermon about the Body of the Buddha and the Making of Images" 290

¹⁴¹ Jaini, "On the Origin of the Buddha Image" 332

¹⁴² Foucher, *The Beginning of Buddhist Art*, 24

- 2) The impact of the *yakṣa* cult during the 2nd century BCE in Mathurā providing a prototype for the Buddha image.¹⁴³

In 1914, the pioneering scholar of Buddhist art, Alfred Foucher, concluded in his *Beginning of the Buddhist Art*, that the Buddha image originated in Gandhāra under the patronage of Kushans with the Graeco-Bactrian influence. He recognized the “striking feature of the old Buddhist school” carrying out the strange undertaking of representing the life of the Buddha without Buddha.¹⁴⁴ His assumption strongly influenced the particular formulation of ‘aniconic theses’ in Indian Buddhist art that lead the scholars to identify the Buddhist symbols as the representation of the Buddha in a non-anthropomorphic form.¹⁴⁵ He observed, “It is established on the written testimony of the artists themselves. Those of Bhārhut inform us by an inscription, that such a person on his knee before a throne is rendering homage to the Blessed one.” Without exception, the throne is vacant; at the most, there is a symbol underscoring the invisible presence of Buddha.”¹⁴⁶ He further stressed that “such is the indisputable fact of which every history of Buddhist art will have the outset to render account.”¹⁴⁷ By putting forward such an account he emphasizes;

[T]he Hellenized sculptors of the north-west, strangers to the native tradition of Central India satisfied to the full or even outwent, the wishes of their Buddhist patrons by creating for their use the Indo-Greek type of Buddha. Immediately their colleagues of the low country, seduced by this wonderful innovation, greeted with no less enthusiasm than the laity the rapture of the magic charm which had

¹⁴³ Ananda Coomaraswamy, *Origin of the Buddha Image*. (Calcutta, University Of Calcutta, 1970), 11-14 (The article was first published in *The Art Bulletin*. (College of Art Association of America, Ney York University), Vol. IX. No.4 (June, 1927), 297-8. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3046550>. Accessed 05/10/2010

¹⁴⁴ Foucher, *The Beginning of Buddhist Art*, 4

¹⁴⁵ Kinnard, *The Emergence of Buddhism*, 48

¹⁴⁶ Foucher, *The Beginning of Buddhist Art* 4-5: Cunningham, *Stūpa of Bhārhut*, Pl. XIII-XVII

¹⁴⁷ Foucher, *The Beginning of Buddhist Art*, 5

weighted so heavily and so long upon the face of the great diffusion of the new type.¹⁴⁸

Relying on the particular characteristics of the Indo-Greek images that evolved throughout the region, Foucher suggests that the superior heritage of Greek sculpture stimulated the anthropomorphic images of the Buddha in India.¹⁴⁹

Ananda Coomaraswamy, opposing this argument in 1927 concluded that Mathurā had created its own Buddha image independently under the influence of the native cult worship of the image of *yakṣas* rather than the Graeco-Bactrian model. His basic argument was that the earliest images of each region bore its own local type of image, thus maintaining in each case the indigenous craftsmanship.¹⁵⁰ As regards the *yakṣa* cult, the evidence comes from the Buddhist site of Bhārhut, which had images of many *yakṣas* and *yakṣinīs* whose identity was indicated with inscriptions. Their appearance as guardian deities is evident from the Bhārhut inscriptions found below the statues of such *yakṣas* and *yakṣinīs*: “*Ajakalaka yakho, kupiro yakkha, Chada yakṣi, Suchilomā, Virūdaka, Ganjito, and Sudana* to whom the guardianship of the gates were entrusted.”¹⁵¹

Coomaraswamy further pointed out that the Gandhāra and the Mathurā traditions have nothing in common and no Gandhāran influence is to be seen in Mathurā images. He thus states;

We can hardly assume so much misunderstanding as M. Foucher imputes without more proof; and nothing is more common than for a physical peculiarity to be exaggerated in art for the sake of emphasis. I suggest accordingly that the cranial protuberance may be an original feature of the Buddha type, and not a later development... One other peculiarity of the Buddha head will be observed here in

¹⁴⁸ Foucher, *The Beginning of Buddhist Art*, 24

¹⁴⁹ Foucher, *The Beginning of Buddhist Art*, 111-37

¹⁵⁰ Coomaraswamy, *The Origin of the Buddha Image*, 14-6

¹⁵¹ L.de Soyza Mudliyar, “Notes on Certain Jātaka relative to the Sculptures recently discovered in North India,” *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, ed., The honorary Secretary. (Colombo: Government printer) Vol. X No.35, (1887), 185

the elongated ear lobes... by the weight of the earrings worn, as may be observed in many parts of India at the present day, and the ears of Siddhartha, being elongated in the same way, naturally remain so when he puts off his royal garb and becomes a monk, and finally a Buddha.¹⁵²

In 1933, Stella Kramricsh examined the particular issue in her study of the *Indian Sculpture* and revealed that its origin is a result of linear development of Buddhist art. She emphatically states that “the tendency towards image worship amongst the masses which had maintained this attitude from the early days, such as those of the Indus civilization. *Yakṣa* statues, for instance, although distinctly no images, may nevertheless have been worshipped by the people.”¹⁵³ She traces the evidence from the existing religious traditions of the particular period where restrictions followed for non-existence of idol worship, though there are a few regional evidence of venerated personage during the 1st century CE. As a result, the making of the Buddha image as well as the other gods were not obvious in the early phase. She supports her argument from the observations of A. A. Macdonell: “Allusions to the anthropomorphic appearances of divinities occur in the Ṛgveda, though such forms were worshipped by the Indus valley people.”¹⁵⁴ Based on such allusions, she argues that once the anthropomorphic forms of the deities became an essential part of religious ceremonies, it was a necessity to have them as objects of worship or ritual. Her emphasis is that the unavailability of early records of venerated images is not a valid assumption to interpret it as the non-existence of the objects of worship prior to the contacts with Hellenism. *Yakṣa* statues found on the railings of Bhārhut could have been worshipped by people. “The *Yakṣa* Manibhadra, from Pawāyā is

¹⁵² Ananda Coomaraswamy, “Indian Stone Sculpture” *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin*, Boston Vol. XVII, No.104, (1919), 59

¹⁵³ Kramrisch, *Indian Sculpture*, 39

¹⁵⁴ A.A., Macdonell, “The Development of Hindu Iconography,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*. (New Series), No. 50 (1918), 527-9 doi:10.1017/S0035869X00051868.

inscribed as ‘Bhagavān’ i.e. ‘Worshipful.’¹⁵⁵ Further as Stella Kramrisch asserts, “[t]hat an anthropomorphic tendency existed among the craftsmen, and allowed itself to be repressed with difficulty only, is shown within the non-iconic reliefs themselves from Bhārhut and Sānchi.”¹⁵⁶ The outcome of such a tendency is observed in Mathurā: “The Buddha there is given the appearance of a *yakṣa*, who excels over others of his kind by being a *cakravarti* (the world leader) endowed with the marks of a ‘great being.’ In this powerful and worldly manner the craftsman from Mathurā fashion their images of the Buddha, whom they prefer to think of and to call a Bodhisattva.”¹⁵⁷ Therefore, Kramrisch concludes: “that the earliest personal image [from Mathurā] dates from as late as the end of the first century A.D., whereas in Gandhāra the Buddha was shown in human shape at an earlier date may be due to the accident of preservation. But, in no case does priority establish a claim of the Gandhāran type as origin of the Buddha image.”¹⁵⁸ Apparently, she does not think that the origin of the Buddha image is to be sought in Gandhāra art and that connotes with the theory preceded by Coomaraswamy.

In 1949 J. E. van Lohuizen-de-Leeuw in her *The Scythian Period* claimed that the Mathurā Buddha image is earlier than that of Gandhāra supporting Coomaraswamy’s opinion.¹⁵⁹ With an extensive discussion refuting the characteristics of the Gandhāra Buddha image as the beginning causes of the Indian Buddha image, she believes that “the images like that of Katrā are preceded by a whole line of development.

Although we would not emphatically assert that Buddha images therefore in vogue a long time before the image of Katrā was made, still this seems very

¹⁵⁵ Kramrisch, *Indian Sculpture*, 39; J.N. Farquhar, “Temple and Image Worship in Hinduism” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol.(1928), 21

¹⁵⁶ Kramrisch, *Indian Sculpture*, 39

¹⁵⁷ Kramrisch, *Indian Sculpture*, 39, Pl. XI, fig. 41

¹⁵⁸ Kramrisch, *Indian Sculpture* 39-40.

¹⁵⁹ J. E. Van Lohuizen-de-Leeuw, *Scythian period*. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1949), 96, 154

probable; but we must not exclude the possibility that line of development in the seated ascetic figures was enacted outside Buddhism. In that case, only Jainism remains as a possibility and we have already seen that these religious images were used even in the middle of the 1st century B.C.¹⁶⁰

Thereby her assumption: the origin of the Buddha image in Mathurā, is the assimilation of native characteristics rather than its influence from Gandhāra.

Later on with some twenty-two images found from Gandhāra with determining iconographical characteristics of the Mathurā Buddha image, Van Lohuizen-de Leeuw concludes that “not Gandhāra but Mathurā was the birth place of Buddha image.”¹⁶¹ Among the twenty-two Buddha images by which she postulated her argument, none follows the classical Gandhāra style. She particularly highlights their relationship to the so-called *kapārdin* images of bodhisattva from Mathurā in which the wide-open eyes, the transparent monastic garment which leaves the right shoulder open as remarkable.¹⁶² What she brings up is the non-appearance of the iconographic characteristics i.e. heavy garment with schematic channels covering both the shoulders, top-knotted curly hair, half-closed eyes which are common in the ‘Classical’ Gandhāra image in her new findings. In both her studies she highlights the robust quality of the Mathurā image as convincing evidence of its earlier creation.¹⁶³

In 1955 Heinrich Zimmer demanded in his conclusion that the origin of the Buddha image is a dogmatic reason which increased the necessity of an image.

[A]t Sānchi and Bhārhut they forbade it. For, naturally, the Indian could have depicted the Buddha, just as they were already depicting anything they wanted: men, women, gods, goddesses, plants, birds, animals, and fish. In the context of the Indian religion the mere fact that Greeks might have taken the depiction of the

¹⁶⁰ de-Leeuw, *Scythian period*, 153-5

¹⁶¹ J. E. Van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, “New Evidence with regard to the Origin of the Buddha Image” *South Asian Archaeology 1979*, ed., H. Hartel. (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1981), 382

¹⁶² de-Leeuw, “New Evidence with regard to the Origin of the Buddha Image” 381-5, fig- 11, 16, 17

¹⁶³ de-Leeuw, *Scythian period*, 154

Highest Being for granted would not have dissolved the orthodox restrictions. Therefore, when suddenly we find that the completely Extinguished One has come visible in the frame of illusory world, rendered by illusory means, a new fundamental teaching, or at least a new conception of fundamental teaching, must be sought.¹⁶⁴

Thereby his attribute is to the development of Mahāyāna Buddhism in the later phase of Buddhism where different art schools invented their own frame to create the Buddha image by means of an object of worship. Thus, according to his observations; “from the sudden appearance of a Hellenistic Buddha in art of Gandhāra that therefore, the Greeks created or even inspired the Buddha image is simply absurd.”¹⁶⁵

Heinrich Zimmer agrees that Mathurā and Gandhāra had solid contacts once the “Alexandrian influence overpowered the local indigenous tradition,”¹⁶⁶ and consequently misrepresented the Buddha which is different from their authentic appearance. However, this revolutionary change does not reveal that Mathurā did not have their own image, simply due to their innovative work favoring Gandhāra, which he examines in “the lively attitude of the Mathurā Buddha, remarkably different from anything evident from Gandhāra Buddha type.”¹⁶⁷ The impact is visible in the “the fullness of human forms and the traditional marks of feminine beauty”¹⁶⁸ displayed by Mathurā sculptor.

Benjamin Rowland (1963) was of the same opinion as Foucher. As he suggests, the image of the Buddha was a necessity of the period, since the image in the form of a human was created centuries after his death, it felt as a result of the necessity. On one point he agrees with Coomaraswamy: that is the role of the *bhakti* cult, as he describes:

¹⁶⁴ Zimmer, *Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. I, 340

¹⁶⁵ Zimmer, *Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. I, 340, n38

¹⁶⁶ Zimmer, *Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. I, 338

¹⁶⁷ Zimmer, *Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. I, 338

¹⁶⁸ Zimmer, *Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. I, 337

With the passing of the centuries Buddhism was transformed from a rather limited and selfish religious system, in which the way to salvation was open only to those who could renounce the world for a monastic existence, to a religion offering the promise of salvation to all men who followed eight-fold path. Gradually the demand arose for the reassurances and comfort of devotion to the person and founder himself rather than his doctrine. The cult of worship fostered by the Emperor Asoka in the third century B.C. is an early indication of this growing worship of the Buddha himself. *Pūjā* or prayer to Śākyamuni himself replaces *jñāna* or the contemplation and practice of his message. This process of change was abetted by the growth of the *bhakti* cult, which means essentially the passionate love of the devotee *bhakti*.¹⁶⁹

The eventual outcome prompted the Buddha as an object of reverence and veneration. With his emphasis of the development of cultic worship of image from the time of the Indus Valley civilization, its motivation in Buddhism cannot be seen in early phase where his portrayals are only seen in aniconic form to tell the story of the Buddha without the Buddha. Thus he assumes:

The earliest images of the Buddha were made in the ancient province of Gandhāra towards the close of first century A.D. This region, comprising the present northwest Pakistan and Afghanistan, was then under the rule of Kushan Scythian kings, a race of Central Asian origin, who were in close commercial contact with the west...Among the first portrayals of Buddha in human form is a likeness on a gold coin of the emperor Kaniška, inscribed in provincial Greek (BODDO).¹⁷⁰

He also credits the Hellenistic influence that was “unquestionably the introduction of bands of foreign workmen from the eastern centers of the Roman empire that led the creation of Buddhist sculptures”¹⁷¹ to ascertain the Graeco-Bactrian characteristics of the Indian Buddha Image. At this point he agrees with Zimmer’s assumption: “The craftsmen who served in Indian religious bases towards the 1st century were originally the journeymen from Mediterranean sites or Alexandria or Antioch.”¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ Rowland, *The Evolution of the Buddha Image*, 6

¹⁷⁰ Rowland, *The Evolution of the Buddha Image*, 9

¹⁷¹ Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India: Buddhist, Hindu and Jain*, 125

¹⁷² Rowland, *The Evolution of the Buddha Image*, 9

Opposing this argument A.H. Dani in 1965 in his *Shaikan Dheri Excavation 1963 & 1964 Seasons*¹⁷³ attempted to prove Coomaraswamy's contribution. In that he notes the distinctive developments of the two schools, Gandhāra and Mathurā, independently with such physical and iconographic characteristics which comply with their own traditions. He particularly arrives at such a conclusion depending on his studies near the *Sanghao Cave Excavations in 1963*¹⁷⁴ in that he exposes some important facts revealing the establishment of the Buddhism in its early stages. He describes;

The name Sanghao is derived from the old Sanskrit word *Saṅgha* meaning a (Buddhist) monastery and obviously implies the many ruins of the Buddhist Period spread over the valley. These Sanghao ruins are not isolated by themselves as the modern village appears to be, for to its south about twelve miles away stand the famous monastic ruins at Jalamgarhi and to its north as Palai have been found several Buddhist sculptures... In this long chain of Buddhist expansion Sanghao stands in the middle, not far from the Shakhkot pass, which appears to have given an easy access, in the past, from the valley of Peshawar to that of Swat and vice-versa. Sanghao is thus an old route and its monastic prosperity depended on the maintenance of this route.¹⁷⁵

Some important ruins relating to early Buddhist inhabitation are Paja Hill that had many contacts with Buddhists, Aśokan edicts of Shabazgarhi, Jalamgarhi, and Takt-i-Bāhi monastic establishments that reveal its early existence prior to the Kushan involvement. Thus, along with later research findings from *Shaikan Dheri*, he concludes,

It must be observed that the Buddha type of Gandhāra does not owe its origin to Mathurā nor the Mathurā type is borrowed from that of Gandhāra. The two types have developed independently, and originated probably simultaneously in the two schools of the art traditions of the two regions.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ A.H. Dani, "Shaikan Dheri Excavation 1963 & 1964 Seasons," *Ancient Pakistan*, Bulletin of the Department of Archaeology, Vol. II. (1965-66) (Peshawar: University of Peshawar, 1966), 40-43

¹⁷⁴ A.H. Dani, "Sanghao Cave Excavations: The First Season 1963," *Ancient Pakistan*, Bulletin of the Department of Archaeology, Vol. I. (1964) (Peshawar: University of Peshawar, 1964), 1-50

¹⁷⁵ Dani, "Shaikan Dheri Excavation 1963 & 1964 Seasons," 3

¹⁷⁶ Dani, "Shaikan Dheri Excavation 1963 & 1964 Seasons," 40

He discusses the same issue in his later findings which follow the inscriptional evidence with regard to the chronological arrangement of the images found from the rock carvings of *The City of Nanga Parvat* (Diamar), exposing some new evidence belonging to both Scythian and non-Scythian cultures.¹⁷⁷

However, the evidence revealed by David L. Snellgrove in his *The Image of the Buddha* (1978) explains that the vast empire of Kushans included a great variety of religions—Greek, Zoroastrian, Buddhist, Jain, and Hindu—all of which freely employed the religious symbols on their coins. Of the regions that employed such emblems, Mathurā remains significant because Buddhism, Jainism, as well as Hinduism (which were native Indian religions) coexisted and evolved together. “It was within these wide Kushan domains that the first anthropomorphic images of major Hindu divinities, as well as the Buddha and Jinas were first produced.”¹⁷⁸

The whole Buddhist religion, the cult of stūpa, and its carved decorations, the aniconic symbols of the Buddha and even probably the very idea of creating an anthropomorphic image of the Buddha in the human form were produced, Gandhāra was quite as much as a Buddhist land as the Ganges-Jumna Valley, and not to mention the vast literature on which the whole region was based, all this was of Indian provenance.¹⁷⁹

Though he stresses the difficulty in giving priority to the Mathurā image rather than to that of Gandhāra, the *bhakti* worship and the cult of *yakṣa* and *yakṣinī* as well as other nature spirits that were popular around the region are assumed to have exerted significant influence. He concludes that both the Gandhāra and Mathurā regions of the Kushan

¹⁷⁷ A.H. Dani, *Chilas: The City of Nanga Parvat. (Dyamar. (Islamabad: Sn., 1983) 93-96, 104-8, 116, fig. 71, 79, 81 87, 90*

¹⁷⁸ David L. Snellgrove, ed., *The Image of the Buddha*. (Paris: UNESCO & Kodansha International, 1978), 47

¹⁷⁹ Snellgrove, ed., *The Image of the Buddha*, 59

empire must have developed their own form of the Buddha image. From this perspective, it is apparent that his argument supports that of Coomaraswamy.

[T]he Buddha image must have been produced simultaneously probably in the middle or near the beginning of the first century A.D. in Gandhāra and Mathurā, in response to a demand created by the internal development of the Buddhism which was common ground in both areas; in each case, by local craftsmen, working in the local tradition,”¹⁸⁰

Notwithstanding the long established debate about the origin of the Buddha image, in 1985, John C. Huntington presented an entirely different theory in his critique; *The Origin of the Buddha Image: Early Image Traditions and the Concept of Buddhadarśanapunyā* assuming a “pre-iconic” phase of the Buddha image which entirely developed as a merit making activity. Thus, his thesis is that the Buddha was represented in the human form shortly after his *parinirvāna*.¹⁸¹ However, “if such a phase existed, it was extremely short, limited to extreme sectarian movements, and without real relevance from either the art historical or doctrinal point of view for majority of Buddhists.”¹⁸² According to him, what Coomaraswamy and Foucher have attempted to establish are imperfect in this regard, since there is firm evidence with regard to the making of images as a pious act. He quotes Lewis R. Lancaster’s “*An Early Mahayana Sermon about the Body of the Buddha and the Making of Images*” (1974) as a supportive fact to approach the subject in broader terms since the scholars assume the “origin of the Buddha image to be tied to the popular deification of the Buddha or to the development of *trikāya* concept of the Buddha to be.”¹⁸³ Thereby his effort is to establish a new theory with consolidated facts found from the Chinese version of *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñā Pāramitā* and an early

¹⁸⁰ Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 60

¹⁸¹ Huntington, “The Origin of the Buddha Image,” 24-5

¹⁸² Huntington, “The Origin of the Buddha Image,” 25

¹⁸³ Lancaster, “An Early Mahayana Sermon about the Body of the Buddha,” 291

ceramic Buddha image (belonging to the years of BCE- third year of Chin Cao) with the gesture of earth Touching (*bhū-sparṣa*), that there must have been a stage prior to the Kushan rule in India which favored local or regional developments of the Buddha image to have travelled to China with similar evidence.¹⁸⁴

However, in his argument, his objective is not to re-define when and where the first Buddha image was created, but to establish his position: “it will be the conclusion of this study that there is considerable corroborating and archaeological evidence for a tradition of early images made in effort to gain merit by viewing the Buddha (*buddhadarśanapunyā*).”¹⁸⁵ The objective is the desire to visualize the Buddha even after his demise.¹⁸⁶ Thereby he denies the theories postulated by Foucher and Coomaraswamy and other scholars with similar arguments. A serious drawback in considering his theory is twofold: 1) Dating of a ceramic jar found in China in the pre-Christian era and 2) The representation of the Buddha image on a jar at a time when even in places of worship, he was represented only with symbols.

In 1985, Joe Cribb examined the issue by studying the iconographical characteristics of the contemporary coins from Mathurā and Gandhāra,¹⁸⁷ which has been a neglected area by many scholars according to him.¹⁸⁸ He saw a close relationship between the Buddhist sculptures developed in the two regions, thereby assuming their prior establishment at Mathurā. According to him, “The relationship shows that these Gandhāra sculptures are the result of close copying by Hellenistic artists of the Indian

¹⁸⁴ Huntington, “The Origin of the Buddha Image,” 24

¹⁸⁵ Huntington, “The Origin of the Buddha Image,” 23-4

¹⁸⁶ Huntington, “The Origin of the Buddha Image,” 49

¹⁸⁷ Joe Cribb, “A Re-Examination of the Buddha Images on the Coins of Early Kanishka: A New Light on the Origins of the Buddha image in Gandharan Art,” *Studies in Buddhist Art in South Asia*, ed. A.K. Narain, (Delhi: Kanak Publications, 1985), 59

¹⁸⁸ Cribb, “A Re-Examination of the Buddha Images,” 72-3

compositions created by the Mathuran school.”¹⁸⁹ The Buddhist images on the coins and Kaniska’s reliquary show the same Hellenistic rendering of Mathuran forms. The Bimran casket is another example of the same phenomenon. “This evidence suggests that the earliest Buddha images of the Gandhāra school are based on the sculptures of the Mathurā school which first created the images of the Buddha early in the reign of Kaniska.”¹⁹⁰ He examines three different types: “two representations of Śākyamuni Buddha standing facing, the other portrays Maitreya Buddha seated on throne.”¹⁹¹ Of these images, there is a considerable resemblance to the stone images from the style though there are technical variations due to the materials they applied. Thus, the typical Buddha images in coins, though display some unique elements, “an adaptation from Mathurā Buddha images of Indian tradition”¹⁹² was unavoidable. He supports his argument with Coomaraswamy (1927) and J.E. van Lohuizen-de-Leeuw (1949). He concludes: “All the images of Śākyamuni depicting him standing facing wearing monastic robes and making the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya mudrā*). When the details are visible he is marked with *ūrṇā*, *uṣṇīśa*, *cakra* mark on the hand, elongated earlobes, and moustache. On one image his whole body is elongated in a halo, on the others only his head.”¹⁹³ This reminds that Gandhāra coin images occasionally display the Mathurā elements which connotes its influence from Mathurā images (further discussed in Chapter 4).

¹⁸⁹ Cribb, “A Re-Examination of the Buddha Images,” 70

¹⁹⁰ Cribb, “A Re-Examination of the Buddha Images,” 80

¹⁹¹ Cribb, “A Re-Examination of the Buddha Images,” 64

¹⁹² Cribb, “A Re-Examination of the Buddha Images,” 73

¹⁹³ Cribb, “A Re-Examination of the Buddha Images,” 79

However, in 1996, Yuvaraj Krishnan charges J. E. van Lohuizen-de-Leeuw since there is a considerable amount of new evidence in support of the origin of the Buddha image in the region of Gandhāra. According to him,

- 1) Early Indian art was aniconic and unanthropomorphic and the turning point is the Gandhāra which was first ruled by the Indo-Greeks and later by the Kushans who were familiar with representing the Greek gods in the anthropomorphic form.¹⁹⁴ He also adds to his point that the early representations of human figures in Indian art prior to Kushan involvement are bas-relief figures and not the real images.¹⁹⁵
- 2) There is a considerable influence from Gandhāra in the Mathurā Buddha image. “The Mathurā sculptures, in their style, are closely allied to Gandhāra: the heavy and realistic drapery of Gandhāra is replaced by relatively thin drapery, in schematic lines.”¹⁹⁶ For the particular assumption he is supported by the statement of H. Goetz: “the formulation of an ideal in opposition to the Hellenic one, that of tropical man.”¹⁹⁷
- 3) Numismatic and inscriptional evidence found from Gandhāra with regard to the anthropomorphic representations of the Buddha, which contrasts the arguments of van Lohuizen-de-Leeuw,¹⁹⁸ and typical cultural and material influence from Gandhāra that affected the Mathurā Buddha image. Thereby, he agrees with the early opinion of Foucher that “original and un-Indian manner of the Gandhāran *uṣṇīśa* in Buddha images proves conclusively that the Gandhāran Buddha image

¹⁹⁴ Yuvaraj Krishnan, *The Buddha Image: Its Origin and Development*. (Delhi: Mushiram Manoharlal, 1996), 29

¹⁹⁵ Krishnan, *The Buddha Image*, 30, fig. 15a, & 15b.

¹⁹⁶ Krishnan, *The Buddha Image*, 31, fig. 17a

¹⁹⁷ See Krishnan, *The Buddha Image*, 33-4: The original reference is located in H. Goetz, “Imperial Rome and the Genesis of Classical Indian Art, *East and West*, Vol. 10, No.3. (September 1959), 153-183 Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29754135>. Accessed December 05, 2011

¹⁹⁸ Krishnan, *The Buddha Image*, 34-37, 39-40, fig. 18a-k, 19a-c

was an original innovation.”¹⁹⁹ A comparison of the Gandhāra Buddha image with the artifacts of Greek and Roman classical art with its fine qualities and techniques and style is presented in support of Krishnan’s conclusion.

Thus the origin of the Buddha image is an issue on which scholars have yet to agree. The earliest datable evidence comes from the coins of Kaniska I (1st-2nd century CE— see **fig.3.40a, 40b, & 40c**), and as such the role of the Kushans as foreign rulers were not bound by indigenous sentiments or restrictions is irrefutable.²⁰⁰ **(Compare with fig.4.2a, 2b, 2c & 4.7a, 7b, & 7c)**. But two important arguments have emerged from the majority of the studies: 1) that the Buddha image first appeared in anthropomorphic form in Gandhāra and was influenced by Graeco-Bactrian art. 2) That the Mathurā Buddha image could have developed through local influences independently. However, Mathurā demonstrates a “purely Indian—mainly Buddhist, and occasionally Hindu—there are no sculptures illustrating a Hellenistic, or rather Gandhāran, story.”²⁰¹ Therefore, Mathurā continued with the narrative style of early Buddhist art in which the representation of the *Jātaka* stories were much popular than the portrayal of the Buddha as a human figure.²⁰² It is thus important to review some salient examples of the Buddha images of the two regions to determine the validity of these two theories.

3.5 Representation of the Buddha in the human form in later Buddhist art

The two regions discussed in the theories on the origin of the Buddha image are extremely important as regards the history of Buddhism: 1) Mathurā; associated with

¹⁹⁹ Krishnan, *The Buddha Image*, 29-39

²⁰⁰ Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 45-6

²⁰¹ J.E. Van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, “Gandhara and Mathura: Their Cultural Relationship” *Aspects of Indian Art*, ed. Pratapaditya Pal. (Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1992), 36

²⁰² The idea was illustrated by Alfred Foucher in 1917 with regard to the narrative representations of the *Jātaka* stores in Bhārhut. For details see Foucher, *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, 36, n59

Sanakavāsi and his disciple Upagupta, who is recognized by the Mahāyāna tradition as the fourth Patriarch, could have been the main area where the schism following the Second Council the Mahāsāṅghika sect was active.²⁰³ Xuan Zang records that Upagupta visited the area around Sindh and propagated his teachings.²⁰⁴ 2) Gandhāra in the northwestern region of the Indian subcontinent where the Fourth Council at Jalandhara was held with the patronage of Kaniska I and spearheaded the spread of Mahāyāna Buddhism to Central Asia and beyond.

While Gandhāra was the base of the Kushan Empire, its eastern boundary extended to Mathurā (See Map 3.2). Thus, at the time that the Buddha image appeared in anthropomorphic form around the beginning of the Common Era, both Mathurā and



Map 3.2 Expansion of Indo-Greek Territory in India

²⁰³ Guruge, *Buddhism today and Aesthetic Creativity*, 164-66, 176

²⁰⁴ Beal, *Si-Yu-Ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Vol. I. 179-182, n48

Gandhāra were centers of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Despite being exposed to a foreign imperial power, the evolution of Buddhism in its later form must have contributed to the relaxation of any restriction that was in force about representing the Buddha in human form. With both influences, which have promoted this innovation, being equally applicable to both regions, the simultaneous origin of the Buddha image in them is plausible.

The significance of the efflorescence of Buddhism under the Kushan dynasty is the evolution of faith of the Buddha which subsequently evolved many Buddhist monuments. Fa-Xian records a magnificent procession of Buddha image during the period of his visit of Khoten;

The monks of the Gomati monastery, being Mahayana students...made a “four wheeled image car, more than thirty cubits high which looked like a great hall moving along. The seven precious substances were grandly displayed about it, with silken streamers and canopies hanging all around. The (chief) image stood in the middle of the car, with two bodhisattvas, in attendance on it while devas were made to follow in waiting, all brilliantly carved in gold and silver, and hanging in the air.”²⁰⁵

His records also praises a *stūpa* built by Kaniska I outside the walls of Puruśapatra (Peshavar) “which was four hundred cubits high and adorned with layers of all the precious substances. Of all the topes and temples which the travelers saw in their journeyings, there was not one comparable to this in solemn beauty and majestic grandeur.”²⁰⁶

There is no doubt that Gandhāra was influenced by the western iconography with pronounced Greek characteristics when they made sculptures. Apparently, the early

²⁰⁵ James Legge, trans. *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*, 18-9

²⁰⁶ Legge, trans. *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*, 33-4; Jean Phillippe Vogel and Adriaan Jacob Barnouw, *Buddhist Art in India, Sri Lanka, and Java*. 1936. Reprint. (Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1998), 25

evidence mostly found in Greek coins, the symbol of *cakra* (wheel of Law) presenting the Buddha, comes from the period of the Scythian Prince Menander and Azes,²⁰⁷ resembling the juxtaposition of two traditions (see **fig.3.40d**). Equally important are 1) the reliquary of Kaniska, found from the principal *stūpa* of Shāh-ji-ki-Dheri (**fig.3.41a**) bearing a depiction of swans (*haṃsa*) on the side of the lid symbolizing the spread of Buddhism and most importantly, the free standing statuette of the Buddha with a surrounding halo flanked by Indra and Brahma on either side²⁰⁸ and 2) the Bimran reliquary in which the round body is decorated with “bands of cusped niches enclosing figures of Buddha, flanked by Indra and Brahma.”²⁰⁹ (**fig.3.41b**). These represent the beginnings of a new tradition of Buddhist art “resulting in that peculiar *hybrid* art which is called Graeco-Buddhist.”²¹⁰ In its later motivations, their tendency is the direct representation of the Buddha as the Great Being (*mahāpuruṣa*) with all his superhuman qualities, in contrast to the symbolic and abstract appearance of the Buddha in early Buddhist sites. With that in mind, the distinctive features of the representations of the Buddha in Mathurā and Gandhāra need to be identified.

As the Gandhāra *stūpas* had no enclosing stone railings, balustrades and gateways as in Bhārhut or Sānchi, sculptors have used the *stūpa* itself to illustrate the life of the Buddha mainly with rows of reliefs, recalling the traditional narrative technique of early Buddhist sites. However, *Jātaka* stories are hardly found in any of the Gandhāra Buddhist sites,²¹¹ sharply contrasting those of Sānchi and Bhārhut (discussed in 3.3) in that the

²⁰⁷ Vogel and Barnouw, *Buddhist Art in India, Sri Lanka, and Java*, 24-5

²⁰⁸ Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India: Buddhist, Hindu and Jain*, 135

²⁰⁹ Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India: Buddhist, Hindu and Jain*, 136

²¹⁰ The term *hybrid* was innovatively used by Benjamin Rowland. see Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*, 121; Vogel and Barnouw, *Buddhist Art in India, Sri Lanka, and Java*, 19

²¹¹ Vogel and Barnouw, *Buddhist Art in India, Sri Lanka, and Java*, 20

Buddha appears in the anthropomorphic form. The figure of the Buddha: either as the bodhisattva or the Buddha is carved as the central figure, which is standing, sitting, or resting, making him always bigger than the other beings in the panel.

Apparently, Gandhāra represents a considerable volume of miniature friezes depicting various events of the life of the Buddha in which the Buddha is evident in the human form. **Fig.3.42a**, from Sārnāth (National Museum, Delhi), illustrates the three interrelated incidents referring to the nativity of the Buddha-to-be: the dream of Māyā-Devi at the left corner, the birth of the prince from the side of the his mother at the right corner, and the child standing on the lotus pedestal in the process of making his seven steps prior to the first Lion Roar. Similarly, **fig.3.42b**, (Victoria and Albert Museum, London), mainly focuses on the birth of the prince from the right side of his mother, and probably the infant on the ground is the Prince before taking his divine steps. A mature depiction of the same event can be observed in **fig.3.42c** found from Kālavān monastery in Taxila (National museum, Delhi).²¹² **Fig.3.42d** shows the seven steps of the bodhisattva, extending the story of nativity. In this panel, the infant with a halo around the head is depicted on a lotus pedestal under a divine parasol, which is held from behind him by an attendant with a fly-whisk in his right hand. Two celestial beings are identified by John Marshall: “On the infant’s right is Indra, by his headdress and the thunderbolt (*vajra*), and on his right, Brahma.”²¹³ **Fig.3.43a & 43b** show the bathing of the infant Buddha by Indra and Brahma, an event not dealt with by early Buddhist sculptors. In all

²¹² John Marhsall, *The Buddhist Art of Gandhāra: The Story of the Early School, Its Birth, Growth, and Decline*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Published for the Department of Archaeology in Pakistan, 1960), 74, Pl. 65, fig. 94

²¹³ Marhsall, *The Buddhist Art of Gandhāra*, 43, Pl. 34, fig. 55

these panels, the Greek Hellenistic influence is traceable in the drapery as well as the anatomical characteristics of the body and limbs.

Fig.3.44a &44b relate to the Great Departure of the Prince. The two Corinthian half-columns, the Greek woman in Parthian dress and heavy anklets, and the halo depict a Hellenistic influence. However, the halo typically indicates him as the Bodhisattva.²¹⁴ Sarla D. Nagar emphasizes that the hair, the headdress, the drapery as well as the related architectural elements confirms this character.²¹⁵ However, **fig.3.44c**, (Museum of Art and Archaeology in the University of Missouri), portrays the Great Departure in that the prince is wearing royal attire, a large turban, and ornaments. The shawl particularly signifies that the horse is in motion. The rimmed halo and the decorated parasol above his head, held by the groom Chandaka symbolize the sovereignty, whereas Vajrapāni, with his thunderbolt, appears as a guardian above Kanthaka. John Rosenfield identifies the physical characteristics of persons in the panel as reflecting the Scythian influence.²¹⁶ Similar characteristics can be observed in **fig.3.44d** in which the prince, though dressed in royal garments, is identified as bodhisattva by the halo around the head. The significance of **fig.3.44e** is the frontal appearance of the prince rather than the profile indication in the previous illustrations.

Fig.3.45a, depicting the defeat of Māra, has the Buddha in the gesture of earth-touching (*bhū-sparṣa mudrā*) seated on the grass-strewn throne, under a canopy of leaves, which was offered by the two merchants, Tapassu and Balluka.²¹⁷ The dramatic nature of the panel testifies to the later innovations in Gandhāra Buddhist art, where some

²¹⁴ Vogel and Barnouw, *Buddhist Art in India, Sri Lanka, and Java*, 21

²¹⁵ Sarla D. Nagar, *Gandhara Sculpture: A Catalogue of the Collection in the Museum of Art and Archaeology, Missouri*. (Columbia: University of Missouri, 1981), fig. 1 and the related description

²¹⁶ John Rosenfield, *The Dynastic Art of Kushans*. (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1967), 56

²¹⁷ *JātakaA*. 110

novel characteristics such as the panel of leaves surrounding the halo were employed to demonstrate the superhuman qualities of the Buddha. Thus, it became more realistic than in the earlier phase as in **fig.3.45b**, which depicts the visit to the Brahman by the Buddha.

Fig.3.46a, on a Corinthian pillar illustrates the delivery of the First Sermon by the Buddha and its significance lies in the employment of aniconic symbols: the presence of the Buddha is marked by “three interrelated wheels symbolizing the three jewels (*triratna*),²¹⁸ which at certain points resemble the coin of Prince Menander (see **fig.3.40d**). The triple wheels are supported by a yakṣa emerging from the capital of the pillar, below of which is the footprint of the Buddha. On either side of the pillar, two monks are shown in the attitude of worship, which John Marshall identifies as Koṇḍañña and his companions.²¹⁹ **Fig.3.46b** depicts the same event with the Buddha in human form. The “Wheel of Dharma” just in front of the Buddha and Vajrapāni as a guardian deity along with the five ascetics highlight the significance of the event. **Fig.3.46c & 46d**, representing the same event, reflect a Greek influence: the topknot, the heavy drapery covering both the shoulders, and the halo. One important characteristic is the employment of lotuses or water lilies in the seat symbolizing purity and peace. This particular element first appeared in Egyptian art as symbol of rebirth.²²⁰ Alfred J. Andrea and James H. Overfield particularly assume that it reflects the impact of the style and artistic innovation of the Graeco-Roman sculptor on early Gandhāran Buddhist art.²²¹ The typical motif of

²¹⁸ Marshall, *The Buddhist Art of Gandhāra*, 45, Pl. 37 fig. 59

²¹⁹ Marshall, *The Buddhist Art of Gandhāra*, 45

²²⁰ “One of the myths which survive in only in part, told that the world was a limitless dark sea before there was life. Out of this rose a large, luminous lotus, bud that brought both light and perfume to the world. The lotus became the symbol for the sun Egyptian thought of it as a symbol of Rebirth.” Robert A. Armor, *Gods and Myths of Ancient Egypt*. 1986. Reprint. (Egypt: American University of Cairo Press, Cairo, 2003), 1

²²¹ Andrea, Alfred J., and James H. Overfield, *The Human Record: Sources of Global History, Vol.I: To 1500*. 7th ed. (MA, USA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2011), 172-3

fig.3.46e depicts the Buddha under a canopy of the leaves of Bodhi Tree with the gesture of earth touching (*bhū-sparṣa mudrā*) in the right hand while the Wheel of Law appears in the frontal panel of the pedestal. However, some robust characteristics of Mathurā tradition can be observed in the same event as **fig.3.46f** in a different manner.²²²

Fig.3.47a is the typical Gandhāra depiction of the Parinirvāna of the Buddha. The Buddha reclining on a couch is surrounded by lamenting, and mourning monks, and pious beings. “Vajrapāni above the head, newly arrived Mahākassapa at the foot; behind Malla chieftains can be seen.”²²³ To comply with the historical event, Sāla trees are added in background. However, **fig.3.47b & 47c** are different in that the reclining Buddha’s hand is in the *abhaya mudrā* while the drapery and the couch are realistic. John Marshall suggests that **fig.3.47c** could belong to the late mature period of Gandhāra art and assumes it to be a copy of the older work shown in **fig.3.47b**.²²⁴

Some events representing the Buddha’s life are also depicted in narrative style. **Fig3.48a**²²⁵ & **48b**²²⁶ highlight one of the miracles of the Buddha. **Fig.3.48a** significantly elaborates “the vastly expanded figure, dropping rain and emitting flames from his shoulders and feet along [with] the two seated Buddhas near his shoulders, which suggests the second aspect of the miracle, that is, multiplication of the body.”²²⁷ Dhammapadattakathā describes the particular event: “From the upper part of the body proceeded flames of fire, and from the lower part of his body a stream of water...”²²⁸

Vincent Smith examines “similar representations of the water of life streaming from the

²²² Parimoo, *Life of Buddha in Indian Sculpture*, 26, fig. 34

²²³ Marshall, *The Buddhist Art of Gandhāra*, 49, Pl. 44 fig. 68

²²⁴ Marshall, *The Buddhist Art of Gandhāra*, 97, Pl. 91, fig. 127 & 129

²²⁵ Parimoo, *Life of Buddha in Indian Sculpture*, 48, fig. 64

²²⁶ Smith, *History of Fine Arts in Indian and Ceylon*, 109, Pl. XXVII, Fig. a

²²⁷ Parimoo, *Life of Buddha in Indian Sculpture*, 48, fig. 64

²²⁸ *Dha.* V-VI. 45-46

feet of Christ.”²²⁹ Though the physical elements are not enlarged as such, the head and the feet of **fig.3.48b** are illustrated with water and fire. **Fig.3.49a, 49b, 49c, 49d, & 49e** however, mainly focus on the **Preaching at Srāvasti**, one of the popular themes in Indian Buddhist art, in different styles. The significance in **fig.3.49a**²³⁰ is that the Buddha is seated on a lotus pedestal, and flanked by two devotees, identified as Brahma and Indra,²³¹ that have the gesture of adoration (*namaskāra mudrā*-now damaged). Similar characteristics are evident in **fig.3.49c**, yet with standing deities on either side. **Fig.3.49b** differently depicts its occurrence under the canopy of the mango tree, where the Buddha in the human form with the halo around the head, is seated on a grass-strewn throne.²³² As emphasized, the typical ionic pillars, the blind arcades where the two seated Buddha images are placed on the upper section of the panel, the illustrated compartments where the queen Māyā, and her attendants listen to the Dharma, in addition to its decorative elements testify to its Graeco-Bactrian resemblance. The two seated figures on either side of the central image, assumed to be Indra and Brahma, typically resembles the plastic quality of the female images of Graeco-Bactrian retention. However, in **fig.3.49d** Buddha is seated on a thousand petalled-lotus with its stem supported by two Nāgarājas: Nanda and Upananda,²³³ and the devotees standing in the gesture of reverence (*namaskāra mudrā*). Significance of the image in the **fig.3.49e** is that the Buddha is seated on a lotus pedestal (*padma pīṭikā*) in the lotus posture (*padmāsana*), and in the gesture of teaching (*dharmacakra*), on either side of which are seated and standing images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

²²⁹ Smith, *A History of Art in India and Ceylon*, 108-9

²³⁰ Smith, *A History of Art in India and Ceylon*, 103, Pl. XXIV

²³¹ Parimoo, *Life of Buddha in Indian Sculpture*, 48, fig. 65

²³² Marshall, *The Buddhist Art of Gandhāra*, 73-4, Pl. 70, fig. 100

²³³ Parimoo, *Life of Buddha in Indian Sculpture* 48, fig. 66

Fig.3.50a & 50b, depict the two events with regard to the **Conversion of the Kassapas**: 1) quelling the snake in the fire house of the Kassapas.²³⁴ (**fig.3.50a**), and 2) Presenting the subdued snake to the Kassapas in the alms bowl²³⁵ (**fig.3.50b**) have the standing Buddha with the top knot (*uṣṇīśa*), elongated earlobes (*lambhakarṇa*), and the tuft of hair between the eye brows (*ūrṇā*), in addition to the *saṅghāti*, the drapery covering both the shoulders. With regard to **fig.3.50a** depicting the quelling of the snake by the Buddha, Snellgrove observes the typical characteristic of Gandhāra art where ‘realism’ receives extraordinary attention.²³⁶ According to John Marshall, their iconographic characteristics are associated with Greek temple architecture.²³⁷ **Fig.3.51a** from Giri at Taxila (Taxila museum),²³⁸ **fig.3.51b** found from Nathu (now in Museum of Art and Archaeology of Columbia University, Missouri),²³⁹ **fig.3.51c** from Mamane-Dheri, Taxila (Peshawar museum), **fig.3.51d**²⁴⁰ from Lauriyan Tangai, Swat valley (Calcutta museum), **fig.3.51e**,²⁴¹ and (Mathurā museum) depict the **Visit of the Indra to the Buddha at the Indrasāla Cave**. They commonly illustrate Indra approaching the Buddha with the musician, Pancasikha,²⁴² whereas the Buddha is seated in meditation with the gesture of meditation (*dhyāna mudrā*), the hands and feet are covered by the drapery. The Buddha as well as the two deities, Brahma and Indra is distinguished by hair arrangements around the heads. The superhuman quality of the Buddha is depicted by his

²³⁴ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 66, Pl. 40

²³⁵ Nagar, *Gandhara Sculpture*, 18, fig. 11

²³⁶ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 66.

²³⁷ Marshall, *The Buddhist Art of Gandhāra*, Chap 3 & 4, Pl. 30, fig. 48

²³⁸ Marshall, *The Buddhist Art of Gandhāra*, 82, Pl.74, fig. 107

²³⁹ Nagar, *Gandhara Sculpture*, fig. 5

²⁴⁰ Smith, *A History of Art in India and Ceylon*, 109, fig.60: Marshall, *The Buddhist Art of Gandhara*, 91, Pl.83. fig.118.

²⁴¹ Smith, *A History of Art in India and Ceylon*, 83, fig.51

²⁴² Alexander C. Soper, “Aspects of Light Symbolism in Gandharan Sculpture” *Artibus Asiae* 13. No.1/2 (1950), 70, fig. 4. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3248449>, Accessed: June 06, 2010

halo and the monastic robe covering the shoulders, yet omitting the elongated earlobes and the *ūrṇā*.²⁴³ As Soper emphasizes, “Its completeness may be the result both of a later date and a more intensive exposure to Iranian beliefs: perhaps even an exposure to Manichaeism which was spreading into Central Asia at the time with almost as much success as Buddhism (and we have seen was capable of combining with Buddhist beliefs to form strange new compounds).”²⁴⁴

Fig.3.52 represents the **Donation of Jetavana** in a frieze. The panel bears six figures in which the Buddha identified by the halo around his head. Its typical Hellenistic iconographic characteristics i.e. the drapery, facial expressions of the figures testify to their foreign nature. What John Marshall emphasizes in this sculpture is the “gulf between Gandhāra and Indian art. The stock Indian version is much more realistic. It shows us the Jetavana garden with the Buddha (represented by his tree), Anāthapiṇḍika in front of him with the libation vessel in his hand...”²⁴⁵ providing a unique value. **Fig.3.53a** is the offering of grass by Svastika, the grass-cutter to the bodhisattva on his way to the Bodhi-tree.²⁴⁶ The panel illustrates the event in a realistic manner. Besides the halo and the typical drapery, *saṅghāti*, which covers both the shoulders, the top-knot, the fully-opened eyes, and the moustache, along with the frontal posture of the body, reflect Graeco-Roman influence. **Fig.3.53b**²⁴⁷ (Berlin Museum) has similar characteristics: wide-opened eyes, moustache, and the halo.

In most of the panels discussed above, the Buddha is shown as being accompanied by either Vajrapāni, or both Vajrapāni and Brahma. Such characteristics

²⁴³ Nagar, *Gandhara Sculpture* 8, fig. 5

²⁴⁴ Soper, “Aspects of Light Symbolism,” 69

²⁴⁵ Marshall, *The Buddhist Art of Gandhāra*, 41, Pl. 33 fig. 53

²⁴⁶ Marshall, *The Buddhist Art of Gandhāra*, 46, Pl. 38 fig. 61

²⁴⁷ Marshall, *The Buddhist Art of Gandhāra*, 46, Pl. 38 fig. 63

testify to the later innovations of the Gandhāra School and are not connected with native Indian Buddhist iconography. According to John Marshall,

This is different from the appearance of *yakṣa* smiting the mountain. The fact is that the later has a *vajra* in his hand does not make a Vajrapāni of him. Primarily the *vajra* was the attribute of Indra, as from time immemorial, it had been of the Greek Zeus. But, as the weapon *par excellence* of irresistible force, it was put into the hands of other deities or superhuman beings, of Athene and Poseidon, for example, among the Greeks; of the Vajrapāni and of his earth-shaking *yakṣa* among the Buddhists.²⁴⁸

As stated by David Snellgrove, the noticeable physical characteristics of the Gandhāra image are;

[T]he short, stocky figure, and the position of the body invariably frontal in whatever he appears independently. His hair is arranged in waves gathered together on top of his head. The eyes are open and there is a little circle (*ūrṇā*-beauty spot) between the eyebrows. He often wears a moustache [and]...the distended ear lobes...heavy monastic cloak that hangs in deep folds and covers the standing figure just above the feet, while the seated cross-legged figure may be covered completely...²⁴⁹ resembling the toga of a Roman warrior. The gestures popularly used are: *abhaya*, *dhyāna*, *bhū-sparṣa*, *dharmā-cakra*, all of which belong to the early Indian Buddhist tradition.²⁵⁰

Thus, it is possible to assume an “Indian origin”²⁵¹ for such images of seated Buddha, while the hybrid phenomenon of the Gandhāra friezes on the life of the Buddha suggest a blend of many different cultures such as Greek, Hellenistic, Classical Roman, provincial Roman and Near Eastern which cannot be denied.²⁵²

3.6 Concluding remarks

The motifs, thus described and many others found from various locations in India and elsewhere in museums and private collections testify that, the tendency of early

²⁴⁸ Marshall, *The Buddhist Art of Gandhāra*, 52

²⁴⁹ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 67

²⁵⁰ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 67

²⁵¹ Snellgrove *The Image of the Buddha*, 103

²⁵² Dietrich Seckel, *The Art of Buddhism*. (London: Methuen, 1964), 54

Buddhist sculpture is to represent the Buddha in aniconic form while the later motivations provided the base to represent him in human form for the same purpose of depicting the Buddha's life. It is evident that later innovations certainly propagated the idea with the Graeco-Roman influence while the early sculptor still was encouraged by the native cult practices. Therefore, despite its simultaneous development in and around two locations, the appearance of two different styles is obvious.

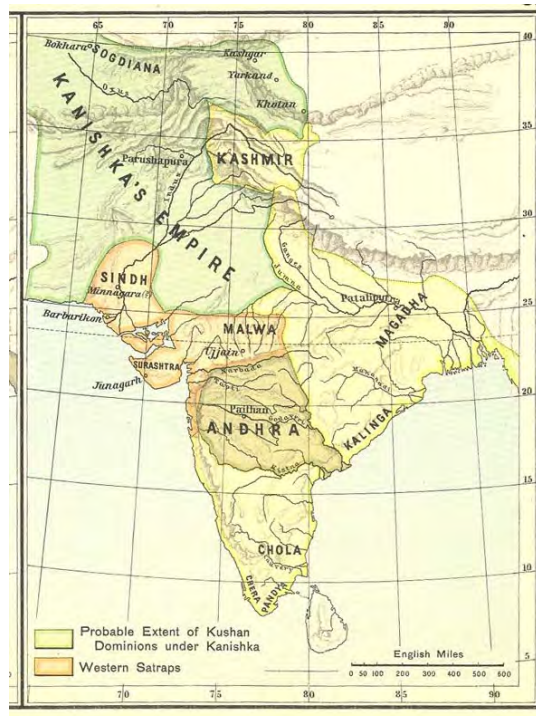
What is significant from the point of the evolution of the Buddha image is the non-appearance of any of these illustrations, except the **footprint** with neither the significance of Buddha's life nor a sign of worship in the Sri Lankan Buddhist art tradition. The question arises at this point: if the concept of the Sri Lankan Buddha image was influenced by those of India, why and how did the scholars fail to trace such characteristics in Sri Lankan context. The fact is that the typical Sri Lankan Buddha image evidently displays its independent origin and evolution, despite its later influences, occurred due to socio-cultural relationships. Therefore, it is apparent that the narrative representations of the early Buddhist art and their representations of the Buddha in aniconic as well as iconic form is typical to Indian context which in no way influenced the evolution of the Sri Lankan Buddha image. A necessary examination will follow to solve the controversy regarding the origin of the Sri Lankan Buddha image.

CHAPTER 04

EVOLUTION OF THE BUDDHA IMAGE IN INDIA AS AN OBJECT OF WORSHIP

4.1 Political and historical background

Though no reliable records are available, it is clear that the earliest appearance of the Buddha image as an object of worship in India occurred during the Kushan period (1st. 3rd centuries CE). The Kushan empire spread over two areas in South Asia: 1) Mathurā, in the north-central India close to Agra in the east and 2) Gandhāra in the west, comprising the present day Pakistan and Afghanistan (**See Map 4.1**), which originally was a province belonging to the Iranian Empire of Achaemenids.¹



Map 4.1 The Expansion of Kushan Empire during the 2nd century CE.²

¹ Benjamin Rowland, *Gandhara Sculpture from the Pakistan Museum*. (New York: Asia Society, 1960), 5
Also see Rowland, *The Evolution of the Buddha Image*, 9; Kinnard, *The Emergence of Buddhism*, 49

² Map courtesy: Charles Joppen, *Historical Atlas of India*. (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1907).
www.columbia.edu. accessed 10/11/2011

Apparently, the Buddha image appeared almost simultaneously in the two ends, contributing to the evolution of a distinctive iconography.³ Just as the popularization of relic worship resulted in the architectural sophistication of the *stūpa* (called *caitya*, *dhātugarbha* or *dharmarājikā*), including other necessary elements as means of religious faith,⁴ the emergence of the Buddha image under Kushans proved to be the most innovative undertaking with regard to the spread of Buddhism as well as Buddhist art in the east Asian countries.

With regard to the particular development, certain political and cultural factors are significant:

- 1) The innovations in Buddhist practices datable to the Kushan Period inspired or facilitated by the new regime. They, being of foreign origin, were not aware of or, were not bound by any previous traditions patronized by their predecessors in Indian Territory.
- 2) The developments within Buddhism itself, which enabled new concepts to be experimented with.

It is also possible that both emerged concurrently and their interaction brought some remarkable results in the religious and social facets of Buddhism. For example, the innovative spirit of Aśvaghōṣa, motivated by the evolution of the Mahāyāna concepts, is evident in the literary movements ascribed to him: he used the style of the ornate court poetry in Sanskrit to write the biography of the Buddha (*Buddhacarita*)⁵ and the romantic

³ Tanaka, *Absence of the Buddha Image in the Early Buddhist Art*, 4: Snellgrove, ed., *The Image of the Buddha*, 46

⁴ Shailendra Kumar Verma, *Art and Iconography of the Buddha Images*. (Delhi: Eastern Book Linkers, 1994), 17

⁵ Aśvaghōṣa is said to have lived during the 1st century CE and was the 12th Buddhist patriarch. He composed the *Buddhacarita* at the court of Kaniska after travelling through many parts of India. The original Sanskrit version is missing though; its Chinese translation is still preserved. Aśvaghōṣa was

story of Nanda and Sundari in *Saundaranandakāvya*⁶ to propagate Buddhism; he dramatized the conversion of Śāriputra in *Śāriputraprakaraṇa* and used the Sanskrit drama for the same purpose; if *Gandhistotra* was one of his works, one may see in it an attempt to use music as a medium of teaching Buddhism. All three developments were contrary to the conservative disposition of early Buddhism. What happened in literature could have affected art too.

3) The concept of many Buddhas and bodhisattvas,⁷ including cosmic/*dhyāni* Buddhas i.e. Vairocana, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, Amoghasiddhi, Akṣobhya,⁸ as a result of the development of different schools in Buddhism.

Mainly, in the belief of Mahāsāṅghikas (precursors of the Mahāyāna Buddhism), the tendency is evident in *Milinda pañhā*,⁹ *Mahāvastu*,¹⁰ *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*,¹¹ *Aavatamsaka sūtra*,¹² and *Lalitavistara sūtra* composed during 1st-2nd century

influenced by the Pāli commentaries of Tripitaka and considered free from mythological incidents. It was consisted of both prose and verse to entertain the personality of the Buddha. See E.L. Johnson, *Buddhacarita or the Acts of the Buddha*. (Calcutta: Motilal Banarsidas, 1939), Introduction: Samuel Beal, Max Muller *et al.*, Trans. *Sacred Books of the East with critical Biographical Sketches by Āśvaghōṣa*. (New York: Colonial Press, 1899), 293

⁶ Unlike the *Buddhacarita*, *Saundaranandakāvya* was believed to have influenced by Mahāyāna ideology, although it described the life of the Buddha. See Ananda Coomaraswamy, *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism*. (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1916), 309

⁷ Le Huu Phuoc, *Buddhist Architecture*. (USA: Grafcol, 2010), 21 Particular concept was first developed by the Vajrayāna sect of Mahāyāna Buddhists, in which they evolved that all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas have seized their salvation until all the sentient beings in the universe are liberated. See: B.J. Sandesara, ed., *Sādhnamālā*, Vol. II. Gaekwad's Oriental Series, No. 41. (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1968), xxiv

⁸ Benoytosh Bhattacharya, trans., *The Indian Buddhist Iconography mainly based on Sādhnamālā*, (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1968), 47

⁹ The Pāli text *Milinda pañhā* was originally a dialogue between the king Menander (Sanskrit: Milinda) and the elder Nāgasena Thero, in order to resolve the problem of "Self" raised by the king. See T. W. Rhys Davids, trans., *Milinda Panhā: The question of King Milinda*, Vol. I & II. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), Introduction www.internetarchive.org: Peter Heehs, ed., *Indian Religions: A Historical Reader of Spiritual Expression and Experience*. (USA: New York University Press, 2002), 126

¹⁰ The treatise is said to be composed as a result of the *mahā saṅgīti* (Great Council), held after hundred years of the Buddha's *parinirvāna*, which dealt with the legendary stories of the Buddha's previous lives, showing how he acquired the necessary supernal power to attain the Buddhahood. See for details Heinrich Zimmer, *Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. I, 174

¹¹ *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra* is the most popular and well established treatise in Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition which endows the Great Enlightenment of the Buddha as an eternal wisdom. "Now at that time it was that the Lord surrounded, attended, honored, revered, venerated, worshipped, by the four classes of

CE, to portray the Buddha as a supra-mundane (*lokottara*) being, “a god timeless and eternal as Brahma himself.”¹³ At this point, while the Buddha was similar to the status of the Supreme God, the bodhisattvas acted as celestial saints. The later Yogācāra School of Buddhism¹⁴ evolved the concept of Gautama Buddha as an earthly descent of a mighty spiritual being whom they named as the Svayaṃ-bhū or Self-Existent Person.¹⁵

According to Svayambhūpurāṇa, a miraculous lotus arose in a lake in present day Nepal, which bore a golden image over which, and subsequently a *stūpa* was erected. This image is believed to be the divine manifestation of the Buddha who was named as Ādi Buddha or Svayaṃ-Bhū.¹⁶ The body of such a being has three major forms (*trikāya*): 1) Body of the Teaching (*dharmakāya*) 2) Body of the Bliss (*sambhogakāya*) 3) Body of the nominal earthly shapes (*nirmānakāya*) through which he appears in different forms when in need of the earthly beings.¹⁷ These factors certainly minimized or even eliminated the sense of sanctity that the historical Buddha held in Early Buddhism.

- 4) A tendency in the Sarvāstivāda School (one of the progressive sects of orthodox Buddhism, which flourished in regions around north-western India, and lower

hearers, after expounding the Dharmaparyāya called ‘the Great Exposition’ a text of great development, serving to instruct bodhisattvas, and proper to all Buddhas, sat cross-legged on the seat of the law and entered upon the meditation termed ‘the station of the exposition of infinity’ his body was motionless and his mind has reached perfect tranquility.” H. Kern, trans. *Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka or the Lotus of the True Law*. (New York: Dover Publications, 1963), 3

¹² The *sūtra* is known as the ‘king of Kings’ of all Mahāyāna Buddhist texts, and said to have recited by the Buddha after his Enlightenment in front of the humans and in the heavens to explain the inconceivable state of Buddhas and the conduct of bodhisattvas. The significance is the state of the Śākyamuni Buddha beyond his historical career to represent as a divine being.

¹³ H. Kern, trans., *Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka or the Lotus of the True Law*, 160-62: Rowland, *Evolution of the Buddha Image*, 8

¹⁴ The particular movement is responsible for evolving the concept of Emptiness (*śūnyatāvāda*) for which they were influenced by the Mahāśāṅghikas. See Bhattacharya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography mainly based on Sādhnamālā*, 10: Sandesara, ed. *Sādhnamālā*, Vol. II, xxii

¹⁵ Charles Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism: An Historical Sketch*. Vol. II. 1921. Reprint. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1972), 140-41

¹⁶ Warren W. Smith, ed. *Mythological History of the Nepal Valley from Svayambhūpurāṇa*. Trans. Mana Bajra Bajracharya, (Kathmandu, Avalok, 1978) Introduction: Charles Eliot, *Japanese Buddhism*. 1935. Reprint. (Surrey: Curzon Prints, 1994), 125-7

¹⁷ Merv Fowler, *Buddhism: Beliefs and Practices*. (Great Britain: Sussex Academic Press, 1999), 97-8

Himalayan areas of modern day Pakistan and Kashmir), to find a way of depicting the Buddha in human form (as seen in their scriptures referring to disciples) in which they seek the Buddha's permission to represent him in the form of a Bodhisattva,¹⁸ and its belief of making the images of the Buddha as a merit making activity.

According to a Chinese translation of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā sūtra*, the dialogue between Sadāprariduta and Dharmodgata follows:

Dharmodgata: The constitution of the Body of the Tathāgata, an Arhat, a Fully Enlightened One is not accomplished with one thing not two but with many hundreds of thousands of things. If, in life after life, one performs acts of merit and the original vows (of the bodhisattva) is fulfilled so that the men are taught (*the Dharma*) then one achieves possession of the Thirty-Two (marks of the Buddha) and the Eighty (minor marks) which are visible.

The Buddha's body is like the images which men make after the Nirvāna of the Buddha. When they see these images, there is not one of them who does not bow them and make offering. These images are upright and handsome; they perfectly resemble the Buddha and when men see them they all rejoice and take flowers and incense to revere them. O Noble One. Would you say that the Buddha's Spirit is in the image?

Sadāprariduta: It is not there. The image of the Buddha is made (only) because one desires to have men acquire merit.¹⁹

Robert R. Sharf examines an early "Scripture on the Production of the Buddha image" (*Zuo fo xingxiang jing*), presumably belonging to early Han Dynasty (25 CE-220 CE) that also provides an association with the king Udayana's Buddha image of sandalwood.²⁰ The scripture informs as follows;

¹⁸ John Kieschnick, *The Impact of Buddhism on Material Culture*. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003), 57, n103

¹⁹ Lancaster, "An Early Mahayana Sermon," 289: Also see Gregory Schopen, "On Sending the Monks back to their Books: Cult and Conservatism in Early Mahāyāna Buddhism" *Figments and Fragments of Mahayana Buddhism in India: more collected Papers*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), Chap. IV, 108-53

²⁰ Robert F. Sharf, "The Scripture on the Production of the Buddha Images," *The Religions of China in Practice*, 262

King Udyana: “When people perform virtuous acts they gain good fortune, but where does this lead them? I dread no longer being able to look upon the Buddha after the Buddha is gone. I want to produce an image of the Buddha to venerate and bequeath to later generations. What sort of good fortune will I obtain thereby? I ask that the Buddha take compassion upon me and explain this matter, as I earnestly desire to understand.”

The Buddha: “Young king, your question is excellent indeed. Listen to what I say, and having heard it, take it to heart.”

King Udayana: “Yes, I am ready to receive this teaching.”

The Buddha: “I will teach you of the good fortune to be gained by one who produce an image of the Buddha...A person who produce an image of the Buddha will, in later life, have clear eyes and a handsome appearance; his body, hands, and feet always be excellent. One born in heaven will also be exceptional among the gods in his purity, with exquisite eyes and countenance. Such is the fortune obtained by one who produces an image of the Buddha.”²¹

They not only promoted the idea by urging the monastic society to make images as means of earning merits, and to glorify the *Rūpakāya* of the later developed *trikāya* concept,²² but also made it an act of piety.²³ Some early Buddha images found from Mathurā have been named as “bodhisattva” even though there is no distinction between the Buddha and the bodhisattva images in general. See **fig.4.2a**-seated Buddha image from Katrā, the inscription below the image says: *Budharakhītasā mātare mohāsiye Bodhisato paṭīthāpito sāhā mātāpitihi sake vihāre sarvasatvānā[m] hitasukhāye* (By Amosasiya the mother of Buddharakṣitā had set up this Bodhisattva image in association with her parents in her own temple for the welfare and happiness of sentient beings),²⁴

²¹ Sharf, “The Scripture on the Production of the Buddha Images,” 265

²² Lancaster, “An Early Mahayana Sermon,” 290: Guang Xing, *The Concept of the Buddha: Its Evolution from the early Buddhism to Trikāya Theory*. (Oxon: RoutledgeCurson, 2005), 27-9 Table 2: Robert. E. Fisher, *Buddhist Art and Architecture*. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993), 42

²³ Om Prakash, *Cultural History of India*. (Delhi: New Age International (P) Limited Publishers, 2005), 144

²⁴ Verma, *Art and Iconography of the Buddha Images*, 57: J. Ph. Vogel, *Catalogue of the Archaeological Museum of Mathura*, 1910. Reprint (Delhi: Indological Book House, 1971), 47, fig. A-1, Pl.VIII : Ju-Hyung-Rhi, “From Bodhisattva to the Buddha: The beginning of iconic Representations of Buddhist Art” *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 54 No. ¾ (1994), 207

and **fig.4.6a** of Sārnāth, donated by the Bhikkhu Bala in the third year of Kaniska.²⁵

Likewise, the central panel of the seated Buddha image found from Anyor says:

Upāsakasya Sushasya Hārukasya Dāna[m]Bu[d]dha prat[i]mā Uttarasya

Hārusha[sya]-vihāre sahā mātāpit’hi sarvasatvān[ā]m hitasukh[ā]rtha[m] (Gift of the

lay member Susha of Harusha, a Buddha image at the convent of Uttara of Harusha

together with his parents for the sake of the welfare and happiness of all sentient

beings).²⁶ These appear to comply with the *sarvāstivādī vinaya* concept that the Buddha

permitted him to be represented as a Bodhisattva.²⁷

A later example of a standing Buddha image found in Jamalpur, Mathurā, belonging to Gupta period (5th century CE), has an inscription on the pedestal which states that the image of the *Samyaksambuddha* was a pious gift by a Bhikkhu named Yasadinna, to confer merit to his parents, teachers, preceptors and all loving beings to attain the Supreme Knowledge. (See **fig.4.43a**).²⁸ Its further development within the particular tradition emphasizes the Spiritual Body (*dharmakāya*) and the Physical Body (*rūpakāya*), which elaborates certain bodily characteristics of the Buddha. Whereas *dharmakāya* was endowed with eighteen attributes, ten powers, four kinds of intrepidity, three foundations of mindfulness and compassion,²⁹ *rūpakāya* corresponded to 1) thirty-

²⁵ See below n104.

²⁶ Vogel, *Catalogue of the Archaeological Museum of Mathura*, 48, fig.A-2, Pl.VIII

²⁷ Archana Verma, *Early Historical and Visual Flux at Bagh in Central India: BAR International Series 1707*. (Oxford: Archaeopress, Publishers of British Archaeological Reports, 2007), 4: Xing, *The Concept of the Buddha*, 27-9 Table 2.: Vogel, *Catalogue of the Archaeological Museum of Mathura*, 63

²⁸ *Deyadharmo yaṁ śākyabhikṣho (r) Yaśadinnasya. Yad atra puṇyaṁ tad thavatu mā- tā-pitro ācāry-upādhyā (dhyā) yānām cha sarva-satvā (ttvā)-nuttara-jñāna (nā) vāptaye.*” (This is the pious gift of the Buddhist monk Yasadinna. What so ever merit [there is] in this [gift] , let it be for the attainment of supreme knowledge of [his] parents teachers and preceptors and of all sentient beings). Vogel, *Catalogue of the Archaeological Museum of Mathura*, 49-50, A.5, Plate 9: Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 96, Pl. 56

²⁹ Xing, *The Concept of the Buddha*, 19

two bodily characters, 2) 80 minor characters,³⁰ 3) a golden complexion, and 4) a one-fathom halo.³¹ In fact, the thirty-two characteristics of a Great Being (*mahāpuruṣa*) were first described in the Pāli texts: *Lakkhaṇa sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*.³² “It is interesting to note here that this possibly gave birth not only to the Buddha image but also to all superhuman and principal divine forms and also to Indian canons of proportions.”³³ Such attributes and visually illustratable characteristics have provided a solid environment for the evolution of the Buddha image as idol worship which subsequently gained currency during the Kushan Period.³⁴

The most significant with regard to the divine bodily appearance of the Buddha is the development of Buddhist iconography through the influence of such treatises as *Lalitavistara sūtra* (date unknown and not a unified text to a particular author, but assumed that it was compiled somewhere around six-hundred years after the death of the Buddha), *Sādhnamālā* (5th -6th century CE), and *Niṣpanṇayogāvalī* (5th -6th century CE). These texts, not only describe the various forms (*veśa*) of the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and their counterparts (*śakti*), but also prescribe certain artistic rules: “proportions, measurements, postures, gestures, moods, and expressions for different types of images in painting and sculpture.”³⁵ Thus, Mahāyāna Buddhism neither had restrictions against the representation of the Buddha in the anthropomorphic form nor was reluctant to make

³⁰ See Appendix II.II for the details of eighty minor characteristics.

³¹ Xing, *The Concept of the Buddha*, 25

³² DN:30, *Anatta Lakkhana sutta*, 142-179.: T.W. Rhys Davids, ed., *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Vol. III, *Sacred Books of the Buddhists*, Vol. IV.1921. Reprint. (London: Luzac & Company for the Pali Text Society, 1971), 137-53. See Appendix II.I-Thirty-two characteristics of the Great Being

³³ Wikramagamage, *Principles of Buddhist Iconology*, 14

³⁴ Madeleine Hallade, *The Gandhara Style and the Evolution of Buddhist Art*. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1968), 4, & the description for Pl. I

³⁵ “*Jino vairocana khyāto ratnasambhava eva ca-Amithābhāmoghasiddhirakṣobhyaśca prakīrtitaḥ varṇā amīṣām sitaḥ pīto rakto haritamecakau-Bodhyaṅgī varado Dhyānam Mudrā Abhaya-Bhūsparṣau*” Bhattacharya, *Indian Buddhist Iconography*, 47: Rowland, *The Evolution of the Buddha Image*, 12

the image of the Buddha with the affluent resources that developed in Indian tradition. With regard to the present study, both these aspects are important in order to clarify the iconographic characteristics of the Indian Buddha image.

That the Buddha image as an object of worship was duly adopted by the Theravāda tradition is also evident from some later literary references. Buddhaghōṣa in his *Vinaya Atthakathā* says that the wise men before taking their food or drink, offered the same to the image of the Buddha or relic casket.³⁶ According to *Manorathapūraṇī*,³⁷ the image of the Buddha is worthy of adoration, if the relic is enshrined in it.

Under such circumstances, the present study attempts to investigate whether the Sri Lankan Buddha image originated independently or whether it was affected by the developments in India to serve the particular purpose. The chapter will, thus, discuss the iconographic specificities of the Indian Buddha image in the following locations:

1. Gandhāra and Mathurā Schools under Kushan regime.
2. Amarāvati and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa of the Southern School.
3. Mathurā and Sārnāth of the Gupta Age.
4. Bihār, Bengal, and Kāshmir under Pāla-Sena patronage.

Apparently, the Buddhists of Sri Lanka have maintained close contacts with India over a period of twenty-three centuries. Onesicritus in the fourth century BCE has

³⁶ ...*tadā bhagavā attanā ladapaccaye attanāpa paribhuñjati, Bhikkhūnaṃ pi dāpeti. etarahi pana paṇḍitamanussā sadhātukaṃ paṭimāṃ vā cetiyaṃ vā ṭhapetvā buddhappamukhassa ubhato saṅghassa dānaṃ denti.*” *Sp.* V. 1143: Richard, F. Gombrich, *Buddhist Precept and Practice: Traditional Buddhism in the Rural Highlands of Ceylon*. 1971. Reprint. (London and New York: Kegan Paul International, 1995), 122

³⁷ *Ath assa ye parinibbūte Tathāgate cetiyaṃ bhindanti bodhiṃ chindanti dhātumhi upakkammanti, tesam kim hoti ti? Bhāriyaṃ kammaṃ hoti ānantariyasadisam. Sadhātukaṃ pana thūpaṃ vā paṭimāṃ vā bādamānaṃ bodhisākhāchinditum vaṭṭati. Sace pi tattha nilīṇā sakuṇā cetiye vaccam pātenti yeva.*” *Mp.* 6

recorded details of Sri Lankan ships plying between the Indus valley and the Island.³⁸ Similar communications had existed between Tāmralipti on the Bay of Bengal, and Jambukola and Gokaṇṇa, as recorded in the Sri Lankan chronicles.³⁹ Inscriptional and other evidence establish contacts with the other locations as well at different times.⁴⁰ Fa Xian mentions that Anuradhapura had mansions for merchants from the middle-east.⁴¹ Influences in both directions need therefore to be examined. What is attempted in the ensuing sections is to identify the specific iconographic characteristics of the Buddha image in each location for the purpose of comparing the Sri Lankan specimens of the corresponding periods.

4.2 Development of the Buddhist iconography in Indian Buddha image

The major iconographic elements, which will be studied in relation to the Indian Buddha image of the different locations and corresponding periods, are:

1. The protuberance of the skull (*uṣṇīśa*),
2. The circular mark in between the eye brows (*ūrṇā*),
3. Halo (*prabhā maṇḍala*) around the head,
4. The distinctive physical appearance which includes facial expressions [eyes, eye brows, (in certain cases the moustache), smile, ear lobes],
5. Monastic garment,
6. Hand gestures (*mudrā*),

³⁸ “On the Ancient Commerce of India,” *The Quarterly Journal of Education*, Vol. III. January-April, 1832 (London: Charles Knight, Paul-Mall), 354; Alexander Robinson Jr., *The History of Alexander the Great* Vol. I. (Rhodes Island: Brown University, 1953), 154

³⁹ *Mv* Ch. XIX, 1-6, 23-26

⁴⁰ According to *Cūlavamsa*, king Mānavamma went to Jambudvipa and did the services to Narasiha in order to win the war with Vallabha. In return he received an army from the king to gain the sovereignty to Ceylon two times. See *Cv*. Ch.XLVII, 7-17

⁴¹ Legge, *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*, 104

7. The posture: seated (*āsana*) or standing (*bhaṅga*),
8. The pedestal (*pīṭikā*),
9. Symbols i.e. Wheel of Dharma (*dharmacakra*), the lions (*sinha*), the lotus (*padma*) with or without other subsidiary motifs depicting the particular incident, and
10. Decorative elements i.e. attendant deities, canopy of the branches of the Bodhi Tree, the fly whisks, the crown, *etc.*

4.2.1 Gandhāra and Mathurā Schools of the Kushan regime

In Gandhāra, adjoining the Greek kingdom of Bactria, the Graeco-Roman religious art in which the gods and goddesses who were in vogue i.e. Apollo, Pallas, Athena, Dionysus, Jupiter, and Minerva appear to have exerted an impact, since the adapted elements of such images are reflected in the Buddha images of Gandhāra.⁴² Their fusion with Iranian deities i.e. Sun-god [*miiro* (Persian-*Mithra*, Indian-*Mitra*, *Mihira*)], the wind-god [*Oado*, (Persian- *Vado*, Indian- *Vata*)], the Fire-god (*Athso*) *etc.* is also significant.⁴³

In Mathurā, the distinctive influence derived from indigenous religions. Some early images belonging to *yakṣa* cult have been found in Bhārhut, Patnā, Pārkhām (neighboring Mathurā), and Barodā all of which resembling the early cultic male and female deities.⁴⁴ **(See fig.4.1a &4.1b).** The inscription found from the statue of *yakṣa*

⁴² *The Imperial Gazetteer of India: The Indian Empire*, Vol. II Historical, New Edition. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 114, accessed December 03, 2010, <http://dsal.uchicago.edu/reference/gazetteer/index.html>.

⁴³ Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 11, 66: Verma, *Art and Iconography of the Buddha Images*, 77

⁴⁴ Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, *The Age of Imperial Unity*. (New Delhi: Bhartiya Vidya Prakashan, 1968), 517

Manibadra of Pawāya in the Gwalior district emphasizes him as “Bhagavān” which connotes him as a “worshipful”⁴⁵ person, while the respective devotees as ‘*bhaktas*’ stresses the veneration by the pious community.⁴⁶ Benjamin Rowland stresses its uniqueness as a transition for the later images of bodhisattva (Buddha):

[The] realistic representation of the inner breath or *prāṇa*; in this respect, of the yakṣa of the Maurya period is simply a perpetuation of the stylistic character of the torso from Harappa, dated 2500 B.C. The yakṣa type essentially a princely figure, is important, too, as a prototype for the later representations of the Bodhisattva in Buddhist art of Kushan and Gupta period. The crudity and stiffness of figure, its conception as two reliefs placed back to back, are to be explained by the fact that it represents transition into stone of methods practiced for centuries on a small scale in wood and ivory; first generation of Indian craftsmen to work in stone still had much to learn about the problems of monumental sculpture in this more difficult medium.⁴⁷

4.2.1.1 Gandhāra

The Gandhāran Buddha in the anthropomorphic form seeks to depict a supreme being whose character was as similar to that of Apollo in Greek belief as seen from the Kaniska coins where the Buddha is in either seated or standing posture (see **fig.3.40a, 40b, & 40c**). The relevant inscriptions: “*Boddo*,” or “*sakamano Boudo*” in a regional language of Gandhāra from Ahin-Posh near Jalalabadh in Afghanistan prove the image as that of the Buddha, whom they depicted as having solid physical strength.⁴⁸

The absence of a model portraying the Indian perception of the Buddha is thus explained by John Marshall;

⁴⁵ J.N. Farquhar, “Temple and Image Worship in Hinduism,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*. New Series. No.60 (1928), 21, accessed January 11, 2011. Doi:10.1017/S0035869X00059694, journals.cambridge.org/

⁴⁶ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 48

⁴⁷ Rowland, *Art and Architecture of India*, 73-4, fig. 24

⁴⁸ K.D. Bajpai, “Early Buddhist Art: Some Salient Features of Iconography,” *Buddhist Art and Thought*, ed, K.K. Mittal and Ashvini Agrawal. (New Delhi: Harman Publishing House, 1993), 6

Indeed, Greek speech and Greek culture were at this time hardly less the hallmark of the educated Parthian than they were of the educated Roman, and we may be sure that Gondophares, who belonged to one of the richest and most powerful houses in the Parthian Empire, would receive the best education that the Hellenic Orient could provide. When therefore, he overcame the Sakas and gained possession of what had been Greek status in Afghanistan and North West, his sympathy for Hellenistic culture could hardly have failed to be quickened. We need not, therefore, be surprised at the sudden influx of multifarious articles from the Graeco-Roman world which followed the Parthian conquest of Taxila, or an encouragement given to artists and craftsmen to imitate western models.⁴⁹

Thus, the Gandhāra Buddha image emerged with the foreign influence of Graeco-Roman, Iranian statues obviously amalgamating the Indian characters to the subject.⁵⁰ Even during the *Saka (Scythian)* period (beginning from 78 BCE) the impact of the artistic tradition of Hellenism was unavoidable. The simple fact is that it “certainly formed a focal point for a renaissance of art from the 1st to the end of 3rd century A.D.”⁵¹ That was in addition to several other socio-cultural influences such as the Greek language, Graeco-Bactrian coinage, which appeared in and around Taxilā.⁵² The employment of the artisans from the Roman Empire⁵³ resulted in the evolution of Gandhāra Buddhist art as a provincial style of Graeco-Roman art,⁵⁴ in which the Buddha image assumed the likeness of Apollo.⁵⁵ Of such an adaptation from the elements of Graeco-Roman deities of the west to the image of the Buddha, to attract the ordinary society, the face of the Buddha depicted his holy nature with opened eyes, fat cheeks and lips, the moustache, combining the appearance of an Indian sage as conceived by the

⁴⁹ John Marshall, *A Guide to Taxila*, 4th ed. (London: Cambridge University Press for the Department of Archaeology in Pakistan, 1960) 18-27

⁵⁰ Verma, *Art and iconography of the Buddha Images*, 33

⁵¹ Hallade, *The Gandhara Style*, 51

⁵² Rowland, *Gandhara Sculpture from the Pakistan Museum*, 8

⁵³ Andrea and Overfield, *The Human Record: Sources of Global History*, 163

⁵⁴ Satyendra Nath Naskar, *Foreign Influence on Indian Life and culture (c. 326 B.C. to c. 300 A.D.)* (Delhi: Abhnav Publication, 1996), 218

⁵⁵ Hallade, *The Gandhara Style*, 59

Gandhāra artists or a Greek Warrior Noble (see fig.4.9a, 4.9b, 4.9c & 4.18a, 4.18b, 4.19a, 4.19c, 4.19d). As Ananda Coomaraswamy states:

The whole conception of the seated *yogi* and the teacher is Indian, and foreign to western psychology, while the Indian *yakṣas* afford a prototype for the standing figure. The *uṣṇīśa* is found already at Bodhgayā, the lotus seat at Sānchi; indeed the Gandhāran type of lotus, resembling a prickly artichoke, is far from realizing the Indian idea of a firm and comfortable (*sthīrasukha*) seat, and this really due to the misunderstanding of the purely Indian idea. Nor can the *mudrās*, *abhaya* and *dyāna* for example, be anything but Indian. All that is really Hellenistic is the plasticity; the Gandhāran sculptor, even supposing his priority in time, did not so much match Apollo into a Buddha, as a Buddha into an Apollo.⁵⁶

In the early Gandhāra Buddha image, the krobylos (top knotted hair)⁵⁷ is incorporated into a typical *uṣṇīśa* (protuberance) with wavy hair in an obscure manner depicting the cranial bump (fig.4.9a, 4.9b, 4.9c, & 4.10a, 4.10b, 4.10c, 4.10d, 4.10e) and the *ūrṇā* (sacred mark between the eye brows) conforms to the physical characteristics of the Great Person (*mahāpuruṣa lakṣaṇa*).⁵⁸ A particular trend is evident in the later emerged seated and standing images in that the typical hair is arranged in locks which gather on top of the head or with wavy hair which makes a bump atop. For example see the heads of the Buddha shown in fig.4.16a, 4.16b, 4.16c, 4.17a, 4.17b, 4.17c, 4.18b, & 4.19d. A typical hair arrangement is evident in fig.4.13a & 4.13b in that the top-knot is placed far back on the head.

Gandhāra sculptor, though represented the Buddha as a warrior noble, or an ascetic person, also employed the *ūrṇā* (sacred mark between the eye brows) to highlight his supernal nature, in addition to the *uṣṇīśa* (protuberance), though we can see its

⁵⁶ Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 52-3

⁵⁷ Albert Grünwedel, *Buddhist Art in India*, trans. Agnes C. Gibson (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1901), 86; Rowland, *Art and Architecture of India*, 127; Vogel and Barnouw, *Buddhist Art in India, Sri Lanka, and Java*, 22; Krishnan, *The Buddha Image: Its origin and Development*, 30

⁵⁸ Coomaraswamy, "Indian Stone Sculpture," *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin*. (Boston, USA: Museum of Fine Arts). Vol. XVIII No.104 (December, 1919), 58

application only occasionally. Whereas the early images shown in **fig.4.9c, 4.10a, 4.10b, 4.10c, 4.10e, 4.12a, 4.12b, 4.14c, 4.14d, & 4.14e** testify to its particular application, the images shown in the **fig.4.16a, 4.16b, 4.16c, 4.17a, 4.17b, & 4.17c** show its later developments. The application is observed only in a few standing images i.e. **fig.4.18b, 4.19a, 4.19b, 4.19e, & 4.19f**. What is apparent is that the Gandhāra Buddha image demonstrated both Indian as well as Graeco-Roman characteristics that made it different from the images of Mathurā which developed simultaneously. The result was to initiate a tradition of art that represent a provincial Hellenism during its early phase, whereas to extract the Indian modeling to the Buddha image in the later stages of Gandhāra art, yet contributing to the fabric of Indian art.”⁵⁹

Kushans also applied the halo as an integral part of the Buddha image, since it symbolized the worship of the sun god in Greek divinity,⁶⁰ the characteristic of Apollo. They easily integrated this particular element from the cultic worship of Sakas,⁶¹ the predecessors of Kushans in Gandhāra,⁶² who typified their understanding of the Buddha as elaborated in the biographical descriptions of the supra-mundane qualities of the Buddha as in *Lalitavistara sūtra*.⁶³ Other than a few images so far found, all Gandhāra

⁵⁹ Krmarisch, *Indian Sculpture*, 45

⁶⁰ The concept has been differently interpreted where Zeus and Apollo have been named as Sun Gods. At certain points, Zeus has been identified as the ‘God of the sunny-day-light’ whereas Apollo has been connected with the concept of Lykeios of the Indo-European root. See Fritz Graf, *Apollo*. (New York: Routledge, 2009), 105-6

⁶¹ They were the followers of original Brāhmanical religion where they worshipped the sun, and hence called as Sakadvīpī Brāhmanas. See: Prakash, *Cultural History of India*, 142

⁶² Janos Harmatta, B.N.Puri and G.F. Etemadi, *History of Civilization in Central Asia*, Vol.II. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas for UNESCO, 1999), 315

⁶³ The particular text describes the Buddha as a divine person rather than an ordinary human being: “The sun needs no companion in this world, nor does the moon, a lion, or Cakravartin king. Certainly the Bodhisattva, well seated and greatly strengthened by wisdom...” In another description it explains that “the perfectly pure *ūrṇā* between his brows shines in tens of millions of Buddha-fields...” The same text explains the symbols in his palm.” “...his right hand, which had on its palm the designs of a conch, a banner, a fish, a vase, a svastika, an iron hook, and a wheel; this hand which had the spaces between the fingers joined by the membrane; which was beautifully adorned with fine softly polished fingernails the

images have the halo. In some images the halo is missing due to vandalism or natural causes. Once the Gandhāra image illustrated the particular element behind the head of the Buddha image, it marked nothing but the sun disk⁶⁴ of Apollo style.⁶⁵ Thus, the halo of the early Gandhāra Buddha images was simple and plain (see **fig.4.9b, 4.10a, 4.10b, 4.10c, 4.10d, 4.10e, & 4.19c, 4.19e, & 4.19f**) while in some specimens two or more scallops are evident at the edge (**fig.4.10c, 4.10d, & 4.19a, 4.20b, 4.20c, 4.20d**).

In compliance with the so called Graeco-Roman characteristics, the early Gandhāra Buddha images were made with fully-opened eyes, fat cheeks with an over-emphasis of muscular strength, with slight smile, which made the appearance of the Buddha as a divine stature of supra-mundane quality. **Fig.4.9a, 4.9b, 4.9c, 4.11, 4.18b, 4.19a, 4.19c, & 4.19d** testify to this character. However, as it adapted certain Indian characteristics to the original form, the eyes were half closed, and the face appeared to be more delicate than the vigorous qualities. See **fig.4.10a, 4.10b, 4.10c, 4.10d, 4.10e, 4.16a, 4.16b, & 4.16c** for its further developments. However, **fig.4.17c, 4.17d, & 4.17e** prove its corrupted characteristics. While the early Gandhāra Buddha images applied the moustache to the Buddha image as shown in **fig.4.9a, 4.9b, 4.9c, 4.18b, & 4.19a**, the application must have been abandoned in its later improvements, once it got in touch with the Indian images.

color of red copper . . .” see *The Lalitavistara sūtra: The Voice of the Buddha: The Voice of Compassion, Vol. II*, translated into English from the French by Gwendolyn Bays. (CA,USA, Dharma Publishing, 1983),478, 479, 481

⁶⁴ Fred S. Kleiner, *Gardener’s Art through the Ages: Non-Western Perspective*. (Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 13th edition, 2010), 13, fig. 1-10, 1-12, 1-13

⁶⁵ Raymond Robert Fischer, *The Children of God: Messianic Jews and Gentile Christiana nourished by Common Jewish Root*, 2nd ed. (Israel: Olim Publications, 2000), 131

The garment with heavy folds resembles the Roman Toga— the typical attire of Imperial Romans,⁶⁶ or the Pallium,⁶⁷ the garment associated with the pagan Chief Priests.⁶⁸ (See **fig.4.18a, 4.18b, & 4.19a**). Benjamin Rowland compares the standing image of Hoti Mardan in **fig.4.19a** (in the Pakistan museum), to a “youthful type of Apollo Belvedere” and describes the garment: “The heavy, plastically conceived folds of the drapery, revealing the body, and yet existing as an independent volume, suggests the garments of Roman draped figures from the Claudian through the Flavian periods (c.a. 40-100 AD).”⁶⁹ Both shoulders were covered by the garment with heavy schematic lines elaborating the fleshy and muscular intensification unlike the spiritual harmony. And in particular, the under garment is distinguished by the vertical alignment of schematic lines against the regular pleats (**fig.4.19e, 4.19f, & 4.20a, 4.20b, 4.20c, 4.20d, & 4.20e**). The heavy and extra voluminous garment, however, could not be managed in the seated images; it was therefore arranged all over the body, allowing a part of it to fall off in between the two legs as an apron. (See **fig.4.9a, 4.9b, 4.9c, & 4.12a & 4.12b**).

The popular gestures of the seated Buddha images at Gandhāra were:

1. Gesture Fearlessness (*abhaya mudrā*) along with that of *dhyāna mudrā* (see **fig.4.9a, 4.9b & 4.11**).

⁶⁶ P. R. Rao, P. Staff and Raghunadha Rao, *Indian Heritage and Culture*. 1988. Reprint. (Delhi; Sterling Publishers, 2007), 18. The toga of the Imperial Romans was similar to the garment worn by the kings of Lydia and Persia. It included a certain number of lines and folds which schematically, placing the upper edge on the front of the body and brought over the left shoulder, letting the other end falls up to the knee. For a detailed discussion of Roman Toga, see Lilian Mary Wilson, *Roman Toga*. (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1924), 18-25

⁶⁷ For a detailed description of the pallium of the Roman Catholic Chief Priest or Arch Bishop, see Charles G Herbermann et al., *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. XI (New Mexico- Phillip). (New York: New Encyclopedia Press Inc., 1913), 427-29

⁶⁸ Rowland, *The Evolution of the Buddha Image*, 10

⁶⁹ Rowland, *Gandhara Sculpture from Pakistan Museum*, 12

2. Gesture of Teaching (*dharmacakra mudrā*) (see **fig.4.10a, 10b, 10c, 10d, 10e, & 4.12a, 4.14a, 4.14b, 4.14c, 4.14d, 4.17a, & 4.17c**), which had been very popular,⁷⁰ and
3. Gesture of Meditation (*dhyāna/samādhi mudrā*) (see **fig.4.9c, 4.12b, 4.13a & 4.13b**).
4. Gesture of fearlessness (*abhaya mudrā*) in combination with the gesture of earth-Touching (*bhū-sparṣa mudrā*) (see **fig.4.15**).
5. Gesture of intellectual conversation (*vitarka mudrā*) in combination with the gesture of meditation (*dhyāna/samādhi mudrā*) as in **fig.4.17b**.

While the first three gestures belong to the early Buddhist tradition,⁷¹ the style depicted in the last two categories, are less often observed in Gandhāra Buddha images. Based on the particular application of gestures, Ananda Coomaraswamy identifies three main forms of seated images:

The first representing the pure *samādhi*, the highest station of ecstasy—here the hands are crossed in the lap in what is known as *dhyāna mudrā*, the seal of meditation, the second in which the right hand is moved forward across the right knee to touch the earth, in what is known as the *bhūmisparṣa*, seal of calling the earth to witness; the third with the hands raised before the chest in the position known as *dharmacakra mudrā*, ‘the seal of turning the wheel of Law.’⁷²

Nonetheless, all, or many of the standing images so far found from the region suggest the application of the gesture of fearlessness (*abhaya*) in the right hand (see **fig.4.18a, 4.18b, 4.19e, 4.20a, 4.20b, 4.20c, 4.20d, 4.20e**), while holding the edge of the robe by the freely positioned gesture of boon-giving (*varada*) in the left hand. (The broken hands of all the standing images appear to have the same pattern of gesture). The

⁷⁰ Kinnard, *The Emergence of Buddhism*, 49

⁷¹ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 67

⁷² Coomaraswamy, *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism*, 331

simple fact is that it satisfied the aesthetic considerations of artistic proportion and appearance to balance the image.

Gandhāra images represented the Buddha either standing or seated. The upright standing posture (*samabhaṅgha*) resembles the model of Greek Apollo,⁷³ (**fig.4.19a, 4.19b, 4.19c, & 4.19d**). Subsequent improvements in the standing posture are evident in **fig.4.20a, 4.20b, 4.20c, 4.20d, & 4.20e**, in which the left or right knee is bent slightly forward to leave the appearance of the image at much ease.

Once the Indian *yogi* posture became predominant,⁷⁴ the Gandhāra images had the Buddha in the gesture of meditation (*samādhi/dhyāna*) or teaching (*dharmacakra*), while seated in cross-legged posture with both soles turned upward. Snellgrove calls the particular seated posture as *Vajrāsana* if a Bodhi tree is behind the Buddha and *vīrāsana* otherwise.⁷⁵ Thus **fig.4.14a, 4.14b, 4.14c, & 4.14d** display the *vajrāsana* where the Buddha is seated under the Bodhi Tree with cross-legged, and the soles turned upward, while **fig.4.10a, 4.10b, 4.10c, 4.10d, 4.10e, & 4.11** suggest the *vīrāsana* with the same bearing. (However, the particular posture should be identified as the *padmāsana* where the legs are arranged in cross-legged position; not the *vīrāsana*).

The pedestal of early Gandhāra images is simple and has elements derived from Graeco-Bactrian art and architecture: See **fig.4.9a** (National Museum, New Delhi), **fig.4.9b** (Berlin Museum), and **fig.4.10d** (Lahore museum, Pakistan) where the basic

⁷³ Pratapaditya Pal, *Indian Sculpture. Vol. I, circa 500 B.C.-A.D. 700*. (CA, USA: University of California Berkley Press, 1987), 33

⁷⁴ Naskar, *Foreign Impact on Indian Life and Culture*, 217

⁷⁵ In the matter of seating position, scholars have different explanations. According to *Indian Śilpa Śāstras*, the cross-legged position where the right leg is placed on the left thigh and the left leg is placed on the right thigh is called as the *padmāsana*. Contrary, the relaxed position of placing the right foot on the left thigh whereas the left foot is placed below the right leg is called *vīrāsana*. To emphasize Snellgrove's explanation, in this chapter, I have followed the explanation given by David Snellgrove in his *The Image of the Buddha*, 447

element is a decoration of plastically arranged linen that hangs down like a curtain.

Fig.4.9a and **4.9b** show a pedestal with the symbolic appearance of two lions. In **fig.4.9c** and **fig.4.10a** (Sahr-i-Bahlol), **fig.4.10b** (Berlin museum) the pedestal decorated with a seated Buddha image in the middle, and is adorned by two worshippers on either side. In addition, the motif of two lions supports the pedestal on either side. The **fig.4.12a** and **12b** (museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri) depict the Buddha seated in *padmāsana* on a lotus pedestal. A particular arrangement in **fig.4.12a** is a double lotus pedestal (*dvitva padma pīṭikā*) inside an image house. In **fig.4.14a** (*Dharmarājikā stūpa*),⁷⁶ **fig.4.14b** and **4.14c** (Lahore museum, Pakistan), the Buddha is seated on a lotus pedestal in *vajrāsana* posture⁷⁷ under the Bodhi Tree. The lotus-like cushion on which the Buddha is shown seated is sometimes referred to as *padmāsana*.⁷⁸ The pedestal of **fig.4.15** (National museum, Taxilā),⁷⁹ is a separate rectangular bench with highly decorated legs suggesting its non-Indian origin. The standing images in **fig.4.18a** (Lauriyan Tangai), **4.19b** (Takt-i-Bahi), as well as **4.20a**, **4.20 b**, **4.20c** and **4.20e**, are placed on a separate pedestal with decorated motifs.

It is very unlikely that the Gandhāra sculptors have employed the symbols other than lion that they employed as a decorative element in the pedestal of the images. It is apparent that the tradition of the application of Wheel of Dharma (*dharmacakra*) as a symbol of enlightenment, or First Sermon, obvious from the Maurya period, is absent in the Gandhāra images, except the gesture of teaching. The application of lion in the

⁷⁶ Nagar, *Gandharan Sculpture: Catalogue of the Museum of Art and Archaeology*, 24 fig. 14

⁷⁷ The emphasis is given by David Snellgrove. See above n75.

⁷⁸ The term *āsana* in Sanskrit indicates the seat where the Buddha or bodhisattvas are seated. The word *Padmāsana*, according to *Sādhanamālā* is “the seat of lotus.” Similarly, the *siṃhāsana* is the lion throne or the seat of lion.” See Bhattacharyya, *Indian Buddhist Iconography*, 433

⁷⁹ Marshall, *The Buddhist Art of Gandhara*, 51-2, Pl. 69, fig.98

pedestal confirms that Gandhārans still emphasized the Buddha's personality as shown in **fig.4.9a, 4.9b, 4.10a, 4.10b, 4.18a, 4.20a, and 4.20b**, yet in compliance with the traditional Graeco-Roman style.

In **fig.4.13a, 4.14a, 4.14b, 4.14c, 4.14d, and 4.15**, the images are “surrounded by attendant deities, including Indra or Sakra, and Brahma, and other members of the Brāhmaṇical heavenly host... in addition to the worshippers.”⁸⁰ In **fig.4.13a and 4.13b**, the emaciated Buddha, made out of Schist, conforming to descriptions of his life stories⁸¹ is seated in *yogi* fashion on a grass-covered seat. On the left, the Brahma and Indra are visible with their distinctive attributes, while Vajrapāni is present from the right behind, “with the double hammerhead of some European gods.”⁸² Sujātā is in front of him, dressed in Greek *chiton* and *himation*, as Marshall identifies.⁸³ The **fig.4.14d** depicts some other attendants, of whom Vajrapāni is visible at the right back. In **fig.4.15** the Buddha is with Vajrapāni and seven female attendants. **Fig.4.22** (National museum, Karachi), shows the Buddha attended by Vajrapāni.⁸⁴ See also **fig.4.14b, 4.14d, & fig.4.15** where two human figures on either side of the frontal panel of the pedestal are shown worshipping the Buddha.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 104

⁸¹ “And then, monks, my body, receiving no food at all, became exclusively dry, thin, and weak. My limbs and their joints were two or three times, four times, five times, even ten times, thinner than the knots of the *asitaki* plant or the knots of the *Kālīka* plant. My sides were like those of a crab. My rib cage was like a caved- in stable, my spine took on the contours of a braid of air, my skull became like a dried –up gourd, my eyeballs like the stars reflected at the bottom of the well....When I thought I was touching my stomach with my hands, it was my spine that I was feeling. When I tried to get up, I was so bent over that I fell backwards. When with difficulty I again got up, and rubbed my limbs with dust, all the hairs came away from my body..” see Bays, trans., *The Lalitavistara sūtra: The Voice of the Buddha: The Voice of Compassion*, Vol. II, 387-8

⁸² D.T. Devendra, “A Note on the Lightning in Iconography with Special reference to Vajra” *Paranavitana Felicitation Volume*. (Colombo: Government Printing, 1965), 130

⁸³ Marshall, *The Buddhist Art of Gandhāra*, 61, Pl.57 fig. 84

⁸⁴ Smith, *A History of Art in India and Ceylon*, 108c

⁸⁵ Verma, *Art and Iconography of the Buddhist Images*, 104, Pl.5

4.2.1.2 Mathurā

Mathurā (the southern capital of Kushans) had a long history of indigenous cultic images in the human form,⁸⁶ such as local gods, *yakṣa* and *yakṣinī* (tree spirits) (**fig.4.1a & 4.1b**), *nāga* and *nāginī* (water spirits) (**fig.4.1d**) etc. As David Snellgrove emphasizes; “when the members of the Buddhist community of Mathurā first wanted an image of the Buddha in stone, the same artisans who produced images of local gods and kings were the ones who were commissioned for the task.”⁸⁷ They visualized the Śākyamuni Buddha as ‘*bhagavān*’ the Supreme Enlightened One, who became the Universal Monarch (*cakravartin*).⁸⁸ The simultaneous evolution of the image tradition of Tīrtaṅkaras⁸⁹ of Jainism in that the *yogi* posture or the *śimhāsana* (the lion pedestal) might have exerted some influence, even though we cannot trace any dated evidence of Tīrtaṅkara images prior to those of the Buddha (**fig.4.1c**). J. E. van Lohuizen-de-Leeuw describes the possibility of the independent development:

When we compare the peculiarities of the images in fig.30 [**fig.4.7a in the text**] with images such as Yakṣa in fig.38 [**fig.4.1a in the text**] and the Nāgas, then we will see how great the similarity is, and therefore we agree with Coomaraswamy that the Buddha type has been derived from the Yakṣa type... When seated, the Buddha is represented as an ascetic in meditative attitude, and here no other tradition in plastic art can have had any influence than nature’s own example. Figures in this pose are represented in early Central Indian School, as, for instance, on the railings of Bhārhut, but there was always the intention to represent ascetics, Brahmins, hermits or at least persons in meditation, and never Yakṣas... It is clear that images like Katrā are preceded by a whole line of

⁸⁶ J.L. Davidson, “Begram Ivories and Early Indian Sculpture: A Re-consideration of Dates” *Aspects of Indian Art: Papers Presented in the Symposium of County of Los Angeles Museum of Art*, ed. Pratapaditya Pal. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), 12-14.

⁸⁷ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 48

⁸⁸ The concept was evolved from the life stories of the Buddha where the Brahmins predicted of his future. See: *JātakaA.* 63-4

⁸⁹ Some iconographic characteristics of Pārśvanātha, a seated image belonging to 1st century CE, and that of a Jina belonging to 20 BCE from Dhammamitra *Āyāgapata*, as well as the image of Ṛśabhanātha dating to 100 BCE, found from Mathurā must have provided some specimens regarding their figural compositions of the Buddha images. See Somya Rhie Quintanilla, *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura: ca. 150 BCE-100 CE*. (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2007), 202-3, fig. 27, 141, 142b

development. Although we would not emphatically assert that Buddha images therefore were in vogue in a long time before the image of Katrā was made, still this seems very probable; but we must not exclude the possibility that line of development in the seated ascetic figure was enacted outside of Buddhism. In that case only Jainism remains as a possibility.⁹⁰

The Jain Images were easily distinguished from those of the Buddha for the character of nudity in them.⁹¹

The association of the bull and the lion with the Buddha (see fig.4.2a, 4.6a, & 4.8a) could also derive from the Pāli Canon (i.e. *Nālaka sutta* of the *Sutta Nipāta*), which elaborates the princely and royal characteristics of the Bodhisattva:⁹²

The Bodhisatta, the foremost jewel, unequaled- has been born for welfare & ease, in the human world, in a town in the Śākya countryside, Lumbini... He, the highest of all beings, the ultimate person, a bull among men, foremost of all people, will set turning the Wheel [of Dhamma], in the grove named after the seers, like a strong, roaring lion, the conqueror of beasts.⁹³

The early statues of Buddha as well as Bodhisattva in Mathurā are generally carved as sculptures in the round whether standing or seated, depicting highly developed physical strength as they attributed to the holy and powerful spirits (*yakṣa* or *nāga*--see fig.4.1a, 4.1b, & 4.1d),⁹⁴ or even to Jina⁹⁵ (see fig.4.1c),⁹⁶ “blending the miraculous aspects of divinity with his mortal appearance by eliminating decorative

⁹⁰ De-Leeuw, “New Evidence with regard to the Origin of the Buddha Image” 382: de-Leeuw, *The Scythian Period*, 154-7 Pl. XVIII, fig.28, 30, 38

⁹¹ See fig. 4.1c

⁹² The bodhisattva in this respect is referred to the mortal career of the Buddha prior to his Enlightenment, unlike the divine bodhisattvas described in the Mahāyāna texts.

⁹³ “*So Bodhisatto ratanavaro atulyo manussaloke hitasukhatāya jāto Sakyānaṃ game janapade Lumbineyye, ten’amha tuṭṭhā atiriva kalyarūpā.*

So sabbasattuttamo aggapuggalo narāsabho sabbapajānām uttamo vattessati cakkam Isivhaye vanenadam va siho balavā migādhibhū.” Sn.11. *Nālaka sutta*, 683-84: “Nālaka sutta: To Nalaka” (Sn 3.11), translated from the Pāli by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. *Access to Insight*. Accessed September 27, 2010, <http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/kn/snp/snp.3.11.than.html>

⁹⁴ de-Leeuw, *The Scythian Period*, 154, Pl. XXII, fig.38: Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 49, fig. 24 (Parkham, near Mathurā, 2nd century BC, sandstone, 264cm, Archaeological museum, Mathurā): R. C. Sharma, *Buddhist Art of Mathura*. (Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1984), 9, (Mathura, Mathura Museum, Cat. No. SOIV-360)

⁹⁵ Quintanilla, *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura*, 203

⁹⁶ Sharma, *Buddhist Art of Mathura*, fig. 9

embellishments.”⁹⁷ The thirty-two auspicious marks (*lakṣaṇa*) of a Great Man,⁹⁸ the body of the shape of a lion “along with a fixed system of proportions of the body, the *uṣṇīśa* or the protuberance atop the head, elongated ear lobes, webbed fingers, *dharmacakra* (Wheel of Dharma) on the palm, and so on”⁹⁹ which made the Buddha different from mortals,¹⁰⁰ (see **fig.4.2a** Curzon Museum, Mathurā),¹⁰¹ and **fig.4.7a**, the railpost image found from Mathurā (Musée Guimet, Paris). There is no *ūrṇā*, no moustache, the head is shaven and no curly hair...the breast are curiously prominent,¹⁰² and the deep navel was a striking character.¹⁰³ (See **fig.4.2a, 4.2b, 4.2c 4.6a, 4.6b, & 4.7a**).

Three Mathurā Buddha images are significant on account of early inscriptions:

- 1) At Kausambi by a nun named Buddhāmitrā in the second year of Kanishka.
- 2) At Sārnāth by the Bhikkhu Bala in the third year of Kanishka (see **fig.4.6a and Epi.**

4.1)¹⁰⁴

⁹⁷ Hāndā, *Buddhist Art and Antiquities in Himachal Pradesh*, 44

⁹⁸ See **Appendix II.1** “The Thirty-two characteristics of the Great Person” according to *Lakkhana Sutta*. *DN 30: Anatta Lakkahan sutta*

⁹⁹ Kinnard, *The Emergence of Buddhism*, 49

¹⁰⁰ Rowland, *The Evolution of the Buddha Image*, 12

¹⁰¹ Verma, *Art and Iconography of the Buddha Images*, 57: Sharma, *Buddhist Art of Mathura*, 178, fig. 79: Hyung-Rhi, “From Bodhisattva to the Buddha,” 207.

¹⁰² Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 57: Vogel, *Catalogue of the Archaeological museum at Mathura*, 47-8, A-1, Plate VII.

¹⁰³ Henrick Willem Obbink, *Orientalia Rheno-traiectina*. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1949), 161

¹⁰⁴ The image bears two inscriptions, both describing that it was donated by the bhikkhu Bala. 1) *Bhikshusya Balasya Bodhisattvo prat[i]stapito- Mahakshatrapena Kharapalanena sahā kahapatrapena Vanashparena* (Translated as: (This gift) of Friar Bala, a master of the Tripitaka (namely an image of) the bodhisattva has been erected by the great satrapKahapallana together with the satrap Vanapara). 2) 1) *Mahārājasya Kanīṣhkasya sath 8 he 3 di 22 2) etaye parvaye bhikshusya Pushyavuddhisya saddhyevi 3) hārisya bhikshusya Balasya trepitakasya 4) Bodhisatvo chhatrayashṭi cha pratishṭhāpito 5) Bārāṇasiye Bhagavato chaṅkame sahā māt[ā] 6) pitihī sahā upādhyāyācherehī saddhyevihāri 7)-hi antevhsikehi cha sahā Buddhāmitraye trepiṭike 8) ye sahā kahatrapena Vanasparena Kharapallā 9) nena cha sahā cha[tu]hi parishāhi sarvasatvanam 10) hitasukhārtham* (Translated as: In the 3rd year of Maharaja Kanishka, the 3rd (month) of winter, the 22nd day, on this, was (this gift) of Friar Bala, a master of the Tripitaka and fellow of Friar Pushyavuddhi, (namely an image of) the Bodhisattva and an umbrella with a post, erected at Benares, at the place where the Lord used to walk,— together with (his) parents, with (his) masters and teachers, (his) fellows and pupils, and with (the nun) Buddhāmitrā versed in the Tripitaka, together with the satrap Vanaspara and Kharapallāna, and together with the four classes, for the welfare and happiness of all creatures.’ J. Ph. Vogel, “Epigraphical Discoveries at Sārnāth.” *Epigraphia Indica and the Record of Archaeological Survey of India*, Vol. 8 (1905-06). ed., E. Hultzsch, (India: Office of the Superintendent of

3) at Srāvasti by the Bhikkhu Bala for the teachers of Sarvāstivāda in Kausamba Kuti
(*sarvasatvānām hitasukharthām*).¹⁰⁵

Epi. 4.1- Inscription on pedestal of Sārṇāth Buddha image, dedicated to the
Buddha/bodhisattva by Friar Bala



These three images and two others, found from Srāvasti and Vārānasi, have been
“inscribed ‘bodhisattvas’ while similar images in other places are referred to as the
“Buddha” (*bhagavato Buddha*).”¹⁰⁶ The inscription belonging to one of these images
mentions that it was erected on the promenade of the Buddha.¹⁰⁷ Clearly, the early

Government Printing, 1906), 176-9, Pl. iia. http://asi.nic.in/asi_books/1843.pdf. Accessed 12/4/2011:
Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 56, fig. 83

¹⁰⁵ Verma, *Early Historical and Visual Flux at Bagh in Central India*, 2-3: Vogel, *Catalogue of the Archaeological museum of Mathura*, 63-4, A-66

¹⁰⁶ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 52: Verma, *Art and iconography of the Buddha Images*, 110

¹⁰⁷ “*Bhagavato Buddhassa caṅkame*” See: T.H. Bloch, “Two Inscriptions on Buddha Images” *Epigraphia Indica and the Record of Archaeological Survey of India*, Vol. 8 (1905-06). Ed. E. Hultzsch, (India: Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, 1906), 179-81, Fig. A. http://asi.nic.in/asi_books/1843.pdf. Accessed December 4, 2011: Debala Mitra, *Buddhist Monuments*, (Calcutta: Sahitya Sansad, 1971), 77-83

Mathurā sculptors did not distinguish between the Buddha and the Bodhisattva,¹⁰⁸ as identified by the later Buddhist tradition. As stated by J. Ph Vogel, “We are thus led to the conclusion that, in seated images at least, the Mathurā sculptors of the early Kushan period made no distinction between Gautama the bodhisattva and Gautama the Buddha.”¹⁰⁹

Many of the early Mathurā images thus show the lump of hair (*uṣṇiśa*) on the head,¹¹⁰ in the snail shell (*kapārda*) style (see **fig.4.2a & 4.2c, 4.7a, 4.7b, & 4.7c, 4.8a, & 4.8b**),¹¹¹ while in some “the head is shaven as befits a monk.”¹¹² (**fig.4.2b, 4.6a, & 4.6b**). David Snellgrove suggests that this agrees with the canonical accounts of his departure from the palace where he removed all his jewels and gathered his braided hair on top of the head once he cut his hair.¹¹³ According to *Buddhavamsa*, the bodhisattva “having dismissed Channa, [he] cut off the dark hair on his chest and his topknot with a sword so sharp that it resembled blue lotuses and threw up into the air.”¹¹⁴ Chandra Wikramagamage assumes that these figures belong to the typical northern Buddhist school where no protuberance is visible at its early stages.¹¹⁵

The early images, except few, do not bear the *ūrṇā*, the hair in between the eye brows. The Head of a colossal Buddha image in the Mathurā catalogue No.A-30 bears an *ūrṇā*, indicated by a slightly raised disc.¹¹⁶ However, it has been a particular mark in the seated Buddha images from the beginning as exemplified in the images shown in

¹⁰⁸ Vogel, *Catalogue of the Archaeological museum of Mathura*, 40

¹⁰⁹ -ibid-

¹¹⁰ G.C. Chauley, *Early Buddhist Art in India*. (New Delhi: Sandeep Prakashan, 1998), 56

¹¹¹ Verma, *Art and Iconography of the Buddha Images*, 52

¹¹² Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 51, Pl. 27

¹¹³ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 51

¹¹⁴ *Md.* 9

¹¹⁵ Wikramagamage, *Principles of Buddhist Iconology*, 82, pl.12b

¹¹⁶ Vogel, *Catalogue of the Archaeological Museum at Mathura*, 55, A-30

fig.4.2a, 4.2b, 4.2c, 4.3, 4.4a, 4.4b, and 4.4c. In the later images it has become an ornament, in that it appears to be a pendent in the centre of the forehead (**see fig.4.5**). However, the particular characteristic is not evident in the standing Buddha images until the late second century CE as shown in **fig.4.8a & 4.8b**.

Apparently, the halo or more precisely the nimbus surrounding the head, popular from the beginning in the seated and standing images, was indicated with decorated scalloped edges in low relief,¹¹⁷ above which the Bodhi tree symbolized the Enlightenment (**see fig.4.2a**). Ananda Coomaraswamy describes its typical semblance to the pre-Buddhist cultic beliefs other than the foreign impulse:

In Vedic ritual a golden disc was placed behind the altar to represent the sun; it may well be that in other cases such a disc was placed bearing cultic objects. Radiance is a quality associated with all the Devas, and we might expect that when anthropomorphic image took its place upon altar, once empty or occupied by a symbol, the disc would remain— just as the Bodhi Tree remains behind the Vajrāsana when the visible Buddha takes his place upon it.¹¹⁸

Typical examples are evident in the seated images shown in **fig.4.2a, 4.2b, 4.2c,** and in the standing images of **fig.4.7a, 4.7b, 4.7c,** and **4.8a**.

Mathurā Buddha images obviously exhibited the broad shoulders and simplified bodily forms along with firm muscular emphasis, which presented the Indian traditional skills. Their images demonstrated the massive proportions of the body with prominent breasts and navel cavity, which derived from the elements of the *yakṣa* cult through which they symbolized the energetic nature and the supreme power of the deity.¹¹⁹ Thus, the particular outcome was the over-sized images with rigid physical characteristics through which Mathurā sculptor demonstrated the Buddha's supernal nature. Complying

¹¹⁷ Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 57

¹¹⁸ Coomaraswamy, *The Origin of the Buddha Image*, 20, fig. 43, 44

¹¹⁹ Promsak Jermawatdi, *Thai Art with Indian Influence*. (Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1979), 48

with particular understanding of the Buddha that satisfied the ancient literary descriptions of iconography (*lakṣaṇa*) of the Great Man, The face of the image was of oval shape with wide-opened eyes, slight smile, and long ear lobes (*lambhakarṇa*).

The garment of the Mathurā Buddha image often covers the left shoulder, indicated by incised lines, which clings closely to the body.¹²⁰ It apparently depicts the monastic robe of an actual monk as it is described in the canon. As J. Ph. Vogel describes, “The dress of the Buddha consists of three pieces (*tricīvara*): the lower garment (*antarāvāsaka*), an undergarment hanging low down and bound to the loins with a girdle, the upper garment (*uttrāsāṅgha*), which covers the breast and the shoulders and reaches below the knee, and third, the cloak (*saṅghāti*), worn over the two undergarments.”¹²¹ These characteristics are evident in **fig.4.6a & 4.6b**, and **4.7a**, where the Buddha appears in the monastic garment covering the left shoulder (of which the schematic lines clench from the top of the shoulder up to the wrist), as a light weight cloth through which the undergarment is visible.¹²² The under garment is marked by the lines around the waist and, in between the ankle and the lower edge of the *uttrāsāṅga*.

The Mathurā Buddha images are of two postures: standing or seated. The large standing images were made in red sandstone,¹²³ and are basically upright (*samabhaṅga*). Occasionally there is a seated lion in between the feet (see **fig.4.6a & 6b**),¹²⁴ reflecting his well-established title of *śākyasiṅgha* (Lion of *Śākyas*).¹²⁵ The seated images show the Buddha image cross-legged with both soles upwards (*padmāsana*) on a rectangular

¹²⁰ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 51; Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 57

¹²¹ Vogel, *Catalogue of the Archaeological Museum at Mathura*, 35

¹²² Vogel, “Epigraphical Discoveries at Sārnāth,” 177

¹²³ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 56; Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 57

¹²⁴ Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 57, fig. 83

¹²⁵ Snellgrove. *The Image of the Buddha*, 51

pedestal supported by lions, called *simhāsana*,¹²⁶ (see **fig.4.2a, 4.2b, & 4.2c**) unlike the lotus pedestal of Gandhāra (**fig.4.14a, 4.14b, 4.14c & 4.14d**).

In both the postures, the only gesture of the Mathurā Buddha image is the fearlessness (*abhaya*) in the right hand, which is raised just above the right shoulder. (**fig.4.2a, 2b, 2c, & 4.7a, 7b, 7c**). In **fig.4.5** the disproportionately carved right hand in *abhaya mudrā* is decorated with a symbol of a Wheel (*cakra*) in the middle, and the fingers are pointing upwards. This may be the particular character that David Snellgrove identifies as the “Wheel of Dharma,” often shown on the palms of his hands and the soles of his feet.¹²⁷ According to J.Ph. Vogel this is unique to Mathurā image that the sculptor employed ‘the three jewels (*triratna*) in the palms as well as on the soles of the feet.’¹²⁸ The left hand of the images is positioned as follows regardless of its posture.

1. In the early seated images it rests upon the left leg (see **fig.4.2a, 2b, & 2c**),
2. In the early standing images the crooked left hand compresses to the hip while supporting the robe (See **fig.4.6a, 6b, & 4.7a**).
3. In the later seated and standing, images the left hand carries the edge of the robe (see **fig.4.4a, 4b, 4c, 4.5 & 4.7b, 7c**).

The pedestal of early Mathurā images usually carried inscriptions with details of donors and the respective circumstances, which is evident in the pedestal of **fig.4.2a**¹²⁹ (Katrā mound), and **4.6a** (Sārnath).¹³⁰ In the images, however, such information is engraved on the frontal panel of the pedestal along with a motif of the Buddha or

¹²⁶ For the description of the term *Simhāsana* see *Bhattacharya, Indian Buddhist Iconography*, 433: Coomaraswamy, *The Origin of the Buddha Image*, 20

¹²⁷ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 51

¹²⁸ Vogel, *Catalogue of the Archaeological museum at Mathura*, 35

¹²⁹ See above n24

¹³⁰ See above n25, & 104.

bodhisattva in the center as in **fig.4.4a** (Sithala-Gati), **4.4b** (Anyor), **4.4c** (Boston), and in **fig.4.5** (Sahet-Mahet): they bear two lions to symbolize the “Lion Throne” (*siṃhāsana*). However, in the early images i.e. **fig.4.2a** (Katrā) & **4.2c** (Boston museum), the pedestal is decorated with carved lion figures on either side in profile view. In the later image, in addition, there are four human figures, two in each side, in the manner of rejoicing.

The application of decorative elements is a rare phenomenon in Mathurā images. However, the practice must have been popular from the early stages as evident in **fig.4.2a, & 2c** in which the Buddha is flanked by two bodhisattvas or gods: Indra and Brahma,¹³¹ and worshipped by divine beings that are attached to the halo. In addition, the halo of **fig.4.2a** is canopied by the branches of the Bodhi Tree ensuring the Buddha as an enlightened being.

4.2.1.3 Unity of the Kushan Buddhist art through the mutual influence of Mathurā and Gandhāra

In later applications, the Gandhāra Buddha image was deliberately made to absorb some typical Indian characteristics of the Mathurā image: for example, the elongated ear lobes with the serene smile as in **fig.4.11**, found from Badalpur,¹³² the half-closed eyes in **fig.4.9a, 4.9b, 4.16a** and **4.16b** of Taxilā & **4.16c** of Haddā, (Victoria and Albert museum) resemble the borrowed elements from Mathurā to the Gandhāra Buddha image. However, the half-closed eyes in **fig.4.16a** and **16c** are slightly tilted to the right with the long neck bent rightward in contrast to the Gandhāra image so as to elaborate the loving and compassionate nature of the Buddha. David Snellgrove emphasizes:

¹³¹ Singh, *A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India*, 464

¹³² The smile with long ears, shell-like spiral, and the robe of '*Ekanshika Sanghati*' or monastic drapery, suggest its Mathurā origin rather than an introduction of Gandhārans. See Muhammad Ashraf Khan, "2nd century Buddha statue discovered in Taxila." *PTI-The Press Trust of India Ltd.*, 2008. *HighBeam Research*. (September 11, 2010). <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-176887244.html>.

The typical features remain, such as the hair arranged in a schematic waves of separate locks, the same type of *ūrṇā* and *uṣṇīśa*, the sharp chiseling of the eyes, lips, and nose, and even the serene inward look. But, there is now a difference in the general treatment; the lines are softer and the chiseling more graduated. Thus, despite the well-defined clarity of the features, the face with its half-closed eyes shows a mellow and spiritual disposition, almost as though emitting a soft light.¹³³

The assimilations of Indian iconographic elements to the Gandhāra Buddha image, however, were not total. As V.S. Agravala observes; the Indian elements derived from the original *yogi* type, namely the lotus seat, and the meditative gaze could not be properly assimilated, and the schematic folded drapery, heavy ornamentation and very often the moustache betray a taste lacking in refinement.”¹³⁴ The result was to initiate a tradition of art that represent a provincial Hellenism during its early phase,¹³⁵ whereas to extract the Indian modeling to the Buddha image in the later stages of Gandhāra art, yet contributing to the fabric of Indian art.¹³⁶ Ananda Coomaraswamy highlights: “[a]s Mathurā sculpture of the Kushan period may be described as the direct continuation of the old Indian school of Bhārhut. The art is fundamentally and profoundly Indian. At the same time certain motifs and compositions are already of classical origin, and show the influence of the Graeco-Buddhist art of Gandhāra.”¹³⁷

The influence of Mathurā is evident in the top knot of **fig.4.11**. However, later in and around Haddā in Afghanistan, the cranial bump turned into a small topknot with hair locks around the head, which again is the typical Mathurā form (see **fig.4.17a & 17b**). **Fig.4.17c**, on the other hand, is a combination of the two traditions, where the top-knot

¹³³ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 107

¹³⁴ V.S. Agravala *The Heritage of Indian Art: Publication of Information and Broadcasting Division*, (Delhi: Government of India), 1976), 17

¹³⁵ Coomaraswamy, “Indian Stone Sculpture,” 58

¹³⁶ Kramrisch, *Indian Sculpture*, 45

¹³⁷ Ananda Coomaraswamy, “Buddhist Sculpture: Recent Acquisitions” *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin*, Vol. XX. No. 120 (August: 1922), 48

and the hair locks are arranged together. How Mathurā was influenced from the Gandhāra images, on the other hand, is seen in the halo of **fig.4.7a**, **4.7b**, and **4.7c**, though they represent some advance characteristics of the halo of Nāga images depicted in **fig.4.1d**.

The monastic garment covering the left shoulder—*Ekānsika Saṅghāti* (although with engraved lines) as in Mathurā is seen in seated images in **fig.4.10a**, (Sahr-i-Bahlol, Archaeological museum, Peshawar), **4.10b** (Berlin Museum), **4.10c** (Laurian Tangai), **4.10d** (Lahore Museum, Pakistan), and **4.10e** (Sahr-i-Bahlol), yet with an augmentation of pleats, which is not familiar in native Indian image tradition. The half removed robe in **fig.4.13a** and **13b** suggest the emaciated torso.¹³⁸ In the **fig.4.13b** the monastic robe is arranged as an apron in between the crossed legs as in earlier images (see **fig.4.10a**, **4.10b**, **4.10d**, & **4.10e**).

Remarkably, the soles of **fig.4.11** are decorated with *dharmacakras* (Wheels of Law). Due to this, Muhammad Ashraf Khan assumes that, "it was brought by monks travelling from Mathurā as a gift for the monastery here at Badalpur. It's unique in the Gandhāra region that stretches from Jalalabad in Afghanistan to Taxilā."¹³⁹ **Fig.4.11** is important due to its columned pedestal supported by two lions, in that one notices both Gandhāra and Mathurā elements. As observed by O. C. Hāndā; Gandhāra, which initiated the Buddha in the human form,

[C]ould not only attract Hellenistic qualities in the figural treatment which highlighted the physical beauty but, at the same time could retain the abstraction of the Buddhist spiritualism of the mainland. It was the integration of those two qualities which gave rise to a splendid art-style which came to be known as the Kushan art. It was under the Mahayanic impetus that the Kushanas developed

¹³⁸ Parimoo, *Life of the Buddha in the Indian Sculpture*, 15, fig. 18

¹³⁹ Muhammad Ashraf Khan, "2nd century Buddha statue discovered in Taxila.

<http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-176887244.html> Accessed September 11, 2010

Buddhism as a ‘religion of faith that committed to the *Tri-ratna* concept and the Buddha emerged in the graceful anthropomorphic form.¹⁴⁰

A measure of *Indianization* of the Kushan art had taken place during the 1st-3rd centuries CE, though it was not fully incorporated with the Indian native tradition.

On the other hand, Gandhāra influence on Mathurā is evident in the style of monastic garment of **fig.4.4a** (Sīthala-Gati), **4.4b** (Anyor), **4.4c** (Boston Museum), **4.5** (Sahet-Mahet), **4.7b** and **4.7c** (Mathurā), and in **fig.4.8b** (Mathurā) where the heavy monastic robe with schematic channels covers both the shoulders, beside its native form and structure. In addition, wide spread smile over the face, fully-opened eyes testify to their assembled elements from Gandhāra style. The *uṣṇīśa* of **fig.4.5** with hair locks spread over the head is assumed to be the way the Mathurā sculptor imitated the hair of Gandhāra image,¹⁴¹ and its *ūrṇā* testifies to the Gandhāra influence on Mathurā Buddha image.

The outer garment (*saṅghāṭi*) of **fig.4.4a** (Sīthala-Gati) covers both the shoulders, and is draped with loose pleats: this feature is not familiar to early Mathurā images. The impact of the Gandhāra style is evident in the garment of **fig.4.4b** (Anyor) and **4.4c** (Boston museum), which resemble “a further stage of development, probably owing to the tendency towards its transition from clumsy and stiff nature of Mathurā image to the plastic and more realistic iconography of Gandhāra.¹⁴² (**Compare with fig.4.15**). In **fig.4.7b** (Sīthala -Gati), and **fig.4.7c** (Mathurā), both the shoulders are covered, the pleats of the garment are equally distributed on both sides of the torso resembling the Roman

¹⁴⁰ Hāndā, *Buddhist Art and Antiquities in Himachal Pradesh*, 22-3

¹⁴¹ de-Leeuw, *The Scythian Period*, 212

¹⁴² de-Leeuw, *The Scythian Period*, 189

Togā, which suggests the influence from North-West India at its earliest stages.¹⁴³ Under the Huviska influence,¹⁴⁴ the incorporation of both the styles is seen in the Mathurā standing images. There is hardly any doubt that the Gandhāra image has significantly changed the native Mathurā style¹⁴⁵ as is evident in the foregoing examination. The unavoidable cross-cultural interaction of two styles generated the Buddha image of their own.

4.2.2 Amarāvati and Nāgārjunakonda of the Southern/Āndhra School

A distinctive tradition of Buddhist art that developed around lower Kriṣṇa Godavari valley (later the Veṅgi) is generally identified as the Veṅgi Tradition (Āndhra School) or Southern tradition of Buddhist art. The tradition demonstrates different iconographic characters in depicting the Buddha image, which distinguishes it from its Northern School. The tradition is considered to have evolved from the 2nd century BCE to 3rd century CE¹⁴⁶ in and around Amarāvati and Nāgārjunakonda, with similar developments found in ‘Western Ghats, Ghaṇṭasālā, Bhaṭṭiprolu, Guṇṭupalle,’¹⁴⁷ Nāgapattinam, Kānchipuram as well as Tamil Nādu. As this tradition evolved as a sequel to post-Mauryan and Suṅga-Kanva styles, its motive and techniques were different from those of Gandhāra and Mathurā.

One major fact is the continuance of the orthodox form of Buddhism which did not encourage the pantheon of deities. “In view of the orthodoxy of the South Indian

¹⁴³ de-Leeuw, *The Scythian Period*, 187

¹⁴⁴ Verma, *Art and iconography of the Buddha Images*, 60

¹⁴⁵ de-Leeuw, *The Scythian Period*, 184-6, Plates XXI-XXIV

¹⁴⁶ P. R. Srinivasan, “Buddhist Images of South India.” *Story of Buddhism with Special Reference to South India*, ed., A. Aiappan and P. Sirinivasan. (Madras: Department of Information and Publicity, Government of Madras, 1960), 62-3

¹⁴⁷ Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 23

Buddhism who did not permit any of the excesses which characterized the later form of Buddhism of North India, South India could accommodate the orthodox form of Buddhism longer.”¹⁴⁸ Transiting from the representation of the Buddha with aniconic symbols (as discussed in Chapter 3), the Āndhra School adopted the Buddha image in human form –

- 1) Solely as a decorative element equal to aniconic symbols of the *stūpa* dome (see **fig.4.23a & b**).
- 2) Simply to replace the aniconic symbols to elaborate the life stories (see **fig.3.3a, 3.3b, 3.3c, 3.3d, 3.8a, 3.8b, 3.8c, 3.8d, 3.8e, 3.15a, 3.15b, 3.18a, 3.18b, 3.25, 3.30, 3.38, 3.39a, & 3.39b**). Simhavarman, Brāhmanical king, has dedicated an image of the Buddha at Amarāvati in about 437 CE.¹⁴⁹

Thus, it was not yet an object of worship for the Amarāvati sculptor. As David Snellgrove emphasizes;

The explanation for the obvious co-existence of the two iconographies lies equally in the slow evolution from the aniconic to iconic forms and in a kind of routine attachment to the earliest artistic formulas. The optimal made by the Amarāvati art is, in fact, more a matter of doctrine than of craft tradition.¹⁵⁰

As a consequence, the transition of the depiction of the Buddha from the symbolic depiction to human form is best illustrated in Amarāvati. Shanti Swarup states,

Amarāvati Buddha is not the ideal of Indian divinity: it is a transitional type. In all the art of Amarāvati we see Indian sculpture passing from the naturalistic school of Aśokan epoch into the idealistic school in which the Indian art reached its highest expression. The simple unsophisticated naturalism of the Bhārhut Art and Sānchi sculptures is here beginning to change into a very pronounced style of an

¹⁴⁸ Srinivasan, “Buddhist Images of South India, 63

¹⁴⁹ Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 101

¹⁵⁰ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 76; Verma, *Art and Iconography of the Buddha Images*, 169

academic character, but wholly different from the style of Gandhāra, though in detail Gandhāra or Graeco-Roman type frequently occur.¹⁵¹

This school was also subjected to Jain and Brāhmanical influences. Some bronze images of Tīrtānkara, of which, one in the Hyderabad museum (catalogue No. 8722) connotes common iconographical characteristics with the Buddha image in Amarāvati.¹⁵² In addition, the social and political background of Sātavāhana which patronized Buddhism during their reign is remarkable in assembling certain iconographic characteristics. Their communication with southern and northern communities imparted such characteristics at their best. For instance, Karikāla, king of *Cholas*, “maintained a powerful navy which he used to conquer Sri Lanka, from where he brought a large number of prisoners of war whom he used for building a huge durable embankment to tame the Kāveri River.¹⁵³ A similar incident is recorded in the Sri Lankan chronicle *Cūlavamsa* that the king Gajabāhu II (1137 CE-1153 CE) sent forth envoys for an open rebellion with Velakkara troops of Colas that was commanded by King Sirivallabha, and defeated them with no harm to his army of ten thousand.¹⁵⁴ The chronicle also states that his army was comprised of foreign soldiers, among them were the soldiers from Kerala.¹⁵⁵

Similarly, the Cheras, the successors of the Colas, had communications on trade with Romans, and were responsible for constructing a Temple at Muchiri, a well-known

¹⁵¹ Shanthi Swarup, *The arts and crafts of India and Pakistan : A Pictorial survey of Dancing, Music, Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Art crafts, and Ritual Decorations, from the earliest times to the present day.* (Bombay : Taraporevala's Treasure House of Books, 1957), 36-37, Plates XCVII- C

¹⁵² Nagendra Kr. Singh, ed., *Encyclopedia of Jainism*, Vol. I. (Delhi: Anmol Publications for Indo-European Jain Research Foundation, 2001), 3101

¹⁵³ Verma, *Art and Iconography of the Buddha Images*, 157

¹⁵⁴ Cv. Ch. LVIII, 25-40

¹⁵⁵ Cv. Ch. LXIX, 15-20

coastal town in ancient India for Julius Caesar Augustus, the First Roman Emperor.¹⁵⁶ With the patronage of Sātavāhanas (3rd-1st century BCE), and Ikshvākus (second half of the 1st century BCE-1st century CE),¹⁵⁷ Buddhist institutions spread over Jaggayyapeta, Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, Alluru, Gumadiduru and several other centers establishing a better institution for all divisions of Buddhism.¹⁵⁸ These institutions developed a distinctive tradition of Buddhist art in the region. Consequently, the northern style of Mathurā provided some influence on Amarāvati sculpture,¹⁵⁹ while the external trade through the seas brought the Hellenistic elements to the Amarāvati sculpture during the 2nd century CE, which exposed some identical elements that enhanced the Amarāvati art nothing inferior to those from Mathurā and Gandhāra.¹⁶⁰ The resultant characteristics are evident in **fig.4.31** when compared with the **fig.4.24a, 4.24b, and 4.30a, 4.30b1 & b2** that display native characteristics.

However, the continuous relationship between these regions and Sri Lanka, and Sri Lanka's contribution towards the establishment of Buddhism in Amarāvati cannot be denied as there is epigraphic evidence that support.

- 1) A 2nd century CE inscription found from Nāgārjunakoṇḍa states that the Sri Lankan Buddhist monks established a temple "Sīhala-vihāra" and had their own shrine for the Bodhi Tree.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁶ E.H. Warmington, *The Commerce between the Roman Empire and India*. (Cambridge: The University Press, 1928), 58; Majumdar, *The Age of Imperial Unity*, 232-4

¹⁵⁷ Verma, *Art and Iconography of the Buddha Images*, 165

¹⁵⁸ Kanai Lal Hazra, *Royal Patronage of Buddhism in Ancient India*. (Delhi: D.K. Publishers, 1984), 169-93

¹⁵⁹ Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 70

¹⁶⁰ T.M. Ramachandran, *Buddhist Sculptures from a stupa near Goli village, Guntur District*, Bulletin of the Madras Government museum new series, General Section Vol. I. Part I. (Madras: Government Press, 1929), 4-6

¹⁶¹ J.Ph.Vogel, "Prakrit Inscriptions from a Buddhist Site at Nāgārjunikoṇḍa," *Epigraphia Indica and Record of the Archaeological Survey of India*, Vol. XX (1929-30), ed. Hirananda Sastri. 1933. Reprint

- 2) The inscription of Vīrapurīsadatta from Nāgārjunakoṇḍa provides similar conviction in that a Buddhist monastery with a considerable space was erected by the Kriṣṇa River in South India, called Sīhala-Vihāra.¹⁶²
- 3) A 13th century (1344 CE) inscription found from Gadaladeniya, Sri Lanka records a restoration of a two-storied image house at Dhanyakaṭaka by the monk named Dharmakīrti.¹⁶³

The Buddha image at Amarāvati, however, does not depict the robust figures that resembled the *yakṣa* type of Mathurā or stout figures of physical strength of Gandhāra. Thus as Stella Kramrisch observes, “in the last two centuries B.C., the delicacy of the modeling, the slimness of the over-elongated limbs, the powerful character of the body, and with it all the sensibility and keenness of movement, were distinctively of local origin. Later by the 1st century A.D., a heavy and plastic form in some reliefs preludes linear fineness.”¹⁶⁴ In addition, “the ornamentation and the beauty of the figure resulted in an exceptional harmony with lively and sensitive human bodies through which the expression becomes more realistic than the plastic nature of Gandhāra image.”¹⁶⁵ (See **fig.4.30a, 4.30c, 4.30d, & 4.33**). Thus, they enabled the establishment of a distinctive tradition in the southern territories of India, and Sri Lanka, as well as in South-East Asian countries. David Snellgrove highlights: “whatever the reason, the so-called Amarāvati

(Delhi: Director General of Archaeological Survey of India, 1983), 22-3 (see Chap.6.n.94): Mitra, *Buddhist Monuments*, 199

¹⁶² Ven. Walpola Rahula, ed., *The Maha Bodhi Centenary Volume (1891-1991)*. (Calcutta: Mahabodhi Society, 1991), 290-91

¹⁶³ *EZ*. Vol. IV. Part. II. 90-93: William M. Johnston, *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, Vol. I. (A-L), (Chicago, USA: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2000), 643

¹⁶⁴ Kramrisch, *Indian Sculpture*, 46

¹⁶⁵ Prakash, *Cultural History of India*, 161

school portrait of the Buddha in the round, as in bas-reliefs, presents a completely original group of characteristics.”¹⁶⁶

In its later innovations, the construction of images must have been influenced by the śilpa texts. For example, *Mānasāra Śilpaśāstra*, a Hindu treatise (6th-7th century CE) describes the following with regard to the elements of the Buddha image.

The image of the Buddha should be of white color, with a broad smiling face, the ear lobes (which are to be pierced), hanging, having broad and long eyes, prominent nose, long arms, beautiful chest, slightly fatty limbs, and a somewhat hanging belly. The image of the Buddha should have only two eyes and pair of arms; its head should possess the *uṣṇīśa* which should be done up in the shape of *kirīta*. In the case of the standing images, the legs must be placed straight. Whether seated or standing, the images must be clothed in yellow robes. (*Mānasāra* -Chap. 56: *Buddha pratimā vidhānam*).¹⁶⁷

This apparently proves that the Southern school denominated their own style from the beginning itself. Thus, to comply, the images were made out of marble, and thought to have covered with a thin plaster, colored and gilt.¹⁶⁸ The particular contrast is thought to have a closer resemblance to the Sri Lankan type rather than its northern convergence. Ananda Coomaraswamy emphasizes: [T]he statue of Buddha in the round, which may date from the beginning of the third century are magnificent and powerful creations, much more nearly of the Anuradhapura (Ceylon) than of the Mathurā type.”¹⁶⁹ Thus, at the early stages, the Amarāvati Buddha image depicted solely independent characteristics in which, 1) the total absence of a seated Buddha image¹⁷⁰ (except the evidence found in bas-relief motifs in *stūpa* dome) and 2) the appearance of standing images with typical southern influence are to be noted.

¹⁶⁶ Snellgrove, *The image of the Buddha*, 76

¹⁶⁷ A. Aiyappan & P. R. Sirinivasan, in *Story of Buddhism with Special reference to South India*. (Madras: Department of information and Publicity, 1960), 65

¹⁶⁸ Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 70

¹⁶⁹ Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 71

¹⁷⁰ Snellgrove, *Image of the Buddha*, 76

Thus, the protuberance is not visible in the Amarāvati standing images (see **fig.4.30a, 4.30b, 4.30c, 4.30d**), except the images illustrated in reliefs or motifs (see **fig.4.23a & 4.23b**). It comprises “very short curls twisting in regular spirals covering the head and the *uṣṇīśa*, which is reduced to a low conical protuberance.”¹⁷¹ **Fig.4.24b, 4.25a, 4.25b, 4.26a, and 4.26b**, (later developed seated images), show the subsequent improvement of the protuberance to the *uṣṇīśa* of Gandhāra style. In later stages, with the unavoidable influence from Mahāyāna tradition,¹⁷² it developed into a flame of fire¹⁷³ (known as the *śīrṣapatra*), which is unique to the Āndhra Buddha images (see **fig.4.24a, 4.27a, 4.27b, 4.27c, 4.29, 4.34, 4.35**). (This cannot be summed up as Mahāyāna influence alone, because there are typical evidence of applying the *śīrṣapatra* in Southern Buddhist tradition i.e. in Sri Lanka). However, the hair in between the eyebrows (*ūrṇā*), was an integral element in early Amarāvati images (see **fig.4.30a, 4.30b, 4.30c, & 4.30d**).

As evidenced hitherto, the early Amarāvati Buddha images have no halo: see the seated image in **fig.4.24a** (8th-9th centuries), and **fig.4.30a, 4.30b1, 4.30b2, 4.30c and 30d**. Later, the halo or aureole had become an integral part, particularly of the seated images as evident in **fig.4.24b, 4.25b, 4.27a, 4.27b, and 4.27c**. Particularly in **fig.4.24b**, the halo is a simple circular disc while its further development fairly complies with the description of *Mānasāra Śilpaśāstra*:

The image of the Buddha may be sculptured either as standing or seated upon a *simhāsana* or other seats; when shown as seated upon a *simhāsana* there should be, in addition, the *kalpaka* tree, the papal (*asvatta*) tree shown on the sculpture.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Snellgrove, *Image of the Buddha*, 79

¹⁷² Snellgrove, *Image of the Buddha*, 82

¹⁷³ Sirinivasan, “Buddhist Images of South India,” 66

¹⁷⁴ -ibid-

The *kalpaka* tree or *Aśvatta* tree is clearly illustrated in **fig.4.26a** and **26b**, which is displayed at the back of the halo. A nimbus (*prabhāmaṇḍala*) with floral decorations around the body is evident in **fig.4.26b**. In **fig.4.28a**, **4.28b**, and in **fig.4.35**, the image is surrounded not by a halo or nimbus but by an architectural feature of a blind arcade.

The images are dressed in the three garments (*tricīvara*), as required by the rule.¹⁷⁵ In the standing images, “the upper garment (*uttarāsaṅga*) is very long, and held in the crook of the left arm, which is bent back towards the left arm; it falls in a broad pouch to the ankle level, leaving the bottom edge of the lower garment (*antarāvāsaka*) visible, and the end is thrown over the back and hangs free.”¹⁷⁶ (See **fig.4.30a**, **4.30c** & **4.31**). However, the prominent character of the monastic robe of the Amarāvati images is that it covers the left shoulder of the body and extends up to the edge of the ankle with heavy schematic lines unlike its northern style where both shoulders have been covered with a toga like garment. It is neatly arranged, suggesting pre-pleats. Most of the right chest is uncovered. The robe neither does appear as a heavy and bulky garment of the Gandhāra style, nor does it cling to the body as depicted in Mathurā (see **fig.4.30c**, **4.30d**, & **4.32a**, **4.32b**). Typically, the robe resembles the actual dress of the monk. In later images such as in **fig.4.24a**, **4.24b**, **4.25a**, **4.25b**, **4.25c**, **4.25d**, **4.26a**, **4.26b**, **4.27a**, **4.27b**, **4.27c**, **4.28a**, **4.28b**, **4.29**, **4.33**, **4.34** and **4.35**, the influence from Mathurā image is evident in both standing and seated Buddha images where the robe clings to the body, and is indicated by incised lines. In all cases, the under garments are indicated by incised lines. Rarely the garment covers both the shoulders as in **fig.4.31**, and possibly in bas-relief motifs.

¹⁷⁵ Sirinivasan, “Buddhist Images of South India,” 66

¹⁷⁶ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 79

In Amarāvati, a variety of gestures occur:

1. In the standing images,
 - a) The right hand is in the gesture of fearlessness (*abhaya*) while holding the robe in the crook of the left hand displaying the gesture of cock comb (*kataka hasta*). as in **fig.4.30a, 4.30c, 4.30d**,—the hands are broken—, in **fig.4.33**, or displaying the gesture of boon giving as in **fig.4.34** and **4.35**.
 - b) The right hand is in the gesture of boon giving (*varada*) while holding the robe in the crook of the left hand as in **fig.4.32a**, or devoted to hold the edge of the in the *āhvāna mudrā*, as a supplement to holding the robe, as in **fig.4.32b**, which became popular in South East Asian countries.¹⁷⁷
2. In the seated images,
 - a) The gesture of meditation (*dhyāna/samādhi*), symbolizing the spiritual bearing of the southern Buddhist tradition as in **fig.4.25a, 4.25b, 4.25c, 4.25d, 4.27b, 4.28a, 4.28b** and **4.29**,
 - b) The gesture of earth-touching (*bhū-sparśa*) in the right hand, signifying the attainment of Buddhahood while displaying the gesture of meditation (*samādhi/dhyāna*) in the left hand, as in **fig.4.24b, 4.26a, 4.27a** and **4.27c**
 - c) The gesture of teaching (*dharmacakra*) indicating the First Sermon or the his Teaching as in **fig.4.26b**, and
 - d) The gesture of Intellectual conversation (*vitarka*) in the right hand along with the gesture of meditation (*dhyāna/samādhi*) in the left hand as in **fig.4.24a** demonstrates its greater variety than its northern School.

¹⁷⁷ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 164, fig. 119; Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 197, fig. 342

The available evidence supports that Amarāvati images portray two different postures: standing and seated. The standing images, which mostly appear in Amarāvati and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, were life size (**fig.4.30a, 4.30c, 4.30d**). Some small images have been found from Guntupalli (**fig.4.31**).¹⁷⁸ As illustrated in terms by the *mānasāra śilpaśāstra*, “the legs [are] placed straight.”

In Amarāvati, the posture of seated images can be identified as follows;

- a) The posture of *vīrāsana* as evident in **fig.4.24a, 4.25a, 4.25b, 4.25c & 4.25d**, and in **fig.4.27a, 4.27b, 4.27c, 4.28a, 4.28b** in Kānchipuram, Nāgapattinam, and Ondichery, which is different from either the *vīrāsana* or the *vajrāsana* of Mathurā or Gandhāra Buddha images.¹⁷⁹ (See sections 4.2.1.1 and 4.2.1.2 above). Here the legs are placed comfortably one over the other without locking them to have the soles upward.
- b) The posture of *padmāsana* as evident in **fig.4.24b, 4.26a, & 4.26b**. The feet are placed on the thigh in the cross-legged position where they are locked.
- c) The rare posture of *badrāsana /pralambhapāda āsana*; the image is placed on a stool from where the legs are hanged down, as evident in bas-relief motifs in **fig.3.39a** (Nāgārjunakoṇḍa).¹⁸⁰

Except a few examples belonging to later Amarāvati tradition which are placed on the lotus pedestal, the cosmic symbol, probably with Mahāyāna influence, as evident in **fig.4.33** and **4.35**, all other standing images are placed on simple ground, in conformity

¹⁷⁸ Sirinivasan accuses Ananda Coomaraswamy for his mention of this image as found from Amarāvati . see Sirinivasan, “Buddhist Images of South India,” 66, n4: for the reference of Coomaraswamy see Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, fig. 137

¹⁷⁹ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 81

¹⁸⁰ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 52: Verma, *Art and Iconography of the Buddha Images*, 24

with its humanistic conception, Gautama himself.”¹⁸¹ This characteristic is, however, seen developed into a well-decorated lotus pedestal as evident in the seated images i.e. **fig.4.24b, 4.25c, 4.26a, 4.26b, 4.27b, 4.27c, 4.28a, 4.28b, & 4.29** in different measures. As described in the *bṛhat saṃhitā* (a Hindu treatise belonging to 5th century CE): “Like the father of the world (Brahma), the Buddha is shown seated on the *padmāsana*. His hands and feet are marked with lotus. He is tranquil and has very little hair.” (*Brihat saṃhitā*, Chap: Pratimā Lakshnam, verse 44).¹⁸²

While the standing images are not comprised of any decorative elements, the seated images, on the contrary, endure with certain characteristics as evident in many, or all seated images. In general, each of halo or nimbus was flanked by animals as in **fig.4.26a** (two lions flanking the halo), flywhisks as in **fig.4.26b**. In **fig.4.28b**, the throne is flanked by two rearing lions. A typical arrangement of ear lobes are evident in **fig.4.27a, 4.27b, and 4.27c** in which the halo appears as a hair-dress behind the head, decorated with floral or animal (lion or dragon) designs extending from the lower edge of the ear lobes. Contrary, the seated figures of bodhisattvas on either side of the image is evident in **fig.4.26b**, whereas *nāga* kings with flywhisks are evident in **fig.4.29**. In **Fig.4.29**, however, depicts a decorated parasol on top of the halo (with the flame of fire), which is decked by a magnificently decorated floral design.¹⁸³

The particular examination reveals that the Amarāvati/Āndhra School of Buddhist art represents a distinctive tradition from its northern tradition.

¹⁸¹ Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. I. 1983, 170-71

¹⁸² Ajay Mitra Shastri, ed. and trans. *India as seen in the Brihat Saṃhitā of Varāha Mihira*. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1969), Ch. LVIII.44: Aiyappan and Sirinivasan, *Story of Buddhism with Special reference to South India*, 65

¹⁸³ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 290, fig. 220

4.2.3 Mathurā and Sārnāth School of the Gupta period

A remarkable volume of Buddhist art evolved in Mathurā and Sārnāth as well as Gārhvā, Udaygiri (Gwalior) and several other centers during the Gupta Age from the third to the seventh century CE. The period is considered the golden age of Indian culture and art. According to Ananda Coomaraswamy, their inspiration came from ‘indigenous, early Asiatic, Persian and Hellenistic’ traditions.¹⁸⁴ Vincent Smith states,

The conquest of Western India by Chandragupta Vikramaditya about 390 A.D. undoubtedly brought the north into renewed touch with the Western world through the ports, and I entertain a strong belief that the efflorescence of Indian literature, science, and art during the Gupta period was largely due to the clash of ideas resulting from the extension of the northern empire to the shores of the Arabian Sea, and the active intercourse with foreign countries both to the east and west, which unquestionably characterized the times.¹⁸⁵

This was also a time when a close relationship had existed between India and Sri Lanka.

E. W. Adhikaram refers to a description of *Atthasālinī* and its historical significance:

King Siri Meghavanna [of Anuradhapura] is said to have sent two bhikkhus to India to king San-maon-to-lo-kin-to, that is Samudragupta, requesting him to provide shelter there for the Sinhalese monks who were on a pilgrimage to the sacred tree at Bodh Gaya. Two inscriptions have also been found at Gaya which record the building of a temple and the gift of a statue by Mahanama, a resident from Amaradvipa and a member of the royal family of Ceylon.¹⁸⁶

As the inscriptions reveal, the monastery was as an active international center for several centuries. Xuan Zang noted it as a monastery with thousand monks.¹⁸⁷ Of references given with regard to Sri Lankan communications, the inscription of the old sandstone railing at Bodh Gayā indicating that it was dedicated by Bodhirakṣita of

¹⁸⁴ Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 72

¹⁸⁵ Smith, *A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, 196

¹⁸⁶ Adhikaram, *Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, 140-41

¹⁸⁷ Beal, *Si-Yu-Ki, Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Book III, 133

Tambapaṇṇā (Sri Lanka),¹⁸⁸ and that of Samudragupta at Alahabad of circa 330-375 which refers to Sri Lanka as Sainhalaka is important.¹⁸⁹ According to the second reference, king Meghavarman (Meghavanna) from Sri Lanka sent an embassy to king Samudragupta with gifts for a permission of the erection of a monastery for Sri Lankan monastics, preferably in Bodh Gayā, for which he has given the name ‘Sinhala Saṅghārāma.’¹⁹⁰

The Gupta period witnessed “the expansion of Hindu and Brahman religion at the expense of Buddhism”¹⁹¹ and the production of Hindu iconographic treatise *Viṣṇudharmottara* (7th century CE), and a canon of iconometry, *Pratimālakṣaṇam* (Mahārṣi Ātreya of 7th century) that designated the proportions of various limbs of the body in poetic terms, to make it a perfect image.¹⁹² To the same period belong the Buddhist texts on iconography *Sādhanamālā* (5th-7th centuries CE), and *Niṣpaṇṇayogāvalī* (by Abhayakaragupta of the Vikramaśilā monastery) during 1084-1130 CE.¹⁹³ The religious and cultural revival of this period continued in the reign of Harṣa Vardhana (606 CE-647 CE).¹⁹⁴ The emerging quality of the art was described by Ananda Coomaraswamy in the following terms:

The outstanding characteristic of the art of India during this time is its classical quality. In the Kushan period the cult image is still a new and important conception, and there we find, quite naturally, magnificent primitives, or “clumsy

¹⁸⁸ Tilman Frasch, “A Buddhist Network in the Bay of Bengal: Relations between Bodh Gaya, Burma, and Sri Lanka,” *From the Mediterranean to the China Sea*. Ed. Claude Guillot, Denys Lombard and Roderich Ptak. (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1998), 72

¹⁸⁹ Susantha Gunatilake, *Anthropologizing Sri Lanka: A eurocentric Misadventure*. (IN, USA: Indiana University Press, 2001), 255

¹⁹⁰ H.S.S. Nissanka, *Maha Bodhi Tree in Anuradhapura*. (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1994), 158

¹⁹¹ Hallade, *The Gandhara Style and the Evolution of Buddhist Art*, 209

¹⁹² Michael Ridley, *Oriental Art: India, Nepal, and Tibet for Pleasure and Investment*, (New York; ARCO Publishing, 1970), 97 Accordingly, the basic unit of the measurement is *aṅgula* or the finger. See Wikramagamage, *Pratimā Pramāna Mūladharma*, 37

¹⁹³ Bhattacharya, *Indian Buddhist Iconography*, 3

¹⁹⁴ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 83

and unwieldy figures,” according to our choice of terms... At the same time the technique is perfected, and used as a language without conscious effort, it becomes the medium of conscious and explicit statement of spiritual conception... With the new beauty of definition it establishes the classical phase of Indian art.¹⁹⁵

Its trend towards the integration of architecture made the Buddha image “[entered] into a general decorative scheme,” as a part of a mass composition.¹⁹⁶ In fact, what happened was the refinement of the Hellenistic elements of the Gandhāra style and the crude realism of the Mathurā style to stabilize the spirituality of Mahāyāna doctrine,¹⁹⁷ possibly combining all such finer characteristics from the early styles.¹⁹⁸ As a result, the Buddha image became an object of actual religious practice, in that the multiplication of the Buddha image as well as the implementation of different gestures became more prominent. Thus, the particular period witness the evolution of the images of Amitābha, Akṣobhya, Vairocana, *etc.*, as the most popular figures according to the concept of manifested Buddhas, and bodhisattvas.¹⁹⁹ The particular trend emerged with the making of large statues with inner personal qualities. The classical prototype evolved during this period with such qualities became the model for later traditions within and “beyond the Indian boundaries.”²⁰⁰ Hence, the Buddha image that evolved in Mathurā during the Gupta period was “singularly original and absolutely independent from Gandhāra School.”²⁰¹

¹⁹⁵ Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 71

¹⁹⁶ -ibid-

¹⁹⁷ Zimmer, *Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. I, 8

¹⁹⁸ Hallade, *The Gandhara Style and the Evolution of Buddhist Art*, 187

¹⁹⁹ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 84-5

²⁰⁰ Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 74

²⁰¹ Smith, *History of Fine Arts in India and Ceylon*, 170

The more highly developed image of Sārnāth was still further from the schist models of Gandhāra²⁰² as regards the “clear delineation and definition of the features.”²⁰³ As stated by Madalleine Hallade, “[t]heir purity of line and expression of meditative sweetness raise these heads to a degree of spirituality attained by only one or two very rare schist heads in the Gandhāra region.”²⁰⁴ In addition, the face of the Buddha image was of the oval shape of an egg; eyes of lotus buds or lotus petals; lips of the fullness of a mango; and eye brows of the Krishna’s bow,²⁰⁵ and elongated ear lobes contrasted from the plastic qualities of Kushan Buddha images from Mathurā. Frederick M. Asher notes; “The full, soft cheeks, thin lips and downcast, contemplative eyes of the Bodh Gaya’s Buddha all clearly distinguish from any image datable to Kushan period.”²⁰⁶ Abiding by the particular tradition, the Gupta Buddha images do not depict the *ūrṇā* in between the eye brows.²⁰⁷ Significant delicacy is evident in the images shown in **fig.4.36a** (Mankuwar, Allahabad, State Museum of Lucknow),²⁰⁸ **fig.4.36b** as well as in **fig.4.43a**, **43b**, and **43c**, found from various locations of Mathurā and Sārnāth.

Except the shaven hair depicted in the famous Mankuwar Buddha image (**fig.4.36a**), the protuberance of many Gupta Buddha images consist of beautifully arranged curly hair (occasionally in the type of snail-shells as of the heads shown in

²⁰² Hallade, *The Gandhara Style and the Evolution of Buddhist Art*, 191

²⁰³ Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 74

²⁰⁴ Hallade, *The Gandhara Style and the Evolution of Buddhist Art*, 191

²⁰⁵ Rowland, *The Evolution of the Buddha Image*, 14

²⁰⁶ Frederick M. Asher, *The Art of Eastern India: 300-800*. (USA: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), 20

²⁰⁷ Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 74; Pratapaditya Pal, *Indian Sculpture*. Vol. I: *circa 500 B.C.-A.D.800*. (USA: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, University of California Press, 1987), 243; Pran Nath Chopra, B. N. Puri, M. N. Das, *et al*, *A Comprehensive History of Ancient India*. 2003. Reprint. (Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 2005), 162

²⁰⁸ The image was initiated by the monk named Buddhmitra in the 120th year of the Gupta period, which confirms its period as 448-9 (*bhagavato (taḥ) samyak-sambuddhasya sva-matāvīruddhasya iyaṃ pratimā pratiṣṭāpitā bhikṣu buddhamitreṇa*) see Jagannath Agrawal, “Aviruddha- /an Epithet of the Buddha- its Meaning,” *Buddhist Art and Thought*, ed. K. K. Mittal & Ashvini Agrawal, (New Delhi: Harman Publishing House, 1993), 31; Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 91

fig.4.39b & 4.41a, 4.41c), that surrounded the entire skull representing the descriptions of the canons with regard to his renunciation. Benjamin Rowland notes that it was sometimes “conceived as a spheroidal mask with its smooth interlocking planes.”²⁰⁹

Fig.4.37a, 4.37b, 4.38, 4.41a, 4.41c, 4.42a, 4.42b, 4.42c, 4.44a and **4.44b** differently depict the character of the protuberance. **Fig.4.39a** denotes a spiral coil in front of the skull from which disperses the wavy hair arranged on top of the head, probably covering the cranial bump.

The beautifully decorated halo of the Gupta Buddha image remarkably distinguishes from the plain halo of Gandhāra,²¹⁰ “due to its curvilinear contours evolved from the center with bands of ornamentation.”²¹¹ **Fig.4.36b, 4.37b, 4.43a, 4.43c, 4.46a,** and **4.46b** have floral and linear decorations been aesthetically arranged into an aureole. The angels/dwarfs hovering from the two corners in **fig.4.36b** and **fig.4.46a** mark the independent iconographic elements of the period. Yet, some elements resemble the Mathurā Buddha image of the Kushan period: 1) in **fig.4.38**, the plain and simple halo is flanked by two attendant deities as in **fig.4.2a** and **4.2c** (of Mathurā), 2) in **fig.4.41a** where the plain halo is decorated with scalloped edges as in **fig.4.7a, 4.7b,** and **4.7c**. Its further development during the Gupta period is evident in the highly decorated nimbus with floral and linear designs, surrounding the entire body (see **fig.4.41a, 4.42b, 4.47a**). A parasol (*catra*) above the head as in **fig.4.42c** recalls the early aniconic symbol that was meant to reflect the Buddha’s royal heredity.²¹²

²⁰⁹ Rowland, *The Evolution of the Buddha Image*, 14

²¹⁰ Smith, *History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, 170

²¹¹ R.M. Majumdar & A. S. Altekar, *Vākātaka-Gupta Age; circa 200-550 A.D.*, 1960. Reprint. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1986), 447-8

²¹² *Dha*. V-VI, 174-6 (see Ch.2. n.100)

The monastic garment of the Gupta Buddha image covers one or both shoulders and is indicated by incised lines, regardless of the posture, except for a few examples with engraved pleats (**fig.4.43c, 4.45a**). It is transparent, and clings to the body, clearly revealing the limbs, yet underlining the typical arrangement of the monastic dress. The undergarments are revealed through the *uttarāsāṅgha*, with neither the mark of a nude body nor the limbs through the garments.²¹³ (**fig.4.36a, 4.36b, 4.37a, 4.37b, 4.38, 4.41a, 4.41b, 4.41c & 4.44a, & 4.44b**). Madalleine Hallade examines;

The fine modeling of the flesh is visible once more through the delicate material, skillful pleats fall in subtle curves, while the hem of the garment and the material falls add a decorative frame to the lower part of the body... Although both shoulders are covered, the material has lost all its solidity with the disappearance of pleating.²¹⁴ (**See fig.4.43a, 4.43b, 4.45a, 4.45b, & 4.46b**).

The garment flows from the shoulders freely and the body appears more natural and dynamic than the stiff arrangement of the Gandhāra image. (**See fig.4.45a, 4.45b, 4.47a, & 4.47b**). The significant feature of the garment is the prominence given to the median line of the body, “so that the form appears as nude through a network of cords.”²¹⁵ (**See fig.4.43a, 4.43b, 4.43c, 4.47a, & 4.47b**).

Among the gestures employed in the Gupta Buddha images, the gesture of fearlessness (*abhaya*) with webbed fingers (*jālāṅgulikākāra*)²¹⁶ perceives a distinctive identity.²¹⁷ The seated images also have preferred three types of hand gestures;

1. Gesture of meditation (*dhyāna/samādhi*) (**see fig.4.37a, & 4.37b**),

²¹³ Majumdar & Altekar, *Vākātaka-Gupta Age*, 447

²¹⁴ Hallade, *The Gandhara Style and the Evolution of Buddhist Art*, 191

²¹⁵ Rowland, *The Evolution of the Buddha Image*, 14

²¹⁶ The term was highlighted by Jithendra Nath Banerji in “The Webbed Fingers of Buddha,” *Indian Historical Quarterly* 6, No.4 (December) 1930, 719. His attention was paid to the Mankuvar Buddha image shown in **fig.4.36a**

²¹⁷ Majumdar & Altekar, *vākātaka-Gupta Age*, 448

2. Gesture of meditation (*dhyāna/samādhi*) in the left hand while portraying the gesture of fearlessness (*abhaya*) in the right hand (see fig. 4.36a).
3. Gesture of Teaching (*dharmacakra*) (see fig.4.36b, 4.38 & 40b, 4.40c, 4.40d).

On the contrary, the standing images display the following;

1. Gesture of fearlessness (*abhaya*) in the right hand while the left hand is carrying the edge of the robe in the left hand (see fig.4.41a, & 4.41b).
2. Gesture of fearlessness (*abhaya*) in the right hand while the left hand is carrying the edge of the robe in the gesture of boon-granting (*varada*) (see 4.42b, 4.42c, 4.43a, 4.43b, 4.43c, & 4.44a),²¹⁸
3. Gesture of boon-granting (*varada*) in the right hand while the left hand is mostly held with the gesture of cock-comb (*kataka-hasta*), holding the edge of the garment (see fig.4.46a, 4.46b, 4.47a, 4.47b, & 4.47c), yet in different arrangements.

The Gupta Buddha images display three different postures: Standing, seated, and reclining. The seated images of the Gupta period are of two types;

1. The cross-legged posture (*padmāsana*,) where the soles of the feet are turned upward (fig.4.36a, 4.36b, 4.37a, 4.37b, 4.38, & 4.40d).
2. The European seat (*badrāsana/ pralambhapādāsana*), in which the legs rest upon a small stool like pedestal as shown in fig.4.40a, 4.40b, & 4.40c.

Fig.4.36b is regarded the best example of Indian art depicting the qualities of the superman (*cakravarti*) endowed with the highest wisdom (*anuttarajñāna*)²¹⁹ with its meditative posture.

²¹⁸ Broken hands of the similar images must have displayed the same gesture.

²¹⁹ Majumdar & Altekar, *Vākātaka-Gupta Age*, 447

Standing Buddha images display three postures:

1. Standing upright (*samabhaṅga*) as in **fig.4.41a, 4.41b, 4.41c, 4.43a, 4.43b, 4.43c, 4.46a, and 4.46b.**
2. Standing in the flexed position in which the body is slightly bent by the knee and the neck (*dvibhaṅga*) as in **fig.4.42b, 4.42c, 4.44a, 4.44b, 4.47b, and 4.47c.**²²⁰
3. Standing in flexed position in which the body is bent by three members of the body (*tribhaṅga*) as in **fig.4.45a, 4.45b, and 4.47a.**

The reclining Buddha images of Ajantā (see **fig.4.48a & 4.48b**) depict the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha, as indicated by the mourning devotees in the frontal panel of the pedestal.

The pedestal of the Gupta Buddha images are decorated significantly depicting the particular event, resembling some attenuation from its aniconic phase. In seated images, the lotus or lion pedestal occurs usually with the figures of donors.²²¹ See the typical lion pedestal in the **fig.4.36a** where the two seated lions appear on either side of the frontal panel while the centre is decorated with the Wheel of Law (*dharmacakra*) and two seated bodhisattva images with the gesture of meditation. In **fig.4.36b**, the lion pedestal of the seated Buddha image from Sārnāth, depicts the First Sermon by the Wheel of Law in the middle with five other disciples who were the first listeners.²²² The woman with a child on the left side of the pedestal in the **fig.4.36b** would be the donor of the image.²²³ The significance of **fig.4.38** is the appearance of five disciples who are revering

²²⁰ Hallade, *The Gandhara Style and the Evolution of Buddhist Art*, 191

²²¹ Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 74

²²² Smith, *History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, 170

²²³ -ibid-

the Buddha in the gesture of veneration (*namaskāra*), while there is no *dharmacakra* in the middle. The lotus pedestal is evident in **fig.4.37a** and **3.37b**. Obviously, the miniature panel on the pedestal provides a clue for the meaning of the gesture: for example, the three dancing daughters of Māra to signify attainment of Buddhahood and a *dharmacakra* and two deer to mark the first sermon (see **fig.4.36a, 4.36b, & 4.38**). However, the pedestal was not an integral part of the standing images, and stand on the ground as the historical Buddha did.

Significantly, the Gupta Buddha image is also flanked by attendant deities/ bodhisattvas as evident in **fig.4.38, 4.40a, 40b, and 40c**. Whereas in **fig.4.38, and 4.40b**, the images are flanked by two attendant deities, probably the bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Maiterya, in **fig.4.40a**, the image is flanked by two lion figures back to back on either side, while the upper section of the image is decorated with two heads of an animal (probably a face of a tiger) facing each other. In addition, the image is placed in a house supported by two columns in the front. The significance of **fig.4.40c** is the appearance of two attendant deities that support the decorated archway atop the Buddha. The image is placed in a colonnaded vestibule.

4.2.4 Bihār and Bengal under Pāla-Sena patronage

The final phase of the evolution of the Indian Buddha image falls in the reigns of the Pāla and Sena dynasties (750 CE-1185 CE) in the Bengal Valley:²²⁴ The kings of the Pāla dynasty ruled over Lower Ganges Valley and promoted a distinctive tradition of Buddhist art in and around Bihar, until they were over powered by the rulers of Sena dynasty who were Brāhmanical Hindus (730 CE-1197 CE). Kanauj or Pancāla ruled by

²²⁴ Jernsawatdi, *Thai Art with Buddhist Influence*, 55

Raja Bhoja (Parihāra) from the 9th century CE until the end of the 11th century CE patronized literature and art.²²⁵ Among the several sites important for Buddhist art are: Bodh Gayā and Nālandā in Bihar and Lalmai-Maināmati, Paharpur, and Mahastangarh in Bengal.²²⁶

How the art of this region was influenced by the developments of Buddhism and Hinduism simultaneously is observed by Susan Huntington:

In Bengal where Brahmanical faiths came to predominate, isolated temples were built, often during a single period of activity and hence, workmen from different locales were probably called in to accomplish task. This phenomenon is significantly different from what had been the case in Bihar where individual Buddhist establishments tended to maintain active workshops of artisans for periods as long as several hundred years and these served as major artistic centers.²²⁷

The maturity of the Buddhist art is evident from the second Pāla emperor, Dharmapāla, because both Bengal and Bihar were ruled under his control.²²⁸ Although very little evidence is found during his period, such specimens are regarded as masterpieces for the subsequent undertakings.

With the efflorescence of tantric and Vajrayāna sects of Buddhism, the Buddha was conceived to be a heavenly being, heading an enormous pantheon of deities and their counterparts along with guardian spirits.²²⁹ Thus, many examples found from this period represent the Dhyāni Buddhas: Vairocana, Akṣobhya, and Amitābha.²³⁰ The Pāla rulers, who were themselves the followers of Buddhism, spread their religious faith over many countries. Nālandā as the center of active, Vajrayāna Buddhism had gained popularity

²²⁵ Comaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 105-6

²²⁶ Susan L. Huntington, *The Pala-Sena Periods of Sculpture*. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1984), 9-10, 13

²²⁷ Huntington, *The Pala-Sena Periods of Sculpture*, 9-10, 155

²²⁸ Huntington, *The Pala-Sena Periods of Sculpture*, 30-67; Madhu Bazaz Wangu, *Images of Indian Goddesses: myths, meanings and Models*. (Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 2003), 89

²²⁹ Bhattacharya, *Indian Buddhist Iconography*, 45

²³⁰ Jermasawatdi, *Thai Art with Indian Influence*, 56

through the faith on magical spells, diagrams, and rituals.²³¹ Due to the considerable demand of foreign missionaries who visited or stayed at Nālandā for the icons of the Buddha, Pāla rulers attempted to make images on a large scale, using different materials i.e. stucco or clay, metals-copper, bronze, brass and gilded copper.

The important feature of the Buddha image during the period is the arrangement of slight curved lines in the whole sculpture, which became prominent in the formation of the nose, eyes, and mouth. Thus, the facial appearance of the Buddha image became serene and sentimental unlike the lively appearance of the Gupta Buddha image in Mathurā or Sārnāth. In addition, the limbs appear to be long and slender with elaborated bodily characteristics that developed the physical appearance to the status of a divine being rather than his mortal emergence in early Buddha images. Thus, the Nālandā Buddha image followed the stylistic features of Sārnāth, the figures were over elongated and taller than those of Sārnāth (**fig.4.51a, 4.51b, 4.51d, 4.52, 4.53a, 4.53b, 4.54a, 4.55b, & 4.55c**), whereas in Kurkihār, the torso is much shorter and robust “with broader shoulders and a more expanding chest than at Nālandā.”²³² (**See fig.4.54b, 4.55a**). Having slightly opened eyes, thin lined lips with a mild grace; the Nālandā Buddha image could not evolve a distinctive tradition from its previous trends. In addition to its local tradition, the spread of new sectarian Buddhism in East-Asian countries i.e. China and Japan, their influence appeared in the region back with different iconographic features i.e. dragon and other decorative elements,²³³ for which Susan L Huntington term an “International style.”²³⁴ Its regional development can be observed in the Kashmir Buddha images where

²³¹ Jermawadi, *Thai Art with Indian Influence*, 55

²³² Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 281

²³³ Wangu, *Images of Indian Goddesses*, 89

²³⁴ Huntington, *The Pala-Sena School of Sculpture*, 7

he is represented as an immortal being with extra ordinary iconographical elements (fig.4.57a, 4.57b, & 4.57c). Typical construction evolves a disproportionate configuration that highlights the non-identity of the image craft of the Buddha image developed during the early periods (fig. 4.59b, & 4.60b).

The *uṣṇīśa* had become an integral part of the Buddha image of Bengal or Bihar during the period and its evolution into a crown seems to be a prominent factor. The hair locks of snail shell are arranged artistically so that it appears as a cap covering the head and the cranial bump (fig.4.49a, 4.49b, 4.50, 4.51b, 4.51c, 4.51d, 4.52, 4.55b, 4.56, 4.60a, & 4.60b). Occasionally, they depicted the *uṣṇīśa* with complete hair locks on top as a full blown lotus (fig.4.53b, 4.58b, & 4.59b) or a lotus bud (fig.4.55a, 4.55b, 4.58a, 4.59a, & 4.60c).²³⁵ Susan Huntington identifies this character as a jewel on top of the *uṣṇīśa*,²³⁶ probably due to its particular shape as shown in fig.4.51d, 4.57a, 4.57b, and 4.57c. David Snellgrove identifies the particular hair arrangement in fig.4.58b as a “five-pronged flame emerges from the protuberance.”²³⁷ The development of the *uṣṇīśa* into a crown created the “Crowned Buddha.” Although the particular character is evident in Ajanta, and Fondukistan,²³⁸ its climax is evident in the Buddha images of the Pāla-Sena Period: (fig.4.51a, 4.53b, 4.53d, 4.54a, 4.54c, 4.59c). Fig.4.55c, found in the eastern part of India (provenance unknown), is highly ornate and is surmounted by an umbrella (*catra*) decked with garlands on top of which are symbols of sun and moon, representing the wisdom (*prajñā*) and means (*upāya*).²³⁹

²³⁵ The particular application has been highlighted and compared by Reginald Le May. See his *Concise History of Buddhist and in Siam*. 1962. Reprint. (Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1977), 103

²³⁶ Huntington, *The Pala-Sena School of Sculpture*, 168

²³⁷ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 337, fig. 259

²³⁸ Leelananda Prematilleka, K. Indrapala and J.E. van Lohuizen-de-Leeuw, *Senarat Paranavitana Commemorative Volume*, Vol.7. (Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1978), 167 n7

²³⁹ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 293, 416, fig. 224

To be noted is the total disappearance of the halo or the disc surrounding the head, which is now indicated by decorated curvilinear designs: **fig.4.49a, 4.51c, and 4.51d** suggest the halo with two circular ridges on top of which is the canopy of the branches of Bodhi tree leaves. It appears to be a common character of the period as seen in **fig.4.26a, and 4.26b** found from Orissa in South India. Instead of a halo, a nimbus had gained currency: 1) in **fig.4.53a** the highly decorated nimbus depicts flames of fire with floral decorations in the middle, at the back of the head; 2) in **fig.4.54b** the nimbus is decorated with three rounds of floral patterns on top which is a conical shaped flower decoration; and 3) in **fig.4.55a** the nimbus depicts a decorated aureole surrounding the entire body which is flanked by two attendant deities, Brahma and Indra.²⁴⁰

In **fig.4.49b, and 4.51c**, the Buddha is flanked by bodhisattvas whereas in **fig.4.49a and 4.51d** by two lions who are standing upright. In **fig.4.51a, 4.51b, 4.51d, 4.53b, 4.53c, 4.53d, and 4.54a**, the Buddha is flanked by dwarfs and attendant deities resembling Hindu divinities. In **fig.4.50 and 4.54c** an arch over the image is evident. On top of **fig.4.54c** are placed two bodhisattva images on either side flanking the central image of the Buddha.

As regards the monastic robe, there is no distinction: they appear covering either one or both shoulders. However, regional differences appear: in Nālandā images the garment looks light weight (**fig.4.49a, 4.49b 4.51c, 4.51d, & 4.52**), and in Kurkihar, the robe is thicker²⁴¹ (**fig.4.54b & 4.55a**) while occasionally, the robe is pleated in a sophisticated manner is evident as in **fig.4.51a, 4.51b, 4.51d, 4.53a, 4.53b, 4.53c, 4.53d, and 4.54a**.

²⁴⁰ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 282, fig. 211

²⁴¹ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 281

The standing images have the gestures of boon granting (*varada*), fearlessness (*abhaya*), and occasionally that of intellectual conversation (*vitarka*). However, the regional distinction appears: Kurkihar standing images show the gesture of boon-granting (*varada*) in the right hand (**fig.4.55a**) whereas the preference in Nālandā and Kāshmir is that of fearlessness (*abhaya*) (**fig.4.55b, 4.55c, 4.60a, 4.60b, & 4.60c**).²⁴² The left hand has been treated freely in a variety of gestures: **fig.4.55b, and 4.55c** (Nālandā) depict the gesture of fearlessness/blessing (*abhaya*) in the right hand while the left hand holds the edge of the garment,²⁴³ in **fig.4.60a** (Pandrethan, Kashmir), and **4.60b** (Sri Nagar museum), the gesture in the left hand is that of intellectual argument (*vitarka*) or that of *kataka/vitarka*, disintegrating the stylistic resemblance in **fig.4.55a**. In the seated images, both Nālandā and Kurkihar have simultaneously employed the gesture of earth-touching (*bhū sparṣa*) (**fig.4.49a, 4.49b, 4.51a, 4.51b, 4.51c, 4.51d, 4.52, 4.53a, 4.53b, 4.53c, 4.53d, 4.54a, 4.54b, & 4.54c**). In **fig.4.50** found from Bengal, the gesture of meditation (*dhyāna/samādhi*) with the begging bowl on top of the palms is a remarkable innovation.²⁴⁴ **Fig.4.56a**, belonging to Kāshmir depicts the same gesture, yet without the begging bowl. In addition, the gesture of Teaching (*dharmacakra*) was popular in Kashmir as evident in **fig.4.57a, 4.57b, 4.57c, 4.59a, 4.59b, and 4.59c**. Yet, the typical arrangement of the style of the gesture is evident in **fig.4.58a and 4.58b** in which the right hand depicts the gesture of boon-granting (*varada*) while the left hand is in a typical assignment of attitude.

The posture of the images during the particular period shows a greater variety. While the standing images are in the upright (*samabhaṅga*) posture (**fig.4.55a, 4.55b,**

²⁴² Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 281

²⁴³ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 169, 282, fig. 124 & 212

²⁴⁴ Snellgrove, *The Image of the Buddha*, 280 fig. 209

4.55c & 4.60a, 4.60b, & 4.60c), the seated images from Nālandā (fig.4.49b, 4.52, 4.53a, 4.53c, 4.53d, 4.54a, & 4.54c), Kurkihār (fig.4.54b) Bihar (fig.4.49a, 4.51b, & 4.51d), and Bengal (fig.4.50, 4.51a, 4.53b) are in the cross-legged position with the soles turned upward with no distinction as to whether it is *vajrāsana* with the Bodhi Tree behind or *vīrāsana* with the gesture of meditation as described by David Snellgrove.²⁴⁵ The seat is generally called the *padmāsana*.

The pedestals are of a great variety, though the common character is the Lotus (*padma*), regardless of the posture whether seated or standing. Several styles are noted:

1. The lion pedestal without lotus (fig.4.49a) in which two lions appear on the frontal panel (compare with fig.4.2a) along with two other animal and human figures. A different depiction of the lion throne is evident in fig.4.51c, 4.53a, 4.53b, 4.53c, & 4.54b in which the two lions are placed back to back supporting the pedestal.
2. Rectangular pedestal with devotees (fig.4.57b).
3. Lotus throne (*padmāsana*) with a lion pedestal either with devotees in the frontal panel (fig.4.51a, 4.53d) or without devotees (fig.4.50, 4.51c, 4.54b & 4.55a, c)
4. Lotus throne with rectangular pedestal as in fig.4.57c
5. The lotus throne on which the Buddha is seated (fig.4.51b, d, 4.52, 4.54a, c, 4.58a, b) or standing (fig. 4.55b), all of which depict different styles.

4.3 Concluding remarks

The foregoing examination of the iconographic characteristics of the Buddha image in the four geographical locations of India apparently display distinctive

²⁴⁵ See above n75.

characteristics that resemble the native impulse as well as the foreign influence of the tradition of Buddhist art in those regions. While Gandhāra and Mathurā demonstrate the development of the Buddha image simultaneously, yet from two different perspectives, Gupta and Pāla-Sena periods show a greater difference due to several factors. Whereas Gandhāra Buddha images sustained the elements of the Graeco-Bactrian images, Mathurā Buddha images significantly displayed the native elements that resulted in introducing robust, yet unavoidable qualities of an earthly being. As a result of the flourishing nature of Hinduism during the later periods, the Gupta Buddha image demonstrated certain divine characteristics into the image, but developed into its highest state by introducing the finest elements, techniques, and proportions. Contrary, the Pāla-Sena period evolved a deterioration of the finest qualities that were absorbed during the Gupta period due to increasing demand of images as means of political propaganda.

However, the objective of the preceding examination is to make an in-depth comparison between the Sri Lankan Buddha images of corresponding periods with those of India for the purpose of determining the extent to which these characteristics are common to the two countries. It is envisaged that the presence or absence of these iconographic characteristics will decide whether the Sri Lankan Buddha image evolved independently or what influences had been exerted, if at all, by either country on the other.

CHAPTER 05

ORIGIN AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF BUDDHIST ART IN SRI LANKA

5.1 The introduction of Buddhism in Sri Lanka and the impact of Mauryan civilization

Despite the tradition recorded in Sri Lankan chronicles that the Buddha visited Sri Lanka three times and preached the Buddha Dharma to groups of early settlers in the country,¹ no reference is made to Buddhism from the reign of Vijaya (483 BCE-445 BCE) who was said to be the first king in the country² to that of Muṭasiva (307 BCE-247 BCE), the son of king Paṇdukābhaya (394 BCE-307 BCE).³ According to the Sri Lankan chronological evidence, the period covers at least two centuries. The early groups of migrants from India no doubt professed Brāhmanism in the country. Particularly important is the presence of Brāhmins with Brāhmaṇa villages, comprising their religious and educational institutions, which is mentioned especially during the reign of Paṇdukābhaya in the fourth century BCE. The chronicle of *Mahāvamsa* gives a detailed account of the city planning of Anuradhapura by the king, and describes the religious institutions that were being established by him. Accordingly, the buildings and shrines erected within the city and the west gate are as follows;

*kāḷavelaṃ nivessi yakkam puprapurattime-yakkam tu Cittarājam taṃheṭṭhā
 abhayavāpiyā
 Pubbopakāriṃ dāsīṃ taṃ nibbatam yakkayoniyā-purassa dakkhiṇadvāre so
 kataññū nivesayi
 ...dvāragāme ca caturo 'bhayavāpīn tathā
 mahāsasānāghātanam paccimarājīṇī tathā- Vessavanassa nigrodham
 vyādidevassatālakam
 Yonansabhāgavatthuñ ca mahejjāgharam eva ca- etāni paccimadvāradisābhāge
 nivessayi.⁴*

¹ *Mv.* Ch. I. 24-32, 44-62, 71-84: *Sp.* Ch. III. 16

² *Mv.* Ch. VII. 72-74

³ *Mv.* Ch. IX 1-4

⁴ *Mv.* Ch. X 84-86, 88-90: *Vp.* Vol. I Ch. X 84-86, 88-90

Translation:

He settled the *yakka* Kāvela on the east side of the city, the *yakka* Cittarāja⁵ at the lower end of the Abhaya tank. The slave-woman who had helped him in time past and was reborn of a *yakkinī*, the thankful king settled at the south gate of the City.⁶ Within the royal precincts he housed the *yakkinī* in the form of a mare (*maheja*). He laid out also four suburbs as well as Abhaya tank, the common cemetery, the place of execution, and the chapel of the Queen of the West (*paccimarājini*), the banyan tree of *Vessavana*, the palm tree of the deity of maladies...and the great house of sacrifice.^{7*}

The institutions established in the north and east are the following:

Taduttare disābhāge yāva Gāmaṇīvāpiyā-tāpasānaṃ anekesaṃ assamo āsi kārīto
Tasseva ca susānassa puratthimadisāya tu-Jotiyassa nighaṇṭhassa gharam kāresi
bhūpati
Tasmim yeva ca desasmim nighaṇṭho Girināmakō- nānāpāsāṇḍikā ceva vasimsu
samaṇā bahū
Tattheva ca devakulaṃ akāresi mahīpati-Kumbhāṇḍassa nighaṇṭhassa
taṇṇāmakam ahoṣi taṃ
Tato tu paccime bhāge vyādhapālipurattime miccādiṭṭhikulānaṃ tu vasī
pañcasataṃ tahim
Pāraṃ Jotiyagehamhā oraṃ Gāmaṇīvāpiyā so paribhajakārāmaṃ kārāpesi
tath'eva ca
Ajīvakaṇaṃ gehaṃ ca brahamaṇavatthum eva ca sivikāsothhisālaṇ ca akāresi
*tahim tahim*⁸

Translation

[N]orth of this cemetery between (it) and Pāsāna-mountain, the line of huts for the huntsmen were built thenceforth. Northward from thence, as far the Gāmaṇī Tank, a hermitage was made for many ascetics; eastward of that same cemetery the ruler built a house for the nighaṇṭa Jotiya. In that same region dwelt the nighaṇṭa named Giri and many ascetics of various heretical sects. And there the lord of the land built also a chapel for the nighaṇṭa Kumbhāṇḍa; it was named after him. Toward the west from thence and eastward of the street of the huntsmen lived five hundred families of heretical beliefs. On the further side of Jotiya's house and on this side of the Gāmaṇī Tank, he likewise built a monastery for wandering mendicant monks, and dwelling for ājivakas and the residence for the Brahman,

⁵ Cittarāja and Kāvela are the two spirit beings who helped the servant of his mother Cittā. See *Mv.Ch. X* 1-6

⁶ See *Mv.Ch. X* 1-2

⁷ *Mv* (WG). Ch. X 84-86: 88-90: *As the present study followed the Pāli version of Wilhelm Geiger, the translation of the same author was used to maintain the integrity of the scholarly work. Whenever important, other updated translations will be used to emphasize the latest interpretations.

⁸ *Mv.Ch. X.* 96-102

and in this place and that built a lying-in shelter and a hall for those recovering from sickness.⁹

In addition to the particular information, *Mahābodhivaṃsa* refers to a *devageha* (chapel for the gods), belonging to the Brāhman named Diyāvāsa, which was located to the left side of the Mahāsīmā during the period of Devānampiyatissa (247-207 BCE).¹⁰ Senarat Paranavitana quotes an early inscriptional source as proof of Brāhmanism in the country, and upon the evidence he assumes that they must have lived prior to the arrival of Buddhism, and might have opposed to the practices of Buddhism. He states:

The earliest inscriptions too, bear testimony to the presence of Brahmanas in Ceylon just after the introduction of Buddhism. They must therefore, have been living in pre-Buddhist Ceylon, too. And, the presence of the Brahmanas is evidence for the prevalence of their religious beliefs. One of the donors of caves at Sasseruva in the Kurunegala District was a Brahmana named Somadeva, son of Vāsakāni. The owner of the cave at Yangala in the Nuwarakalaviya District is given in the inscription on the brow the cave as Vijitasena, son of the Brahmana Kosika (Kaṇiṣka).¹¹ The Brahmanas mentioned in the chronicles and the inscriptions were naturally those who were in the sympathy with the Buddhist movement. There must have been many others who were indifferent or opposed to the cause of Buddhism; and hence were not mentioned in the records of the times. Whether these Brahmanas were versed in Vedic sacrifices, we do not know; but the name Yagadata (sacrifice-given) occurring in one of the Vessagiriya Cave inscriptions shows that even after the introduction of Buddhism, a memory, at least, of the Brahmanical sacrifices was preserved in Ceylon.¹²

While the shrines of Jain Nighaṇṭas, wandering ascetics and Ājīvakas are mentioned, *Mahāvāṃsa* does not make any contribution with regard to the presence of Buddhism or Buddhist institutions.

⁹ *Mv* (WG), Ch. X. 96-102

¹⁰ “*Diyāvāsa Brāhmaṇassa devahamaṃ...*” *MBv*. P. 135-6

¹¹ By the time the article was published, the inscription was not introduced to the public. Later on it was published by the same author in his *Inscriptions of Ceylon*, Vol. I. (Colombo, Department of Archaeology, 1983), plate 205 and in *JRAS(CB)*, New Series, Vol. V. 156, which reads as follows; *Bamana kosika- puṭa Vijitasenasa lene* (translation: *The cave of Vijitasena, son of the Brahmana Kosika*).

¹² Senarat Paranavitana, “Pre-Buddhist Religious Beliefs in Ceylon,” *JRAS(CB)*, Vol. XXI No. 2. (1929) 321-322

The spread of Jainism to the south must have been developed under the patronage of Candragupta Maurya (340 BCE-320 BCE), who himself is said to have abdicated his throne and become a Jain devotee for twelve years, and died as a Jain monk.¹³ Neither the remains of Jain monasteries nor the evidence of inscriptions have given the status of Jainism in the country to evaluate its presence. Senarat Paranavitana emphasizes that the reason for this would be the similar appearance of early Buddhist and Jain monasteries that it became a sacred place of Buddhism, once Jainism disappeared from Ceylon.¹⁴ There is evidence to prove the replacement of Buddhist monasteries upon the Jain religious shrines. King Vattagāmini Abhaya (43 BCE and 29 BCE-17 BCE), once enthroned after fourteen years of the departure; re-established the Abhayagiri monastery with twelve cells on the remains of the temple of the Jain Nighaṇṭa named Giri.¹⁵

The introduction of Buddhism to Sri Lanka was accomplished under such circumstances by one of the nine missions sent out by Moggaliputtatissa after the Third Council under the patronage of Emperor Aśoka (304-232 BCE).¹⁶ The information recorded in the Pāli commentarial literature and the Sri Lankan chronicles reveal that the mission to Sri Lanka received special attention of Aśoka. Two main factors are highlighted:

1. The second coronation of king Tissa of Sri Lanka according to the Mauryan custom which included the conferment of Aśoka's title '*devānampriya*' on Tissa.¹⁷

¹³ N.R. Guseva, "History of Jainism" in *Cultural and Religious Heritage of India*, ed. Suresh K. Sharma & Usha Sharma. (Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2004), 11-12; Arun Kumar Jain, *Faith and Philosophy of Jainism*. (Delhi: Kalpaz Publishers, 2009), 23-26

¹⁴ Senarat Paranavitana, "Pre-Buddhist Religious Beliefs in Ceylon," 325

¹⁵ *Mv.* Ch. XXXIII. 78-82

¹⁶ *Mv.* Ch. XII. 1-8

¹⁷ *Mv.* Ch. XI. 27-36

2. The decision to send Saṅghamittā and the Bodhi tree with eight of the uncles of Mahinda and Saṅghamittā (their mother's brothers) to take over the civil administration of the country.¹⁸

The particular intervention not only introduced Buddhism into the country, but also established certain other elements that helped to sustain a particular Sri Lankan culture. Ven. Walpola Rahula states;

In the 3rd century B.C. during the time of King Devānampiyatissa, Buddhism was introduced to Ceylon by the Arhant Mahinda, the son of Emperor Aśoka. He brought not only the Buddhist religion but also complete Buddhist culture, which had by then reached a very high standard of development. Ceylon was comparatively a less advanced country at the time. The Sinhala people progressed as a nation and won international recognition only after they embraced Buddhism. Sinhala literature, arts and crafts, architecture, town planning, education, health and sanitation, the ethics of the good life, economics and politics—all these developed gradually under the guidance of Arhant Mahinda and the *Bhikkhus*.¹⁹

Of the two incidents, the most prominent with regard to the particular establishment is the arrival of Mahinda along with the four monks Ittiya, Uttiya, Sambala, Baddhasāla²⁰ and Sumana Sāmanera (son of Saṅghamittā),²¹ and Bandula Upāsaka (son of his mother's sister),²² at the Missaka Pabbhata or Ambaṭṭala, currently known as Mihintale, where he met the king Tissa, on a full moon day of Jettḥa.²³ At the very first event of ordination, which took place at the end of the delivery of *Cullaḥaṭṭipadopama sutta* in order to clarify the meaning of Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha,²⁴ he demarcated

¹⁸ "...Vedisadeviyā saḥodarāṇam aṭṭhannaṃ khattiyakumārakānam aggaṃ SumittaBodhiguttābhidhānaṃ Sakyaputtayugam attanā samaṭṭhāne ṭhapetvā, kaniṭṭhassa rājakumārassa Sumittābhidhānassa kulavāsino datvā, jettḥena Bodhiguttakumārena mahābodhiṃ sampaṭicchāpetvā mahābodhiyaṃ salilāni..." MBv.

154: P.B. Sannasgala, ed. *Sinhala Mahābodhivaṃsa*, (Colombo, Sn., 1970), 126ff

¹⁹ Walpola Rahula, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon*. (Colombo: M. D. Gunasena and Co., Ltd., 1974), 16

²⁰ *Mv.* Ch. XII. 7-8; *Sp.* Ch. V. 62-63, 71

²¹ *Mv.* Ch. XIII. 3-4 19 (The objective of having seven Buddhist chaplains was the establishment of Upasampadā tradition, which propagated the *Buddha śāsana* in the country).

²² *Mv.* Ch. XIII 3-4 *Sp.* Ch. II 33

²³ *Dv.* Ch. XII. 12-44; *Mv.* Ch. XIII. 18; *Sp.*, Ch. V. 76-77

²⁴ *Dv.* Ch. XII. 51-51; *Mv.* Ch. XIV. 22-23 *Sp.* Ch. V. 81

the boundaries of the city (*sīmā*), where Bandula Upāsaka was bestowed with Pabbajjā and Upasampadā,²⁵ for the first time in the country. The chronicle also describes that the king caused to erect the *cetiya* called Pathamacetiya where the theras first alighted.²⁶

The most prominent evidence to the present study is found in *Mahāvamsa* Chapter XV, which gives a detailed account of how Mahinda chose the Mahāmeghavana park as the site for a great monastery to be established in the capital: “he assigned boundary-marks on the furrow that the king had ploughed and had assigned the boundaries for thirty-two mālakas and for Thūpārāma, the great thera of lofty wisdom, then fixed the inner boundaries,”²⁷ allocating the following shrines and other buildings to be erected there in the future, which was carried out up to almost two centuries:

1. Mālaka with thirty-two stories (a consecrated enclosure) for carrying out the duties of the Saṅgha.
2. Site for the Thūpārāma (to be constructed by Devānampiyatissa)
3. A pond with rooms for warm baths.
4. The site for the southern branch of the Bodhi-Tree
5. The Uposatha-Hall
6. Place where gifts to the Saṅgha are distributed
7. The Catussālā, the refectory
8. The site of the future Great Tūpa (to be constructed by Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya).²⁸

(Map 5.1).

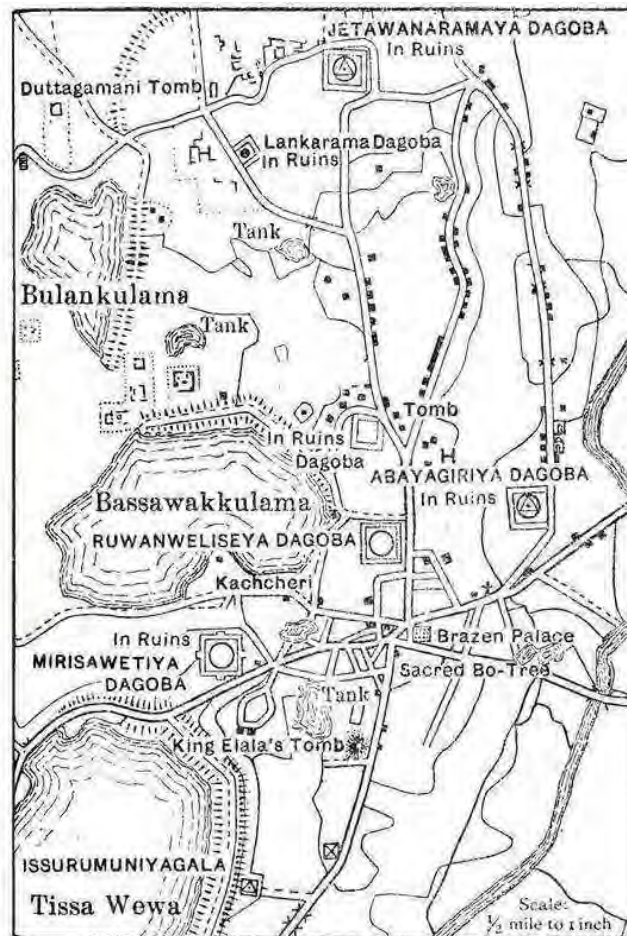
²⁵ *Dv.* Ch. XII. 62-63: *Mv.* Ch. XIV 32-33

²⁶ *Mv.* Ch. XIV. 44-45

²⁷ *Mv.* Ch. XV. 191-194

²⁸ *Mv.* Ch. XV.26-56

There is evidence that in planning the Great Monastery of Anuradhapura, Mahinda had monasteries like Veluvanārāma of India in mind: the *Mahāvamsa* records that on being questioned by the king regarding the acceptance of a monastic complex by the Sangha, Mahinda said, ‘it is allowed’ and related the acceptance of the Veluvanārāma. (*Ārāmo kappate bhante saṃghassa? ti apucci so. Kappate, iti vatvāna kappākappesu kovido, thero veluvnārāmapaṭiggahaṇam abravi, tam sutvā atihattḥo so tuṭṭhahattḥo mahājano*).²⁹



Map 5.1 The Town Planning of Ancient Anuradhapura City.

(Source: Sir G. Heam, ed., “*A Handbook for Travellers in India, Burma and Ceylon*, 15th ed. (London: J. Murray, 1938)

²⁹ *Mv.* Ch. XV. 16-17

Interestingly, there is no reference to residential quarters for the Saṅgha as an element of the Great Monastery, whereas the preparation of caves for the use of the mission and the recently ordained monks in Mihintale is noted.³⁰

The construction of the Thūpārāma stūpa and the planting of a sapling of the sacred Bodhi tree as the first two Buddhist shrines in Sri Lanka reflect the impact of Aśoka. According to *Mahāvamsa*, Mahinda expressed his desire to return to India because there were no shrines for the mission to worship in Sri Lanka. The outcome was the erection of Thūpārāma by the king, enshrining the collar-bone of the Buddha.³¹ Equally emphasized is Aśoka's establishment of a large number of stūpas called Dharmarājikā and the promotion of relic worship (discussed in Chapter 2.4). It is also clear that Aśoka sent the artisans to the country (from the weavers and potters and from all the handicrafts) with experience in erecting such buildings in his empire, along with Saṅghamittā.³² "Among the members of the 18 guilds accompanying the Buddhist missions there were painters. They would have introduced the traditions and the styles of the ancient art of Indian painting especially that prevailing at Sānchi."³³

³⁰ *Mv.* Ch. XVI. 10-17: *Sp.* V. 86

³¹ *Mv.* Ch. XV. 192-194, XVII. 9-21: *Sp.* V. 89-90

³² "tattheva pesakārāṇāṃ kumbhakārāṇāṃ kulāni ca sabbesaṃ cāpi senīnaṃ..." *Mv.* Ch. XIX. 3-4.: "...tathā aṭṭha khattiyakulāni aṭṭha seṭṭhikulāni aṭṭha Brāhmaṇakulāni aṭṭha vāṇijakulāni aṭṭha dhanuddahakulāni aṭṭha tacchakulāni aṭṭha kalinṅakulāni aṭṭha kappalakulāni balatthakulāni aṭṭha pesakārakulāni aṭṭha kumakārakulāni aṭṭha mālākārakulāni aṭṭha gandhakārakulāni aṭṭha sikkakulāni aṭṭha sūdakkulāni aṭṭha kammārakulāni aṭṭha lohakārakulāni aṭṭha suvaṇṇakārakulāni aṭṭha vaḍḍhakikulāni aṭṭha cittaakārakulāni aṭṭha ātojjavādakulāni aṭṭha chattakārakulāni aṭṭha uyyānapālakakulāni datvā..." *MBv.* 154 (Although Geiger's translation interprets the term *senīnaṃ* as handicrafts, Ananda Guruge, emphasizes it as "eight categories or classes. See *Mv.*(AG), Ch. XIX. 1-4 and n4): *Sp.* V. 100

³³ Nandadeva Wijesekara, "Sinhala Buddhist Painting: Its Styles and Tradition," *Buddhist Studies in Honor of the Ven. Hāmmālava Saddhatissa*. Edited by Ven Gatara Dhammapala, Richard Gombrich & K.R. Norman. (Nugegoda: University of Sri Jayawardhanapura, 1984), 257

It is most likely that Devānamapiyatissa would accomplish his extensive contribution to Buddhist architecture in Sri Lanka with such technical support.

Mahāvamsa lists the following buildings and other requisites as constructed by him:

1. The Mahāvihāra (the Great Monastery) at Anuradhapura.
2. The Cetiyapabbata monastery at Mihintale.
3. The Thūpārāma monastery, starting the construction of stūpa
4. The Bodhi-tree shrine
5. A stone pillar to mark the site of the future Great stūpa
6. Issarasamaṇa (Isurumuniya)
7. The Tissa tank
8. The Pathama stūpa
9. Vessagiri monastery
10. Two nunneries called Upāsikā and Hatthālaka
11. The Mahāpāli refectory
12. Jambukola vihāra in Nāgadīpa
13. Tissamahārāma, and
14. Pācīnārāma³⁴

In addition, he is said to have had “monasteries founded at every *yojanā* (roughly seven miles) and had the relics enshrined appropriately in stūpas there.”³⁵ It is also said that he had Bodhi shrines established in various parts of the island with the berries of the Bodhi tree sent by Asoka. According to *Mahāvamsa*, the eight Bodhi-saplings, sprout from the original Bodi-Tree, he planted in the following places;

³⁴ Mv. Ch. XX. 17-27

³⁵ “*Vihāre kārayitvāna ṭhane yojanayojane dhātuyo tattha thūpesu nidhāpesi yathāraham.*” Mv. XX. 12-13

1. Jambukola
2. The village of Tivakka Brahman,
3. The Thūpārāma,
4. The Issaramaṇārāma
5. First stūpa (Pathamaka Cetiya).
6. Cetiya-mountain.
7. Kājaragāma
8. Candanagāma, along with other thirty-two Bodhi saplings sprung from the four seeds, at a distance of yojanā from each shrine.³⁶ Thus, the impact of Aśoka's activities in India as pertaining to 1) the worship of the Bodhi tree, and 2) the erection of *stūpas* as part of the relic worship is no doubt clear from what is attributed to Devānampiyatissa. Relevant to the current study is that no reference is made to the Buddha image and the reason for it is that it had not become an object of worship during the Mauryan period.

However, the introduction of certain architectural elements along with the stūpa as an important object of sanctity is evident as a result of the particular mission. For the stūpa Thūpārāma, which was constructed similar to Mahinda's home at Vedisā,³⁷ the king used a considerable volume of bricks, and it was used as the chamber for the collar-bone of the Buddha. The important fact is the simplicity and the firm structure that is unique to the Sri Lankan tradition, unlike the ornamentation of the construction with highly decorated gateways with numerous narratives from the Buddha's life and floral work in

³⁶ “*Paṭiṭṭhāpesum aṭṭhannam Jambukolamhi paṭṭane mahābodhiṭṭhitaṭṭhāne nāvāyoroḥaṇe tadā, Tivakkabrāhmaṇaggāme, Thūpārāme tatheva ca, Issaramaṇārāme, Paṭhama cetiyangane, Cetiyaḥpabbatārāme tathā Kājaragāmake Candanagāmake cāpi ekekaṃ bodhilaṭṭhikaṃ, sesā catupakkajātā dvattiṃsabodhilaṭṭhiyo samantā yojanaṭṭhāne viḥāresu taḥim taḥim Mv. Ch. XIX. 60-63*

³⁷ *Sp. V.74-75: D. T. Devendra, Classical Sinhalese Sculpture: c. 300 B.C. to A.D. 1000. (London: Alec Tiranti, 1958), 9*

Indian stūpas.³⁸ (**Fig.6.1a1-6.2c2**). However, detailed descriptions proving the decorations applied in the interior of the relic chambers of many stūpas, and the placing of the Buddha images are found in the chronicles (discussed below under **5.3.1, 5.3.2, & 5.3.3**). Some evidence from the excavations of ancient stūpas proves that they have had painting in the interior walls. The clear indication is the unique traditional skills that were employed by the Sri Lankan artist to produce its own model of stūpa independent of the Indian prototype.

5.2 Beginning of Sri Lankan art

As in India, Sri Lanka, too, has had a tradition of rock and wall paintings. Their evolution can be traced from pre-historic caves through paintings in religious monasteries, relic chambers, and temples up to the 18th-19th centuries CE. Though not spread all over the island, the settlements of prehistoric cave men in Tantirimale, Billāwa, Kadurupokuṇa, Āṇḍiyāgala, Budu Lena/Budunne Lena (the cave of the Buddha), Doravaka, etc, is important to the present study (**Map 5.2**).³⁹ According to B.D. Nandadeva, forty-one rock shelter caves have paintings and engravings.⁴⁰

Senaka Bandaranayake assumes that these engravings would belong to the pre-historic period where the civilization used the drawings to express their daily lifestyle.

The existence, therefore, of ancient paintings anywhere and from any period is always a rare phenomenon, astonishing not only by virtue of their artistic character and the insight they provide into the imaginative and conceptual world of the past, but also for the sheer feat of survival... The early rock art and the

³⁸ Devendra, *Classical Sinhalese Sculpture*, 9

³⁹Source: B.D. Nandadeva, "Aboriginal Rock Art of Sri Lanka" (Paper read at the Second Asian Regional Conference on Historic Places, Colombo, Sri Lanka, March 20-28, 1987)

⁴⁰ B. D. Nandadeva, "Rock Art of Sri Lanka" *Rock art in the old world : Papers Presented in the Symposium of the AURA Congress, Darwin(Australia): 1988*. (New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Aryan Books International, 1992), 339

associated lifestyle of the Veddās make a tangible contribution to our understanding of artistic activity in pre historic times.⁴¹

J. B. Dissanayake, too, attests those as their language of expression.

Spāññaye ‘Altāmīrā nam guhāve citra soyāgatte 1870 dī. Ehi vādiyenma āndala tiyenne sattva rūpa. E atatat ‘Bison’ nam sivupāvāge rūpa kīpayakma mehi tiyenavā. Ehi pātāt yodā tiyena handā huṅgakma lassanai. Īta amatarava Val Asun, Goṇan, Val ūran dākvena rūpada tiyenvā.

Tantirimale len citrat ayat vanne mānava Itihāsaye pāsāṇa nam yugayata. E vanavīta bhāṣāva pahaḷa vī notibuṅā vannata āti. EHEMA bhāṣāven kiyannata bāri yam yam deval kiyannata me sattva rūpa saha minis rūpa yodāgattā āti. Tamāta gonek hamu unu bava kiyannata Goṇa rūpaya āndā vanata bārida?...Me vage citra puravdyāgñayāta vādāgat vanne kem valata, sārāsii valata, situm pātum prakāṣa kirīmata ādi vāsī janatāva pāta vargat, rekhā satahanut yodāgat ākārāya terum gannata in idak lābena handā.⁴²

P. E. P. Deraniyagala in 1951, highlighting the geographical distribution of these caves from the North-Central to Southeastern and Central Provinces, examined the human figure representing different functions along with elephants in a number of rock-shelter engravings.

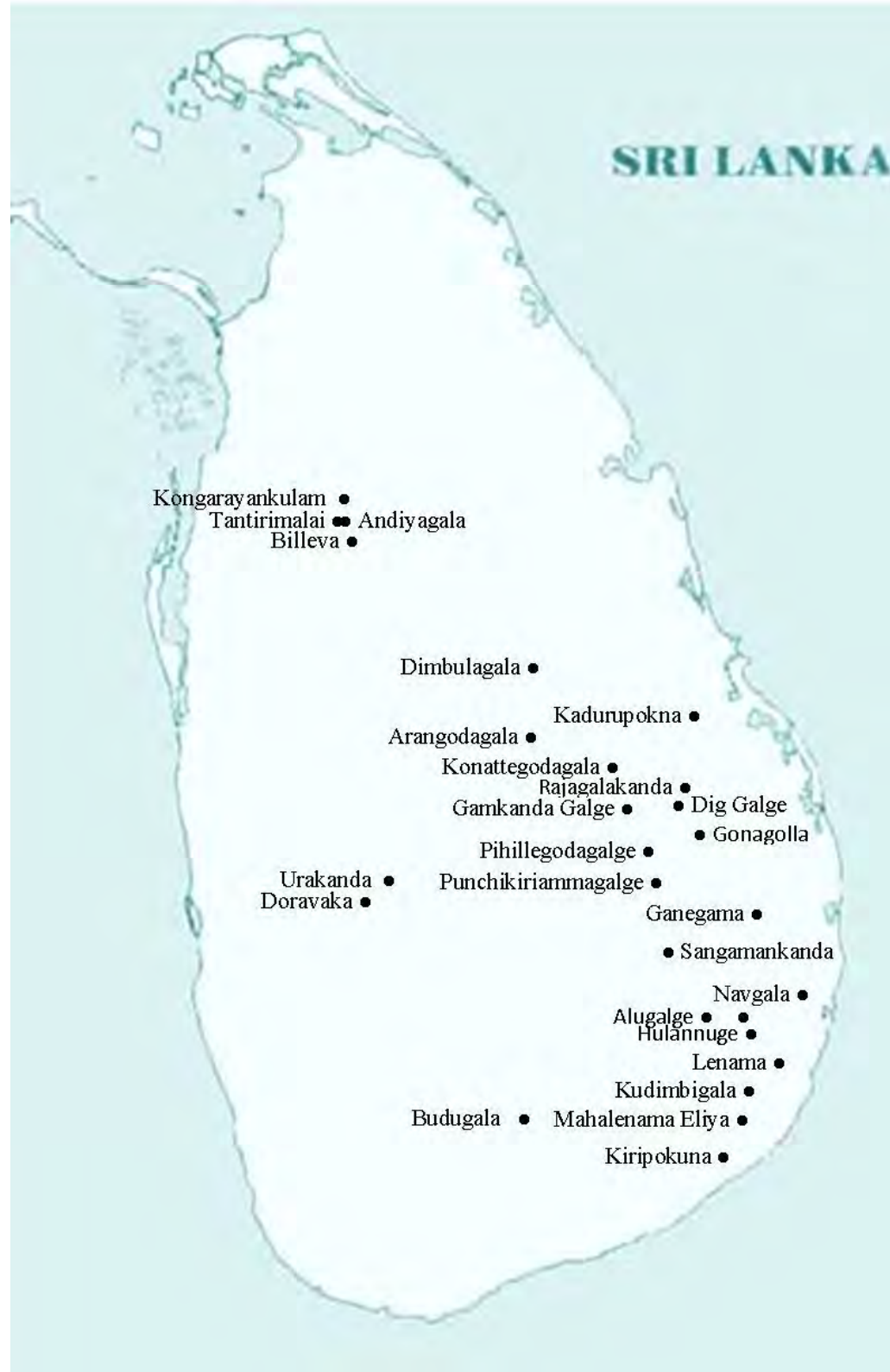
Remains of elephants are rarely found when excavating pre-historic sites in Ceylon. Only once were fragments of elephant molars found in association with quartz and chert implements, pitted hammers and celts of Balangoda culture phase. They were recovered from a depth of about 2 feet beneath the surface from the rock shelter known as Neravana galena near Kukule-gama of Kukul Korale in Sabaragamuva Province. The paucity of elephant remains in cave deposits suggests that prehistoric man of the later Stone Age phase of Ceylon avoided the elephant but portrayed it in an attempt to invoke supernatural aid against it.⁴³ (fig.5.1a & 1b).

⁴¹ Senaka Dias Bandaranayake, *Rock and Wall Paintings of Sri Lanka*. (Colombo: Lake House Book Shop, 1986), 7-9

⁴² “ස්පාඤ්ඤයේ ‘අල්ටාමීරා’ නම් ගුහාවේ විභූ සොයාගන්නේ 1870 දී. එහි වැඩියෙන්ම ඇදලා තියෙන්නේ සත්ව රූප. ඒ අතරින් ‘බයිසන්’ නම් සිවුපාවාගේ රූප කීපයක්ම මෙහි තියෙනවා. එහි පාටත් යොදා තියෙන හන්දා හුගක්ම ලස්සනයි. ඊට අමතරව වල් අසුන්, ගෝණන්, වල් උරන් දැක්වෙන රූපද තියෙනවා.

තන්තිරිමලේ ලෙන් විහුන් අයත් වන්නේ මානව ඉතිහාසයේ පාෂාණ යුගය නම් යුගයට. ඒ වන විට භාෂාව පහළ වි නොතිබුණා වන්නටත් ඇති. එහෙම නම් භාෂාවෙන් කියන්නට බැරි යම් යම් දේවල් කියන්නට මේ සත්ව රූප භාෂිනිස් රූප යොදාගන්නා වන්ට ඇති. තමාට ගෝනෙක් හමු වුණු බව කියන්නට ගෝණ රූපය ඇන්දා වන්ට බැරිද්?... මේ වගේ විහු පුරා විද්‍යාඥයාට වැදගත් වන්නේ කෙම්වලට, සැරසිලිවලට, සිතූම් පැතුම් ප්‍රකාශ කිරීමට ආදී වාසි ජනනාව පාට වර්ගත් රේඛා සටහනුත් යොදාගත් ආකාරය තේරුම් ගන්නට ඉන් ඉඩක් ලැබෙන හන්දා.” J.B. Dissanayaka, *Tantirimale*. (Colombo: S. Godage Brothers, 2001), 43

⁴³ P.E.P. Deraniyagala, *Elephas maximus: The Elephants of Ceylon*, Vol. I. (Colombo: National Museums of Ceylon, 1951), 2, Plate I fig.1, 2 (The article was first published in *Spolia Zeylanica*, Vol. 26 (1), 22-23 (1951a), 21-6 and *Spolia Zeylanica*, Vol. 26 (2) 161-176



Map 5.2 The Settlement Sites of Pre-Historic Caveman in Sri Lanka

In an examination of pre-historic paintings P.E.P. Deraniyagala also reveals three groups: monochrome silhouettes, polychrome paintings, and incised representations.⁴⁴ Senaka Bandaranayake further analyses the techniques of the pre-historic cave paintings;

The artists have employed white or colored clays, kaolin and ash, or have just bruised the surface of the rock in the form of a primitive engraving. Line or 'stick' figures, thicker finger drawings and smears, portray stylized animal forms, hunting figures, hunting figures with bow and arrow, men riding on animals, and geometrical or symbolic motifs. Some forms are highly imaginative or symbolized rendering in which the identification of subject matter is dependent on interpretation.⁴⁵ (Fig.5.2a, b1, b2, & 2c1 & 2c2).

According to B.D. Nandadeva, "the subjects commonly found are figures of human beings, animals such as elephant, leopard, deer, stag, dog, etc., and men riding on animals."⁴⁶ Many of these compositions show hunting scenes incorporating animals (tiger, elephant, cow, and iguana), birds (crow, peacock), man and woman, sun, moon, and stars, the bow and arrow. The subjects and the techniques employed are so limited that there is no suggestion of any religious themes in the tradition of Sri Lankan pre-historic art.

These themes can be clearly distinguished from those of the pre-historic cave men in India, due to two reasons: 1) the geographical expansion of the pre-historic art is limited to certain areas, where the evidence are found only from the pre-historic settlement patterns had evolved. 2) The evidence so far found proves that the pre-historic hunting men in Sri Lanka have not extensively used the human figure as in India, yet testifies to the establishment of a distinctive tradition. No link can therefore be

⁴⁴ Deraniyagala, *Elephas maximus: The Elephants of Ceylon*, 3

⁴⁵ Bandaranayake, *Rock and Wall Paintings of Sri Lanka*, 9

⁴⁶ Nandadeva, "Rock Art of Sri Lanka," 339; also see "The Aboriginal Rock Art In Sri Lanka," Second Asian Regional Conference on Historic Places, Colombo, 1985), 20-28

established between the cave paintings in India and its influence on the later developments in Sri Lankan art.

Waves of migrants who came from India in different periods seem to have brought with them some popular cults such as the worship of *yakṣas* and *yakṣis*, similar to what is represented in the stone fence around the Bhārhut stūpa of the second century BCE. *Mahāvamsa* mentions that Paṇḍukābhaya (394 BCE-307 BCE) admired certain *yakkhas* for their benevolent acts and the immense assistance they rendered to him during his wars of succession.⁴⁷ “Yet, by year and year he had sacrificial offerings made to them and to other (*yakkhas*), (but on the days of festival he sat with Cittarāja beside him on a seat of equal height, and having gods and men to dance before him, the king took pleasure, in joyous and merry wise”).⁴⁸ (*Anto narindavatthussa vaḷavāmukhayakkhiṇim-nivessesi, baliṃ tesam aññesaṃ cānuvasskaṃ: dāpesi caṇakāle tu Cittarājena so saha- samānena nisāditvā dibbamanusanāṭakaṃ:*⁴⁹ *kārento ’bhirami rājā rathikhiḍḍāsamappito...*)⁵⁰

Ven. Walpola Rahula, describing the particular incident states that Paṇḍukābhaya’s sitting with Cittarāja beside him and his joint enjoyment observing the prosperity does not mean that the *yakka* was visible as a being: “perhaps the images of these *yakkas* were placed on equal seats by the side of Paṇḍukābhaya to emphasize his majesty and greatness.”⁵¹

This shows that the *yakṣas* Cittarāja and Kālavela were neither the two chiefs of the aborigines of Vāddās, nor any beings actually known to Paṇḍukābhaya, but

⁴⁷ *Mv.* Ch. X 84-86, 88-90: (see above n.4 & 7)

⁴⁸ *Mv.* (WG), Ch. X 86-88

⁴⁹ Ananda Guruge describes the original Pāli term *dibbamanusanāṭakaṃ* as the “divine and human dances, instead of what Wilhelm Geiger has interpreted for the same term as “having gods and men to dance before him.” See *Mv.* (AG), Ch. X 86-88, n64

⁵⁰ *Mv.* Ch. X 86-88

⁵¹ Rahula, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, 38

that they were the spirits of the dead existing in the imagination of the people, like the yakṣas and spirits even today in the imagination of the superstitious.⁵²

Thus, the most plausible interpretation of this statement can only mean that these *yakṣas* were represented in images for public view. If so it can be surmised that Sri Lanka had a similar tradition as Mathurā and Bhārhut that had been displayed about two centuries later than what the chronicles attest.

Though no evidence of such images are so far found from the excavations, literary references to the shrines dedicated to *yakṣas* at the time Buddhism was introduced to the country during the reign of king Devānampiyatissa can be traced: Mahejjaghara to which the elephant that was bearing the Buddha's relics to be enshrined in the Thūpārāma proceeded is explained in the *Mahāvamsa Tīkā* or *Vamsaṭṭhappakāsinī* as a shrine dedicated to a yakṣa by the name of Mahejja.⁵³

Haṭṭho hatthī koñcanādaṃ akā 'kampittha medinī; toto nāgo nivattitvā
satherabalavāhano
puratthimena drvārena pavisitvā puram subham-dakkhinena ca dvārena
nikkhamitvā tato puna
Thūpārāme cetiyassa thānato paccato kataṃ-Mahejāvattum gantvāna
bohiṭṭhāne nivattiya
puratthāvadano aṭṭhā thūpārāmaṃ tadā hi tam-kadambaoupphaādārīvallīhi
*vitataṃ ahu*⁵⁴

Fig.5.3a, a stone seal belonging to 1st-2nd centuries BCE found from Anuradhapura, depicting an elephant kneeling down in front of a shrine located in between two hills or stūpas could be an illustration of this incident. D.P.E. Hettiaratchi, examining the symbols of the “Buddhist” Svastika coins of Ancient Ceylon,” observes the similar symbols: elephant and the triple hemisphere on the obverse side of the coins (**fig.5.3b1**).

⁵² Rahula, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, 36

⁵³ *Mahāvamsa* though does not specifically mention the name *Mahejjaghara*, it describes its location in Ch.X.9 see also *Mv.* Ch. XVII. 28-31: *Mv.* (WG). Ch. XVII. 28-31 and n1: *Mv.* (AG), Ch. XVII. 27-31 and n28

⁵⁴ *Vp.* Ch.XVII. 28-31

“A Triple hemisphere so arranged as to give a pyramidal character, two for basement and one for apex- has been adopted as the name for this symbol [*caitya*], by the early numismatists, including Sir Alexander Cunningham.”⁵⁵ In addition, Siri Munasinghe exposes some ancient coins which consist of the symbols i.e. the elephant, the railed Svastika, and the triple hemisphere that must have been used by the king Devānampiyatissa “to commemorate the propogation of Buddhism in ancient Sri Lanka by Rev. Mahinda.”⁵⁶ **(fig.5.3b2).**

5.3 Literary evidence on the antiquity of the Buddha image in Sri Lankan art.

5.3.1 Erection of the Buddha image

The earliest reference of a Buddha image in Sri Lankan tradition is to an image attributed to king Devānampiyatissa in whose reign Buddhism was introduced by Mahinda, the son of Emperor Aśoka. According to the *Mahāvamsa*, Jeṭṭhatissa I (323 CE-333 CE), “brought from the Thūpārāma and installed in the Pācīnatissapabbata monastery the beautiful great stone image (*ūrusilāpaṭimā*) which in the past was placed in the Thūpārāma by Devānampiyatissa”⁵⁷

“*Devānampiyatissena so paṭṭhiṭhāpitam purā -Thūpārāme urusilāpaṭimām
cārudassanam
netvāna Thūpārāmamhā Jeṭṭhatisso mahipati-paṭiṭṭhāpitesī ārāme
Pacīnatissapabbate*”

Whether the particular reference can be regarded as reliable evidence is of polemic, further references to the same image articulate the attention paid by several

⁵⁵ D.P.E. Hettiaratchi, “The Symbols on the “Buddhist” Svastika Coins of Ancient Ceylon” *Paranavitana Felicitation Volume on Art and Architecture and Oriental Studies*, ed., N.A. Jayawickrama. (Colombo: M.D. Gunasena, 1961), 227, fig.4

⁵⁶ Siri Munasinghe, “King Devanampiyatissa’s Coins,” *Ancient Sri Lankan Coins*, sirimunasiha.wordpress.com/ accessed May 2, 2011.

⁵⁷ *Mv.* Ch. XXXVI. 128-30: *Vp.* Ch. XXXVI. 128-129

kings who reigned after king Jetṭhatissa I. His brother and successor, king Mahāsena (334 CE-362 CE) who was for some time partial to Abhayagiri monastery and even tried to uproot Mahāvihāra, is said to have “sent for the great stone image from the Pācīnatissapabbata [vihāra] and set it up in the Abhayagiri (vihāra). He set up a building for the image, a temple for the Bodhi Tree, a beautiful tree hall and four-sided hall.”⁵⁸

*Mahāsīlāpaṭimām so Pācīnatissapabbatā ānetvābhyagirimhi patiṭṭhāpesi bhūpati
Patimāgharam Bodhigharam Dhātusālam manoramam catusālam ca karesi
samkhari Kukkuṭavhayam*⁵⁹

King Buddhadāsa (371 CE-400 CE) has placed the precious jewel that he received from the recovered snake as a mark of esteem, as the eye of the stone image of the Perfectly Enlightened One in the Abhayuttara vihāra.⁶⁰

*Disvā sukhitam attānam pannago so mahīpatiṃ- pūjetum tassa pādāsi
mahaggham maṇim attano;
Śīlāmayāya sambuddhapaṭimāya akārayi- maṇim tam nayanam raja vihāre
abhayuttare*⁶¹

It is said that the jewels were stolen in the reign of Dhātusena (460 CE-478 CE) who, according to the *Mahāvamsa*, adorned it as follows:

*Phātikammaṃ bahum 'kāsi vihāre Abhyuttare, -Silāsathussa kāresi mandiram ca
samaṇdapaṃ
Buddhadāsakate nette natṭhe 'nagghamaṇdivayaṃ akāsi nettam satthussa
raṃsicūlāmaniṃtathā
maṇīhi ghananīlehi kesāvaṭṭaṃsum uttamam hemavaḍḍham that' ev' uppalomaṃ
sovaṇṇacīvaram,
pādajālam suvaṇṇassa padumaṃ dīpam uttamam- nānārāgabaram tattha
pūjayitthaasamkiyaṃ.*⁶²

⁵⁸ *Mv.* (WG) Ch. XXXVII 14-16

⁵⁹ *Mv.* Ch. XXXVII 14-16

⁶⁰ *Cv.* (WG) Ch. XXXVII. 122-123

⁶¹ *Mv.* Ch. XXXVII, 122-123

⁶² *Cv.* Ch. XXXVIII 61-64

Translation

He undertook the buildings for the enlargement of the Abhayuttara-vihāra and for the stone image of the Master (Buddha) he had a shrine erected with a Maṇḍapa. As the eyes placed by Buddhadāsa (in the image) had been lost, he made a pair of costly jewels into the eyes for the Master. Further he wrought a gleaming diadem of rays and out of dark blue gems a shining coil of hair, likewise a bandolier of gold and a tuft of down (between the brows) and a golden garment, a mandorla of gold, a lotus flower and a magnificent lamp.”⁶³

King Silāmeghavaṇṇa (617 CE-626 CE) is said to have revered the stone image of the Buddha at the Abhayagiri-vihāra.

*Vihāre Abhaye buddhaṃ pūjayittha ailāmayam jinaṃ ca gehaṃ tassākā
nānāratana-cittikaṃ,
Kolavāpiṃ ca datvāna ārakkhatthaṃ jinassa so pūjaṃ sabbopahārehi
sabbakālaṃ pavattayi*⁶⁴

Translation

In the Abhayagiri-vihāra he honored the stone image of the Buddha by an offering. He had its ruined temple (restored and) brightly decorated with divers precious stones. He dedicated (unto it) the Kolavapi tank to protect the Victor and he continually instituted sacrificial festivals at the greatest cost.⁶⁵

To king Sena II (851 CE-885 CE) is ascribed the restoration of important religious properties, and securing the safety of the country by fortifying the images of the Buddha, which included the restoration of the ruined pedestal of the golden image of the Buddha.

*[verses 22-26] Katvā sabbopahārena dāṭhādhatumamāmahaṃ āruyā
varapāsādaṃ Ratanavhaṃ mahīpati
Tadā sovaṇṇayassāpi saṃbuddhassa purā ṭhitaṃ suññaṃ pīṭhaṃ sa taṃ disvā
»kasmā evaṃ« ti-y-āvadi
Tato amaccā āhaṃsu »na jānāsi mahīpati mahāpitunarindassa kāla tava,
narissara,
Paṇḍurājā idh’ āgamma dīpaṃ etaṃ vināsiya sabbam sārāgataṃ dīpe samādāya
gato«iti
Taṃ sutvā lajjito raja sayam viya parājitato tadahe va niyojesi amacce
balasaṃgahe*

⁶³ Cv. (WG). Ch. XXXVIII. 61-64

⁶⁴ Cv. Ch. XLIV. 68-69

⁶⁵ Cv. (WG). 68-69

[verses 48-49] *sabbaṃ pākatikaṃ 'kāsi sāraṃ dīpe nirālayo sovaṇṇapaṭimāyo ca
yathāthāne thāpāyayi
suññaṃ Ratanapāsāde pīṭhaṃ pūresi satthuno, kāsi rakkhāvidhānena nibbhayaṃ
dharanītaṃ*⁶⁶

Translation

[Verses 22-26] Once when the Ruler with all pomp was holding high festival for the Tooth Relic, he ascended the splendid Ratanapāsāda and when he beheld the pedestal of the golden Buddha empty whereon formerly the image stood, he asked why that was so. Thereupon his councilors replied: 'Knowest thou not O Ruler! That in the time of the Great King thy uncle, O Sovereign! The Paṇḍu king came hither, ravaged this Island and departed with whatever belonged to the treasures of the Island?' When the king heard that, he was ashamed, as if he himself had suffered the defeat, and gave orders the selfsame day to his councilors to collect troops.

[Verses 48-49] He restored all the valuable property in the Island as it was heretofore, without partiality, and the golden images he set up in the places where they belonged. The empty pedestal (of the statue) of the Master in the Ratanapasada he filled again and he made the country secure by setting up guards against every danger.⁶⁷

His queen is said to have consecrated the image with a blue crown.

*Tassa rañño mahesī ca Saṃghanāmā akārayi pabbataṃ Saṃghasenavhaṃ
sabhogaṃ Abhayuttare,
nīlacūlāmāṇiṃ cākā silāmayamahesino pūjaṃ sabbopahārehi 'kāsi satthussa
tassa sā.
Tassa senāpati cākā Senasenāpativhayaṃ pariveṇaṃ mahābhogaṃ sūro
Tuṭṭhakanāma.*⁶⁸

Translation

The Mahesī of the king, Sanghā by name, built in the Abhayuttara (-vihāra) the building called Saṃghasenapabbata together with the (necessary) revenues. She placed a dark blue jewel diadem on the stone image of the Prince of Sages and instituted at great cost a sacrificial festival for the Master (Buddha).⁶⁹

King Udaya IV (945 CE-953 CE) decorated the image of the Master (Buddha) in the Mahāvihāra with a 'diadem of jewels which sparkled with the rays of precious stones [while] one of the ladies of the harem, Vidurā, honored his stone image with a network of

⁶⁶ Cv. Ch. LI, 22-26, 48-50

⁶⁷ Cv (WG). Ch. LI, 22-26, 48-49

⁶⁸ Cv. Ch. 51. 86-88

⁶⁹ Cv (WG). Ch. LI. 86-88

rays.⁷⁰ (*Mahāvihāre Lanḅindo paṭimbassa satthuno jalantaṃ maṅiraṃsīhi akā
cūlāmaṅiṃ tadā. Orodhā Vidurā tassa pādajālena pūjayi maṅīhi pajjalantena paṭimāṃ
taṃ silāmayaṃ*).⁷¹

Among the numerous religious properties that have been restored in Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa by the king Parākramabābu was the image house of the stone of [the Buddha]. Pūjāvaliya states;

*Polonnaruwehi tun dahas pansiyayak pamaṇa maha saṅganata niti dan pavatvā
soḷīn davasa bindi ruvanmāli masāya, denānākaya, bhagiri nakaya, thūpārāmaya
bandavā, kot paḷandavā, Anuradhapura nuvara boho vihāra mul pisa karavā,
katukohol peraḷavā, Salapiḷima geyada katukohol peraḷavā Srī mahā bodhīn
vahanseta Bodhi geyada karavā...*⁷² [Emphasis mine].

Apart from such references, the inscriptions of Mahinda IV (956 CE-972 CE), found from Mihintale, and the Jetavana monastery refer to a ‘Great Stone image.’ Of the two slab inscriptions of Mihintale, the Slab A refers to a list of places to which the king made offerings:

*Kārāviyā yutu Dāgehi isā Maṅgul-maha-sala-piḷima-gehi isā Maha-boy-gehi isā
Nayindā isā Miṅinā
-I-Dev-dūn-gehi isā Katumahāsāyehi isā Kiribaṅḅpavu-dāgāb-hi isā Uḅgalā
Yatgalā Ātve-
-her piḷibad dāgāb-hi isā me tuvāk tanhi pijni-vat isā Ātveherin ran ek-siyak kaḷa-
-nd isā vī dasa yahaḷak isā me tuvāk genā havurudu patā me veherehi dāgab āy
hāmā -tanhi kam-
-navām kārāviyā yutu dāge piḷima-gehi bad Gutā Karandā de gāṃhi
dummalassamun ge-daṅḅ ko-daṅḅ.*

Translation

The ‘Relic House,’ **the house containing the auspicious colossal stone-image [of the Buddha]**, the house at the Great Bodhi Tree, [the shrine] Nayinda, the house of the goddess Minial, the[afore-mentioned] Katu-Maha-Sāya, the Kiribad-Pavu dagaba and the dagabas on the upper rock and the lower rock belonging to

⁷⁰ Cv. (WG) Ch. LIII, 49-50

⁷¹ Cv. Ch. LIII. 49-50

⁷² පොළොන්නරුවෙහි තුන් දහස් පන්සියයක් පමණ මහ සභනට නිකි දන් පවත්වා, සොළීන් දවස බිඳි රුවන්මැලි මහාසෑය, දෙනානාකය, හගිරි නකය, උපාරාමය බදවා, කොන් පළඳවා, අනුරාධපුර නුවර බොහෝ විහාර මුල්පිය කරවා, කටුකොහොල් පෙරළවා, සලපිළිම ගෙය ද කටුකොහොල් පෙරළවා ශ්‍රී මහා බෝධීන් වහන්සේට බොධි ගෙය ද කරවා...Pv. 783

the Āt-vehera:- the offerings made at all these places as well as 100 kanad [weight] of gold and 10 *yahala* of paddy from Āt-vehera- all these shall be utilized and [by means of them] the repairs at the dagabas and all other places within [the precincts of] this vihāra shall be executed every year.⁷³

Tablet B, on the other hand, refers to the grants offered to the officials and artisans who served for the Great Stone Image;

-*sagak isā Maṅgul-maha-sala-piḷima-gehi pūnā kāmiyak-haṭ isā kam-ssamakhaṭ isā eknaṭ de pā*
Bāgin isā eknaṭ ek aḍ-manā de pat bāgin sāl isā dā-gehi bud-bisovaṭ tel gannā ek poṭāk
Isā diya parahana ek tuḷulak isā piḷima-gehi-d metek-me isā kam-tān-ledaruvak-haṭ ek kiri
De payak isā sāl de aḍ-manāk isā vaḍu-maha-ādurak-hat Boṅḍ-vehera seṇāya isā ādura-vaḍu de ja-
-nak-haṭ isā sir-vaḍu aṭ janak-haṭ isā uḷu-vaḍu de janak-haṭ isā meknaṭ Vaḍu-devāgama isā ka-

Translation

To a *Pūnā-kāmiyā* of the **temple of the auspicious colossal stone-statue [of the Buddha]** and to one who officiates [there]- to each of them [shall be assigned] two *paya* [of land] with one *admanā* and two *pata* of rice [daily]; to an official at the place of business [who provides] a cup in which to take oil for the unction of [the statue of] the Buddha in the ‘relic-house’ also, [there shall be granted] one *kiriya* and two *paya* [of land] with two *admanā* of rice [daily]; to the chief master-artisan, all that belongs to the guild of artisans at Bond-vehera, to two master-artisans, to eight carvers and to two brick-layers- to [all of] these, the village Vadudevagama.⁷⁴

Slab Inscription No.I of Mahinda IV at Jetavanārāma suggests the particular establishment of the stone image;

[lines 8-9] *pirivar var piriven kula-gal mānd-hi Ruvan-maha-pahā ruvan-Suner tevna*
satar muḷ satar maha-div-bavana avatahi Muni-nd-piḷibib-viman ruvan-pav-pāhān pahayana Abhayaturā-maha-sā hima-gal sobona

[lines 16-19]*nava-kam karā sivat (Denā)-veherhi (mara).....*
(-ṭ gi) manhi Muni-rad-haṭ pilisat siri aḷa Diyasen-maha-po-ge yūlin karā nan dā-ruvanin tevnā ran-Mer-men (da) ...

⁷³ EZ. Vol. I. 86 (original script), 92-93 (transcript), 103 (translation), Pl. XIV

⁷⁴ EZ. Vol. I. 89-90 (original script), 93 (transcript), 111-112 (translation), Pl. XV

*kammen (huvā) kaḷa pin-pelen tumā ata(t) duvana ruvan-sakme(n) hiri-mañḍulu
karā Udāgiri-hishi tevnā rivi-bi(mb)-[men Munind-piḷibi-]
-mb mudun ran-satin randvā tamā siyu div piyodunu paḷa ted rāndi sirin siyu kam
hem-muvā kotur-ṭāmbin ma*

Translation

[lines 8-9] The Abhāgiri Vehera, which displays the grace of the abode of Śrī at the moment when Mahadāmi residing in...Ārāma [experience the joy of association] with the Dharma, just as Vāsudeva enjoys the bliss of union with Śrīkāntā on the couch of [the serpent Ananta]; in which (Vihāra) there rises in splendor the Ruvan-maha-pahā surrounded by the noble Parivenas, like the golden Meru, centered by the Kuḷa-gal; where around [the residence of] the four fraternities is shed the effulgence of the **shrine of the image of the Lord of Sages**; like the lustre of the Ruvan-pav around the abode of the four regent gods...where dwell bands of scholars directing their wisdom to great literary works and adorning the Abhayaturā-maha-sā..

[lines 16-19] He built anew the great *uposata* hall [named] Diya-sen, which displayed the grace of *pilisat*, **to the Lord of Sages in summer**... in the beautiful Denā-vehera. [Like] the golden Mēru shining with gems of various kinds...he raised...with...work.⁷⁵ [Emphasis mine].

Depending on literal evidence and their relevance to the particular epigraphic exposures, M. de Z Wickramasinghe suggests that “the stone statue of the Buddha mentioned in lines 9 and 18, was probably the one which king Devānampiyatissa (247-207 BCE) set up at the Thūpārāma [which] the King Jeṭṭhatissa I (323 -333 CE) removed it to Pācīnatissapabata.”⁷⁶ Perhaps, this would be the image that Fa Xian records in his observatins in Sri Lanka.

By the side of the tope he also built a monastery, called Abhayagiri, where there are (now) five thousand monks. There is in it a hall of the Buddha, adorned with carved inlaid work of gold and silver, and rich in the seven precious substances, in which there is an image (of Buddha) in green jade, more than twenty cubits in height, glittering all over with those substances, and having an appearance of solemn dignity which words cannot express. In the palm of the right hand there is a priceless pearl.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ EZ. Vol. I., 218-219 (original script), 221-222 (transcript), 225-227 (translation), Pl. 28

⁷⁶ EZ. Vol. I. 217

⁷⁷ Legge, *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*, 102

The two references of the Jetavana Slab Inscription No. 2 enumerate the accountability of the stone images of the Buddha: while the place of the first reference is missing, the second image is located at Ruwan-pahā at Abhayagiri Vihāra states as follows;

[lines 6-14] tumā sirin Lak-div pahayā... - yū tun maha-sala-piḷima-Budun nan ruvan vihi...gana [kuḷu]...indu-sāv-lesin satin sajay...maha...-gut Bud piriboy miṇi-pay (ruvan sat-maha-pera)....-dū-veheraṭ lakar Maṅgul-pi-riven (karay) ...ṭ...vihigum dā-ge maṅvay Bamu-...ṇu...koṭ bad gang-kaḍ band-va-y naṭ(bun)...(pā)vāt-vū diyen Heḷ-divā dudi-k [nivay] ...[dan]-vaturen levan upulvay...(deya)...(mahaṇa karay) Jamb-divhi (nan radu)n vaṭṇa asiri paṇḍure-

[lines 44-46] mese no kala himiyan avasin piṭat karanu isā me (Naka)...veherehi isā (Maha)-sala-piḷima-gehi isā Ruvan-pahāhi isā Abayatu(rā-maha-sā-)-yehi isā ...Bo-gehi isā Sā-girihi isā...(n) kam-navā-

Translation

[lines 6-14] He adorned **the three great stone statues of the Buddha at ...with parasols (diffusing [the glitter of] various gems) like rainbows (on rain clouds)... the gem-set bowl used by the Buddha...**(the great festival of the golden parasol)... (he built) the beautiful Mangul Piriven for the monastery at [Vahadu?]....

[Lines44-46] The wardens who have not acted in this manner shall be sent away from the residence. **Whatever remains after repairs have been effected (Naka...) Vihāra, at the shrines of the great stone statue [of the Buddha] at the Ruwan-pahā, at the Abhayaturā-maha-sā...**⁷⁸

The king has also adorned the incomplete colossal statue of the Buddha in stone, and adorned the surviving images with parasols, in addition to the newly made golden image of the ‘Lord of Sage’ of his own size in the Atulā-vihāra.

*[Lines 24-26]diya-ṭamb-men dada-ṭamb huvā miti-hir-devhu piḷibib baṇḍu hir maṅḍlen (si) ... muḥuṇ...
-n siyu-saṅgarā-vat-men hem-muvā kotur-tāmbin siyu kan sadā dalavulatnen siyu Budun-(piṭibib) ...[si-]
-ri isilū apuṇ **Maha-sala-piḷime daring-miṇin ās tabavā tama āpā siri vi(ndā) vusū Mihi...***

⁷⁸ EZ. Vol. I. 232-233 (original script), 234- 237(transcript), 237-239 (translation), Pl. XXIX (left)

[Lines 34-35] ...*Uṇ-lom-dā-ruvanaṭ mandos bandu Rak-sā-ge karā hāmā mahatumba nava-[kam karā]...
-(bu)! Atuḷā-veherhi suvan-muvā tama pa(laṅgi) Munind-piḷibib karā sa*

Translation

[Lines 24-26] He adorned the four corners with golden capital-topped pillars like the four cardinal attributes of the royalty, and... the statutes of the four Buddhas with *dalavulatna*. He caused to be set with rubies **the eyes of the incomplete colossal statue in stone [of the Buddha]**, which displayed the grace of...

[Lines 34-35] He built a Rak-sā-ge like unto a casket for the jewel of the Urṇa hair relic, and repaired all the great stupas... **In the Atuḷā vihāra he made a golden image of the Lord of Sages of his own size.**⁷⁹ [Emphasis mine].

Nonetheless, the awareness of the presence of the Buddha as well as the other revered figures in the anthropomorphic form is evident from the information of the image of Great Mahinda Thero, described in Slab Inscription No.1 of Mahinda IV at Jetavanārāma. The inscription states that the king set the eyes of the image of Great Mahinda Thero.

-hi ruvan-divak bandu ganol nava-kammen hobavāpirivar-ge (yā)ḷin karā Mihind-maha-sal-piḷime tul (dāti)- miṇin ās tabavā (ra-)n muvā pāda-dāla karā...

Translation

Of the *cetiya* built [in this vihāra] his Majesty renewed the brickwork and made it shine like a golden islet; he rebuilt the edifices surrounding it, **set the eyes of the Great Stone statue of Mahinda with large brilliant rubies, and made a network of gold for the feet.**⁸⁰

Cūlavamsa, in the description of the king Sirimeghavanna (362 CE-390 CE?) states the establishment of the golden image of the life size of Mahinda at the Ambhattala-cetiya.⁸¹

Therassātha Mahindassa samaṇindassa sūnuno sutvāna manujindo so pavattiṃ sabbam ādito pasīditvā guṇe tassa jājā dīpappasādake »issaro vata dīpassa thero« iti vicintiya paṭibimbaṃ suvaṇṇassa katvā taṃmānanissitaṃ,

⁷⁹ *EZ*. Vol.I. 219 (original script), 222-223 (transcript), 228-229 (translation), Pl. 28

⁸⁰ *EZ*. Vol.I. 218 (original text), 221 (transcript), 226 (translation), Plate 28: *Inscriptions of Ceylon*, Pl.28

⁸¹ *Cv*. Ch. XXXVII (WG), 66-69

*pubbakattikamāsassa pubbapakkhe tu sattame dine netvā Cetiymbathale
therambasaṃñite...*⁸²

Translation

Now when the Ruler of men had heard from the beginning the whole history of the Thera Mahinda, the (spiritual) son of the Ruler of the Samanas (Buddha), he felt a believing joy in his merit in having brought the island to the faith and thought: “Of a truth of Thera is lord of the island.” He then had an image of gold made corresponding with the size of Mahinda and brought it to the Ambatthala-cetiya...⁸³

In addition to the continuous indication about the stone and golden image of the Buddha, *Cūlavamsa* records that once “the Paṇḍu king enthroned,⁸⁴ he plundered the golden image of the Master (Buddha) in the Ratnapāsāda, the two jewels that has been set as the eyes in the stone image of the Prince of Sages, likewise the gold plates of the cetiyas in the Thūpārāma, and the golden images here and there in the Vihāras...depriving the splendid town into a state of destruction during the period of Sena I (831-851CE)”⁸⁵

*Sabbaṃ sāraṃ harāpesi bhaṇḍāgāramhi rājino, agaṇhittha gahetabbaṃ vihāre
nagare pi ca. Pāsāde ratane sabbe, sovaṇṇaṃ satthubimbakaṃ,
silāmayamunindassa cakkhubhūtamaṇidvyaṃ, tathā sovaṇṇapaṭṭe ca Thūpārāmaṃ
cetiye, suvaṇṇaṇṭimāyo ca vihāresi tahiṃ tahiṃ: sabbaṃ gahetvā nissāraṃ
Laṅkāḍīpaṃ akāsi so...*⁸⁶

Colas demolished the ‘relic chambers and carried away many costly gold images, while they violently destroyed here and there all the monasteries,⁸⁷ during the period of King Mahinda V (981 CE-1029 CE). (“*Nikāyattitaye dhātugabbhe Laṅkātale ’khile*

⁸² Cv. Ch. XXXVII. 66-69

⁸³ Cv. (WG), Ch. XXXVII, 66-69

⁸⁴ Paṇḍu is the first of five foreign rulers (433 CE-460 CE) who enthroned after the king Mittasena (432 CE-433 CE). The last ruler to secure the country prior to them was Mahānāma (409 CE-431 CE)

⁸⁵ Cv (WG). Ch XLIV 33-36

⁸⁶ Cv. Ch. XLIV. 33-36

⁸⁷ Cv (WG). Ch. LV. 20-21

mahārahe suvaṇṇādīpaṭīpaṭībimbe ca 'nappake bhinditvā sahasā sabbe vihāre ca taḥim taḥim.”⁸⁸

The slab inscription of Veḷāikkāras of Tamil language belonging to the period of the king Niśsaṅkamalla (1187 CE-1196 CE), found from Polonnaruwa states as follows;

*-m-āṇa prathamābhīṣekattukku maṅkala-grham-āṇa āḍḍāṇḍu-
torun tiru-nayana-mokṣam paṇṇi aṅṣaṇa niṟukkum
kaṇṇālaṅ śeyyum maṅgala-mahā-ḥilāmaya-Buddha-
devarkku gandha-kuṭi-y-āṇa Daḷadāy-p-perum-paḷḷi uṅka...*

Translation

It became also the auspicious house for [holding] the first anointment ceremony and the Hall of Fragrance for the auspicious and colossal stone statue of the Holy Buddha, in which is held annually the ceremony of unloosening the sacred eyes (of the image) and applying collyrium to them.⁸⁹

Such evidence proves that the tradition of paying homage to the stone image of the Buddha had continued up to the Polonnaruwa period.

In spite of the sanctity attached to this particular statue by kings from the fourth to the eleventh century, its antiquity remains disputable. All that the *Mahāvamsa* statement could establish is that a statue of the Buddha, which was old enough to be considered as belonging to the era of Devānampiyatissa existed at Thūpārāma, from the beginning of the fourth century CE. That it belonged to the reign of Devānampiyatissa is inconclusive.

D.T. Devendra, however, assumes that the omission of the particular reference from the *Mahāvamsa* must have been intentional, since the images of such sanctity were not in practice during the period;

The omission to refer to it would be an important omission *only if Buddha Images had been considered sacred objects in the third century before Christ*. There is no reason to suppose that they were so regarded. It is a matter of record that images

⁸⁸ Cy. Ch. LV. 20-21

⁸⁹ EZ. Vol. II.242-45 (Original Script), 252 (Transcript), 254 (Translation), Pl.36

or image-houses found no places in the then scheme of adoration. An image was made of ordinary substance which had no sanctity attached to it.⁹⁰

Thus, he assumes that Devānampiyatissa's image might well be one of several Buddhas found today in Anuradhapura."⁹¹ He supports his statement with an emphasis to the enshrinement of the Buddha image in the relic chamber of the Mahātūpa by the king Duṭṭhagāmiṇī,⁹²

And now this is a most significant reference. It cannot be ignored. Two points are fairly clear from it. The first is that there was a Buddha image on each throne. The second is that the central theme was the Bodhi-Tree and not the Buddha image. This latter point further implies that the image was not so vital in the scheme of veneration in the second century before Christ, a point which has been made before.⁹³

Hence the other literary evidence coming from the Sri Lankan historical tradition is important. According to the *Mahāvamsa*, the first hint of the Buddha image is found during the 3rd century BCE, with reference to the 3rd Buddhist Council where king Aśoka entered into the doctrine, and paid homage for seven days by a festival called the "feast of the eyes."⁹⁴

*Athekadivasam rājā catusambuddhadassinam-kappāyukam Mahākālam
nāgarājam mahiddhikam
Sunitvāna tam ānetum soṇṇasaṅkalibandanam-pesayitvā tam ānetvā
setacchattassa heṭṭhato
Pallaṅkamhi nisidetvā nānāpupphehi pūjia-soḷasitthisahashehi parivāriya abravi:
saddhammacakkavattissa sabbaññussa mahesino- rūpaṃ anantaññassa dassehi
mama bho iti
Dvatimsalakkhaṇūpetam asītivyañjanujjalaṃ- vyāmaprabhāparikkhitaṃ
ketumālābhisobhitaṃ
Nimmāyi nāgarājā so buddharūpaṃ manoramam-Tam disvātipasādassa
vimhayassa ca pūrito⁹⁵*

⁹⁰ Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, 34

⁹¹ Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, 37

⁹² See below n105, 106

⁹³ Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, 43

⁹⁴ *Mv.* Ch.V. 93-94

⁹⁵ *Mv.* Ch.V.87-92

Translation

When one day, the monarch heard of the nāga-king Mahākāla of wondrous might, who had beheld four Buddhas, who had lived through one age of the world, he sent for him to be brought (into his presence) fettered with the chain of gold; and when he had brought him and made him sit upon the throne under the white canopy, when he had done homage to him with (gifts of) various flowers, and had bidden the sixteen thousand women (of the palace) to surround him, he (the king) spoke thus: ‘Let us behold the bodily form of the omniscient Great Sage, of Him who hath boundless knowledge, who hath set rolling the wheel of the true doctrine.’ The nāga-king created a beauteous figure of the Buddha, endowed with the thirty-two greater signs and brilliant with the eighty lesser signs (of the Buddha), surrounded by the fathom-long rays of glory and adorned with the crown of flames.⁹⁶

In the description of the Third Buddhist Council in Pāṭalīputra, and Aśoka’s conversion into Buddhism, Samantapāsādikā, and the Thūpavaṃsa refer the same incident.

Imāhi iddhīhi samannāgato rājā ekadivasaṃ suvaṇṇasaṅkhalikabandhanaṃ pesetvā catunnaṃ Buddhānaṃ adhigatarūpadassanaṃ kappāyukaṃ Kālaṃ nāma nāgarājñāṃ ānāyitvā setacchattassa heṭṭhā mahārahe pallaṅke nisīdāpetvānekaśatavaṇṇehi jalajathalajapupphehi suvaṇṇapupphehi ca pūjaṃ katvā sabbālaṅkārapatimaṇḍitehi soḷasahi nāṭakasahashehi samantato parikkhipitvā: anantañāṇassa tāva me saddhammavaracakkavattissa sammāsambuddhassa rūpaṃ imesaṃ akkhināṃ āpāthaṃ karohīti vatvā tena nimittaṃ sakalasarīre viṇṇapūṇṇappabhāvanibbattāṣīti-anuvyañjanapatimaṇḍitam dvattiṃsamahāpurisalakkhaṇassassirīkatāya vikaṣitakamal uppalapūṇḍarīkatimaṇḍitam iva salilatalaṃ tārāgaṇarasmijālavisadavisphuritasobh---āsamujjalam iva gaganatalaṃ nīlapītalohitādibhedavicitravaṇṇaraṃsivinaddhabyāma--ppabhā parikkhepavilāsitāya sandhyāppabhānurāga-indadhanuvijjullatāparikkhittam iva kanakagirisikharaṃ nānāvīrāgavimalaketumālāsamujjalitacārumatthakasobhaṃ nayanarasāyanam iva brahmedevamanujanāgayakkhagaṇānaṃ uddharūpaṃ passanto sattadivāsāni akkhipūjaṃ nāma akāsi.⁹⁷

Translation

The king who was endowed with these supernatural powers, one day sent a golden chain to bind the Nāga king called Kāla, whose span of life is an aeon and who had had the opportunity of seeing four Buddhas in person; and he had him

⁹⁶ *Mv. (WG)*, Ch. V. 87-92

⁹⁷ *Sp. Ch. IV.45: Tv. Ch. 185*

brought before him, and seating him on a worthy divan beneath the white parasol of state made offering of flowers of many hundred colors sprung both on land and water, as well as with flowers of gold. Making 16,000 (women) dancers decked him, “ Firstly set before these eyes of mine the form of the Perfectly Enlightened One, the exalted Universal Monarch of the Good Teaching.” And beholding the form of the Buddha created by him, decked with all the eighty minor marks scattered all over his body, arisen through the power of his merit and resembling an expanse of water adorned with red, blue, and white lotuses in full bloom on account of the splendor of thirty-two characteristics of the Great Being.⁹⁸

Chandra Wikramagamage emphasizes that the particular reference was first recorded in the Sīhala Atṭhakathā *Mahāvamsa* (the treatise is lost for the date) during the third century BCE, from which the present Pāli chronicle (*Mahāvamsa*) was translated.⁹⁹ Thus, it is clear that the establishment of the particular concept of the “Buddha’ in the human form from the period of Aśoka in India is recorded in Sri Lankan Chronicles for which no evidence is found in India. As far as the artistic evidence reveals, India has represented the Buddha in the aniconic form in all its Buddhist monuments (discussed in Chapter 3) during the period of Aśoka.

In addition to literary references mentioned in Sri Lankan chronicles and inscriptions, the reference of the jade Buddha image sent from Sri Lanka to China in 428 CE. is worth mention with regard to the image making in the country. The occurrence was recorded in the Liang history in China, and not in a Sri Lankan episode. Alexander C. Soper describes:

Ceylon...sent its first embassy at the outset of the I-hsi era (405-418 AD) of the Jin bearing a jade image and *sūtras*. The mission was ten years in transit. The image was 4.2 feet in height; the color of the jade was pure and rich; the workmanship [displayed in] the form was extraordinary, well-nigh superhuman. The statue was kept during the Chin and Sung dynasties at Wa-kuan-ssu... Under the Ch’i, the last ruler, the Marquis of Tung-hun (r. 499-501), finally broke up the

⁹⁸ *Sp (NAJ)*, Ch. IV.45 (p. 38): *Tv (NAJ)*, 185 (p. 48)

⁹⁹ Chandra Wikramagamage, *Sri Lankave Baudha Pratimā Kalāwa*. (Colombo: Godage International Publishers, 2006), 13-4

jade image, first cutting off its arms and taking its body to fashion hairpins for his favourite concubine.¹⁰⁰

It is said that a few years later, the king of Ceylon also dispatched a Buddha statue from the Temple of Tooth Relic to China.¹⁰¹ Benjamin Rowland suggests that these statues would have been of the Anuradhapura type, and possibly would have exerted some influence on southern Chinese sculpture during the six dynasties Period.”¹⁰² This is considered the first evidence about the Sri Lanka images from a foreign source,¹⁰³ which evolves their distinction among the many traditions evolved in Indian sub-continent. Soper also reveals another record that belongs to the Wei history for 454, (the dynasties evolve from 386-556 AD) in China, which particularly refers to five standing statues of Śākyamuni to be placed in the grand temple with five storeys on behalf of the five emperors from Tai Tsu on; each of the height of sixteen feet. He describes;

At the outset of the Tai-an era (455-459) a party of five foreign monks from Ceylon (Yaśugupta, Buddhanandi and others) came to the capital bearing three Buddha images. They claimed to have traversed all the kingdoms of the West and to have seen the Buddha's shadow and his *uṣṇīśā*. The princes of those foreign realms in turn had sent artists to copy the shadow likeness, but, none of those could compare with the one made by [Buddha] nandi. If looked at from a distance of ten paces it shone like fire, but as one came closer the brightness lessened.¹⁰⁴

Depending on this evidence, Benjamin Rowland distinguishes the less resemblance of Southern Chinese sculptures to those of Indian images.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ Alexander Coburn Soper, “Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China” *Artibus Asiae Supplementum*, Vol. 19 (1959), 29, accessed October 19, 2011, Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1522597>; Charles E. Godakumbura, *Budu Piḷima = Buddha Statues*. (Colombo: Department of Archaeology, 1964), 19

¹⁰¹ Soper, “Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China,” 40; Godakumbura, *Budu Piḷima = Buddha Statues*, 19

¹⁰² Rowland, *Art and Architecture of India*, 364, n16, 17

¹⁰³ Godakimbure, *Budu Piḷima = Buddha Statues*, 6

¹⁰⁴ Soper, “Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China” 96 and Appendix in p.259

¹⁰⁵ Rowland, *Art and Architecture of India*, 364, n16, 17

5.3.2 Buddha images placed in the relic chambers

In addition to the foregoing literary evidence, the *Mahāvamsa* also makes a reference to the Buddha images placed in the relic chamber of the Mahātūpa in the reign of Duṭṭhagāmiṇi Abhaya (101 BCE-77 BCE):

*bodhipācīnapaññatte pallaṅke koṭiagghake - sovaṇṇabuddhapaṭimāṃ nisīdāpesi
bhāsuram
sarīrāvayavā tassā paṭimāya yathārahamaṃ - nānāvaṇṇehi ratanehi katā surucirā
ahum
Mahābrahmā ṭhito tattha rajatacchattadhārako- Vijayuttarasañkhena Sakko ca
abhisekado
vīṇāhattho Pañcasikho Kālanāgo sanāṭaki - sahasahattho Māro ca sahatthi
sahakimkaro
pācīnapallaṅkanibhā sesasattadisāsu pi- koṭikoṭidhanagghā ca pallaṅkā atthatā
ahum¹⁰⁶*

Translation

On the throne, the cost whereof was one koti, erected to the east of the Bodhi Tree, he placed a shining golden Buddha image seated. The body and members of this image were duly made of jewels of different colors, beautifully shining. Mahā Brahma stood there holding a silver parasol and Sakka carrying out the consecration with the Vijayuttara shell, Pancasika with his lute in his hand, and Kālanāga with the dancing girls, and the thousand handed Māra with his elephants and the train of followers.¹⁰⁷

*Vamsatṭappakāsini*¹⁰⁸ and *Thūpavaṃsa*¹⁰⁹ similarly describe the honor paid for the same image in its description. In addition to the particular image, which was made out of metal, he also caused to be decorated the interior walls of the relic chamber with the incidents relating to the Buddha's life, in all of which, the presence of the Buddha was

¹⁰⁶ *Mv.* Ch. XXX.72-76

¹⁰⁷ *Mv* (WG). Ch. XXX. 72-76

¹⁰⁸ *bodhipācīnapaññatte pallaṅke koṭiagghake-sovaṇṇabuddhapaṭimāṃ nisīdāpesi bhāsuram sarīrāvayavā tassā paṭimāya yathāharam-nānāvaṇṇehi kata surucirā ahum* see. *Vp.* Ch. XXX 72-73

¹⁰⁹ *Bodhi rukkhassa pācīnadisābhāge ratanamaye koṭi-agghanake pallaṅke ghanakoṭṭimasuvaṇṇamayam buddhapaṭimāṃ nisīdāpesi.* see *Tv.* XIV, *Dhātugabbarūpavaṇṇākathā*, 114, 232

illustrated in the anthropomorphic form. The following references from the *Mahāvamsa* testify to the state of art in the relic chamber of the Mahātūpa.¹¹⁰

Sattasattāhaḥānesu tattha tattha yathārahaṃ-adhikāre akāresi Brahmāyācanam
eva ca,
dharmacakkappavattiṃ ca Yasapabbajanaṃ pi ca,-Bhaddavaggiyapabbajjaṃ
jaṭilānaṃ damanaṃ pi ca,
Bimbisārāgamaṃ cāpi, Rajagahappavesanaṃ,-Veḷuvanassa gahaṇaṃ asītisāvake
tathā,
Kapilavatthugamaṇaṃ tattheva ratanacaṃkamaṃ,-Rāhuānandapabbajjaṃ
gahaṇaṃ Jetavanaṃ ca,
Ambamūle pāṭihīraṃ, tāvatiṃsamhi desanaṃ,-devovohaṇapāṭihīraṃ,
therapañhasamāgamaṃ
Mahāsamayasuttantaṃ Rāhulovādameva ca,-Mahāmaṅgalasuttaṃ ca,
Dhanapālasamāgamaṃ,
Ālavakaṅgulimāla-Apalāladamaṇaṃ pi ca,-Pārāyanakasamitiṃ āyuvossajjanaṃ
tathā
sūkaramaddavaggāhaṃ siṅgivaṇṇayugassa ca,-pasannodakapānaṃ ca
parinibbānaṃ eva ca,
devamanussaparidevaṃ, therena pādavandanaṃ, dahanāṃ, agginibbānaṃ tattha
sakkāraṃ eva ca,
dhātuvibhaṅgaṃ Doṇena pasādajanakāni ca, yebhuyyena akāresi jātakāni
sujātimā.
Vessantarajātakaṃ tu vitthārena akārayi,- Tusitapurato yāva bodhimandaṃ
tatheva ca.
...Medavaṇṇakakapāsānabhittiyaṃ yeva ujjalā- vijjulātā appitā āsum
dhātugabbhe vibhūsitā
Rūpakān' ettha sabbāni dhātugabbhe manorame-ghanakoṭṭimahemassa kārāpesi
mahīpati¹¹¹

Translation

The events during the seven weeks he commanded them to depict duly here and there in the relic chamber, and also the prayer of Brahma, the setting in motion the wheel of the doctrine, the admission of Yasa into the order, the pabbajjā of Bhaddavaggiyas and the subduing of the jatilas; the visit of Bimbisāra and the entry into Rajagaha, the accepting of the Veḷuvana, the eighty disciples, the journey to Kapilavastu and the (miracle of the) jeweled path in that place, the pabbajjā of Rahula and Nanda, the accepting of the Jetavana, the miracle at the foot of the descent of the gods, and the assembly with the questioning of the thera, the Mahāsamaysutānta, the exhortation to Rahula, the Mahāmaṅgalasutta, and the encounter with (the elephant) Dhanapāla; the subduing of the (yakka) Ālavaka, of the (robber) Aṅgulimāla and the (nāga-king) Apalāla, the meeting with the

¹¹⁰ Tv. Ch. XIV, 115-121, 233-237

¹¹¹ Mv. Ch. XXX. 78-88, 96-97. Same incident is referred in the Vp. Ch. XXX. 78-97

Pārāyanakas, the giving-up of life, the accepting of the dish of pork, and of the two-gold colored garments, the drinking of the pure water, and the Parinibbāna itself.; the lamentation of gods and men, the revering of the feet by the thera, the burning (of the body), the quenching of the fire, the funeral rites in that very place and the distributing of the relics by Dona. Jātakas also which are fitted to awaken faith did the noble (king) place here abundance. The Vessantara jātaka he commanded them to depict fully, and in like manner (that which befell beginning at the descent) from the Tusita heaven to the Bodhi-throne... On the wall made of fat-colored stones sparkling zig-zag lines were traced, serving as adornment for the relic-chamber. The king commanded them to make all the figures here in the enchanting relic-chamber of massive wrought gold.¹¹²

According to Chandra Wikramagamage, this is the earliest reference to a Buddha image in Sri Lanka, and it is of seated posture of meditation where similar examples of paintings have been found from the relic chamber of Mahiyangana stūpa.¹¹³ (See **fig.5.5a**). However, based on this evidence, Ananda Coomaraswamy assumes the possibility of having Buddha images during 100 BCE.

According to the *Mahāvamsa*, the relic chamber was adorned with paintings (“rows of animals and haṃsas”), and contained a Bodhi-Tree with a silver stem and leaves of gold and silver, relics of the Buddha, jewelry, a gold image of the Buddha and a representation of the *Vessantara Jātaka*. As regards the image, some doubt may be entertained as to the existence of the Buddha figure in the first century B.C., but it is not impossible that images of precious metal were made long before any in stone.”¹¹⁴

Whether what the *Mahāvamsa* describes as objects of art in the relic chamber are actually there and belong to the reign of Duṭṭhagāmiṇī Abhaya could only be determined by excavation and scientific dating. This had not been done and nor is it possible now. As such, the conclusion of Coomaraswamy can only be regarded as tentative.

Thus, Ananda Guruge emphasizes the significance of the particular description;

The list of scenes from the Buddha’s life, as given here, is remarkable in that it is not only comprehensive but has also continued to be in vogue in Sri Lanka right up to the present times. It is true that some of the incidents in the Buddha’s life

¹¹² *Mv* (WG). Ch. XXX. 78-88, 96-97

¹¹³ Wikramagamage, *Principles of Buddhist Iconology*, 20-21

¹¹⁴ Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 160

have become more popular than others, especially on account of the scope for visual representation. Missing from the list, however, are such more frequently encountered scenes as the dream of Māyā, the struggle with Māra and the offering of milk-rice by Sujata- unless, of course, the laconic statement in verse 88 (i.e. “from Tusita-heaven to the excellent Bodhi-Tree”) covers all the events of the Buddha’s life as Prince Siddhārtha.¹¹⁵

The *Mahāvamsa* refers to the art in the relic chamber of the Mahatūpa in its account on the reign of Bhātikābhaya (38 CE-66 CE):

*Gaṇasajjhāyasaddaṃ so dhātugabbhamhi tādinaṃ- sutvā:»adivā taṃ nāhaṃ
vuṭṭhahissaṃ« ti nicchito
Pācīnaddikamūlamhi anāhāro nippajji so,- therā dvāraṃ māpayitvā
dhātugabbhaṃ nayiṃsu taṃ
Dhātugabbhavibhūtiṃ so sabbaṃ divā mahīpati-nikkhanto tādisēh’ eva
pottharūpehipūjāy.¹¹⁶*

Translation:-

When he heard one day in the relic-chamber the sound of the arhants chanting in chorus he made the resolve; “I will not rise up till I have seen it, ‘and fasting he lay down at the foot of the stone pillar on the eastern side. The theras created a door for him and brought him into the relic-chamber. When the ruler of the earth had beheld all the adornment of the relic-chamber he went forth and made an offering of figures modeled with clay in close likeness to those (within).¹¹⁷

The same chronicle describes that he went three times a day to pay homage to the Buddha image.¹¹⁸

Pūjāvaliya, 13th century treatise refers the same incident as follows;

*Ohu pit Bhātiya nam raja Ruvanmāli dāgāba ātuḷata rahatan vahanse pirit
baṇana handa asā “ātuḷata vāda baṇa asā mut nonāgemi” i nirāhāra va,
salapatāre vādaheva śakrabhavanaya kampākota śakrayā genvā, ohuge sahayen
dhātugarbhayata vāda, sit se vānda balā pitatva, tama dāgāb kusā dutu tāk
pratimā maṇḍapayaka karavā, Ruvanvāli dāgābata noek vārayak puja kota
atavisi havuruddak dāhāmen rajaya kaḷeya.¹¹⁹*

Commenting on the illustrations painted in the relic chambers, Ananda Guruge states;

¹¹⁵ *Mv* (AG), Chap. XXX n55

¹¹⁶ *Mv*. Ch. XXXIV. 49-51

¹¹⁷ *Mv* (WG). Ch. XXXIV 49-51

¹¹⁸ *Divassa ca tikkhattuṃ buddhupaṭṭhānām agama,*” *Mv*. Ch. XXXIV. 61

¹¹⁹ *Pv*. 774

The motifs described here are still in use in the traditional Buddhist paintings of Sri Lanka, especially on the walls and ceilings of the image-house. “Sittara” art, as it is called seems to have preserved a very old tradition. We have evidence that the relic-chambers were repositories of art object and their walls were richly painted e.g. Mihintale and Mahiyangana.¹²⁰

The continuity of the practice is evident during the later periods. As the king Aggabodhi II (601 CE-611 CE) restored the Thūpārāma stūpa, “he had the work on the shrine finished in a short time, including the paintings and the like.”¹²¹

Though enclosed within a *stūpa* and hence not visible outside though, the relic chambers in Sri Lanka are known to have paintings and images. Several excavated relic chambers of stūpas like Mihintale (**fig.5.4a, 4b, & 4c**)¹²² and Laṅkārama at Anuradhapura, Mahiyangana (**fig.5.5a, 5b1, 5b2, & 5c**),¹²³ and Dādigama (**fig.5.6**)¹²⁴ are known to have the inner walls decorated with paintings. Whereas the Buddha/bodhisattva image in the Mihintale relic chamber is surrounded by a bisected disk, which crosses over the median line of the body (**fig.5.4a**), the depiction of the Buddha in the inner chamber of Mahiyangana has a decorated halo surrounding the head, and backed by the Bodhi Tree (**fig.5.5a**). The figures of many celestial beings can be seen differently: in **fig.5.4b** and **4c** from Mihintale, it is illustrated as a row with various postures and attitudes, while they surround the central figure as in **fig.5.5b1**, and **5b2** in Mahiyangana stūpa. In addition, the relic chamber has been decorated with the illustrations of female celestial beings, probably Apsarās (**fig.5.5c**). Though, the illustrations of the Sūthiyaghara caitya

¹²⁰ *Mv* (AG), Ch.XXX, n90

¹²¹ “*rājā pabuddho saṃviggo naricen’ eva kārayi kammaṃ dhātughare sabbam cittakammādisaṃyutaṃ...*” *Cv*. Ch. XLII 56-57

¹²² Bandaranayake, *Rock and Wall Paintings of Sri Lanka*, 75-7, fig.37, 38

¹²³ Bandaranayake, *Rock and Wall Paintings of Sri Lanka*, 64-5, Pl. 27, 28

¹²⁴ Bandaranayake, *Rock and Wall Paintings of Sri Lanka*, 79, fig.40

is not well preserved, the remnants prove the availability of illustrations, which is related to the Buddha's life, possibly with the influence from the early period (**fig. 5.6**).

Commenting on the particular paintings in the relic chamber of Kaṇṭhaka caitya, Senarat Paranavitana states;

The walls of the relic chamber were covered with paintings, but in the years during which the chamber was exposed to the elements after rifting of the *stūpa*, the side have fallen down, and of the numerous life-size, painted figures which adorned the walls of the chamber, only the portion below the knee are now left for inspection. Remains of 28 figures are clearly recognizable. The pigments used, as at Polonnaruva and Sigiri, are red, yellow, and green. There is evidence of modeling, but the fragmentary in nature... The paintings depict divine beings among clouds which have cut off the lower parts of their bodies. The figures have been sketched in outline only, red and black being the pigments used, but are of high artistic quality, indicating that the artist possessed skill in draughtsmanship, a subtle sense of form and an understanding of the principles of balanced composition.¹²⁵

However, he also assumes that this would be the result of the incompleteness of the painting work at the time the *stūpa* was building.¹²⁶

Among the artifacts that have been preserved by the Department of Archaeology, two sites are significant;

1. In the relic chamber of the *stūpa* excavated to the west of Mahāsāya, a restored seated Buddha image of gilt bronze (will be discussed in Chapter 7, **see fig.7.24**), and some important reliquaries.

For the purpose of present study, the description of the Archaeological Commissioner,

Senarat Paranavitana is stated below;

Placed in the middle of the floor of the chamber was a stone *chattra* with what would have been its underside, if fitted to a shaft, turned upwards. The knob in the centre with a square hole meant to fit the shaft that was covered with an earthen bowl with its mouth turned down. Covered by this was a miniature *stūpa* of

¹²⁵ Senarat Paranavitana, *Sinhalayo*. (Colombo: Lake House Investments, 1970), 40; Senarat Paranavitana, *Glimpses of Ceylon's Past*. (Colombo: Lake House Investments, 1972), 74-75

¹²⁶ Paranavitana, *Sinhalayo*, 40; Paranavitana, *Glimpses of Ceylon's Past*, 75

terracotta, so badly burnt that part of it, including the spire, had crumbled away. Inside this was a reliquary, 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. in height, in the shape of a *stūpa* with elongated dome and conical spire. Its base was studded with pearls, three rows to mark the three courses of mouldings at the *pesā-valalu*. Inside the reliquary was found, in addition to coral, pearls and other objects, a flower made of fold foil, and placed on this was a soldered tube of gold foil in which was the sacred object...¹²⁷

The particular implication suggests the continued custom of what King Duṭṭhagāmiṇī Abhaya introduced as a result of enshrining relics in the Mahātūpa.

2. Some frescoes of the Jātaka stories and events from the life of the Buddha from the inner chamber of Demaḷa Mahā Sāya in Polonnaruwa.¹²⁸

Ananda Coomaraswamy states;

The Northern Temple, formerly but incorrectly designated Demala Mahā-seya, has plaster covered brick relief figures in the niches of the external decoration; when the interior was cleared much of the plastered surface covered with paintings (fig.291), of Jātakas, the *Vessantara* and *Maitribala* amongst others, was found in a fair state of preservation, but as a result of some twenty years of exposure and neglect, these paintings, which formed by far the most extensive remains of their kind anywhere in India and Ceylon, have almost disappeared.¹²⁹ (See fig.5.7).

In addition, the remains of the frescoes of i.e. Nāri-latā design are evident in the Laṅkātilaka image house, the image house that contains a colossal Buddha image of standing posture in brick (See fig.7.19c).

Besides the aforementioned instances, Charles Godakumbura reveals some significant information about a walking Buddha image found from the Kirivehera, the ancient stūpa at Kataragama in the southern tip of the country.

One of the objects found in the modern relic chamber of Kirivehera, Kataragama, re-opened by this department (*A.S.C.A.R. for 1960*, page 85) is a representation of the walking Buddha though the walking is only inferred. The object, a small bronze unit with two statuettes of the standing bolt upright facing each other at

¹²⁷ Paranavitana, *Glimpses of Ceylon's Past*, 68-69

¹²⁸ Nandadeva Wijesekara, *Early Sinhalese Sculpture*. (Colombo: M.D. Gunasena & Co. Ltd., 1962), 33

¹²⁹ Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 164, fig. 291

either end of a narrow dais simulating the sky depicts the Buddha and the other the likeness of himself conjured into being by the Buddha. According to the legend the real Buddha and his likeness paced to and fro in the air crossing each other.¹³⁰

Nonetheless, its influence on illustrating the life incidents of the Buddha in the image houses is evident in Tivaṅka Image House at Polonnaruwa where the presence of the Buddha is illustrated in the anthropomorphic form. **Fig.5.8a** (reproduced from the original illustration) depicts the Buddha as descending from the Tusita, one of the miracles performed by the Buddha, while **fig.5.8b** depicts the Buddha seated on a jeweled lotus seat in the gesture of intellectual argument (vitarka). In addition, the interior walls of the vestibule are decorated with the depictions of celestial beings in the worshipping attitude (**fig.5.8c1, 8c2, 8c3, & 8c4**), and the Jātaka stories i.e. Sasa, Rūrumiga, Vessantara (**fig.5.8d1 & 8d2**) etc. Particular examples are apparently similar to the description of relic chamber paintings of Mahātūpa, of which some are described in the *Mahāvamsa*.

The custom of having paintings and drawings are even evident in the Buddhist cave paintings i.e. Vessagiriya, Sigiriya, Dimbulagala, Pulligoda, Hindagala, Polonnaruwa (Vidyādhara cave), and Dambulla where the Buddha as well as the bodhisattva was represented in the anthropomorphic form. According to the inscriptional evidence, the cobra hood (Nai Peṇa) cave at Sigiriya proves its settlement history from the period of 3rd-2nd centuries BCE, and continuity through 5th century CE.¹³¹ Recent studies of Sigiriya and Vessagiriya have proved “larger composition of gods and other

¹³⁰ “කතරගම කිරිවෙහෙරේ නූතන ධාතුගර්භය තුළ තිබී මේ දෙපාර්තමේන්තුව විසින් අනාවරණය කරන ලද වස්තූන් අතුරෙහි බුදුන්ගේ සක්මන පිළිබිඹු කරන වස්තුවක්ද විය. ලෝකඩින් කරන ලද මෙහි එසවූ පටු පීඨයක දෙකෙළවර උදක් සෘජුව වැඩසිටින බුද්ධරූප දෙකකි. පීඨයෙන් අදහස් කරන්නේ අභසය. එක පිළිමයක් බුදුරජාණන්ගේද අනික නිර්මිත බුදුකෙනෙකුන්ගේද මුර්ති ය. මෙහි සක්මන් ඉටියව ව සිතාගත යුතුවා මිස යථාර්ථයෙන් පිළිබිඹු කර නැත. මෙයින් දැක්වෙන්නේ බුද්ධත්වය ලැබූ තුන්වන සතියේ කළ ප්‍රාතිහාර්යයයි.” Godakumbura, *Budu Piḷima = Buddha Statues*, 7, 20

¹³¹ Senarat Paranvatana, *Inscriptions of Ceylon*, Vol. I., (Colombo, Department of Archaeology, 1957), Pl.82, 867-872

celestial beings worshipping the Buddha or the Bodhisattva... while Karambagala evolves a similar theme.”¹³² (**fig.5.9a, 9b, & 9c**). Depending on their characteristics and remaining archaeological findings, Senaka Bandaranayake assumes that these caves must have been used as rock-shelter residences or shrines.

Further evidence has been traced from Situlpahuva (3rd-4th centuries CE) belonging to southern tip of the country with a fragment bearing a row of monks with yellow robes (**fig.5.10a**),¹³³ from Gonagolla (5th-7th centuries CE) of the north western region with a fragment of colored bodhisattva figure (**fig.5.10b**),¹³⁴ from Kudagala (8th-12th centuries CE) with a black and white figure of a seated bodhisattva image, with a jeweled headdress (**fig. 5.10c**).¹³⁵ Similar illustrations at Kotiyagala cave (5th-7th centuries CE) has remained with the dream of Māyādevi (**fig.5.10d**).¹³⁶ Mārāvīdiya cave (8th-12th centuries CE) has some scenes belonging to the Buddha’s life i.e subduing of elephant (**fig.5.10e**),¹³⁷ while Pulligoda caves depict a group of deities or bodhisattvas in yellow and red: all of them having a halo surrounding the head (**fig.5.10f**).¹³⁸ The cave paintings of Hindagala (**fig.5.11a1**¹³⁹ & **11a2**), Pidurangala (**fig.5.11b**),¹⁴⁰ Kandalama, and Dambulla (**fig.5.12a, 12b, 12c, & 12d**), belonging to the later period from 7th- 18th centuries provide a range of paintings indicating the life of the Buddha in narrative style. In addition to the particular tradition, evidence of Buddhist paintings have been found from the eastern vāhalkada of the Ruvanvāli stūpa, eastern vāhalkada of the Jetavana

¹³² Bandaranayake, *Rock and Wall Paintings*, 36, fig.30

¹³³ Bandaranayake, *Rock and Wall Paintings*, 59, Pl.22

¹³⁴ Bandaranayake, *Rock and Wall Paintings*, 58, Pl. 20, 21

¹³⁵ Bandaranayake, *Rock and Wall Paintings*, 36-37, 58, fig. 31

¹³⁶ Bandaranayake, *Rock and Wall Paintings*, 39, fig. 33

¹³⁷ Bandaranayake, *Rock and Wall Paintings*, 39, fig.34

¹³⁸ Bandaranayake, *Rock and Wall Paintings*, 59, Pl. 23

¹³⁹ Bandaranayake, *Rock and Wall Paintings*, 63, Pl. 26

¹⁴⁰ Bandaranayake, *Rock and Wall Paintings*, 40, fig.25

stūpa at Anuradhapura, and at Gonagala at Digamadulla.¹⁴¹ Particularly, these scenes have been described in *Mahāvamsa*, in the decorations of the relic chamber of the Mahātūpa.

5.3.3 Buddha Image placed in the image houses and maintenance of the Buddha image by Sri Lankan kings

The earliest reference to a Buddha image used as an object of worship and that too in an image house is in the reign of Vasabha (127 CE-171 CE):

*So yev' uposathāghāraṃ Issaramaṇake idha,- Thūpārāme thūpagharaṃ kārāpesi
mahīpati.
Mahāvihāre pariveṇapantiṃ pacchimapekkhiniṃ- kāresi, Catusālaṃ ca jiṇṇakaṃ
paṭisaṃkhari.
Catubuddhapaṭmā rammā paṭimānaṃ gharaṃ tathā- mahābodhaṅgaṇe ramme
rājā so yeva kārayi.¹⁴²*

Translation

In like the manner the king built an uposata-house in the Issaramaṇaka (vihāra) here and in Thūpārāma a thūpa-temple. In the Mahāvihāra he built a row of cells facing the west, and he restored the ruined Catusālā. In like manner the same king made four beautiful Buddha-images and a temple for the images in the fair courtyard of the Great Bodhi Tree.¹⁴³

The practice of image making has been followed by many subsequent kings of

Anuradhapura and early Polonnaruwa periods:

1. King Vohārikatissa (269 CE-291 CE)—two bronze images in the eastern temple of the great Bodhi Tree, Anuradhapura.¹⁴⁴
2. King Jeṭṭhatissa I (323 CE-333 CE)—shifting of the statue attributed to Devānampiyatissa from Thūpārāma,¹⁴⁵ as discussed above.

¹⁴¹ Paranavitana, *Sinhalayo*, 40

¹⁴² *Mv.* Ch. XXXV.87-89

¹⁴³ *Mv* (WG), Ch. XXXV 87-89

¹⁴⁴ “*Tissarājamaṇḍapaṃ ca mahāvihāradvaye pi so mahābodhighare pācīne loharūpadvayaṃ tathā.*”
Mv. Ch. XXXVI 31

¹⁴⁵ *Mv.* Ch. XXXVI 128-130

3. King Mahāseṇa (334 CE-362 CE)—two bronze images on the west side of the temple of the Great BodhiTree.¹⁴⁶ (Whether this reference is to a statue of the Buddha or a king is however disputed, the association with the Bodhi-tree suggests an image of the Buddha).
4. King Upatissa I (368 CE-410 CE) —an image house with an image, by the northern side of the Maṅgalacetiya,¹⁴⁷ and an image house by the south-west corner of the palace, with an image of the Buddha, which was surrounded by a wall.¹⁴⁸ The *Cūlavamsa* adds that the king sought advice from the monks as means of resolving the famine which occurred, and the answer was the reciting of the Gaṅgārohaṇa sutta on such an occasion. “When he heard this he made an image wholly of gold of the departed Buddha, laid the stone alms bowl of the Master, (filled) with water in the hollow of its hands and placed this, his figure on the great chariot.”¹⁴⁹
5. Dhātuseṇa (460 CE-478 CE)—erected a Bodhisattva image in the image house of the Bāhumaṅgala-cetiya, in addition to the diadem of rays he made for the image of the Master in black stone, and that of the World Teacher of Upasumbha, and for the Buddha image known as Abhiśeka Buddha.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ “*Abhayena bhaye tasmīn vūpasante tu bhikkhavo Mahāvihāraṃ vāseum āgantvāna tato tato. Rājā mahābodhigāre paccimāye disāya tu kāretvā loharūpāni thapāpesi duve tu so.*” *Mv.* Ch. XXXVII 30-31

¹⁴⁷ “*Uttaramhi disābhāge cetiyamhā tu Maṅgalā thūpaṃ ca paṭimāgehaṃ paṭimaṃ cāpi kārayi...*” *Cv.* Ch. XXXVII 183-184

¹⁴⁸ “*saṅkhaṃ sodakam ādāya carat āsanadhovane. Dakkhiṇāparakoṇamhi kāretvā rājagehato uposathagaram ca buddhapaṭimāgeham eva ca pākārena parikkhittaṃ uyyānaṃ ca manoramam...*” *Cv.* Ch. XXXVII 200-202

¹⁴⁹ “*Gaṅgārohaṇasuttassa uppaṭiṃ tattha niddisum; sutvā taṃ sabbasovaṇṇaṃ bimbaṃ sambuddhahātuno katvā, satthu silāpattaṃ sodakam pāṇisampuṭe thapetvā, tassa taṃ rūpaṃ āropetvā...*” *Cv.* Ch. XXXVII 191-193

¹⁵⁰ “*Akāsi paṭimāgehe Bahumangalacetiye, bodhisatteca tath’ āsi; Kālaselassa satthuno Upasumbhavhayassāpi lokanāthassa ‘kṛayī raṃsicūlāmaṇiṃ c’eva Abhisekavhayassa ca Buddhabimbassa kāresi pubbe vuttaṃ pilandhanaṃ...*” *Cv.* Ch. XXXVIII 65-68

6. Kassapa I (478 CE-496 CE)—a temple in his name and two children, Bodhi and Uppalavaṇṇā, with an image of the Buddha.¹⁵¹
7. Aggabodhi I (568 CE-601 CE)—a stone statue of the Buddha to the Unnavāli-vihāra,¹⁵²
8. Aggabodhi II (601 CE-611 CE)—four images and thrones of stone, a golden umbrella and work in stone and ivory for the throne.¹⁵³
9. Moggallana III (611 CE-617 CE)—made images and repaired what was decayed.¹⁵⁴
10. Mahinda II (772 CE-792 CE)—made an image of the Master (Buddha) at a cost of sixty thousand (kahapanās).¹⁵⁵
11. Udaya I (792 CE-797 CE)—the proper maintenance of the Kholakkhiya image of the Buddha, and the grant of the village of Mahāmaga, for the outlay on festivals to the image. He also granted the village of Ārāmassa to the bronze image of the Buddha.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵¹ “Bodhi Uppalavaṇṇā ca tass’ āsuṃ duhitā duve, vihārass’ assa kāresi nāmaṃ tāsaṃ ca attano; dente tasmin na yicchiṃsu samaṇā Theravādino » pitughātassa kammaṃ » ti lokagārayhabhūruno. Dhātukāmo sa tesam va sambuddhapaṭimāy’ adā, bhikkhavo adhvāsesuṃ.” Cv. Ch. XXXIX 11-13

¹⁵² “Unnavālivihārassa Ratanam dīghavaṇṇitam datvā gāmaṃ paṭiṭṭhesi satthubimbaṃ cādā silāmayam.” Cv. Ch. XLII 18

¹⁵³ “catasso paṭimāyo ca pallaṅke ca silāmaye hemacchattam silādantakammaṃ gehamhi sabbaso.” Cv. Ch. XLII 57-58

¹⁵⁴ “Paṭimāyo ca kāresi jīṇam ca paṭisaṃkhari loṇakkhetam ca pādāsi saṃghassa tisatādhikam.” Cv. Ch. XLIV 49

¹⁵⁵ “anekabhūmiṃ kāretvā Vejayantam ivāparam, tathā satasahashehi tithi c’ eva mahādhano jambonadasuvaṇṇassa sahassehi ca satthihi bimbam satthussa kāretvā ’nagghacūlāmaṇiyutam, pūjam...” Cv. Ch. XLVIII 136-37

¹⁵⁶ “Mahāvihāre kāresi salākaggaṃ thiram subham Kholakkhiyamunindassa parihārāya dāpayi. Mahāmagavhayaṃ gāmaṃ pūjayitvā yathābalaṃ Vaḍḍhamānamunindassa jīṇam geham ca kāriya... Loharūpassa pādāsi Kālussaṃ nāma gāmakam, jīṇam ca paṭisaṃkāsi paṭimāyo ca kārayi.” Cv. Ch. XLIX 14-15, 17-18

12. Aggabodhi IX (828 CE-831 CE)—a golden image of the Master for the vihāra called Jeta.¹⁵⁷
13. Sena I (831 CE-851 CE)—brought the golden image of the Victor (Buddha) that he had made to the Jetavanārāma,¹⁵⁸
14. Sena II (851 CE-885 CE)—restored the pedestal of the golden image of the Buddha at Ratnapāsāda, replaced the golden images where they belonged to,¹⁵⁹ and re-established ‘an image of the Buddha of closely jointed gold mosaic in the ceremony of ‘restoration of the Lohapāsāda.’¹⁶⁰ He granted a village to the Mahāsena Buddha (the image in the Mahāsena vihāra), built an image house in the Sobhha-vihāra, brought the figures of bodhisattvas into the Maṇimekhala - Pāsāda, and restored the stone statue of the Prince of Sages (Buddha).¹⁶¹
15. Kassapa IV (896 CE-913 CE)—erected three stone images with rays of gold and umbrellas as well as diadems of jewels for the three fraternities of Buddhism: Theravāda, Dharmaruci, and Sāgalīya.¹⁶² He has also provided ornaments for images at Mariccavatti vihāra,¹⁶³ and image houses (maṇḍapa) resembling

¹⁵⁷ *“Vihāre Jetanāme ca katvā sovaṇṇayaṃ muniṃ vaḍḍhetvā bodhigehamhi pūjaṃ ’kāsi acintiyam.”*
Cv. Ch. XLIX 77

¹⁵⁸ *“vaḍḍhetvā tatha kāretvā sabbsovaṇṇayaṃ jinaṃ saṃtāpetvā mahābhogaṃ vasāpesi ca bhikkhavo.”*
Cv. Ch. L 66

¹⁵⁹ *“tadā sovaṇṇayassāpi saṃbuddhassa purā ṭhitaṃ suññaṃ pīthaṃ sa taṃ disvā » kasmā evaṃ» ti-y-āvaḍi.”* Cv. Ch. LI 23-26: *“sabbam pākatikaṃ ’kāsi sāraṃ dīpe nirālayo sovaṇṇapaṭimāyo ca yathāthāne ṭhapāyayi...”* Cv. Ch. LI, 48-49

¹⁶⁰ *“Kāretvā Lohapādaṃ Vejayantasarikkhakaṃ vaḍḍhesi paṭimāṃ tatha suvaṇṇaghanakoṭṭimāṃ.”*
Cv. Ch. LI, 69-70

¹⁶¹ *“Mahāsenassabuddhassa gāmaṃ datvāna rakkhake dāsi, Sobhavihāre ca kāresi paṭimāgharam.*
Bodhisatte ca vaḍḍhesi pāsāde Maṇimekhale, Silāmayamunindassa jīṇṇagehaṃ pi kārayi;” Cv. Ch. LI.76-77.

¹⁶² *“Akā tīsu nikāyesu tīni bimbe silāmaye sovaṇṇaye raṃsiphalakacchattaṃ cūlāmaṇi tadā...Tassa senāpaṭi Seno Ilaṅgo rājāvaṃsajo Theriyānaṃ akā vāsaṃ Thūpārāmassa pacchato, Dharmarucikabhikkhūnaṃ dhammārāmaṃ akārayi tathā Sāgalikānaṃ ca Kassapasenanāmaṃ, Hadayaṇhādebhidhānaṃ so katvā...”* Cv. Ch. LII. 12-13, 16-18; Pv. 781

¹⁶³ *“Anurādhapure c’ eva Pulatthinagare pi ca upaggaroganāsāya vejjasālā pi kārayi Attanā katavāsānaṃ bhogagāme ca dāpayi tathārāmikāgāme ca paṭimābharaṇaṃ ca so.”* Cv. Ch. LII. 25-26

Vejayanta, had them painted in different colors, in a fashion (rendered) charming by figure ornament.¹⁶⁴

16. Kassapa V (913 CE-923 CE)—Devā, the mother of Sakkasenāpati, made a diadem jewel, a net of rays, an umbrella and a garment to the image of the Buddha at Mariccavatti.¹⁶⁵

The Buddha image as the centerpiece of Buddhist worship in the rest of the island is also established by the information about Rohaṇa. Aggabodhi (568 CE-601 CE), the independent ruler of the Rohaṇa Province, “set up a large image-house for the Paṭimā vihāra in Kānagāma and, [in that] a stone image of the Buddha which he had made and which received the name ‘the Great,’ produced as by a miracle.”¹⁶⁶ Dappula I (650 CE) erected an “image house in the Ariyākari vihāra, and an image of the (Victor) Buddha with a valuable tuft of hair (between the eye brows), a bandolier of gold, for which he made all kinds of offering. In addition, he had established an image of the Maitreya bodhisattva (savior) of fifteen cubits high.”¹⁶⁷

Besides such chronicler descriptions, the legends claim that the king Kāvantissa, the father of Duṭṭhagāmani Abhaya, erected a Buddha image of 18 cubits high, and placed it in the cave under the rock in Mūkirigala vihāra (Muhudugiri vihāra) of the southern tip of the country. And his son Saddhā Tissa (younger brother of Duṭṭhagāmani Abhaya) is also mentioned for his contribution to the same place.

¹⁶⁴ “Rājā tisu nikāyesu rūpakammamanorammaṃ maṇḍapāṇi vicittāni Vejayantopamāni ca kāretvā dhātupūjāyo katvā...” Cv. Ch. LII, 35

¹⁶⁵ “Sakkasenāpaṭimātā Devā ’raññakabhikkhunaṃ Theravaṃsappadīpānaṃ akā vāsaṃ sanāmakam.” Cv. Ch. LII, 64-65

¹⁶⁶ “Kānagāmaṃhi kānānaṃ gilānānaṃ ca sālake, vihāre Paṭimavhe va mahantaṃ paṭimāgharaṃ. Paṭiṭṭāpesi katvāna buddhaṃ tattha silāmayam Mahantanāmaṃ sappañño iddhi viya nimittam.” Cv. Ch. XLV, 43- 44

¹⁶⁷ “Datvāriyākariss’ esa gāmaṃ so Mālavatthukaṃ akāsi paṭimāgehaṃ tatth’ eva sumanoharaṃ; tatraṭṭhassa jinassākā unṇalomaṃ mahagghiyam hemapaṭṭam ca kāesi...” Cv. Ch. XLV, 60-62

In addition, the records of the 4th Sessional Report of the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon (*ASCAR*) reveals some evidence from archaeological findings of the north-central province of the country of a stone slab of a Buddha image carved back to back, from the “Gomālakanda Vihāre (Udiyankulama Korale) that may belong to this period and, may be the earliest of the Buddha images of Sri Lanka.”¹⁶⁸ The sessional Report also mentions about the remains of some Buddha images found from the Abahaygiriya monastic complex;

Some broken statuary was also exhumed... a) image of the Buddha, a seated image complete, but in two b) the lower portion of a second resting on the coils of Mucalinda Naga-Raja c) and the mere trunk of a standing figure... The last has holes bored into it at the neck, wrists, and ankles, showing that the head, hands, and feet were originally joined on by iron or copper joggles. The hands of the seated Buddhas are as usual placed in their lap, the back of the right hand resting on the left palm. But the crossed feet have been carved in an impossible position, a false perspective, intended to exhibit to distant view the *mangul lakumu*—the sacred marks on the soles—a conventionalism (abandoned in later days) which necessarily detracted from the artistic finish of the figure.¹⁶⁹

The particular technique and skill testify to the independent development of the image craft in Sri Lanka from the prototypes of India.

In addition to the foregoing evidence, Senarat Paranavitana describes some miniature images of the Buddha made out of bronze, which were found from an ancient stūpa to the west of Mahāsāya at Mihinatale. According to the brāhmi letters found from a number of bricks, he dates the stūpa as belonged to the pre-Christian era.¹⁷⁰ He continues;

On each side of the chamber, there is a niche on the wall, at a height of 9” from the floor. The niche on the western side contained a large bronze Buddha image with traces of gilding, 5 ¾” in height, seated in *dhyāna mudrā*. It is in an excellent

¹⁶⁸ Senarat Paranavitana, “Anuradhapura and the North-Central Province,” *Archaeological Survey of Ceylon*, 4th Progress Report, January-March 1891. (Colombo: Department of Archaeology, 1892), 7-9

¹⁶⁹ Paranavitana, “Anuradhapura and the North-Central Province,” 4

¹⁷⁰ Paranavitana, *Glimpses of Ceylon's Past*, 65

state of preservation, and has to be counted among the most artistic Buddha image in metal so far brought to the light in Ceylon. Two other images of the Buddha, 2” and 2 ½” in height, respectively, modeled out of some kind of paste and covered with gold foil, were picked up from the floor. These evidently had been deposited in two of the niches. The glitter of the precious metal does not compensate for the artistically poor quality of these two images.¹⁷¹

Thus, it is clear that the erection of Buddha image in the image houses or placing them in the relic chambers has played a distinct role in Buddhist art tradition of Sri Lanka ever since the reign of Vasabha (127 CE-171 CE). The questions raised are: 1) What did the Buddha image replace? 2) What had been the object or objects of worship prior to it?

5.4 Symbolic or aniconic representations of the Buddha in Sri Lankan Buddhist art

The *Mahāvamsa* records a conversation between Mahinda and Devānampiyatissa in which the missionary monk expresses his desire to return to India.¹⁷² He says, “It is a long time, O Lord of men, since we have seen the Sambuddha. We lived a life ‘without a master.’¹⁷³ There is nothing here for us to worship.” And to the question: ‘Yet, hast thou not told me, sir, that the Saṃbuddha is passed into Nibbāna?’ he answered: “if we behold the relics we behold the Conqueror.”¹⁷⁴ The outcome was the decision to build Thūpārāma that was taken place with a request sent to Emperor Aśoka for relics.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ Parānavitana, *Glimpses of Ceylon's Past*, 68

¹⁷² *Mv* (WG). Ch. XVII. 16-20: E.W. Adhikaram, *Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon*. (Colombo: M.D. Gunasena and Co. Ltd., 1953), 136: D.T. Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*. (Colombo: K.V.G. Silva, 1957), 27-28

¹⁷³ Ananda Guruge translates the Pāli Term Anāthavāsaṃ as the ‘helpless, unprotected, poor’ see *Mv* (AG). Ch. XVII, n4

¹⁷⁴ *Vutthavasso pavāretvātvā kattikapuṇṇamāsiyaṃ-avocedaṃ mahārājaṃ mahāthero mahāmati:*
»*ciradiṭṭho hi sambudho sattā no manujādhipa,- anāthavāsaṃ vasimha, natthi no pūjīyaṃ idha*«
Bhāsitha nanu bhante me: sambuddho nibbuto? « iti- āha: »dhātusu diṭṭesu hoti jīno« iti
»*Vidito vo adhippāyo thūpassa karaṇe mayā,- kāressāmi ahaṃ thūpaṃ, tumhe jānātha dhātuyo* See *Mv*.
Ch. XVII. 1-4

¹⁷⁵ *Mv*. Ch. XVII. 16-20

Bodily relics of the Buddha enshrined in a *stūpa* were thus equated to the sight of the Buddha himself. Thūpārāma stūpa, the very first religious edifice to be erected in Sri Lanka gave rise to an architectural innovation which had no parallel in India. The *stūpa* was housed in a mansion, namely the *Cetiyaḡhara*,¹⁷⁶ which shows its historic existence in the country during the period of Rāvaṇa, the legendary king of Sri Lanka.¹⁷⁷ (See **fig.6.1a1, 1a2, & 6b**). The later work of the *stūpa* surpassed the original size of the early stūpas i.e. Thūpārāma, Lankārāma, but were huge constructions of its kind, which demonstrated the authentic Sri Lankan architecture. D.T. Devendra states:

It has been proved from archaeological evidence that Ruvanveliseya, which is the name by which this Mahā Tūpa is best known today, was originally of practically the same dimensions as it is now... But, what is important to remember at this stage is that the stupendous *stūpa*, which he began, and which his brother and successor Saddhā Tissa completed, was then *the most colossal stūpa in the Buddhist world*.¹⁷⁸

The unique nature of the Sri Lankan *stūpas* is also highlighted by Ananda Coomaraswamy in his description of the Mahātūpa, with regard to its later enlargements: ‘as large as but the largest of the Egyptian pyramids; the paved platform measures 475 by 473 feet.’¹⁷⁹ Its architectural distinction is the simple and modest decorations which reserves any assumption of independent evolution of Sri Lankan architecture from its Indian prototype. Meher McArthur emphasizes;

¹⁷⁶ “*Tassa rañño mahesī sā Potthanāmā manoramaṃ thūpaṃ thūpaḡharaṃ ceva rammaṃ tattheva kārayi.*” *Mv.* Ch.XXXV.90

¹⁷⁷ “Hanuman beheld the great city, which looked like the city of the gods in heaven, with its ramparts of gold and its mansions that shone like planets and were huge as autumn clouds; with the chariot ways, white and high, that ran all round it and its hundreds of many-storeyed houses; with its festoons of banners, and bunting and its portals of gold, divinely beautiful, adorned with friezes of many vines.” See N. Raghunathan, trans., *Srīmad Vālmikī Rāmāyaṇam*, Vol. II, *Āraṇya Khanda-Sundara Khanda*. (Madras: Wigneswara Publishing House, 1981), *Sundara Khanda*, Canto II-Lanka’s Beauty, 339 : M.D. Raghavan, *India in Ceylonese History, Society and Culture*. (Delhi: Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Asia Publishing House, 1969), 8

¹⁷⁸ Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, 29

¹⁷⁹ Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 161

The stūpa, a symbol of the Buddha's enlightenment, features prominently in Sri Lankan Buddhist architecture, the most important example also being at Anuradhapura. Unlike many of the stūpas from India and other Buddhist cultures, the Sri Lankan stūpas feature minimal decoration, the form itself being of greater importance than decorative details.¹⁸⁰

With the arrival of the sapling of the Bodhi-tree of Bodh Gayā,¹⁸¹ a similar architectural innovation came into existence as the *Bodhighara* (house for the Bodhi Tree) of which several examples exist in Anuradhapura, besides the references in chronicles and inscriptions. *Mahāvamsa* states that the king Kuñcanāga (248 CE-249 CE) restored the steps to the four entrances leading to the Great Bodhi Tree,¹⁸² while the king Sirināga (249 CE-268 CE) restored its surrounding walls.¹⁸³ The king Goṭābhaya (309 CE-322 CE) set up a *vedi* of stone for the Great Bodhi Tree.¹⁸⁴ King Dhātusena (460-478 CE) erected a large and splendid house for the Great Bodhi Tree with a hundred thousand pieces of gold.¹⁸⁵

The particular architectural setting includes a pillared hall with four seated Buddha images at the four corners while the Bodhi Tree is located at the centre of open space. The first *Bodhighara* is said to be that which was erected surrounding the sacred Bodhi Tree, brought by Saṅghamittā during the 3rd century BCE.¹⁸⁶ (fig.5.13a1, & 13a2). While Sässeruwa (Rās Vehera) provides a *bodhighara* of distinctive architectural

¹⁸⁰ Meher McArthur, *Reading Buddhist Art: An Illustrated Guide to Buddhist Signs and Symbols*. (London: Thames and Hudson, 2002), 15

¹⁸¹ It is apparent that the Bodhi Tree was an object that was kept in the relic chambers of ancient Sri Lankan stūpas. According to *Mahāvamsa*, King Duṭṭhagāmani Abhaya made a jeweled Bodi Tree to be placed in the relic chamber to the east of the jeweled throne. *Mv.* Ch. XXX. 72. The same is described in the *Vamsattappakāsini*: *Majjimi dhātugabbhassa tassa rājā akārayi ratanamayaṃ bodhirukkhaṃ sabbākāramanoramam..Bodhiṃ parikkhitpitvāna nānāratanaavedikā mahāmālakamuttāhi santhāro tu tadantare... Vp.* Ch.XXX. 62, 70

¹⁸² *Mv.* Ch. XXXVI. 25

¹⁸³ *Mv.* Ch. XXXVI. 55

¹⁸⁴ *Mv.* Ch. XXXVI 103

¹⁸⁵ *Cv.* Ch. XXXVIII. 69

¹⁸⁶ David Bachman, *World and Its People: Eastern and Southern Asia, India and Its Neighbors*, Part II. (New York: Marshal Cavendish Corporation, 2008), 555

characteristics: four tightly bound stone layers of up to the height of 10 feet (**fig.5.13b**), the best preserved bodhighara is found from Nillakgama, of the district of Kurunegala, belonging to Anuradhapura period (**fig.5.13c1 & c2**). According to Senarat Paranavitana, the entrance of the Nillakagama bodhighara proves to have “the most elaborately decorated carved door...that has so far been found. The decorative motifs are similar to those on the moonstones and the significance of the ornamentation to the devotee of ancient times must have been the same. (**fig.5.13c2**).”¹⁸⁷

Traditionally, the stūpa and the Bodhi-tree have been venerated in Sri Lanka up to present times as representing two objects of worship: 1) *Śārīrika*=bodily relics=stūpa¹⁸⁸ and (2) *Pāribhogika*=what had been used by the Buddha=the Bodhi-tree, besides the begging bowl and the belt.¹⁸⁹ A third category of objects of worship is called *Uddeśika*, namely symbolic representations. Since the Buddha image came into existence, it has been considered the most commonly employed *uddeśika* object of worship. Thus, the question raised is what was used before the Buddha statue was created?

Along with the *cetiyaḡhara* (stūpa house) and the *Bodhighara* (Bodhi Tree house), *Samanatapāsādikā*, in two of its references, mentions a third shrine called the *Āsanaghara*:

1) *cetiyaḡharaṃ bodhigharaṃ āsanagharaṃ samuñṅṅo dāruaṅṅo vaccakuṅṅi iṅṅhakasālā vaḅḅhakīsālā dvārakoṅṅhako pāṅṅiyamālo maggo pokkharanī ’ti etāni hi asenāsanāni*”¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ Senarat Paranavitana, *The Art of the Ancient Sinhalese*. (Colombo: Lake House Investments Co. Ltd., 1971), 132, Pl. 45: see also Paranavitana, *Sinhalayo*, 34

¹⁸⁸ “*Tena ca samayena Thūpārāme purimakānaṃ tiṅṅṅaṃ sammāsambuddhānāṃ paribhogacetiyaṃ hoti.*” See *Sp.* V. 90

¹⁸⁹ Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. I. 233

¹⁹⁰ *Sp.* VI. 1229

2) *bodhirukkkhabodhigharasāsanagharasammūñjanītaṭṭadāruaṭṭavaccakuṭīdvārakoṭṭhaka-pānīya kutipānīyamālakadantakaṭṭhamāḷakesu pi es' eva nayo.*¹⁹¹

Also in the *Visuddhimagga*, it is stated; *Tassa kir'āyasmato Cittalapabbate pattangapupphehi kataṃ āsanapūjaṃ passato sahadassanen' eva āsanappamāṇaṃ nimittaṃ udapādi.*¹⁹² (“[A]s that Venerable One looked at an offering of a seat presented with the offerings of *Pattaṅga* flowers on Mount Cittala, there arose in what he saw the sign of the size of the seat”).¹⁹³

Dīpavaṃsa as well as *Mahāvāṃsa* speak of āsanas established by several kings: king Goṭābhaya (Meghavaṇṇābhaya)-(309 CE-322 CE) erected a stone āsana among the edifices established by the Bodhi Tree: [*silāparikhañ ca kāresi Mahāvihārapacchato, kāresi silāpallaṅkaṃ mahābodhigaruttame*],¹⁹⁴ (*Tisso silāpaṭimā ca tīsu dvāresu kārayi ṭapāpesi ca pallaṅkaṃ dakkhiṇaṃhi silāmayam*),¹⁹⁵ king Silākāla (524 CE- 537 CE) ‘set up an Āsana called Kunta which he had moved from the eastern vihāra of the adherents of the Thera School.’¹⁹⁶ (*Raheradakavāram ca adāsi Abhayuttare; puratthimā Theriyānaṃ vihārā Kuntanāma so anetvā āsanaṃ tattha ṭhāpesi dumarājake*).¹⁹⁷ Once Aggabodhi II (601 CE-611 CE) became the ruler, he repaired the relic chamber of the Thūpārāma with various elements, of which the stone āsanas are remarkable.¹⁹⁸ (*catasso paṭimāyo ca pallaṅke ca silāmaye hemacchattaṃ silādantakammaṃ gehamhi*

¹⁹¹ *Sp.* VI. 1231

¹⁹² *Vm.* V. 6.

¹⁹³ Pe Maung Tin, trans., *The Path of Purity: Being a Translation of Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga*, (London & Boston: Pali Text Society, 1975), 199

¹⁹⁴ “He erected an excellent stone altar surrounding the Bo-tree; he constructed a stone ditch and a costly arch; he made a stone couch in the excellent room of the Great Bo-tree.” *Dv.* Ch. XXII.57

¹⁹⁵ “At the three entrances, (of the Bodhi Tree) he made three statues of stone, at the south gate he set up a throne of the stone.” *Mv* (WG). XXXVI. 104

¹⁹⁶ *Cv* (WG), Ch. XLI. 31-32

¹⁹⁷ *Cv*, Ch. XLI verses 31-32

¹⁹⁸ *Cv.* Ch. XLII.57-58 (see above n153)

sabbaso).¹⁹⁹ The rectangular stone slab represented the seat on which the Buddha sat at the moment of enlightenment. It could have preceded the image house (*paṭimāghara*) which is mentioned in *Mahāvamsa* for the first time in the reign of king Vasabha (127-171 CE).²⁰⁰

Upon the archaeological evidence so far found from Anuradhapura and elsewhere, Charles Godakumbura assumes that it would have been an object of worship, once it is placed under the Bodhi Tree:

What one can deduce from the statements in the Chronicles is that just as in the very early stages of the Buddha statue, there was no image-house (*paṭimāghara*), but the *bodhighara* and *cetiyaighara* gave protection to the *āsana* or *pallaṅka*. Thus, the *bodhighara* would have preceded both the *paṭimāghara* and the *āsanaghara*. It is also possible that when the Buddhists began making images of the Master, the first act of theirs was to place a small seated image of the Buddha on the *pallaṅka* at the **Bodhi Tree**.²⁰¹

The seat by itself placed under the Bodhi-tree is a feature found at Bodh Gayā even though its antiquity cannot be ascertained (see **fig.2.15a**). The symbol of the *āsana* has been found from Abhayagiriya (**fig.5.14a**), Hammillavātiya (**fig.5.14b**), Katuwanāwa (**fig.5.14c**), Uttimaduwa, Veheragala, (Anuradhapura district), Pulukunawa (**fig.5.14d**) (Bataloa District), Rajagala, Genewewa (Kurunegala District) and several other places around the country. Such evidence testify that the ‘practice of paying homage to the *āsana* persisted even after the introduction of the Buddha image and the image house...which represented the *vajrāsana*, the ‘throne of the victory’ of the Master.’²⁰² Its later development is evident in the *mal-āsana* or the throne of flowers that was placed in

¹⁹⁹ Cv. Ch. XLII 57-58

²⁰⁰ See above n142, & 43

²⁰¹ Charles E. Godakumbura, “Āsanaghara” *Paranavitana Felicitation Volume on Art and Architecture and Oriental Studies*, ed. N.A. Jayawickrama. (Colombo: M.D. Gunasena, 1965), 161, 5 plates

²⁰² Godakumbura, “Āsanaghara,” 170

front of the *stūpa* as an object of veneration (**fig.5.14e**). The particular architectural elements then became part of the *stūpa*, instead of its setting in a separate house.

The distinction of *āsana* as the first object of worship in place of the Buddha is a significant phenomenon in Sri Lanka. As it appears in the vicinity of the *stūpa* as an integral part, or housed in a pillared chamber, made his imaginary presence at the particular location, instead of employing it as an aniconic presence that was popular in Indian caliber of art. Ulrich Von Schroeder explains the distinction:

In India, the early *stūpa* monuments at Bhārhut, and Sānchi (Mādhy Pradesh, Central India), or Amarāvati, and Nāgārjuṅakoṇḍa (Āndhra Pradesh, South India), were decorated with an overwhelming array of narrative reliefs incorporating various symbols. In Sri Lanka, the decoration of the Dāgaba included *Vāhalakadas*, *āsana* tables, and *siripatulagal* slabs, placed in front as aniconic representations of the Buddha. Such *āsana* platforms are sometimes surrounded by circles of stone pillars (*āsanaghara*). Regarded as the seat of the Master, the *āsana* was not actually an aniconic representation, but served as the trigger for visionary and contemplative realization of the Buddha, as if he were seated there.²⁰³

If the particular architectural innovation, the *āsana* in Sri Lanka was influenced by India, for which the evidence is still found at Bodh Gayā (see **fig.2.15a**), that it would suggest that the Sri Lankan innovation was what Senarat Paranavitana identified as the *āsanaghara* (house for the stone seat): a circular shaped open ended building, which is set up on 7-10 pillars, “in which the sole object of worship was a throne in a shape of a large rectangular slab of stone, smoothly chiseled, set up on a raised platform,”²⁰⁴ an independent evolution.

²⁰³ Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculpture of Sri Lanka*, 48

²⁰⁴ Paranavitana, *University of Ceylon, History of Ceylon*, Vol. I, Part I, 263, Pl.V.b

Another most important Sri Lankan innovation without a parallel in India or elsewhere is the symbol of footprint (Buddhapāda) representing the Buddha with different sculptural elements: 1) the single footprint in a rectangular slab, 2) the footprint with the parasol (*catra*) to indicate his royal inherence, 3) the footprint with the wheel of Dharma (*dharmacakra*) representing his teachings (*Buddha Dharma*), and the Trident (*triśūla*) the triple refuge or jewels (*triratna*) and, the lotus bud (*padma*), which indicated the community of monks and nuns, which are found at the following sites: Mahātūpa (Ruvanvālisāya), Abhayagiriya, Jetavanārāma, Isurumuṇiya (Issaramaṇaka vihāra) in Anuradhapura, Seruvila in the district of Trincomalee, and many other sites. Their association as an object of veneration in the Sri Lankan art tradition is of doubt, though, significantly, they can be identified as individual sculptural elements that served for various purposes: either to indicate the sacrality of the place, or as part of the architectural decoration. In many of these sites, except Isurumuṇiya (**fig.5.15a**) and Seruvila (**fig.5.15b1 & 15b2**) where the footprint is carved as a bas-relief on the surface of the rock, all the other evidence show that they were carved in stone slabs of square or circular shape, which could have been installed at any place suitable. Several such slabs, described below, had been found in Anuradhapura at different levels of details, which are now preserved in regional museums: Anuradhapura, Jetavanarama, Seruvila whereas some of them belong to the National museum, Colombo.

1. Single footprint carved on the rock as a bas-relief i.e. Isurumuṇiya (**fig.5.15a**),
2. Footprint with no decorative elements i.e. Seruvila (**fig.5.15b1 & 15b2**).
3. Footprint with parasol (*catra*) in a square shaped medallion i.e. Seruvila (**fig.5.16a1, 16a2 & 16a3**) and Jetavana monastery (**fig.5.16b1 & 16b2**).

4. Footprint embossed with the Wheel of Dharma (*dharmacakra*) in a square or circular shaped medallion i.e Jetavanārāma monastery (**fig.5.17a1, 17a2, 17a3, & 17a4**), Abhaygiri monastery (**fig.5.17b**), and Isurumuṇiya (**fig.5.17c**).
5. Footprint elaborated with auspicious mark (*svastika*) i.e. Koddaikeni, Trincomallee (**fig.5.18a**) and Velgamvehera (**fig.5.18b**). The arrangement pattern of the particular symbols is described in **Diagram 5.1**
6. Footprint with the symbol of lotus bud (*padma*) and the parasol (*catra*) i.e Ruvanvālisāya (**fig.5.19**).



Diagram 5.1 Arrangement of the auspicious marks in the footprint (Buddhapāda)

Source: Siri Munasinghe, "Ancient Sri Lankan Coins" sirimunasiha.wordpress.com, accessed 5/2/2011.

Being singularly established, or employed as a decorative element along with other architectural components, they existed distinctively as symbols, which demonstrated the sacrality of the religious tradition, yet not the Buddha. Thus, what U.V. Schroeder regards them as the aniconic symbols,²⁰⁵ which represented the Buddha cannot be

²⁰⁵ Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculpture of Sri Lanka*, 99

accepted as a custom that existed similar to India. The fact is that India used those symbols in place of the Buddha in narrative illustration, for which Sri Lanka does not provide any evidence.

The endorsement of the parasol in the Sri Lankan Buddhist symbols as evident is entirely different from what one can see in Indian tradition. They simply stand as a canopy for the footprint, which embellishes the revered nature of the Buddha. In fact, it was the symbol of *cakravarti*, which is the most fitting explanation with his early life, according to his Birth stories. Since, the Sri Lankan sculptor viewed the Buddha as an earthly being; his birth must have provided a significant impulse to enumerate his regal inheritance by holding a parasol atop the footprint. Sri Lankan chronicles constantly describe the usage of the parasol (*catra*) as a symbol of consecration of the kings as well as the placing of the parasols on the throne to depict the presence of the Buddha. An important reference to the present study is mentioned with regard to the consecration of the Lohapāsāda (later known Brazen palace), during the period of king Duṭṭhagāmiṇī;

*Mahagghapaccattharaṇe pallaṅke 'yimanohare manoharāsi ṭapitā rucirā dantavijānī pavāḷapādukamaṃ tattha paḷikamhi patiṭṭiramsetacchatamaṃ pallaṅkopari sobhstha. Sattaratanamayān' ettha aṭṭhamaṅgalikāni ca catuppadānaṃ panti ca maṇimuttantarā ahumrajatānaṃ ca ghaṇṭhānāṃ panti chattantalambitā. Pāsādachattapallaṅkamaṇḍapāsum anagghikā'*²⁰⁶

Translation

On the exceedingly beautiful throne covered with costly cushions was placed a beautiful fan of ivory, gleaming (magnificently), and a white parasol with a coral foot, resting on the mountain-crystal and having a silver staff, shine forth over the throne. On it, depicted in the seven gems were the eight auspicious figures, and rows of figures of beasts with jewels and pearls in between; and rows of little silver bells were hung upon the edge of the parasol.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁶ *Mv.* Ch. XXVII 35-38

²⁰⁷ *Mv.* (WG). Ch. XXVII. 35-38

Whether the *dharmacakra* representing the Buddha's teachings, was also an object of worship as evident in Dvāravati in Thailand is a controversial point. According to Robert L. Brown, the Wheel of Law (*dharmacakra*) in later Dvāravati Buddhist symbols (see **fig.5.21**)²⁰⁸ represented part of the triad: *Cakra-Buddha-Stūpa*, symbolizing the three jewels (*triratna*).²⁰⁹ When the Tooth Relic was brought from Kāliṅga during the reign of king Sirimeghavaṇṇa (362 CE-390 CE?), it was housed in a temple called *Dhammacakka*, which the *Mahāvamsa* attributed to King Devānampiyatissa.²¹⁰ It is not certain whether it was so named because it housed the wheel symbol (*cakra*) as an object of worship. *Mahāvamsa* refers the veneration of the *Dharmacakra* by numerous kings, as in the case of Goṭābhaya (Meghavaṇṇābhaya—309 CE-322 CE) who “set up a *vedi* of stone for the great Bodhi tree and an arched gateway at the northern entrance and **likewise at the four corners (of the courtyard), pillars with wheel symbols.**”²¹¹ (*Mahāvihāre kāresi silāmaṇḍapam uttamam, -Lohapāsādathamhe ca parivattiya ṭhāpayi. Mahābodhisilāvedim uttaradvāratorañam patiṭṭhāpesi thambhe ca catukaṇṇe sacakkake*).²¹² The Jetavana Inscription of Mahinda IV describes that the king honored the image of the Buddha with the wheel of gem.

*kammen (huvā) kaḷa pin-pelen tumā ata(ṭ) duvana ruvan-sakme(n) hiri-mañḍulu
karā
Udāgiri-hishi tevnā rivi-bi(mb)-[men Munind-piḷibi-]
-mb mudun ran-satin randvā tamā siyu div piyodunu paḷa ted rāndi sirin siyu kam
hem-muvā kotur-ṭāmbin ma*

²⁰⁸ Wheel of Law (*Dharmacakra*), circa 7th century, Nakhon Pathom, height 123.7 cm. length 97 cm, stone. National Museum Phra Pathom Chedi in Nakhon Pathom.

²⁰⁹ Robert L. Brown, *Dvāravati Wheels of the Law and the Indianization of the Southeast Asian Art*. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1966), 92

²¹⁰ Cv. Ch. XXXVII 92-96

²¹¹ Mv (WG). Ch. XXXVI. 102-103

²¹² Mv. Ch. XXXVI. 102-103

Translation

He made an orb of the sun like unto the wheels of gems, which rolls to his hands as the fruit of his meritorious work. With the golden parasol like the orb of the sun shining on the Orient Mount, he adorned the head of the image [of the Lord of Sages], and with golden capital topped pillars at the four corners, which displayed the...²¹³

The most detailed and artistically significant design (**fig.5.19**) has the footprints with *dharmacakras* on the soles, a parasol spanning the heels, and two lotus buds on either sides, in addition to the slabs engraved with the simple parasol atop along with several auspicious marks (**fig.5.16a1, 16a2, 16a3, 16b1, & 16b2**). The parasol (*catra*), signifying royalty, has been associated with the Buddha in the aniconic representations in Bhārhut, Sānchi and Amarāvati (see **fig.3.4a, 3.4b, 3.5, 3.6a & 6b, 3.7, 3.8a, 8b, & 3.9**). The *dharmacakras* are taken to represent the teachings of the Buddha as imagery in the title of the Buddha's first discourse *Dhammacakkappavattana sutta*, while the two lotus buds are assumed to symbolize the Saṅgha. Thus interpreted, the particular slab in **fig.5.19** is a symbolic representation of the three refuges (*tisaraṇa*) or jewels (*ratanattya/triratna*) – Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha. It is not certain whether these slabs were objects of worship or were held in veneration. It is more likely that they were decorative illustrations as one of these slabs is found as a paving stone in the compound of the Mahātūpa (Ruvanvālisāya). (See **fig.5.19**).

Nandadeva Wijesekara describes several symbols found in a cave at Weweltenna as the earliest appearance of the symbols. Among them are the symbols of swastika, caitya, cakra, trident, and footprint. According to him, the trident is typical, and resembles “Ma” representing the symbol of auspiciousness (*maṅgala*). “All these signs are considered sacred objects of earlier Ceylon and are datable to the first century

²¹³ EZ. Vol. I, 218 (original script), 222 (transcript), 227 (translation), Pl. 28

BCE.”²¹⁴ However, in Sri Lankan Buddhist art, no such evidence has been found to illustrate the supremacy of the Buddha, or to represent the Buddha in an aniconic form.

D.T. Devendra, thus states;

To the best of the author’s knowledge there is, at one of the *vāhalkada* frontpieces, one of those pre-iconic Indian symbols in relief. This is the Tri-ratna emblem. But what is noteworthy is that it is used decoratively in an insignificant corner. Not one of the other symbols occurs here or in any of the other well-known shrines of Anuradhapura’s earliest period.²¹⁵

What is conspicuously absent in Sri Lankan art is the symbol of the Bodhi-tree to represent the Buddha.

Significantly, the above symbols, by their location and execution, do not appear to have been objects of worship. Nor do they replace the anthropomorphic presence of the Buddha in a narrative as in Bhārhut, Sānchi, or Amarāvati in India.²¹⁶ While the symbols used in India other than the Bodhi-tree are seen in Sri Lanka, the Indian technique of depicting “the life of Buddha without the Buddha” does not appear to be an aspect of the Buddhist art of Sri Lanka at all. Only a few examples, so far found from different locations in the country have been considered as imported from India.

1. The fragment of a stone slab found from Anuradhapura (now at the National museum, Colombo) showing the dream of queen Māyā (**fig.5.20a**). Depending on the sculptural characteristics and the rarity of similar slabs in Sri Lanka, Senarat

²¹⁴ Wijesekara, *Early Sinhalese Sculpture*, 67

²¹⁵ Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, 48-9

²¹⁶ Raghavan, *Indian in Ceylonese History, Society and Culture*, 187

Paranavitana assumes that the particular marble plaques would have “probably brought from the Andhra country.”²¹⁷

2. The sculptural slab depicting the Miracle of Srāvasti (now at the National Museum, Colombo) (**fig.5.20b1**).²¹⁸
3. The lime-stone plaque depicting the miracle of Srāvasti from Pidurangala (now in the Regional Archaeological Museum, Anuradhapura (G.31) (**fig.5.20b2**). Ulrich Von Schroeder assumes that the plaque would also relate to the cult of the Dipaṅkara Buddha, and would have been imported from Uttar Pradesh, North India.²¹⁹
4. The lime-stone plaque representing the renunciation of Prince Siddhartha, from Girihandu Sāya, Ambalantota (**fig.5.20c**).²²⁰

5.5 Concluding remarks

The uniqueness of all these narrative representations is the presence of the Buddha/Bodhisattva in the anthropomorphic form except **fig.5.20a** where the dream of Māyā is indicated. The parent tradition in India, instead, marked the presence of the Master by a symbol. The reason for such passage is factualized by Mirella Levi D'Ancona in her *Amarāvati, Ceylon and, Three Imported Bronzes* in search of the chronology of Sri Lankan Buddha image. She seeks evidence from the fifth century traveller's account of Fa-Hsien in that is described the difficult situation of the vengi

²¹⁷ Paranavitana, *The Art of the Ancient Sinhalese*, 129, Plate 18: Senarat Paranavitana, *Archaeological Survey of Ceylon: Administration Report (ASCAR)*, 1951. (Colombo: Department of Archaeology, 1953), 26, Plate vii a & b

²¹⁸ Wijesekara, *Early Sinhalese Sculpture*, 69, fig.5

²¹⁹ Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, 108, Pl.19A: See also Paranavitana, *ASCAR*, 1951, 26

²²⁰ Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, 108-9, Pl.19D

region: “This land is barren and without inhabitants. At the considerable distance there are villages, they know nothing of the law of the Buddha, or Sramanas, or Brahmanas, or of any of the schools of learning.”²²¹ Based on this comment, D’Ancona suggests the following;

In the second and third centuries A.D., during the flourishing period of the vengi region, the relation between this country and Ceylon has been very friendly. Sinhalese monks and nuns, had founded monasteries at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, and had taken an active part in the religious life of the country. It is natural, therefore, that when trouble began in the vengi region, the relatively quiet Isand was sought as the refuge. Small sculptures, the more easily transportable, were taken along by the faithful, and workmen trained in the Amarāvati School came among the emigrants and practiced their art in their newly chosen country.²²²

The evidence on the employment of symbolic representation of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha in Sri Lanka clearly leads to three conclusions:

1. The *āsana*, the stone seat under the Bodhi-tree, could have come to Sri Lanka as an *uddeśika* object of worship symbolizing the Buddha from the Mauryan times during which Emperor Aśoka was pre-occupied with pilgrimages and other forms of veneration to the Bodhi-tree at Gayā;²²³
2. The parasol (*catra*), the Wheel of Dharma (*dharma cakra*), the Lotus bud (*padma*), and the Trident (*triśūla*), also could have been introduced along with Buddhism,
3. The Buddhist art of the Sunga, Kanva and Sātavāhana periods of India as at Bhārhut, Sānchi and Amarāvati had no impact on Sri Lankan art as the concept of illustrating the Buddha’s life in symbols is totally absent.

²²¹ Legge, *The Records of the Buddhistic Kingdoms*, 97: Beal, *Si-Yu-Ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Introduction, lxix

²²² Mirella Levi D’Ancona, “Amarāvati, Ceylon, and Three Imported Bronzes,” *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Mar., 1952), 9, accessed November 11, 2011. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3047387>.

²²³ Strong, *The Legend of King Aśoka*, 257-58.

Thus, the foregoing examination reveals the unique tradition of symbols that in no way resembles the Indian characteristics of a narrative art.

CHAPTER 06

ICONOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS SPECIFIC TO THE SRI LANKAN BUDDHA IMAGE

6.1 Are all aspects of Sri Lankan Culture directly influenced by Indian prototypes?

6.1.1 The theory of Bronislaw Malinowski

The close relationship between the Mauryan Empire of Aśoka and the island of Sri Lanka is borne out by two references in Aśokan Rock Edict II and XII by its ancient name Tambapaṇṇī (Sanskrit Tamraparṇi and Greek Tabrobani).¹ That the introduction of Buddhism in Sri Lanka by emperor Aśoka during the reign of Devānampityatissa brought several cultural and artistic elements to the country is established by the evidence provided in the chronicles, corroborated by inscriptions² as well as the artifacts found from different locations. Among them, the main objects of worship were the *cetiya* or *stūpas*, for which a share of bodily relics of the Buddha were sent from India, and a sapling of the original Bodhi Tree under which the Gautma Buddha attained the supreme state of enlightenment. These were sent with his daughter Saṅghamittā along with technicians, also from India.³ There is also evidence that a close relationship had been

¹ “In all the subjugated (territories) of the king *Priyadasi*, the beloved of the gods, and also in the bordering countries, as (*Choda*), *Palaya* (or *Paraya*), *Satyaputra*, *Keralaputra*, *Tambapani*, (it is proclaimed), and ANTIOCHUS by name the *Yona* (or *Yavana*) raja, and those princes....” See Alexander Cunningham, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol.I, *Inscriptions of Asoka*. (Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, 1877), 117; James Alwis, “Terms of Address and Modes of Salutation in use Amongst the Sinhalese” *JRASC*, Vol III, (1856-61), ed. Honorary Secretary (Colombo: Ceylon Observer Press, 1894), 248

² Rajagala Inscription No. 468 states that the particular *stūpa* was dedicated to the elders Idika and Mahinda who came to the country with good fortune (Buddhism). See Senarat Paranavitana, ed., *Inscriptions of Ceylon*, Vol.I.Plate 468 and description, Stable URL: www.royalasiaticsociety.lk/inscriptions accessed 10/30/2011

³ *Mv.* Ch.XVII. 20-24: *Tv.* Ch.VI, p. 65: Paranavitana, *Sinhalayo*, 17-18

maintained between the main Buddhist centers of the two countries for almost the time Buddhism disappeared from the Indian subcontinent.⁴

In view of such contact, the early scholars assumed that every development in Buddhist culture in Sri Lanka was indebted to direct Indian influence. As regards Buddhist art and architecture, they consistently looked for antecedents from India. Adequate attention therefore had not been paid to unique Sri Lankan innovations for which one cannot find evidence in India. Even Martin Wickramasinghe, who was among the earliest to take note of unique features in Sri Lankan art and architecture, accepted highlights from the following theory of British anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski and sought Indian prototypes:

Every invention is a partial borrowing. The borrowers modify and reinterpret what they have taken over. They also readjust and modify their own heritage in the process. No culture is a simple copy of any other. No historian of present-day European culture would dare to assign it to any one original source. He knows perfectly well that we have borrowed from everywhere; from ancient Greece as well as China and Japan, from India and aboriginal America, and that out of the mixture we have evolved an entirely independent and homogeneous culture.⁵

⁴ According to *Mahāvamsa*, the inauguration of the Mahātūpa was held with the participation of foreign missions ; with eighty-thousand bhikkhus from Rajagaha of Great school (Mahāyāna) that was headed by thera Indagutta, twelve thousand bhikkhus from Isipatana, sixty-thousand bhikkhus from Jetārāma-vihāra, eighteen-thousand bhikkhus from Mahāvana in Vesāli, headed by Ūrubuddharakkhita, thirty-thousand bhikkhus from Ghoṣitārāma in Kosambi headed by Ūrudhammarakkhita, forty-thousand bhikkhus from Dakkhinagiri in Ujjaini headed by Ūrusaṅgharakkhita, one hundred and sixty-thousand bhikkhus from Aśokārāma in Puppapura headed by Mititinna, two hundred and eighty-thousand bhikkhus from Kāśmira headed by Uttinna, four hundred and sixty thousand bhikkhus from Pallavabhoga headed by Mahādeva, thirty thousand bhikkhus from Alasanda, the city of Yona headed by Yonamahādhammarakkhita, sixty thousand bhikkhus from the Viñjhā mountain headed by bikkhu Uttara, sixty-thousand bhikkhus from Bodhimanda-vihāra headed by bikkhu Cittagutta, eight-thousand ascetics from the Vanavāsa headed by bikkhu Candagutta, ninty-six thousand bhikkhus from Kelāsa-vihāra headed by Sūriyagutta have arrived at the particular occasion. See *Mv.* Ch.XXIX, 29-45. The chronicle further describes the departure of Silākāla, son of Dāṭhāpabhūti (537 CE), who fled to India, stayed and participated in the ceremony of world-renunciation in the Bodhimanda-vihāra in India. In his return to the country during the reign of Moggallana I/II (537 CE-556 CE) possessed of the Hair Relic of the Buddha and handed it over to the king. The king has preserved it in a crystal casket, and instituted a sacrificial festival in honor of the Buddha. See *Cv.* Ch. XXXIX 44-52. In addition to chronicler descriptions, the Nāgarjuṇakoṇḍa inscription of the *Sihala vihāra* belonging to the 2nd century CE states that the *stūpa* erected by a devotee was dedicated to the elder monks of Sri Lanka (*Tambapanni*). See below 6.3 for further details.

⁵ Lyon Sprague de Camp, “Welsh and Other Indians” in *Lost Continents: The Atlantis Theme in History, Science, and Literature*. (USA: Dover Publications, 1970), 138: For abstract see *Nature* **119**, 65-66 (08

Whether this theory really applies to developments of Buddhist culture in Sri Lanka, however, needs to be reviewed with reference to all aspects before its application to the Buddha image is examined.

6.1.2 Sri Lankan Buddhist Literature

Three specific literary activities had taken place in Sri Lanka and no prototypes for them have been traced in India.

1. The compilation of the commentaries of Tripitaka, which is attributed to Mahinda, in the local language of the country, namely Sinhala. Internal evidence of the vast volume of commentaries, known as *Sīhala Aṭṭhakathā*, shows that the activity had gone on until at least the first century CE. They were held as authoritative interpretations of the Buddhist doctrine by Indian scholars as indicated by the fact that Buddhaghoṣa, Dhammapāla, and Buddhadatta translated them into Pāli in the fifth century CE.

2. The council of composing the Pāli Tripitaka and the Sinhala commentaries on it were reduced to writing with the participation of five-hundred monks at the Alu-Vihāre, Matale, for the very first time in the first century BCE. The particular council was undertaken during the period of King Vaṭṭagāmaṇī Abhaya (29 BCE-17 BCE), which was till then transmitted through oral tradition from teacher to pupil.⁶ No record of reducing the Buddhist canon to writing is thus far found in India.

January 1927), accessed December 13, 2011. doi:10.1038/119065a.

www.nature.com/nature/journal/v119/n2984/abs/119065a0.html : Wickramasinghe, *Aspects of Sinhalese Culture*, 10

⁶ *Mv. Ch.XXXIII*, 100-01: M. B. Ariyapala, *Society in Medieval Ceylon*. 2nd print. (Ceylon: Department of Cultural Affairs, 1968), 12

3. A detailed historical record of the advent and progress of Buddhism in Sri Lanka that was maintained in historical sections of the *Sīhala Aṭṭhakathā* provided reliable historical data for an extensive literature of chronicles such as *Dīpavaṃsa*, *Mahāvaṃsa*, *Thūpavaṃsa*, *Bodhivaṃsa*, *Dhātuvavaṃsa* etc., which were written down during the 3rd-5th centuries CE, as well as *Pūjavalīya* belonging to the 13th century CE. India does not provide such evidence with regard to its historical tradition that sustains its historical relationship with the neighboring countries.

6.1.3 Sri Lankan Buddhist Architecture

Likewise, Sri Lankan art and architecture, too, make available many examples of architectural specimens, which are indigenous innovations. Architectural constructions that belong to the early period of the country testify to their independent evolution in the country;

1. The **Cetiya** (fig.6.1a1, 6.1a2, & 1b), a mansion to house a *stūpa* whose earliest known examples are found in the *Thūpārāma* and the *Laṅkāraṃa stūpas* at Anuradhapura. Referring to *Caiyaprāsāda* and *Caityagr̥ha* that are mentioned as a special feature of Lanka in the *Rāmāyaṇa*,⁷ Ananda Guruge emphasises that such evidence are based on the existing evidence of early centuries of the Christian era. He states; “The use of *prāsāda* and *Gr̥ha* to qualify the Caityas of Lankā is very important because it distinguishes between the two types of Caityas. Those of Northern India are not constructions; they were probably trees, rocks and other objects of worship.”⁸ Senarat Paranvithana examining the unique nature of the Sri Lankan *stūpas* states; “The type was

⁷ Raghunathan, trans., *Srīmad Vālmikī Rāmāyaṇam*, 5 n176: Raghavan, *India in Ceylonese History, Society and Culture*, 8 (see chap.5. n.177)

⁸ Ananda W.P. Guruge, *The Society of the Rāmāyaṇa*. (Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1991), 265

not unknown in India, being represented in bas-relief as well as by a few rock-cut examples. In India itself, however, the wooden apsidal caitya-hall replaced the circular shrine at a very early date. In Ceylon (Sri Lanka), the circular shrine continued to be in vogue up to the fifth century.”⁹ Nothing similar or closer to *cetiya*ghara has been found in India.

2. The incorporation of many new features into the *stūpa* construction of Sri Lanka for those no association can be traced in the Indian *stūpas*. Following are some of the unique elements of Sri Lankan *stūpas*;

- I The gigantic volume of the dome (**dhātugarbha**) in ancient *stūpas* i.e. Ruvanvālisāya (Mahātūpa) (**fig.6.2a**), Tissamahārāma (**fig.6.2b**), Abhayagiri (**fig.6.2c1 & 2c2**), and Jetavana (**fig.6.2d1 & 2d2**), the last being the second tallest building in the world for many centuries next to the Great Pyramid of Egypt.
- II The compression of the multiple parasols (*cattra*) popularly known as the **kotkārālla** into a conical finial or spire, which typically grew from the square-shaped base (*satarās kotuva*) atop the dome, agreeing with the architectural proportions of the *stūpas*. The finest of such is considered the spire of Ruvanvālisāya (*mahātūpa*). (See **fig.6.2a**).
- III. The architectural frontpiece (**Vāhalkada**), which is an architectural element “projected from the base of the *stūpas* at the four cardinal points,”¹⁰ the finest examples are found at Kanṭaka cetiya in Mihintale (2nd-3rd centuries BCE)

⁹ Senarat Paranavitana, *JRASCB*, Vol. XCVIII (No. 4822, 592-93) in Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, 54; Raghavan, *India in Ceylonese History, Society and Culture*, 95

¹⁰ Paranavitana, *The Art of the Ancient Sinhalese*, 9

(**fig.6.3a& 6.3b**), whereas the Abhayagiri and Jetavana monasteries provide some aesthetically mature examples.

3. The typical image house (**Patimāghara**) that Senarat Paranavitana refers to a type of image house found in Sri Lanka. “The second architectural type distinctive of Ceylon is the brick-built shrine with vaulted roof and massive walls that is rising from a heavily moulded plinth. The type is not exactly paralleled in India itself or in any other region influenced by the Indian culture.”¹¹

4. The **Padhānaghara**, a unique and major architectural innovation in the country,¹² which facilitated the monks to meditate in the forest (Tapovana), away from city dwelling. The Padhānaghara on the western side of the ancient city of Anuradhapura is remarkable due to its unique double-platformed plan.¹³ The finest example so far found is at the Ritigala monastery (**fig.6.4a & 4b**). No examples or models can be found outside Sri Lanka. Equally specific to Sri Lanka is the orderly plan of the residences for monks to which two references are made in the *Mahāvamsa*: 1. Gatabandha,¹⁴ and 2.

Pancāvāsa.¹⁵ Jean Boisselier refers to the precise overall scheme as follows:

Recent research has suggested that such regular plans are a characteristic of the monasteries of the Dharmarucika sect, the sect associated with the Abhayagiri Vihāra. In much simplified term, they can be defined as consisting of two concentric precincts, appropriately square in plan. The other enclosure...contained monk’s living quarters, it was bound by a wall, usually reinforced by a ditch...¹⁶

¹¹ Paranavitana, *JRASCB*, Vol. XCVIII (No. 4822, 592-93) in Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, 54; Raghavan, *India in Ceylonese History, Society and Culture*, 95

¹² Senaka Bandaranayake, *Sinhalese Monastic Architecture: The Viharas of Anuradhapura*. (Netherlands: Institute of South Asian Archaeology, University of Amsterdam, 1974), 215

¹³ “Anuradhapura Heritage Site” www.ccf.lk/anuradhapura. Accessed May 22, 2011

¹⁴ *Mv* Ch. XXXIII, 99

¹⁵ *Mv*. Ch. XXXVI, 29

¹⁶ Jean Boisselelier, *Ceylon: Sri Lanka*, trans., from the French by James Hogarth, *Archaeologia Mundi*, (Geneva: Nagel Cop, 1979), 60-61

5. The **Bodhighara**, literally a house for the Bodhi tree, which is a pillared podium surrounding the Bodhi Tree, the images of the Buddha are occasionally placed either in front or at the four cardinal directions (see **fig.5.13a1, a2, 5.13b, 5.13c1, & 13c2**). The first of the kind is said to have been erected surrounding the sapling of the original Bodhi tree that was brought by Saṅghamittā (**fig.5.13a1 & a2**), for which no evidence can be traced in India.

6.1.4 Sri Lankan Buddhist sculpture

Similar to its architectural implications in Sri Lankan Buddhist art, one can also find evidence of sculptural innovations for which no evidence or impulse can be traced from India. The following examples testify to its particular establishment.

1. **Sankadapahaṇa** (Moonstone/threshold-stone)—(*Irahandagala* or *Sankadapahaṇa* in Sinhalese, *Padmasilam* in Tamil, and *arohacandraka pāṣāṇa* in Sanskrit) — (**fig.6.5**),
2. **Koravakgala** (balustrade), all of which constitute the doorway-complex of Sri Lankan shrines that was elaborately sculpted with figures of animals, dwarfs and floral designs (**fig.6.6**),
3. Muragal or Dvārapāla (Guardstones) (**fig.6.7**).

Although it is suggestive that the existence of similar element of Sankadapahaṇa in Indian temple architecture, particularly at Amarāvati, at the entrance of the building or shrine, or at other doorways,¹⁷ it has assumed its distinct individuality as a beautiful work of art in Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. There is nothing artistically comparable in

¹⁷ Raghavan, *India in Ceylonese History, Society and Culture*, 94

India.¹⁸ The best preserved and aesthetically comprehensive moonstone is found from the Queen's Pavilion (Biso Māḷigāva), Anuradhapura (**fig.6.5**) while its later implications are evident at the four entrances of the four cardinal points at Vatadāge (Circular House) at Polonnaruwa. The particular architectural element is seen in bas relief sculpture of Nāgārajuṅakonda and Amarāvati. Senarat Paranavitana assumes that “the motif must have come to Sri Lanka from the Āndhra country, but it had the fullest development in Sinhalese art. A borrowing from Ceylon by Indian sculptors is not out of question.”¹⁹

Incorporated with the Moonstone, the other two elements; 1) the architectural balustrade (Koravakgala) terminating with the face of dragon (makara)²⁰ or lion (siṅha), and 2) the Guardstone with the figures of cobras (*nāga* or *nāginī*) with 3-9 hoods in the human form, dwarfs, or vāmana figures, or guardian deities are distinctive sculptural elements in Sri Lankan Buddhist art tradition. With regard to the architectural balustrades, the well preserved example is found at the entrance of Thūpārāma, whereas the one erected at Ratna Pāsāda is considered the finest of the particular implication (**fig.6.6**). From its mouth issues ornamented scrolls, which are curling downwards into the volutes. Not only do these architectural members provide ample scope for decorative embellishments, but they also have developed a few elements that are unique to Sri Lanka. Nonetheless, the implication of the guardstone, placed at the footsteps leading to stūpa, or Bodhighara i. e. in Thūpārāma, Laṅkāārāma, Ruvanvālisāya, and Sri Mahā Bodhi tree, display different types of Guardstones, whereas the best preserved one with a nine-hooded cobra is found from the Ratna pāsāda of Anuradhapura (**fig.6.7**). “It is cut out of one large block of granite and contains a richly carved janitor. The figure is a usual

¹⁸ Wijesekara, *Early Sinhalese Sculpture*, 62

¹⁹ Paranavitana, *Sinhalayo*, 1970, 37

²⁰ Wijesekara, *Early Sinhalese Sculpture*, 69

Nāgarāja, heavily jeweled and holding a flower filled vase in the left hand, a flowering creeper in the right.”²¹ A typical illustration of Guardian deities i.e. Padmanidhi and Saṅkhanidhi are evident at the northern entrance of the Abhayagiri monastery.

Conversely, the few pieces so far found in Sri Lanka of the sculpted panels depicting the scenes from the life of the Buddha are considered to be the imported panels from India. The fact is that there are no sculptures similar to what was found in India in Bhārhut, Sānchi or Amarāvati depicting the life of the Buddha without the Buddha image have been discovered in the island (see **fig.5.20a, 20b1, 20b2, & 20c**).

The sheer number of the above-mentioned features, their geographical and chronological distribution in the island, and their distinctive artistic quality confirm that all aspects of Sri Lankan Buddhist culture are independent of Indian originals or prototypes. It is with this fact in mind that I proceed to analyze the iconographic features of the Sri Lankan Buddha image to determine whether the Sri Lankan Buddha image, too, had an independent origin.

6.2 Current theories and conclusions on the origin and evolution of the Sri Lankan Buddha image.

Before moving on to the particular analysis of detailed iconographical characteristics of the Sri Lankan Buddha image, it is necessary to review the current theories, conclusions, and disputes of scholars with regard to the subject. They will be examined in relation to literary evidence as well as the earliest available Buddha images in Anuradhapura.

²¹ Wijesekara, *Early Sinhalese Sculpture*, 72

6.2.1 Literary references to ancient Buddha images in Sri Lanka

6.2.1.1 Stone Buddha image attributed to king Devānampiyatissa (247 BCE-207 BCE)

As already discussed (in Chapter 5.3.1), the *Mahāvamsa* mentions that a beautiful and large stone statue (Ūrusilāpaṭimā) of the Buddha, placed at the Thūpārāma in Anuradhapura by King Devānamapiyatissa (247 BCE-207 BCE) was moved by Jetṭhatissa I (323 CE-333 CE) to *Pācīnatissapabbata vihāra*.²² Thūpārāma, the very first Buddhist shrine to be erected in Sri Lanka at the instance of Mahinda, was by King Devānampiyatissa. Similarly, a sixth century inscription enables us to identify *Pācīnatissapabbata vihāra* with a monastery named *Pācīnatisapavata* just outside Anuradhapura to the east.²³ As Vincent A. Smith noted in 1911, “Dated dedicatory inscriptions, as common in India, are rare in the Island, and the principal monuments have been subject to such extensive alterations at various times that it is almost impossible to distinguish the sculptures of different periods.”²⁴ As a result, it has not been possible to identify any of the statues in and around Anuradhapura with the image under reference.

J.Ph.Vogel, in 1936, referred to a “colossal statue (8 feet high) carved in very dark granite which is hidden in the forest of Anuradhapura,” [and described it as] showing the Buddha seated in the attitude of meditation with folded legs and the hands resting in the lap. “This well-preserved image is a grand work of art in which mental repose is admirably expressed.”²⁵ Without any further information to locate this statue, it is in no way possible to ascertain its antiquity.

²² *Mv.* Ch. XXXVI. 128-30: *Vp.* Ch. XXXVI. 128-129 (see Chap.5.n.57)

²³ *EZ.* Vol. I. 282-4

²⁴ Smith, *A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, 86-87

²⁵ Vogel and Barnouw, *Buddhist Art in India, Ceylon and Java*, 85

In 1956, Walpola Rahula in his *History of Buddhism in Ceylon: The Anuradhapura Period (3rd C.BC-10th C. AD)*, made the following comment ending with a pertinent question:

If we accept this statement, Ceylon had the earliest Buddha image in the world. Merely because we don't find Buddha images among the early sculptures at Sānchi and Bhārhut, it is not logical to conclude that there were no Buddha images made in the 3rd century BC anywhere else either. One is tempted to ask whether Devānampiyatissa's Buddha image is the same as the celebrated sedentary statue of the Buddha in Samādhi at Anuradhapura.²⁶

D.T. Devendra in his *The Buddha Image and Ceylon* in 1957 emphasized that the seated Samādhi image of Mahamevunā Uyana (outer circular road, Abhayagiriya —see **fig.7.28a**) was “the great and beautiful Buddha image that was made by the king Devānampiyatissa.”²⁷ He further stated: “The fact that there was in Ceylon no aniconic Buddhist art can be interpreted in one way alone, that, as the *Mahāvamsa* says, the Buddha image was in vogue from the very beginning of the religious art in the land.”²⁸ Most significant to the present study is his following argument: “nobody explores the possibility that Ceylon may have influenced India”²⁹ and concluded in his *Classical Sinhalese Sculpture: 300 BC-AD 1000* in 1958 as “this would be the earliest Buddha image anywhere in the Buddhist world. In size this Buddha is monumental. The robe is merely indicated by its upper edge. Simplicity is of its essence and yet it creates profoundly a sense of power, not as it was by its size, but by the spirit that glows from it.”³⁰

²⁶ Rahula, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon: The Anuradhapura Period*, 122-124

²⁷ Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, 38, 67

²⁸ Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, 50

²⁹ Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, 62

³⁰ Devendra, *Classical Sinhalese Sculpture: 300 BC-AD 1000*, 13

Benjamin Rowland refuted the reliability of the chronicler descriptions assuming the constant changing of the building architecture in the country. “Often these descriptions are invaluable in enabling us to reconstruct the original appearance of the temples almost totally destroyed or remodeled; no less important are the accounts of the methods of building and the ceremonies attending the dedication of the shrines.”³¹

In 1964, P. L. Prematilleke too, refuted D.T. Devendra saying, “We may understand the reference made to the existence of the Buddha image in the 3rd century BC as an attempt to stamp the impress of alleged antiquity to an important image of the 3rd century AD.”³²

Martin Wickremasinghe (1967) contributed to the discussion with the following comments:

As Buddhist culture was developing in Ceylon in isolation in a predominantly Buddhist environment, the Ceylon sculptors had ample opportunities to develop independently the image of the Buddha according to the tradition of Theravada Buddhism. There was a perpetual cultural conflict in old India because of three main religions, Buddhism, Brahmanism, and Jainism. Later Buddhist culture and religion became the source of fierce sectarian quarrels in India. Buddhist culture of Ceylon was free from these disturbing influences until, at least, the 8th century in spite of occasional attempts of Indian monks to introduce heretical doctrines...³³

He continues,

In Ceylon, there was no Vedic tradition or oligarchic culture, which discouraged congregational worship. Buddhism quickly developed as a congregational religion. Feudal lords and the peasants mixed up in worship of the Buddhist symbols such as the white domed stūpa, Bodhi tree, under which the Buddha attained Buddhahood, and the Buddha image... In Ceylon, we have no archaeological or literary evidence as pointed out by D.T. Devendra to encourage

³¹ Rowland, *Art and architecture of India*, 198

³² P.L. Prematilleke, “Religious Architecture and Sculpture of Ceylon” (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1964), 220

³³ Wickramasinghe, “The Development of the Buddha image in Ceylon,” 51

us surmise that early Buddhists substituted aniconic symbols to represent the person of the Buddha as happened in India.³⁴

He concludes with the following in his *Buddhism and Art*, in 1972:

Unrestrained by the Vedic tradition and the culture of a sacerdotal caste, Ceylon monks and sculptors could have made the Buddha image earlier than it was made in India. Therefore, the reference in the *Mahāvamsa* to the Buddha image made in Ceylon earlier than in India cannot be ignored... The making of the Buddha image in India developed as a commercial enterprise which was exploited by other religionists, too. In Ceylon, the making of the Buddha image developed not as commercial art but as religious art under guidance of monks and sculptors who derived inspiration from their devotional worship.³⁵

A rather contrasting view of the Sri Lankan Buddha image was expressed by John C. Huntington in his *A Note on a Buddha Image from China Dated to the Year 36 of the Pre-Christian Era* (1986).

It is interesting to note that in Sri Lanka, the bastion of Theravāda Buddhism in the modern world, the question of the origin of the Buddha image is a moot point. According to tradition, the first image in the Island was carved at Isurumuṇiya vihāra at Anuradhapura in the third century of the pre-Christian era either at the behest of Mahinda [Asoka's son (younger brother)] or by his contemporaries. The surviving image at the site is so covered with modern refurbishments that it is impossible to determine anything from the image itself. However, the tradition alone negates the commonly held notion that early Buddhist art was ipso facto "Hīnayāna" because it presumably lacked the images of the Buddha.³⁶

Ananda Guruge contributing to the *Mahāvamsa's* reference agrees with D.T. Devendra's statement (1958), and stated:

No statue has been ascribed to Devānampiyatissa in spite of the exhaustive account of his services to Buddhism. Apparently the statue concerned belonged to a later period though tradition had ascribed it great antiquity. If, on the other hand, such a statue was made in the reign of Devānampiyatissa, Sri Lanka could claim the earliest Buddha statue to be made anywhere."³⁷

³⁴ Wickramasinghe, "The Development of the Buddha image in Ceylon," 53

³⁵ Martin Wickramasinghe, *Buddhism and Art*. (Colombo: M.D. Gunasena, 1972), 22-23, 70

³⁶ John C. Huntington, "A Note on a Buddha Image from China Dated to the Year 36 of the Pre-Christian Era (Former Han Chien Chao Third Year)" *Lalit Kalā*, No.22, A Journal of Oriental Art: Chiefly Indian, ed. Karl Khandalavala. (New Delhi: Secretary of the Lalit Kala Acadami, 1986), 28 n3

³⁷ *Mv* (AG), Ch. XXXVI, n107

Ulrich Van Schroeder in 1990 advanced a more detailed argument to suggest a Buddha image could not have come into existence in Sri Lanka until the Abhayagiri monastery was established. He stated;

The oldest known Sinhalese Buddha statues point to the introduction of the image cult by the heterodox fraternity of the Abhayagiri Vihāra at Anuradhapura. Their opponents at the rival Mahāvihāra at Anuradhapura, as the compilers of the chronicles, may have felt compelled to increase the age and appeal of their Buddha images to give their form of worship a greater antiquity. It is conspicuous that only two references to Buddha images are found in the 5th century AD Pāli commentaries of Buddhaghōṣa. These are in connection with the enshrining of relics. Not a single reference is found with regard to the image houses, whereas the chronicles contain several references to both the images and image houses. Could this be an indication of the fact that the cult image of the Buddha had not been fully accepted by the Theravādins in the 5th century AD? All the remains in the Buddha images found at Mahāvihāra complex at Anuradhapura appear to be later than the ones discovered at Abhayagiriya Vihāra complex, and they do not actually predate the 6th century AD. There are several theories about the absence of references to image houses in the Pāli commentaries which do not endorse the view that the Buddha image had been the object of worship in the Mahāvihāra since the earlier period. The sculptural remains lead us to believe that the image cult emerged at the Abhayagiri Vihāra earlier than the Mahāvihāra.³⁸

The weakest point in Schroeder's *argumentum ex silencio* is that Buddhaghōṣa's commentaries have only two references to Buddha images. A careful study of these commentaries would have shown that any information on Sri Lankan history in them are anterior to the first century CE by which time the Sinhala commentaries (*Sīhala Aṭṭhakathā*) which he translated into Pāli had ceased to evolve. In any case much more cogent evidence has to be adduced to establish that "the cult image of the Buddha had not been fully accepted by" the Mahāvihāra "Theravādins." Accordingly, Schroeder's view that 'the oldest known Sinhalese Buddha statues point to the introduction of the image

³⁸ Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, 27-28

cult by the heterodox fraternity of the Abhayagiri Vihāra at Anuradhapura,”³⁹ demands further proof.

While the issue of whether a statue of the Buddha was placed at Thūpārāma by Devānampiyatissa in the third century BCE or not, may not be conclusively resolved, the earlier views that prevailed: the Sri Lankan Buddhist art developed directly under Indian influence is not universally accepted. Equally undecided is the issue whether early Buddhism as represented by the Theravāda school of Mahāvihāra had any reservation about depicting the Buddha in the human form. In this respect, Schroeder’s quotations that are derived from *Cullavagga* and *Visuddhimagga* as the evidence of the Buddha’s prohibition to the paintings of human figures in the monastic cells are discussed in Chapter II, and do not support his assumption; “it is very hard to believe that there was any motivation for the monks of the Mahāvihāra to have cultivated the Buddha-image worship independently from, and earlier than India.”⁴⁰

6.2.1.2 Buddha image or images in the Relic chamber of Mahātūpa

The emphasis of the particular reference is a Buddha image made by Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya (101 BCE-77 BCE) in gold and decorated with jewels of different colors, and placed in the relic chamber of Ruvanvālisāya (Mahātūpa).⁴¹

Long before enshrined Buddha images in metal were found in Mihintale (see **fig.7.24**), Ananda Coomaraswamy in 1927 stated in his *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, “As regards the image, some doubt may be entertained as to the existence of the

³⁹ Ulrich Von Schroeder, *The Golden Age of the Sculpture in Sri Lanka: Masterpieces of Buddhist and Hindu Bronzes from museums of Sri Lanka*. (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications, 1992), 23

⁴⁰ Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures in Sri Lanka*, 99

⁴¹ *Mv. Ch. XXX.72-76* (see Chap. 5. n.106, 107)

Buddha figure in the first century B.C., but it is not impossible that images of precious metal were made long before any stone.”⁴²

A contradictory assumption was given by P. E. E. Fernando of the veracity of the chronicler statement of the particular Buddha image placed in the relic chamber:

It is not possible to ascertain the veracity of this statement, as no examination has so far been made for the relic chamber of the stūpa... Buddha image that can be referred to such an early date have not been found in Ceylon. It is possible that the Mahāvamsa was actually attributing to the first century BC, a practice that was current in the 6th century AD when the chronicle was compiled. But there is no substantial reason to discredit this account, for it is quite possible that by this time (1st century BC) the practice of making images of the Buddha had been introduced to Ceylon from India. The people of ancient Ceylon attempted till the 1st century BC the making of Buddha images, (or) probably later.⁴³

Nandadeva Wijesekara in 1962 in his *Early Sinhalese Sculpture* agreed with Ananda Coomaraswamy, and stated;

This is the earliest reference we have to the Buddha image and it is noteworthy that it is made in precious metal and gems. This is natural and is to be expected. Similar images existed at all cardinal points of the Thūpa. Other events in which the Buddha may have depicted here and there in the relic chambers were the scenes from the Buddha's life from the Sambodhi to his death. These are the scenes as depicted in the Buddhist monuments in India where the presence of the Buddha is shown by a symbol. It is not certain if a similar symbolism was followed in these scenes. But the bold fact remains that his image is mentioned and hence there is no reason to doubt his presence.⁴⁴

Charles Godakumbura (1964) in his *Budu Piḷima=Buddha Statues* emphasized the consistency of the literary references with regard to the golden image of the Duṭṭhagāmaṇi Abhaya that was placed in the relic chamber of Mahātūpa, and assumes that the Buddha image as a ceremonial object was in vogue, prior to its establishment as an object of worship. He believes that the existence of the Buddha image was first

⁴² Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 160

⁴³ P.E.E. Fernando, “Art and Crafts of Ancient Ceylon from Pali and Sinhala Literature Sources” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1953), 82-3

⁴⁴ Wijesekara, *Early Sinhalese Sculpture*, 205

evident under the Bodhi tree as a receptacle to enshrine the relics when it was placed on the throne (*vajrāsana*), or it was simply an object that was placed in the relic chamber among one of the reliquaries.⁴⁵

Ananda Guruge in 1989, in his translation of the chronicle observed the particular reference, and criticized G. C. Mendis's explanation:

This is the earliest instance recorded in Mahāvamsa of making a Buddha image in Sri Lanka. That would mean that the representation of the Buddha in human form started in the island about the same time (if not a little earlier than) its appearance in Greco-Bactrian art. G. C. Mendis notes that 'the making of images of the Buddha is first mentioned in 35.89. This is not correct.⁴⁶

Any reservation with regard to the Buddha image enshrined in the relic chamber of the Mahātūpa is refuted by the excavation of the relic chamber of an ancient stūpa to the west of the Mahāsāya, Mihintale (**fig.7.24**). Three Buddha images had been enshrined in it as described by Senarat Paranavitana:

On each side of the chamber, there is a niche on the wall, at a height of 9 in. from the floor. The niche on the western side contained a bronze Buddha image with traces of gilding, 5 ¾ in. in height, seated in the dhyāna mudrā, it is in an excellent state of preservation, and has to be counted among the most artistic Buddha images in metal so far brought light in Ceylon. Two other images of the Buddha, 2 in. and 2 ¼ in. in height, respectively modeled out of some kind of paste and covered with gold foil, were picked up from the floor. These evidently had been deposited in two of the niches. The glitter of the precious metal does not compensate for the artistically poor quality of these two images.⁴⁷

The Brāhmi letters found from several bricks of the site, appear belonging to the pre-Christian era, and therefore, the stūpa as well the images must belong to the same era.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Godakumbura, *Budu Piḷima= Buddha Statues*, 18

⁴⁶ G.C. Mendis exposed the particular statement in the Adendum of Geiger's Translation of *Mahāvamsa* in 1980. For the particular reference see *Mv* (WG), 309, n72. For Ananda Guruge's statement see *Mv* (AG). Ch.XXX, n47

⁴⁷ Paranavitana, *Glimpses of Ceylon's Past*, 68, Pl. IX

⁴⁸ Paranavitana, *Glimpses of Ceylon's Past*, 65, 69

In addition to what Paranavitana attests, Martin Wickramasinghe's description of the archaeological findings of Ruvanvālisāya (Mahātūpa) enumerates its accountability:

[T]he discovery of a few Buddha figures made of metal, and gold ornaments by a religious society in the course of restoration work at the Ruvanveli seya attracted the attention of the Buddhists all over Ceylon...[A]n earthenware casket covered with a lid and containing reliquaries of gold and crystal...many caskets, some of lime-stone and others of terracotta, with contents of the same type but of varying richness.⁴⁹

This discovery disproves the following statement of U.V. Schroeder in his *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*:

It has to be faced that not a single known Buddha image prior to Polonnaruva period can be accurately dated on the basis of a dated inscription. Under these circumstances, any proposed chronology of the Sinhalese Buddhist sculpture will have to depend first of all on material and style, modified by information on the various locations of the discovery.⁵⁰

6.2.1.3 King Vasabha's four beautiful Buddha images and the image-house in the compound of the Bodhi tree (127 CE-171 CE)⁵¹

The significance of the particular reference is the veneration of the Buddha image that was placed in an image house. Noting the location of these images within the compound of the Bodhi Tree, Charles Godakumbura in his *Budu Piḷima=Buddha Statues* in 1964 noted:

This points to the fact that while a Buddha statue had been sculptured almost simultaneously with the advent of the Buddhism, it was, however, some time before the statue by itself, became an object of veneration. Thus, the statue placed under the artificial Bodhi Tree enshrined in the relic chamber of the Ruvanveliseya in the day of Duṭṭagāmiṇi (161-137 B.C.), the four images of Vasabha (214-236 AD.), and the statue seen by Fa-Hien (beginning of 5th century A.D.), all yielded pride of place to the Bodhi-tree...An originally empty vajrāsana probably on the east side of the Bodhi-tree would subsequently have been supplied with a statue. The first statue we hear of i.e. the one made by

⁴⁹ Paranavitana, *Glimpses of Ceylon's Past*, 43

⁵⁰ Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, 20

⁵¹ *Mv. Ch. XXXV.87-89* (see Chap.5, n.142, 143)

Devānampiyatissa, may also have been placed in like manner near the Bodhi-tree at Thūpārāma. With the passage of time the Buddha statue rose in importance from being an appurtenance of the Bodhi-tree to be an object of veneration.⁵²

In addition to the particular seated image, he also believes in having the standing images near the Bodhi shrine. According to his description, “the first standing statue of the Buddha may have been placed in the north-eastern quarter of the ground of the *Bodhi*-tree and must have been in the attitude of *animisalocana* (fixed-gaze).⁵³

Ananda Guruge, referring the following statement of *Mahāvamsa*, stated,

This is considered to be the first reference to Buddha images which were housed in an image-house as opposed to images which were said to have been made for the relic chamber of the Great Thūpa. The emergence of the image-house as a component of the monastic complex in the reign of Vasabha is indeed noteworthy as it was exactly around the same time that the Buddha image made its first appearance in and around the northwest of the Indian subcontinent.⁵⁴

No information of placing the Buddha image in an image house has been found from Indian evidence. The latest evidence so far found from the 6th century CE, belonging to the Gupta period or later, in Ajantā caves, in which the Buddha image was placed in front of the small stūpa, erected in the distant corner of the vestibule of the cave temples (*caitya śālā*) i.e. Ajantā & Ellora (See **fig.4.40a, 40b, 40c, & 40d**). Thus, the Sri Lankan concept of placing the Buddha image in an image house is an independently developed tradition for which no relevance can be attached to Indian prototypes.

⁵² Godakumbura, *Budu Piḷima= Buddha Statues*, 18-19

⁵³ Godakumbura, *Budu Piḷima= Buddha Statues*, 19

⁵⁴ *Mv* (AG), Ch. XXXV, n61

6.2.1.4 Statues seen by Fa-Xian in Anuradhapura

Fa-Xian, in his travel accounts of Tāmralipti (the name given to Sri Lanka by his time) where he stayed for two years by writing sūtras and drawing pictures of images,⁵⁵ emphatically describes the religious environment in the country. Particularly, in his accounts, there are two references to the existing images of the Buddha in the city.

1. By the side of the tope he further built a monastery called Abhayagiri, where there are (now) five thousand monks. There is in it a hall of Buddha, adorned with carved and inlaid work of gold and silver, and rich in the seven precious substances, in which there is an image (of Buddha) in green jade, more than twenty cubits in height, glittering all over with those substances, and having an appearance of solemn dignity which words cannot express. In the palm of the right hand there is a priceless pearl.⁵⁶

2. A former king in the country had sent to the Central India and got a slip of the patra tree, which he planted by the side of the hall of Buddha, where a tree grew up to the height of about 200 cubits... Beneath the tree there has been built a vihara, in which there is an image (of the Buddha), seated which the monks and the community of reverence look up to without ever becoming wearied.⁵⁷

There is no evidence to support Godakumbura's statement that "the statue seen by Fa-Hien (beginning of 5th century A.D.), all yielded pride of place to the Bodhi-tree."⁵⁸ Yet, this statement is significant as it is in an eyewitness account of a foreign pilgrim to the Island who spent as long as two years at Abhayagiri monastery.

6.2.2 Ancient Buddha images hitherto discovered in Sri Lanka

H.C.P. Bell's *First Report on the Archaeological Survey of Anuradhapura* (ASCAR) in 1890 states with reference to **fig.7.28d** (seated Buddha image found from Toluville) as follows;

⁵⁵ Legge, trans., *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms*, 100

⁵⁶ Legge, trans., *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms*, 102

⁵⁷ Legge, trans., *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms*, 103-4

⁵⁸ Godakumbura, *Budu Piḷima= Buddha Statues*, 18-19

The wonderful sharpness and depth of the features, the softness of expression, the symmetry and repose of the body, give the image a *tout ensemble*, which contrasts markedly with the solid 'figure-head' appearance as characteristic of these Buddhas in stone. **The eye-lids, the under-lips, and ears are carved with a life-like reality not reached in the case of the other Buddhas already known. The nose is chipped, but so lightly as to be practically unnoticeable from the front; the fingers are somewhat worn, and there are a few cracks. With these sight blemishes the Sage sits as serenely contemplative as when votaries flocked to worship and make their offerings upon the altar. The figure is rather flat-chested.**⁵⁹ [Emphasis mine].

In 1911 Vincent A. Smith in his *A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon* noted:

Ceylon is rich in sculpture of many kinds beginning probably as in India, from the third century before Christ. Ferguson's belief is that the 'almost total absence of sculpture was one of the striking peculiarities of Ceylonese art' that has been disproved abundantly by the fruitful researches of the Archaeological Commissioner and his staff. But, it is very extremely difficult to affix a date, even approximate, to the numerous specimens of the Ceylonese sculptor's skill.⁶⁰

He continued further:

Large and colossal images of Buddha, seated, standing, or recumbent, are numerous in the Island, some of which undoubtedly must be very ancient. One of the oldest, probably, is a battered figure at Tantirimale, which wears a conical cap, and is believed by Mr. Parker, to date from the beginning of the Christian era.⁶¹ **... One of the best Buddhas of early age is now well-known image from the Toluvila ruins, Anuradhapura, represented in situ in Fig.54, with a native seated beside it in exactly the same attitude. The photograph helps the European reader to realize the facts on which the forms of the canonical images are based.**⁶² [Emphasis mine].

In 1913, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy in his *The Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon* observed the images of Anuradhapura and stated:

The sculpture of Anuradhapura in Ceylon, which would be our best guide to the history of Indian art up to the classic period, had we already the more exact date which stylistic criticism may someday provide. As it is, would appear that the most characteristic examples are in what would be called, in India, the Gupta style. **The design of the earlier statues very closely recalls the (pre-Gupta)**

⁵⁹ H.C.P. Bell, *First Report on the Archaeological Survey of Anuradhapura*, (Colombo, Skeen, 1890), 4

⁶⁰ Smith, *A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, 86

⁶¹ The assumption was stated in H. Parker, *Ancient Ceylon*. (London: Luzac & Co., 1909), 219

⁶² Smith, *A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, 92-3 fig.54

Amaravati standing figures, and at the same time shows an approach to a later type in the transparent clinging drapery.⁶³[Emphasis mine].

Ananda. K. Coomaraswamy, in “*Bronzes from Ceylon, Chiefly in the Colombo Museum,*” in 1914 stated:

From what we now know of ancient metal-work, as well as the stone sculptures of Ceylon, it is clear that from at least the beginning of the Christian era up to the 14th century the development of Ceylonese and Indian art proceeded concurrently and in close relationship; nor is there any Indian art of like size that has yielded an equal number of important examples in both stone and metal...The Buddha figure, especially in the feeling of the right hand, recalls the finds of 6th century bronzes from the Buddhavani in the Madras Presidency; while the Toluville images are not unlike the large stone figures from the same site, now preserved in the grounds of Colombo museum. **The Toluville figures, moreover, to the tradition of the great Anuradhapura Buddha (near Jetvanarama Dagaba), which is certainly the greatest work of art in Ceylon, and is not surpassed in India.**⁶⁴ [Emphasis mine].

Coomaraswamy emphasizes three important points namely that

- a. the development of Sri Lanka and Indian art proceeded concurrently;
- b. India had not yielded any art of like size in equal number as Sri Lanka; and
- c. the Samādhi statue of Toluville (**fig.7.28d**) is the greatest work of art of Sri Lanka and is not surpassed in India.

Again in 1918, in his *Buddhist Primitives*, (in the article “The Dance of Śiva”) he observed the colossal Buddha image on the grounds of Ruvanvālisāya (**see fig.7.2a**), and stated:

This figure of the seated Buddha yogi, with a far deeper content, is as purely monumental art as that of the Egyptian pyramids; and since it represents the greatest ideal which Indian sculpture ever attempted to express, it is well that we find preserved even a few magnificent examples of comparatively early date.

⁶³ A.K. Coomaraswamy, *Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon*. 1913. Reprint. (New York: Noonday Press, 1964), 51-2, fig.2, fig.27: Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 161, fig. 293

⁶⁴ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, “Bronzes from Ceylon, Chiefly in the Colombo Museum,” *Memoirs of Colombo Museum*, Series A. No.1, ed. Joseph Pearson (Colombo: Department of Government Museums, 1914), 6 (this volume was later published as *The Bronzes from Ceylon: Chiefly in Colombo Museum*, (Colombo: Department of Government Printing, 1978)

Among these, the colossal figure at Anuradhapura is currently the best.⁶⁵
[Emphasis mine].

While Coomaraswamy observed some parallels without examining so far as to posit that Sri Lankan art was influenced by Indian prototypes, J.Ph. Vogel in 1936 assumed that the standing images that were discovered on the grounds of Ruvanvālisāya demonstrate similar characteristics of the Amarāvati Buddha images.

In the course of excavations at the Ruvanveli Dāgaba three standing Buddha images of more than life-size have come to light. The arms are broken, but presumably the right hand was raised in the attitude of imparting protection, whilst the left held the monastic robe. **In their general style, and particularly in the treatment of the drapery with its schematic folds, these images exhibit a closer relationship to the Buddha type of Amarāvati.**⁶⁶ [Emphasis mine].

Similarly in 1950, Senarat Paranavitana was emphatic in his view that Sri Lankan art was indebted to Indian prototypes:

The earliest type of the Buddha-image known in Ceylon is that of the Andhra School. A life-size Buddha image of marble, obviously of South Indian origin, has recently been unearthed at an ancient site in Ceylon. There is epigraphical as well as literary evidence to indicate a brisk intercourse between the Buddhists of Ceylon and their co-religionists in the Kistna valley. **It, therefore, seems likely that the school of sculptural art established in Ceylon during the earliest period of its history was a result of the cultural wave which affected the civilization in the time of Asoka and a century or two which immediately followed, which coming in contact with the more mature art of the Andhra country, improved its techniques and modified its styles.**⁶⁷ [Emphasis mine].

Not only did he assume that the higher quality of Sri Lankan art that Bell, Vincent Smith and Coomaraswamy observed as resulted from Sri Lanka improving and modifying “the more mature art of Andhra country,” but also considered that the standing Buddha statues found at Ruvanvālisāya (Mahātūpa) of Anuradhapura (**fig.7.2a, & 7.10c**) to be ‘obviously

⁶⁵ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, “Buddhist Primitives” *The Dance of Shiva: Fourteen Indian Essays*. (New York: Sunwise Turn Inc., 1918), 51

⁶⁶ Vogel, *Buddhist Art in India, Sri Lanka and Java*, 84

⁶⁷ Senarat Paranavitana, *Sinhalese Art and Culture*. (Colombo: Department of Information, 1950), 7-8; Paranavitana, *The Art of the Ancient Sinhalese*, 13

of South Indian origin.’ He also does not seem to have examined the epigraphical evidence in the Nāgārjunaḥkoṇḍa with adequate care.

Further in 1970 in his *Sinhalayo*, Parānavitana showed how he reached the above conclusion:

Intercourse between the Buddhism of Ceylon and those of the Vengi country is attested by the Pāli literature of Ceylon, and the two inscriptions found at Nāgārjunaḥkoṇḍa. It is therefore, certain that the first Buddha image to be made by Ceylon were fashioned by the artists who came from the Vengi country, and trained Ceylon artists to carve the Buddha image from material available locally. The colossal images of the Buddha at the Ruvanvāli Dāgaba at Anuradhapura, of white limestone resembling the Amarāvati marble, must have been the work of these artists who followed the Amarāvati style. **The standing Buddha of Amarāvati has one shoulder uncovered, one hand in the Abhaya mudrā (gesture of protection) and the other is held up to the shoulder in front, and holds the folds of the robe. The folds of the drapery are indicated by schematic lines in relief. In time, the Buddha image made in Ceylon workmanship, have been found in western Java, Celebes, Vietnam and Siam. The earliest seated images do not show the Amarāvati influence, they appear to have been modeled on the Mathurā type of the Buddha.**⁶⁸ [Emphasis mine].

Parānavitana gives the impression that the second sentence in the above statement is a logical conclusion derivable from the first sentence; that is, the literary and inscriptional evidence makes it certain that artists coming from the Amarāvati region trained the Sri Lankan artists *to make the colossal images of the Buddha at the Ruvanvāli Dāgaba at Anuradhapura*. Whether the inscriptions at Nāgārjunaḥkoṇḍa really justify such an interpretation will be examined in depth in the next section of this chapter (6.3), since it is necessary to do so especially because foreign scholars like Benjamin Rowland and Heinrich Zimmer seem to have made the following assertions on the authority of Parānavitana, who declared these images as those of South Indian origin in 1950.

⁶⁸ Parānavitana, *Sinhalayo*, 22-23.

The following is what Benjamin Rowland in his *Art and Architecture of India:*

Buddhist, Hindu, Jain (1953), noted;

The relationship is even more apparent in the fragments of sculpture dating from the second and third centuries A.D. Chief among these examples of Sinhalese carving are a number of Buddha statues originally arranged around the base of the Ruvanveli Dagaba. Two of these dolomite images are standing Buddhas, and a third, traditionally identical in the likeness of Duṭṭagamīṇi, is perhaps more likely the prince Siddhartha. The Buddha figures have an awe-inspiring heretic quality induced by their massive scale of proportions and the rather archaic rigidity of pose. [See fig.6.2a]. **It needs but a glance to see in them the Sinhalese adaptation of the type of Buddha fashioned at Amarāvati under the later Andhra Dynasty. To an even greater degree than the Andhra prototypes these statues have a heaviness and grandeur immediately suggestive of the very earliest Indian Buddha effigies made under the Kushans at Mathurā.**⁶⁹ [Emphasis mine].

Interestingly, the last two sentences are mutually contradictory and had not been explained by Rowland. The question is how the Sinhalese artist could adapt an Amarāvati prototype of later Āndhra Dynasty with the heaviness and grandeur of the Mathurā Buddha of the Kushan period, which were far apart both in time and in space from each other.

Coming to the seated Buddhas, Benjamin Rowland repeated his theory of an amalgam of Āndhra and Kushan prototypes by comparing them to the Katrā Buddha image:

Although some seated Buddhas from Anuradhapura are related to late Āndhra models, the Indian prototype for this statue is to be in such Kushan images as the Buddha from Katrā. We note the same herculean physical proportions and the complete revelation of the form by the sheath-like mantle. In this later aspect and the employment of the snail-shell curls the Anuradhapura image approaches some of the masterpieces of the Gupta period at Sārnāth, although, probably, it is to be dated no later than the third century A.D. In few other representations of the Buddha in yoga trance do we get such a sense of the complete self-absorption and serenity of the Enlightened One. **This impression of the perfect embodiment of the idea of samādhi is conveyed through the very simplicity of the conception; the perfect material equilibrium of the figure connotes the**

⁶⁹ Rowland, *Art and Architecture of India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*, 363, fig.291

perfect mental state of Śākyamuni through the massive stability of the triangular base formed by the locked legs, surmounted by the erect columnar body which supports the perfectly impassive mask-like face.⁷⁰ [Emphasis mine]

Here, he brings a third element of Indian art, namely Gupta art of the fourth to sixth century to emphasize that the Sri Lankan image approached in the third century “some of the master pieces of the Gupta art.” But, in fairness to Rowland, it has to be said that he did observe that the Samādhi statue of Sri Lanka had a unique aspect which he accurately underscored in the part highlighted in the above statement. As Jawahar Lal Nehru had stated;

I know nothing about art, Eastern or Western, and am not competent to say anything about it. I react to it as any untutored layman might do. Some painting or sculpture or building fills me with delight, or moves me and makes me feel a strange emotion; or it just pleases me a little; or it does not affect me at all and I pass it by almost unnoticed; or it repels me. I cannot explain these reactions or speak learnedly about the merits or demerits of works of art. The Buddha statue at Anuradhapura in Ceylon moved me greatly, and a picture of it has been my companion for many years. On the other hand some famous temples in South India, heavy with carving and detail, disturb me and fill me with unease.⁷¹

M.D. Raghavan also observes, “Among the many images of the sitting Buddha, the Toluvi Buddha of Anuradhapura is incomparable for the high standard of its art and for calm serenity of contemplation depicted.”⁷² But Benjamin Rowland attributes the superior quality of such images not to the talent of the Sri Lankan artist but to the nature of the granite which he used:

The seated Buddha images from this early period of Sinhalese sculpture are, if anything, more interesting and aesthetically moving than the examples of the standing type. **As in the statues at Ruvanveli Dāgaba already discussed, the style of the figures of the Buddha in yoga pose has been to a large extent**

⁷⁰ Rowland: *Art and Architecture of India, Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*, 366, fig.294

⁷¹ Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*. 1946. Reprint. (New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1960), 110; Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, 40; W.B. Marcus Fernando, *Ancient City of Anuradhapura*. (Colombo: Archaeological Department, 1971), 49 Pl. XVIII

⁷² Raghavan, *India in Ceylonese History, Culture and Society*, 99

conditioned by the nature of the granite stone, which does not permit any special refinements of carving. The resultant abstraction of form and surface and the largeness of conception bestow upon these figures particularly moving dignity and serenity.⁷³ [Emphasis mine].

Heinrich Zimmer in his *The Art of Indian Asia* (1955), wittingly or otherwise considered the “earliest remains of Sri Lankan art” to be later than the Gupta art of the fourth century CE which evidently contradicts his assumptions regarding the Sri Lankan Buddha image. He emphasizes the constant influence from Indian art in the evolution of the Sri Lankan art:

The earliest remains of Ceylonese art reflects the various traditions of the mainland from which they were derived: the Buddhist art of the first centuries A.D., which flourished under the patronage of the Mongolian Kushan kings in Northern India; the Art of Amaravati and of various other sites within the Andhra domains of the Deccan; the art of Guptas; and the several early medieval styles. The monumental statues of standing Buddhas before the Ruvanveli Dagaba, shown in the Plate 456, belonging probably to the third or fourth century of our era, reflect, for example, the austere and the monumentality of the Buddhas of the Andhra period (of which we have just seen the specimen from Amaravati); and yet weighty bulk of those Andhra Buddhas, inherited from their origin in the yakṣa, has entirely melted away.⁷⁴

His assumption of the monumentality of the Āndhra Buddha image is however disputed in 2003 by an Āndhra scholar L. R. Reddy, who states, “The Sri Lankan Buddha images in limestone were more impressive in size than those of Amarāvati and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa.”⁷⁵ Nonetheless, Zimmer, too, like Rowland is impressed by the “magnificent simplicity and truth to life” and the “monumentality” of the seated Buddha image of Sri Lanka, which he quite curiously attributed to the “achievement of Pallava art.”

The work shown in the plate 457 is an example of Ceylonese art at its best. The date is somewhat controversial: possibly second century A.D., but more probably

⁷³ Rowland: *Art and Architecture of India, Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*, 364

⁷⁴ Zimmer, *Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. I. 170, Vol.II. Pl.456

⁷⁵ L.R. Reddy, *Sri Lanka: Past and Present*. (New Delhi: A. P. H. Publishing Corporation, 2003), 32

later, perhaps the third and fourth; some would assign it to the sixth or eighth. In this magnificent simplicity and truth to life **the figure suggests the achievement of Pallava art; but it has nothing of the unearthly spirituality that we have noted in those dissolving, nimble, floating cloudlike apparitions.** Stressing, rather, the realistic aspect of the Buddha, it is in the true mode of the Hīnayāna, the ideal represented being that of Hindu superman meant for enlightenment. The form expresses the perfect aloofness of the solitary Yoga who, having conquered the world of the senses, has pierced the intellectual web that meshes the human mind and ego. He is endowed with a perfect body and has achieved an imperturbable calm without tension or effort; serenity is the intrinsic attitude and it has been expressed in terms of a human harmony and beauty. **The monumentality is unsurpassed, being far beyond the comparatively archaic, somewhat rigid and dry impressiveness of the standing Buddha already discussed. And the lotus pedestal again is missing—in accordance with a human, realistic, ethical conception of the Buddha and his deed.**⁷⁶ [Emphasis mine].

An opposite point of view, similar to what was expressed by D. T. Devendra (1957 & 58) and Martin Wickremasinghe (1972) with reference to literary sources has been stated in 1956 by Siri Gunasinghe in his *Ceylon and the Buddha image in the Round*:

The history of Buddhism in the Anuradhapura Period shows that the cult of Buddha image was popular in Ceylon at least from the Second Century A.D. As for the chronology of Ceylonese Art, no satisfactory sequence has yet been established; indeed no attempt has been made to study it independently from the art of India. With the exception of Mirella Levi d' Ancona,⁷⁷ all students have assumed that it springs from Amaravati. But the assumption disregards at least four hundred years of religious contacts between Ceylon and Central India. In Ceylon, there are more products of a non-Amaravati character dating from the second century, when Amaravati began to be active, than all the so-called Amaravati objects put together. **There is ample evidence to show that before the classic period of Amaravati the Ceylon artists were working in stone on a colossal scale unknown to his Indian counterpart. In India, there are no free-standing temples or any other religious building in stone of the earlier epoch, only rock-cut architecture; but in Ceylon from the earliest times free-standing buildings in stone had been common. Quite apart from the stūpa which underwent changes in Ceylon that have no parallels in India, the arrangements and elaborate character of monastic buildings are essentially Ceylonese; the vatadāge and bodhighara are peculiar to Ceylon; among the**

⁷⁶ Zimmer, *Art of Indian Asia, Its Mythology and Transformations*, Vol. I. 171-2, Vol. II. Pl.457

⁷⁷ See for details: Mirella Levi D'Ancona, "Amarāvati, Ceylon, and Three Imported Bronzes," *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Mar., 1952), 1-17.

minor motifs one could mention the guard-stone, and the moon-stone, which if it is not originally Ceylonese, is at least Ceylonese in elaboration.⁷⁸
[Emphasis mine]

Gunasinghe further states: “we may conclude that monks from Ceylon introduced the cult of Buddha image into southern India in about second century.”⁷⁹ He particularly emphasizes: “It is possible that the Sinhalese Buddhists, being perhaps the first ever to use the Buddha image in the iconic role, were the first to produce a Buddha statue in the round for ceremonial purposes.”⁸⁰

Senarat Paranavitana’s view had continued to have an impact on local scholars, too. Thus in 1962, Nandadeva Wijesekara in his *Early Sinhalese Sculpture* argued,

The mainland of India was the source of all its arts and styles and techniques that evolved in the vast sub-continent naturally and inevitably came to be absorbed and accepted by the Sinhalese artists. There can be no exception to this⁸¹... The sheath-like flimsy robe is indicated by a few lines of the upper boulder. The erect frame is in the perfect balance, the traditional stare being immanent on the face. The buoyancy has created a feeling of ethereal suspension as it were. **The basic idea of the seated image may have been derived from the Kushan image of the Katra. This stands unique when compared with some of the finest meditative images of the Gupta period although the medium and general set up give it a characteristic difference.**⁸² [Emphasis mine].

Wijesekara, too, like Rowland and Zimmer seeks an amalgam of Indian influences in the statues of Ruvanvālisāya:

The standing image housed at the courtyard of Ruvanveliseya possesses a delightful serenity, although the limbs and trunk seem both heavy and stuff. The face is beautiful and peaceful. The hair is depicted schematically. The robe is draped on one shoulder and rests above the ankles. The three ribbed folds and the gathered piece are shown in Amarāvati style while the body resembles the Katrā type of image...⁸³

⁷⁸ Gunasinghe, “Ceylon and the Buddha image in the Round,” 253

⁷⁹ Gunasinghe, “Ceylon and the Buddha image in the Round,” 258

⁸⁰ Siri Gunasinghe, “Buddhist Sculptures of Ceylon” *Arts of Asia*, Vol. 3 (1973), No.1 (January-February), 25.

⁸¹ Wijesekara, *Early Sinhalese Sculpture*, 224

⁸² Wijesekara, *Early Sinhalese Sculpture*, 246, fig.15

⁸³ Wijesekara, *Early Sinhalese Sculpture*, 244, fig. 5

He, however, does not negate the fact that Sri Lanka had the skill of workmanship in Arts and Crafts during the sixth century BCE, prior to the advent of Buddhism.

Since the possibility of sculptures representations existed during the sixth century B.C. it becomes necessary to ascertain the nature of these images...During the time of Pandukabhaya for not only the king himself but also the nobles and others of the Court circles would have professed this form of worship. Into such a form of religion it is very unlikely that image worship did not enter. In fact temples and other places for the performance of all religious activities would have been set up under the king's command.⁸⁴

By establishing such an assumption his main concern is the acceptance of the reliability of the two references in *Mahāvamsa* of the Buddha images.

Sinhalese literature nor the stone inscriptions nor the images offer any evidence about the Buddha image. It is true that there is so-called image of king Devanamapiyatissa but that does not help as it is not the inability nor knowledge to make sculptured images that is the problem but the propriety of making an image of the Buddha and how it should be made that it is in dispute...⁸⁵ On the throne erected to the east of the Bodhi Tree he placed a seated shining golden Buddha image...This is the earliest reference we have to the Buddha image and it is noteworthy that it is made in precious metal and gems.⁸⁶

Meher McArthur in 2002, attempted to address the issue in a different perspective in that his emphasis was the establishment of Theravāda Buddhism and the evolution of a type of art related thereof, contrasting Schroeder's assumption (1990) of Sri Lanka's Buddha image as the result of the development of Abhayagiriya fraternity.

In Theravada Buddhist cultures such as Sri Lanka, the principal figure of veneration is the historical Buddha, so the art of these cultures generally focused on Shakyamuni and the various important events of his historical life. Jataka tales, or tales of his previous lives as Bodhisattva, also feature prominently in the art of these cultures. **The most outstanding examples of Sri Lankan Buddhist sculptures are the colossal stone images of the Buddha and other figures at the Gal Vihara temple at Polonnaruwa. These figures and many other Sri**

⁸⁴ Wijesekara, *Early Sinhalese Sculpture*, 200-01

⁸⁵ Wijesekara, *Early Sinhalese Sculpture*, 204

⁸⁶ Wijesekara, *Early Sinhalese Sculpture*, 205

Lankan images from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries show the stylistic influences of the graceful sculptures of the earlier Indian Gupta period.⁸⁷
[Emphasis mine].

Although he does not comment on its origin and further development, the foregoing statement confirms that he agrees with many other scholars who view the SriLankan Buddha image through the tradition of Indian Buddha image.

The images of the Buddha on which these opinions were expressed include the following which are among the earliest to be discovered in and around Anuradhapura:

1. The life-size standing images found at Ruvanvālisāya (Mahātūpa) of Anuradhapura (**fig.7.2a**, & **fig.7.10c**).
2. The standing Buddha images Maha Iluppallama (**fig.7.1b**), and at Avukana (**fig.7.3c**).
3. The seated images of Samādhi posture at Abhayagiriya outer circular road (**fig.7.28a**), Tolvila (**fig.7.28d**), and the Aśokārāma, Pankuliya (near Anuradhapura) (**fig.7.44d1**).

In addition to the particular chronicler references and the archaeological findings, some scholars were of different opinions of the same image that belonged to the early period of the country. In 1978 W. M. Sirisena in his *Sri Lanka and South-east Asia: Political, Religious and Cultural Relations from A.D. c. 1000 to c. 1500* referred to “Amarāvati-Sinhalese style” and examined those as the “Buddha images which exhibit some Amarāvati influence.”

A number of Buddha images recovered from various countries in South east Asia have close affinity to some of the Indian images and therefore one could suggest that they were imported from India itself. However, when an image which appears to be Indian is recovered in anywhere, very seldom can we determine whether it was directly imported from India, or from another place where the dominant

⁸⁷ Meher McArthur, *Reading Buddhist Art*, 15, 182

factor in the art tradition was Indian influence, or whether it was a local production by Indian craftsmen already working in the particular country in which it is found... In some countries of South-east Asia a few bronze images have been found, made in the Amaravati-Sinhalese style and dated in the middle of the first millennium A.D. They are some of the early images found from the region. A standing Buddha image from Celebes, and two images from Java, one seated and one standing, fall into this category... Although all these images broadly represent the Amaravati style, a careful examination reveals that they have characteristics which are different from the original Indian Amaravati statues. These particular features are common in various Buddha images made in Sri Lanka which exhibit some Amaravati influence...⁸⁸

Chandra Wikramagamage, though attesting the existence of the Buddha image in India during the third century BCE according to the literary evidence, agrees that there is no available evidence about such an image until the first century BCE. Surmising the literal and narrative evidence with regard to the Buddha image in sandalwood made by the king Pasenadi of Kosala and the Udayana of Kausambi, he states:

According to all these narratives it can be surmised that the first Buddha image came into being in the 3rd century B.C., in India, but the art of that period does not display any evidence of the existence of the Buddha image. In the sculptures of Sānchi and Bhārhut there are symbols of Gautama Buddha and previous Buddhas not in the form of images but in the form of the Bodhi tree. Scholars are of opinion, therefore, that there were no images of the Buddha at that time.⁸⁹

He continues further:

It is asserted there are no archaeological evidence obtained so far that can lead to the assertion that the Buddha images were made earlier than the 1st century B.C., let alone their existence during the life time. One must treat this view with great caution because, according to the *Mahāvamsa*, the earliest Buddha images in Sri Lanka belong to the 3rd century B.C. *Apadāna*, which was composed slightly earlier, contains references to the very earliest Buddha images in India... Therefore, the present evidence that the Buddha image originated in the 1st century B.C. is only a temporary premise. There is still a vast amount of

⁸⁸ W.M. Sirisena, *Sri Lanka and South-east Asia: Political, Religious and Cultural Relations from A.D. c. 1000 to c. 1500*. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978), 145

⁸⁹ Chandra Wikramagamage, "The Origin of the Buddha Image," *Buddhist Studies in Honor of the Ven. Hammalava Saddhatissa*, ed., Ven Gatara Dhammapala, Richard Gombrich & K.R. Norman, (Nugegoda: University of Sri Jayawardhanapura, 1984), 254 .

archaeological excavation to be done in Sri Lanka and India, till then, we would discredit the folk traditions connected with the earliest Buddha image.⁹⁰

This statement apparently throws light for further studies on the Buddha image with the help of existing archaeological evidence, which have not been examined so far. However, its immediate emphasis is that, if one tends to accept the sandalwood image made by king Udayana or the king Kosala, similar credentials should be given to the Mahāvamsa references as well.

However, in 2000 Virender Kumar Dabral in his *Buddhist Art in India and Sri Lanka: A Critical Study* offered a contrasting point of view in that he attested the emergence of the Sri Lankan Buddha image in the fourth century CE with the influence from Amarāvati and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa:

The Anuradhapura image has been dated to fourth century and this is somewhat similar to the bas relief of Amarāvati and Nāgārjunikoṇḍa. It could be that the the image of Buddha that was carved in South India and was perfected in Sri Lanka. In many cases, it is seen that the things started in India went to Sri Lanka where they reached perfection. Undoubtedly, it is true also. Anuradhapura image (*Plate XXXV*) is an independent development and has no parrell. It is *chef-d'oeuvre*.⁹¹

This apparently suggests the insufficiency of data to affix a specific date to the early Sri Lankan images, and Dabral seeks any aspiration from India.

The above survey of the current theories, conclusions, and the opinions of scholars reveals that:

1. Early scholars like Vincent A. Smith and Ananda K. Coomaraswamy saw affinities between the Buddha images of Sri Lanka and India and at the same time recognized that the Sri Lankan images—especially the Samādhi statue at Abhayagiriya (which Coomaraswamy associated with Jetavana because the two *dāgabas* were misnamed until

⁹⁰ Wikramagamage, “The Origin of the Buddha Image,” 254 .

⁹¹ Virender Kumar Dabral, *Buddhist Art in India and Sri Lanka: A Critical Study*, Emerging Conceptions of Buddhist Studies No. 13. (New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 2000), 79, Plate XXXV

the discovery of epigraphic evidence) and Toluila statue—were artistically superior to Indian prototypes;

2. Senerat Paranavitana’s view that Sri Lankan images were influenced by Amarāvati prototypes to the extent that the Sri Lankan artists could have been trained by Āndhra artists from Veṅgi had an impact on the views expressed by Benjamin Rowland, Heinrich Zimmer and Nandadeva Wijesekara and even Chandra Wickramagamage.
3. Paranavitana claimed to have based his conclusions on “the Pāli literature of Ceylon and the two inscriptions found at Nāgārjuṇakoṇḍa” which attest to “the intercourse between the Buddhism of Ceylon and those of the Veṅgi country.”
4. The overall conclusion of these scholars was that
 - a. The standing Buddha images of Ruvanvālisāya followed Āndhra prototypes from Amarāvati; and the
 - b. The seated Buddha images were based on Katrā image of Mathurā that belongs to the Kushan age.

It is therefore very important that the following evidence be re-examined with utmost care in order to have an understanding about the early communications between India and Sri Lanka;

1. Evidence of Pāli Literature, and Nāgārjuṇakoṇḍa inscriptions that Paranavitana depended on, establishing any institutional relationship between Amarāvati/ Nāgārjuṇakoṇḍa, and Sri Lanka.
2. Compare the early Buddha images of Sri Lanka that are under discussion/ controversy with regard to the stylistic criticism, which Ananda K. Coomaraswamy suggested in 1913 as the way to resolve the issues highlighted by

various scholars. The particular examination will be done in the next two sections of this chapter.

6.3 The Re-examination of the Literary and Epigraphic evidence for Āndhra influence

In the absence of any bibliographical reference to the Pāli literature of Sri Lanka in any work of Senarat Paranavitana, it is most likely that the evidence that he relied on is limited to the mention of Andhaka as a non-Aryan tribe (milakkha) in *Dīgha Nikāya* and *Āṅguttara Nikāya*⁹² along with the reference in the *Samantapāsādikā* for Damilas as non-aryans,⁹³ and the reference to *Andhakaṭṭhakathā* also in the *Samantapāsādikā* as a commentary utilized by Buddhaghosa.⁹⁴ Either of these references would only indicate that the region of the Veṅgi Kingdom of the Sātavāhanas was known in Sri Lanka at the time of Buddhaghosa. As regards *Andhakaṭṭhakathā* (of which the manuscript is not available to date), however, it is not clear whether Buddhaghosa knew it in India or at the Mahāvihāra.

Equally confusing is his mention of two Prākṛit inscriptions in Nāgārjuṅakoṇḍa referring to Veṅgi-Sri Lankan relations. Sri Lanka as **Tambapaṇṇi-dīpa** is mentioned only in one inscription which is referred to as the Second Apsidal Temple Inscription (See **Epi.6.1**) where the relevant part reads as follows;

⁹² The term was used in Pāli text as *Dīgha Nikāya* and *Āṅguttara Nikāya* to emphasize the non-aryan tribes i.e. "...paccantimesu janapadesu paccājāto hoti millakkkhusu aviññātaresu yattha n'atthi gati bhikkūnaṃ bhikkunīnaṃ..." See *Dn.* III, 264: "...atha kho ete va sattā ye thalajā, atha bahutarā ye paccantimesu janapadesu paccājāyanti aviññātaresu millakkkhesu..." See *An.* I, 35

⁹³ "tatta ariyakaṃ nāma ariyavohāro Magadhabhāṣā.milakkhakaṃ nāma yo koci anāriyako Andha-Damilādi..." *Sp.* I, 255

⁹⁴ *Sp.* IV, 1125-26

Epi.6.1 The Cetiyaḡhara Inscription of Nāgārjunakonda

- (L. 1) Sidhaṃ namo bhagavato Ikhāku-rāja-pavara-risi-sata-pabhava-vaṃsa-sambhava
 deva-manusa-sava-sata-hita-sukha-maga-desikasa jita-kāmo-kodha-bhaya-harisa-
 tarisa-moha-dosa-sada(ī)pita-Māra-bala-dapa-māna-pasamana-karasa dasa-bala-
 maha(ā)balasa aṭha[m]ga-maga-dhamachaka-pavatakasa chaka-lakhaṇa-
 sukumāra-sujāta-charaṇasa turuṇa-divasakara-pabhasa sarada-sasi-soma-
 darisanasa sava-loka-chita-mahitasa Budhasa raṃṃo M[āṭha]riputasa- 10[+*]
 hemaṃta-pakhaṃ chhaṭhaṃ 6 divasaṃ teraṃ IO[+]3. . ,ta [rā] jācharīyānaṃ
**Kasmira-Gaṃdhāra-Chīna-Chilāta-Tosaḡi-Avaraṃta-Vaṅga-Vanavāsi-
 Yava[na]-Da[mila-Pa]lura-Taṃbapaṃṇi-dīpa-pas[ā]dukānaṃ, theriyānaṃ
 Taṃbhapa[m]ṇakānaṃ suparigahe**
 (L 2) Siripavate Vijayapuriya-puva-disā-bhāge vihāre Clūla-Dhammagiriyaṃ
 chetiya-gharaṃ sapāta-saṃtharaṃ sachetiyaṃ sava-niyutaṃ kūritaṃ uvāsikāya
 Bodhisiriya apano bhatuno Budhi[m]nakasa pituno cha se Govagāma-vathavasa
 Revata-gahapatisa mātuya cha sa Budhaṃnikāya bhātunaṃ cha se
 Chamdamukhanasa Karumbudhinasa Haghamaṃsa bhāgiṃya cha Revatiṃnikāya
 bhātu-putānaṃ cha Mahā-Chamdamukha-Chūla-Chamdamukhanāṃ
 bhāgiṃyānaṃ cha Mahā-Mūla-Chūla-Mūlānaṃ apano cha ayakasa Mūlavāniyasa
 ayikāya Budhavāniki[nāya] mātulaka-[sa cha] koṭh[ā]kārikasa Bhadasa
 Bodhisamaṃsa Chamdasas Bodhikasa mahāmātukāya Bhadi[lā]ya Bodhiya cla
 apano pituno Budhi[vā]niyasa m[ātuya]...
 (L 3) bhātuno Mūlasa bhaginīnaṃ Budhaṃnikāya Mūlaṃnikāya
 Nāgabodhinikāya cha dhūtuya Viraṃnikāya putānaṃ Nāgaṃsa Viraṃn-a cha
 saṃhānaṃ cha Bhadasiri-Misīnaṃ evam-eva cha Kulaha-vihare chetiya-gharaṃ
**Sīhala-vihāre bodhi-rukha-pāsādo Mahā-Dhammagiriyaṃ ovarako 1
 mahūvi[hā]re ma[m]ḡava** khambho Devagiriyaṃ padhāna-sālā Puvasele
 talākaṃ a[laṃ]dā- ma[m]ḡavo cha Kaṃṭakasele mahāchetiyasa puva-dāre sela-
 maṃdāvo Hirumuṭhuve ovarakā tiṃṇi 3 Papiḡayaṃ ovarakāsata 7 Puphagiriya[m]
 sela-maṃdāvo Dhaṃ vihāre sela ma[m]ḡavo etaṃ cha lokasa imaṃ
 navakamaṃ tiṃhi navaka[m]mikehi kāritaṃ Chamdamukha-therena cha
 (L 4) Dhaṃmaṃdi-therena cha Nāga-therena cha sela-vaḡhākisa Vidhikasa
 kaṃmaṃ ti

Translation

**For the benefit of the....masters and of the fraternities (of monks) of
 Taṃbapaṃṇa (Ceylon) who have converted Kashmir, Gandhāra, Chīna,
 Chilāta (=Skt. Kirāta), Tosali, Avaraṃta (=Skt. Aparānta), Vaṅga, Vanavāsi,
 Yavana(?), Damila (?), Palura (?) and the Isle of Taṃbapaṃṇi (Ceylon). At
 Siripavata (=Skt. Śrīparvata) on the east side of Vijayapurī at the Convent on the
 Lesser Dhammagiri a *chaitya*-tiall with a flooring of slabs, with a *chaityas* and
 provided with all the necessaries, was caused to be made by the female lay-
 member Bodhisiri (Skt. Bodhiśrī) for the sake of her own husband Budhiṃnaka,**

and .of his father, the householder Revata residing at Govagāma and of his mother Budhamnikā and of his brothers Chamdamukhana, Kurumbudhina (*and*) Haghanna and of (*his*) sister Revatimnikā and of (*his*) brother's sons Mahā-Cbamdamukha (=Skt. Mahā-Chandramukha) and Chūla-Chamdamukha (=Skt. Kshudra-Chandramukha) and of (*his*) sister's sons Mahā-Mūla and Chūla-Mūla, and (*for the sake*) of her own grandfather Mūlavāniya and of her grandmother Budhavānikinā and of her maternal uncle(s) (?), the treasurer, Bhada (=Skt. Bhadra), Bodhisamma (=Skt. Bodhisarman), Chamda (=Skt. Chandra) (*and*) Bodhika, and of her maternal grandmother Bodhi and of her own father Budhivāniya and of her mother (?) ----, of her brother Mūla, of her sisters Budhamnikā, Mūlamnikā and Nāgabodhinikā, of her daughter Vīramnikā, of her sons Nāganna and Vīramna and of her daughters-in-law Bhadasiri (=Skt. Bhadrāsī) and Misi (=8kt. Miśī). And even thuswise a **chaitya-hall** at the Kulaha-vihāra, a shrine for the **Bodhi-tree** at the **Sihala-vihāra** one call at the Great Dhammagiri, a maṇḍava pillar at the Mahāvihāra, a hall for religious practice at the Devagiri, a tank, verandah and maṇḍava at Puvaseḷa (=8kt. Pūrvasaḷa), a stone maṇḍava at the eastern gate of the Great Chaitya at Kaṇṭakasela (=Skt. Kaṇṭakaśaḷa), three cells at Hirimuṭhuva, seven cells at Papilā, a stone maṇḍava at Puphagiri (=Skt. Pushpagiri), ... a stone maṇḍava at the ...vihāra. And all this above described has been dedicated for the endless welfare and happiness of the assembly of saints and for .that of the whole world. This work was caused to be made by the three superintendents of works, the *thera* Chamdamukha, and the *thera* Dhammanandi and the *thera* Nāga, (*It is*), the work of the stone mason Vidhika.⁹⁵

The information in the inscription attests to “the intercourse between the Buddhism of Ceylon and those of the Veṅgi country,” as described by Paranavitana.⁹⁶

The inscription does not in any way indicate that the artists or artisans of Veṅgi (Nāgārjunakoṇḍa) came to Sri Lanka and trained the Sri Lankan artists to make the Buddha image. Contrary, the inscription indicates the association of Sri Lankan monks with regard to the establishment of Buddhism in India and in the neighboring countries centering from Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, and the respect paid by laities to the Sri Lankan monks by dedicating a monastery. Thus, the conclusion of Paranavitana is totally unfounded and has to be disregarded as a figment of his imagination. But, it is this conclusion of

⁹⁵ J.Ph. Vogel, “Prakrit Inscriptions from a Buddhist Site at Nāgārjunikoṇḍa,” 22-3

⁹⁶ See above n.68

Paranavitana that influenced Benjamin Rowland, Heinrich Zimmer, and Nandadeva Wijesekara to claim any Indian influence on Sri Lankan Buddha images.

On the other hand, what the inscription shows are the following:

1. At Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, there was an Sīhalavihāra establishing the fact that the Sri Lankan monks had founded a monastery of their own at the site similar to what is known from epigraphic records of similar monasteries in Buddha Gayā in India⁹⁷ and Ratuboka in Indonesia (**See Epi.6.2**).⁹⁸ There is no evidence of any Indian monks setting up similar institutions in Sri Lanka.
2. The monks in Sri Lanka of the particular Sīhalvihāra had been held in high esteem on account of their missionary role in spreading Buddhism to Kāshmir, Gandhāra, China, Chilata (=Skt. Kirata), Tosali, Avaramta (=Skt, Aparanta), Vaṅga, Vanavāsi, Yāvana (?), Damiḷa (?), Palura (?) and the Isle of Tambapaṇṇi (Ceylon).
3. The Sri Lankan monks are credited with the conversion of not only various regions in the Indian subcontinent but also China and Yāvana, with which Sri Lanka's close relations are established by Chinese, Greek and Latin literary evidence.

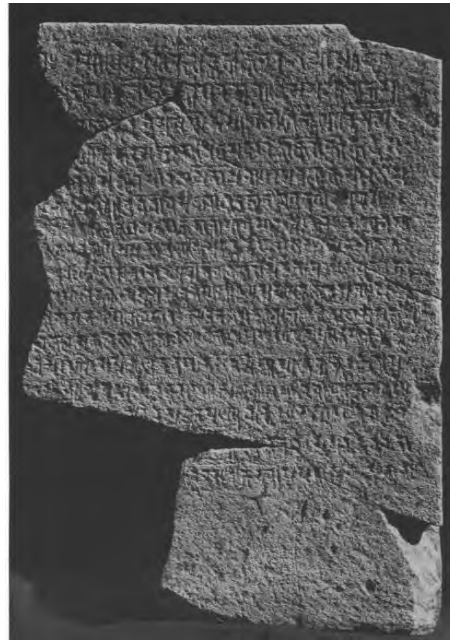
⁹⁷ “The inscription No. 71 is dated in the year 269, in the month Chaitra; it mentions, in a line of Buddhist disciples' of Lanka (Ceylon), Bhava, Rāhula, Upasena (I), Mahānāman (I), Upasena (II), and Mahānāman (II), a resident of Āmradvīpa, and born in the island of Lankā...second Mahanaman founded a Buddhist temple or monastery at the Bodhimāṇḍa, that is at Bodh-Gaya. The inscription No. 72 is not dated; it records the presentation of a Buddhist image by the *Sthariva* Mahānāman, a resident of Āmradvīpa... Its extreme interest "lies in the fact that, as the Mahānāman, whose record it is, can hardly be any "other than the well-known person of that name who wrote the more ancient "part of the Pāli *Mahāvamsa* or History of Ceylon." See J.F. Fleet, “The Date of Buddha's Death, as Determined by a Record of Asoka,” *JRASGB & I*, (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1904), 16, http://www.archive.org/details/journal_u_royalasi72irelgoog, Oclc. ID: 1764574, accessed: February 12, 2011

⁹⁸ The inscription particularly states: “This Abhayagiri Vihāra here of the Sinhalese ascetics (?), trained in the sayings of discipline of the Best of the Jinas, was established.” See J.G. de Casparis, “New Evidence on Cultural Relations between Java and Ceylon in Ancient Times,” *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 24. No.3/4(1961), 245, Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3249220>, accessed November 21, 2011

4. Two features associated with the Sīhalavihāra at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa are the *Cetiya*ghara and the *Bodhi Tree* which are specific elements of a Sri Lankan monastery and unknown in India.⁹⁹

These facts would prove that Sri Lanka was better placed to have an impact on Buddhism and Buddhist art of the Veṅgi region than *vice versa*.

Epi.6.2 Ratuboka inscription of Indonesia



(Photograph: J.G. de Casparis, “New evidence on Cultural Relations between Java and Ceylon in Ancient Times,” *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 24. No.3/4(1961), 244

6.4 Stylistic Criticism or Iconographic comparison of early Anuradhapura images with Mathurā and Amarāvati images

As already mentioned, the scholars who examined the Buddha image in the county offered their theories and conclusions based on a number of images that belong to the particular period, of the major concern were the 1. Standing Buddha images at Ruvanvālisāya (**fig.7.2a & 7.10c**), Avukana (**fig.7.3c**), Māligāvila (**fig.7.17b**), and the

⁹⁹ J.Ph. Vogel, “Prakrit Inscriptions from a Buddhist Site at Nāgārjunikoṇḍa” 10

seated images at Abahayagiriya outer circular road, Anuradhapura (**fig.7.28a**), Toluville (**fig.7.28d**), and Pankuliya (**fig.7.44d1**). The particular statements highlight two different perspectives of the Sri Lankan Buddha images;

1. The images were made under the inspiration/influence of the Indian craftsmen.
2. The images were imported from India.

These assumptions cannot be accepted without any further clarification since there are doubts about the iconographical characteristics of the images that belonged to the two traditions. **Table 6.1** and **6.2** show the comparison between the Sri Lankan Buddha images found from various Buddhist sites belonging to the ancient Anuradhapura period, and those found from Mathurā, Gandhāra, Amarāvati, and Sārnāth in India, which have been the specimens constantly used by scholars for their discussions and comparisons.

The particular comparison shows following iconographical distinctions between the two traditions:

1. The standing Buddha images in Sri Lanka (**fig.7.2a, 7.3c, 7.10c, & 7.17b**) do not demonstrate the characters of those belonging to Amarāvati except the slight resemblance to the monastic garment. There is neither a hint of protuberance, nor snail-shell hair on top of the head, nor do they have wide eye-brows or lips, ūṛṇā in between the eyes, or the smile in the face, long ear-lobes (except in later examples), and there is no hint of muscular overemphasis. In the application of the monastic garment, the standing images of Sri Lanka simply show that it clings to the body while its Indian prototype demonstrates deeply engraved channels. In addition, the edge of the robe hanging from the elbow of the left hand displays a greater difference in two traditions.

2. In the treatment of seated images, Mathurā Buddha images display the snail-shell coil on top of the hair, bear the protuberance or *uṣṇīṣa* on top of the head, have the broad smile, wide-open eyes, and long ear-lobes, while the depiction of physical strength through heavy muscular accent is evident. The robe, which covers the right shoulder, falls down through the left arm. The right hand obviously depicts the gesture of fearlessness while the cross-legged position is always inter-locked. One can never observe these characteristics in the seated Buddha images of Sri Lanka (**See fig.7.28a, 7.28d, & 7.44d1**).

3. In both the cases: seated and standing, the following decorative elements are not evident in the Sri Lankan Buddha image.

- 1) The halo surrounding the head.
- 2) The figures of dwarfs on the edge of the nimbus.
- 3) The attendant deities on either side.
- 4) No rectangular pedestal with decorative motifs in the frontal panel, which are the prominent characteristics of Mathurā Buddha images.

Thus, it is apparent that the dominant assumptions and conclusions presented with regard to the Sri Lankan Buddha image based on the literary and iconographical evidence of the two countries are not valid, since they demonstrate entirely different and independent elements from its Indian model. Considering such distinctions as the emphasis of the present study, further examination of the iconographical elements of the Buddha images in Sri Lankan Buddhist tradition expect to identify its independent development and unique iconographical elements.

Table 6.1: Comparative examination of the early standing Buddha images of Sri Lanka with the Amarāvati Buddha images of India.

Iconographic elements of the Buddha image	Standing Image Ruvanvālisāya No.1 (fig.7.2a)	Standing Image Ruvanvālisāya No.2 (fig.7.10c)	Standing Image Avukana (fig.7.3c)	Standing Image Māligāvila (fig.7.17b)	Standing Image Amarāvati (fig.4.30a)
Protuberance or the Skull (<i>uṣṇīśa</i>)	No <i>uṣṇīśa</i> on top of the head.	No <i>uṣṇīśa</i> on top of the head. The <i>ketumālā</i> with slightly knotted hair	No <i>uṣṇīśa</i> on top of the head. The head is decorated with <i>Siraspata</i>	No <i>uṣṇīśa</i> on top of the head. The head is decorated with <i>Ketumālā</i>	<i>uṣṇīśa</i> with knotted hair of snail-shell coils
Halo (<i>prabhā maṇḍala</i>) around the head	No Halo surrounding the head	No Halo surrounding the head	No Halo surrounding the head	No Halo surrounding the head	No Halo surrounding the head
The circular mark in between the eye brows (<i>ūrṇā</i>)	No <i>ūrṇā</i> between the eye brows	No <i>ūrṇā</i> between the eye brows	No <i>ūrṇā</i> between the eye brows	No <i>ūrṇā</i> between the eye brows	<i>ūrṇā</i> between the eye brows
The distinctive physical appearance [eyes, eye brows, smile, ear lobes]	No smile, half-closed eyes, no long ear-lobes, no muscular emphasis in the body	No smile, half-closed eyes, no long ear-lobes, no muscular emphasis in the body	No smile, half-closed eyes, slightly long ear-lobes, no muscular emphasis in the body	No smile, half-closed eyes, slightly long ear-lobes, no muscular emphasis in the body	No smile, fully opened-eyes, slightly long ear-lobes, slight indication of the physical heaviness
Monastic garment	Light weight garment with double channeled grooves that extends up to the ankle covering only the left shoulder.	Light weight garment with double channeled grooves that extends and covers up to the ankle, covering only the left shoulder.	Light weight garment with single line channels that extends and covers up to the ankle, covering only the left shoulder.	Light weight garment with single line channels that extends and covers up to the ankle, covering only the left shoulder.	Heavy garment with single channeled grooves that covers up to the knee height covering only the left shoulder
Hand gestures (<i>mudrā</i>)	Both hands are broken (Indicates having the <i>abhaya mudrā</i> in the right	Gesture of fearlessness (<i>abhaya</i>) in the right hand with that of cock-comb	Gesture of fearlessness (<i>abhaya</i>) in the right hand with that of cock-comb (<i>kataka-</i>	Gesture of fearlessness (<i>abhaya</i>) in the right hand with that of cock-comb (<i>kataka-hasta</i>) in	Both hands are broken (While the remains of the right hand does not give any clue of the

	hand with that of cock comb (<i>kataka hasta</i>) in the left hand	(<i>kataka-hasta</i>) in the left hand	<i>hasta</i>) in the left hand	the left hand	gesture, that of left hand suggests the boon-giving (<i>varada</i>)
The posture, (<i>āsana</i>) or (<i>bhaṅga</i>)	Standing upright (<i>samabhaṅga</i>)	Standing upright (<i>samabhaṅga</i>)	Standing upright (<i>samabhaṅga</i>)	Standing upright (<i>samabhaṅga</i>)	Standing upright (<i>samabhaṅga</i>)
The pedestal (<i>pīṭikā</i>),	No Pedestal	No Pedestal	Lotus Pedestal	Lotus Pedestal (found later from the site).	No Pedestal
Symbols or the auspicious marks	No Symbols or auspicious marks	No Symbols or auspicious marks	No Symbols or auspicious marks	No Symbols or auspicious marks	No Symbols or auspicious marks
Decorative elements such as attendant deities, canopy of the branches of the Bodhi tree, the fly whisks, the crown	No Decorative elements	No Decorative elements	No Decorative elements	No Decorative elements	No Decorative elements
Height of the Image	8.6ft	8ft	43ft	47ft	8.3ft
Stylistic Criticism	Resembles the characteristics of Amarāvati images, and more impressive in size than those of Amarāvati and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa				

Table 6.2: Comparative examination of the early seated Buddha images of Sri Lanka and the Mathurā and Gupta images of India.

Iconographic elements of the Buddha image	Seated Buddha Image Abhayagiriya (fig.7.28a)	Seated Buddha Image Toluila (fig.7.28d)	Seated Buddha Image Pankuliya (fig.7.44d1)	Seated Buddha Image Katrā Mathurā (Kushan period) (fig.4.2a)	Seated Buddha Image Makuvar (Gupta Period) (fig.4.36a)	Seated Buddha Image Sārṇāth (Gupta Period) (fig.4.36b)
Protuberance or the Skull (<i>uṣṇīśa</i>)	No <i>uṣṇīśa</i> on top of the head.	No <i>uṣṇīśa</i> on top of the head. The <i>ketumālā</i> with slightly knotted hair	No <i>uṣṇīśa</i> on top of the head. The <i>ketumālā</i> with slightly knotted hair	<i>uṣṇīśa</i> with knotted hair of snail-shell coils	Shaven hair covered with a turban.	<i>uṣṇīśa</i> with knotted hair of snail-shell coils
Halo (<i>prabhā maṇḍala</i>) around the head	No Halo surrounding the head	No Halo surrounding the head	No Halo surrounding the head	Halo surrounding the head with decorative elements.	No Halo surrounding the head	Halo surrounding the head decorated with floral designs and worshipping dwarfs on either side
The circular mark in between the eye brows (<i>ūrṇā</i>)	No <i>ūrṇā</i> between the eye brows	No <i>ūrṇā</i> between the eye brows	No <i>ūrṇā</i> between the eye brows	<i>ūrṇā</i> between the eye brows	No <i>ūrṇā</i> between the eye brows	No <i>ūrṇā</i> between the eye brows
The distinctive physical appearance [eyes, eye brows, smile, ear lobes]	No smile, half-closed eyes, no long ear-lobes, no muscular emphasis in the body	No smile, half-closed eyes, no long ear-lobes, no muscular emphasis in the body	No smile, half-closed eyes, no long ear-lobes, no muscular emphasis in the body	Slight smile, fully-opened eyes, long ear-lobes, severe indication of the muscular emphasis in the body	The image shows slight smile, half-closed eyes, and long ear-lobes	The image shows slight smile, half-closed eyes, and long ear-lobes

Monastic garment	Light weight garment clings to the body which is shown by a single line crossing over the left shoulder.	Light weight garment clings to the body which is shown by a single line crossing over the left shoulder.	Light weight garment clings to the body which is shown by a single line crossing over the left shoulder and hanging down from the left elbow.	Light weight garment clings to the body covering both the shoulders and up to the elbow of the left hand, which is shown by single channels.	Light weight garment clings to the body which is shown by a single line around the neck indicating the drapery covering both the shoulders. The under garment is shown by a line above the umbilicus.	Light weight garment clings to the body which is shown by a single line around the neck indicating the drapery covering both the shoulders. The under garment is shown by a line above the umbilicus.
Hand gestures (<i>mudrā</i>)	Gesture of Meditation (<i>dhyāna/samādhi</i>)	Gesture of Meditation (<i>dhyāna/samādhi</i>)	Gesture of fearlessness (<i>abhaya</i>) in the right hand, that of blessing (<i>āśīrvāda</i>) in the left hand.	Gesture of fearlessness (<i>abhaya</i>) in the right hand, while the left hand is placed on the left leg.	Gesture of fearlessness (<i>abhaya</i>) in the right hand along with that of meditation (<i>dhyāna/samādhi</i>) in the left hand	Gesture of Teaching (<i>dharmacakra</i>)
The posture, (<i>āsana</i>) or (<i>bhaṅga</i>)	Relaxed Posture (<i>vīrāsana</i>)	Relaxed Posture (<i>vīrāsana</i>)	Relaxed Posture (<i>vīrāsana</i>)	Cross-legged posture (<i>padmāsana</i>)	Cross-legged posture (<i>padmāsana</i>)	Cross-legged posture (<i>padmāsana</i>)
The pedestal (<i>pīṭikā</i>),	No Pedestal	No Pedestal	Rectangular pedestal.	Rectangular pedestal supported by circular pillars of which the frontal piece is	Rectangular pedestal supported with two lion-heads in frontal position, and the	Rectangular pedestal supported by circular pillars of which the frontal piece is decorated

				decorated with three lions: one in the middle in frontal position while two lions looking either side	Wheel of Dharma (<i>dharmacakra</i>) in the middle with two seated figures in the gesture of meditation on either side.	with the wheel of dharma (<i>dharmacakra</i>) in the middle, worshiped by six seated figures— three on each side— in the gesture of reverence (<i>namaskāra</i>).
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CHAPTER 07

ICONOGRAPHIC EVOLUTION OF THE SRI LANKAN BUDDHA IMAGE FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY CE

Further to the evidence presented from the earliest known images to establish an independent origin for the Sri Lankan Buddha image in the previous chapter, an analysis of the iconographic evolution of many hundreds of Buddha images over well-nigh two millennia would clarify the impact of relations with India. While images of the Anuradhapura period had received some scholarly attention,¹ the way the Buddha image evolved in Polonnaruwa, Dambadeniya, Gadaladeniya, and Kandyan periods has not been subjected to adequate scrutiny.

7.1 Iconographical characteristics to be analyzed

What is attempted in the present chapter is to trace the evolution of the following as the principal iconographic characteristics of the Sri Lankan Buddha image with a view of identifying whether the Indian prototypes of corresponding periods exerted any influence:

1. The protuberance or the skull (*uṣṇīśa*),
2. Halo (*prabhā maṇḍala*) around the head,
3. The circular mark in between the eye brows (*ūrṇā*),
4. The distinctive physical appearance which includes facial expressions [eyes eye-brows, (in certain cases the moustache), smile, ear lobes],
5. Monastic robe,
6. Bandolier or *hemapatta*,
7. Hand gestures (*mudrā*),

8. The posture, particularly seating (*āsana*) or standing posture (*bhaṅga*),
9. The pedestal (*pīṭikā*),
10. Symbols i.e. Wheel of Dharma, the lions, the lotus with or without other subsidiary motifs depicting a particular incident, and
11. Decorative elements such as attendant deities, canopy of the branches of the Bodhi Tree, the fly whisks, the crown, *etc.*

Assigning a Sri Lankan image to a specific period is a challenging task and it has been attempted with reference to literary evidence where available (i.e. from the chronicles) and a careful study of stylistic characteristics. The results are no doubt tentative and subject to revision if further evidence is found. The study made of these characteristics in Chapter Four in relation to the Indian Buddha image will be utilized for comparison.

7.1.1 The protuberance or the skull (*uṣṇīśa*):

It is significant that the Sri Lankan Buddha images do not display any indication of the protuberance of the skull (*uṣṇīśa*). Instead, they provide evidence of having two kinds of hair arrangements. Chandra Wikramagamage identifies them in relation to the Mahāvihāra and the Abhayagiri monasteries of Anuradhapura:

- 1) Mahāvihāra Tradition-The *ketumālā* with curled hair clockwise and attached to the skull without a knot¹ as in the standing images displayed in **fig.7.2a** (Ruvanvālisāya),² **fig.7.2d** (Medavachchiya), **7.3b** (Sāsseruva), **7.6b**

¹ Wikramagamage, *Sri Lankāve Baudhha Pratimā Kalāva*, 18

² Six life-size standing Buddha images have been recovered from the site of Ruvanvālisāya. While some of them are displayed in the Colombo museum, some are placed in the image house in front of the Ruvanvāli Dāgāba. For the present study, only two images (**fig.7.2a** & **fig.7.10c**) that display distinctive characteristics will be discussed. The other four images, though have been modernized by the later developments, demonstrate the similar characteristics that are seen in the two images selected. For details see Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculpture of Sri Lanka*, 152-53, Pl.33C-H

(Anuradhapura), **7.8c** (Head from Anuradhapura), **7.16b** (Polonnaruwa), and the seated images from the *Āsanaghara* at Abhayagiriya as shown in **fig.7.26a** and **fig.7.26e**, and that which is located in the Abhayagiriya outer circular road (**fig.7.28a**). The head surface of these images does not possess any hint of a protuberance.

2) Abhayagiri tradition- The *ketumālā* with slightly knotted hair that indicates the radiance of the Buddha (*Raṇsipuñja*),³ as shown in the standing images: **fig.7.2c** (Pidurangala), **fig.7.4a** (Medirigiriya), **fig.7.6c** (Maradankadawala), **fig.7.6d** (Mannarama), **fig.7.6e** (Colombo museum), **fig.7.8a** and **8b** (Heads displayed in the Archaeological museum, A'pura), **fig.7.10a** (Aytigeveva), **fig.7.11a** (Yatāla Vehera), **fig.7.11b** (Mahakachchikodi), and the seated images of Abhayagiriya **7.26b**, **7.26c**, & **7.26d**), and that of the Great Bodhi tree (**fig.7.27a**).

According to *Mahāvamsa*, the Buddha had a *raṇsijāla* around his head, in addition to the thirty-two major marks as evident in the description of the Buddha image that had been made for the king Aśoka's "Feast of Eye" that was attributed to mythical Mahākāla Nāga-Raja⁴ According to *Samantapāsādikā*, *ketumālā* is one of the thirty-two greater characters of the Buddha that the Mahākāla had visualized.⁵ The conical shape on top of the Buddha's hair is described in the *Vaṃsattappakāsini* as the *raṇsipuñja* or *ketumālā*.⁶

³ Wikramagama, *Sri Lankāve Baudha Pratimā Kalāva*, 19

⁴ *Mv.* Ch. V. 93-94: *Sp.* I. 44 (see below n.11): *Tv.* *Caturāsīsisahassathūpakthā*, 37 (for English translation see p. 48 of the same text): (see Chap. 5, n. 94, 95, 96, 97, & 98)

⁵ The story reveals that the Buddha image that the mythical Mahākāla created for Aśoka had thirty-two major marks (*dvātiṃsalakkhaṇa*), eighty minor-marks (*asītyanuvyañjana*), radiance of compass in diameter (*byāmaprabhā*), and a mass of rays on the summit of the head (*ketumālā*). See *Sp.* I. 44

⁶ "Ten'eso raṇsipuñjo ketumālānāṃ jātā...: *Vp.* I, 209

During the later Anuradhapura period, the *ketumālā* or *raṅsipuñja*, assumed a conical shape (*śikhākāra*). This particular character is significantly evident in the standing image of Māligāvila (**fig.7.17b**), Pabaḷu Vehera (**fig.7.20b**), and the seated of Vāhalkada of Ruvanvālisāya (**fig.7.36a**),⁷ Kolambagama (**fig.7.39a**), Tiriyāya (**fig.7.39b**), Riet Berg museum, Zurich (**fig.7.39c**), Metropolitan museum of Art (**fig.7.39e**), Pallepola (**fig.7.39f**), bronze image found from Badulla (**fig.7.40b**),⁸ Puvarasankulama (**fig.7.44b**), Pankuliya (**fig.7.44d1**), Kromos collection (**fig.7.45b**),⁹ and Veheragala (**fig.7.45c**).

Thus, it is clear that the Sri Lankan Buddha images do not resemble the *uṣṇīśa* of **fig.4.2a & 2c, 4.5, 4.7b** and **7c**, from Mathurā, and **fig.4.9a, 9b, 9c, 4.18a** and **18b** of Gandhāra of Kushan period as shown by Chandra Wikramagamage.¹⁰ Instead, the *ketumālā* is a bright and illuminating element of the Buddha's head,¹¹ which did not represent any hint of *uṣṇīśa*.¹²

In the image of the Buddha of the Abhayuttara Vihāra, the king Dhātusena (460 CE-478 CE) “wrought a gleaming diadem of rays (*keśāvataṃsa*) and a shining coil of hair (*raṅsi-cūlāmaṇi*)¹³ out of the dark blue gems to sparkle above the head and distinguished the images of the Buddha from those of his disciples”¹⁴ According to Cūlavāṃsa, he also placed a fascinating element called *raṅsisikhāmaṇi* on top of the

⁷ “Perhaps the Greatest Archaeological Find in Ceylon: A Unique Ivory Statuette and Exquisite Gold Reliquaries,” *Illustrated London News*, No.53 (January 11, 1947): 6-8 with 11 illustrations

⁸ See Chandra Wikramagamage, “Two Schools of Buddha image in Sri Lanka,” *Ancient Ceylon*, No. 12, (Colombo: Department of Archaeology, 1990), 160-1, Plate 3

⁹ M. Lerner, *The Flame and the Lotus-Indian and South east Asian Art from the Kromos Collection*. (New York: Catalogue of the Exhibition held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1980-90), 46-7, Cat. No.13

¹⁰ Wikramagamage, *Sri Lankāve Baudha Pratimā Kalāva*, 21-22

¹¹ “...*nīlapāṭalohitādibhedavicitravaṇṇa raṅsivinaddhabyāmappabhāparikkhepavilāsītāya sandyāppabhā nurāgainadadhanuvijjullatāparikkhittam iva kanakagirisikharam nānāvīrāgavimalaketumālāsamujjalitacārumatthakasobhaṃ.*” *Sp.* Vol. I. 44.

¹² Wikramagamage, *Principles of Buddhist Iconology*, 83

¹³ *Mv* (WG). Ch. XXXVIII.63

¹⁴ Wilhelm Geiger, *Culture of Ceylon in Medieval Times*, ed., Heinz Bechert. (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1960), 101

ketumālā of the Upasumbha Lokanātha (Buddha) and Abhiśeka Buddha.¹⁵ *Pūjāvāliya*, a 13th century Sinhala classic, records the *ketumālā* as the radiance of nine inches in height (*vadu rīyan*), which illuminates at all the times on top of the Buddha's head.¹⁶ The technique they employed in order to make the *ketumālā* illuminated was to emboss in it jewels and gems. Many images of the later Anuradhapura period are assumed to have a decorated *ketumālā* with gems and jewels. The hole in the middle of *ketumālā* and the grooved channels around evidently support the assumption. Particularly the seated images that are shown in the **fig.7.38b** and **7.41c** (Archaeological museum, Jetavanārāma), **fig.7.50c1-c6**, (Archaeological Department, Tiriyāya and Colombo), **fig.7.50d1-d8** (Archaeological museum, A'pura), **fig.7.50d9-d11** (Tiriyāya - now in Archaeological Department, Trincomallee), and in the **fig.7.50d12** and **d13** (Veheragala, Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura) demonstrate this technique.

A distinct arrangement of *ketumālā* is evident in the standing Buddha image of Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala (**fig.7.9d**), and in the seated image of Veheragala (**fig.7.48d**), where the corn-shell shaped element is made to shine with gold and precious stones.¹⁷ The image of the Buddha in the Mirisavāti Vihāra was crowned with a “diadem of jewels, and a net of rays,”¹⁸ and that of Mahāvihāra with a “diadem of jewels which sparkled with the rays of precious stones”¹⁹ Further to this particular arrangement, the hair of **fig.7.40a** (Colombo museum) is arranged in the design of a blossomed lotus. It is

¹⁵ Cv. Ch. XXXVIII. 66-67

¹⁶ *Sirodhātuven vadu rīyanak nāgī hāma velehima jyotimatva tibennavū ketumālā nam raśmi kadamba yayyana mese vū asū anyyañjana lakṣaṇayan dā y mese tunsīya atavissak maṅgul lakuṇu dāka...* (සිරොධාතුචෙන් වඩු රියනක් නැගී හැම වෙලෙහි ම ජොයාතිමන් ව තිබෙන්නා වූ කේතුමාලා නම් රශ්මි කදම්බ යයි යන මෙසේ වූ අසු අනුවාසඤ්ජන ලක්ෂණයන් දැ යි මෙසේ තුන්සිය අටවිස්සක් මහල් ලකුණු දැක...). P.v.143

¹⁷ R.H. de Silva, “Buddha from Veragala” *Archaeological Survey of Ceylon Annual Reports (ASCAR 1968-69)*, (Colombo: Department of Archaeology, 1969), 81, Pl.24: Wikramagamage, “Two Schools of Buddha Image in Sri Lanka,” 159-60, fig. 2

¹⁸ Cv. Ch. LII. 65

¹⁹ Cv (WG). Ch. LIII. 49

apparent that in later Buddha images, the sculptors employed either the *ketumālā* or *raṅsipuñja* instead of applying both together.

The above evidence testifies that the Sri Lankan Buddha images during the period had two elements: *ketumālā* and the *raṅsīśikhāmaṇi*, to decorate the Buddha image,²⁰ and these are unique to the Sri Lankan tradition with no trace of any influence from India.

During the subsequent period, the *Ketumālā* or *raṅsipuñja* had evolved into a *siraspaṭa*, the flame of fire symbolizing the radiance emanating from the Buddha's head. Sri Lankan sculptors have obviously used this in the Buddha images from the 4th century CE to date as seen from the colossal standing Buddha image of Avukana (**fig.7.3c**),²¹ and those of Kankanodai (**fig.7.15a**), Veheragala (**fig.7.15b**),²² Gadaladeniya (**fig.7.21a**), Colombo museum (**fig.7.21b**), Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra (**fig.7.22a1-a3**), Gaṅgārāmaya, Kandy (**fig.7.22b**), Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala (**fig.7.22c**), Archaeological museum, Peradeniya, (**fig.7.23a**), Colombo museum (**fig.7.23b**), Godapitiya Raja Mahā Vihāra, Akuressa (**fig.7.23c**). The seated Buddha images in Colombo museum (**fig.7.42a, 42b, & 42c**), that of Udattapola (**fig.7.50e**), and those of Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra (**fig.7.55b1-b6**), in addition, testify to the continuous application of the particular element. Whereas the particular arrangement in the shape of a trident (*triśūla*) is evident in the **fig.7.45d3**, (Tiriyāya),²³ the shape of a stemmed flower is evident in the seated image of Pallepola Raja Mahā Vihāra (**fig.7.50f**).

²⁰ Wikramagama, *Sri Lankāve Bauddha Pratimā Kalāva*, 21

²¹ Charles Godakumbura assumes that the *siraspaṭa* and the lotus pedestal would have been added to the image at a later date. See Godakumbura, *Budu Pilima= Buddha Statues*, 23, Pl. No. 01

²² "The separately cast and lost flame ornament (*siraspaṭa*) originally inserted into a hole of the auspicious protuberance on top of the head (*uṣṇīśa*), was certainly inset with a precious stone." Ulrich Von Schroeder, *The Golden Age of the Sculpture in Sri Lanka*, 52, Plate 13

²³ M.H. Sirisoma, *The Vatadāge at Tiriyāya*. (Colombo: Department of Archaeology, 1983), 12, fig.6

The continuation of the same tradition, yet in a different style is evident when the flame like aura surrounding the body became prominent, in addition to the *siraspatha* as in the images belonging to 14-18th centuries CE, in the Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra, (**fig.7.17a, 7.22a2, 7.55b2 & b3**),²⁴ Gaṅgārāmaya, Kandy (**fig.7.22b & 7.55g**), Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala (**fig.7.22c**), Pulligoda Cave (**fig.7.55a**), Laṅkātilaka Raja Mahā Vihāra, Kandy (**fig.7.55d**), as well as the seated image of Hindagala Temple (**fig.7.55j**). The reclining image found from Nilagama (**fig.7.62b**) depicts the same element surrounding the body, yet de-generating the authentic character due to the particular technique. This characteristic is described in later Pāli works such as *Mahābodhivaṃsa*, *Pārūpanapāli*, *Sumaṅgalavilāsini*, and *Manorathapūraṇī*. Both *Mahābodhivaṃsa*, and *Pārūpanapāli* emphasize that “there is radiance illuminating from the Buddha’s body, which is of six colors (*śaḍ varṇa*): blue (*nīla*), yellow (*pīta*), red (*lohita*), white (*odāta*), orange (*mānjeṣṭa*), and the combination of all colors (*prabhāśvara*). The hair is blue, the

²⁴ According to the literary evidence, the history of Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra goes back to the period of the king named Devanapiya-Gamini-Tissa (the king named Gamini Tissa, the friend of the gods), whose name is found in an inscription of one of the caves. The particular name is still under controversy, since the king Devānampiyatissa as well as Saddhātissa (the brother of Duṭṭhagāmaṇi Abhaya who ruled the county from 101 BCE-77 BCE.) though; the first reference regarding its history begins from the period of king Vijayabāhu I (1059 CE-1114 CE), as he restored it and built some dwellings for monks (Cv. Ch. LX. 60). The important references with regard to the Buddha images derives from the period of king Niśsaṅkamalla (1187-1196 CE.). According to *Cūlavāṃsa*, in the ‘Jambukola-vihāra (by which the temple was named) resplendent with walls and pillars shimmering in gold and silver, ...rebuilt and placed seventy-three golden statues of the Buddha. (Cv. Ch. LXXX. 22-23). In addition, *Pujāvali* states that the king covered the temple with gold plates, overlaid the seventy-three images with gold, and named it as Rangiri Dambulla (Pv. 784). The inscription on the rock to the right of the Vāhalkada states that in the temple named Swarṇa Giri Guhā (upon which it derives the name Ran Giri Dambulla), he caused reclining, sitting, and standing Buddha images to be gilded, and celebrated every year with the cost of seven lakhs of money. The temple consisting of five caves namely 1) Deva Raja Lena (Cave of the Divine King), 2) Maha Raja Lena (Cave of the Great King), 3) Maha Alut Vihāra (Great New Monastery), 4) Paccima Vihāra (Western Cave), and 5) Devana Alut Vihāra (Second New Monastery) occupy a large number of Buddha statues, which have been remodeled and painted through the course of history. Whereas the Devaraja Lena contains six images of the Buddha of standing posture and one reclining image of 30 ft long, (**fig.7.58b1**), the Maharaja Lena bears sixty-three images of seated and standing posture. In the Maha Alut Vihāra, there are fifty seated and standing images, including a 34ft long reclining Buddha image (**fig.7.58b2 –b2i**). For the present study only a few of those will be selected in order to distinguish the particular iconographic evolution and their characteristics. See Anuradha Seneviratna, *Golden Rock Temple of Dambulla: Caves of Infinite Buddhas*. (Sri Lanka: Central Cultural Fund, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, 1983), 30-31

body is yellow, and lips are red, and so on.²⁵ *Manorathapūraṇī*, on the other hand, describes the brightness of the radiance that the Buddha issued from his body by the river Pubbakottaka.²⁶ The significance of the description of *Sumaṅgalavilāsini* is its mention about the height: 160 feet. According to the text, this is one of the four ways i.e. 1) the bodily radiance (*vyāmaprabhā*) 2) radiance around the head (*raṅsi jāla*) 3) radiance on top of the head (*ketumālā, raṅsi cūlāmaṇi, nīla cūlāmaṇi*) 4) *siraspata*,²⁷ of depicting the radiance of the Buddha image, for which no evidence are found in the early Indian Buddha images.

Whether this particular element was imported from the southern part of India i.e. Amarāvati was considered. Early Amarāvati images do not indicate the *siraspata* in any manner (see **fig.4.30a, 30b1 & b2, 30c, & 30d**). Only the later ones of the 8th to 10th centuries CE display the shape of the cone, which develops on top of the head in spiral grooves (see **fig.4.24a & 24b, 4.25c & 25d, 4.33, 4.34, 4.35**). Chronologically, the Sri Lankan images with these characteristics are earlier than those of Amarāvati and any influence could have been established from Sri Lanka to India rather than *vice versa*.

7.1.2 Halo (*prabhā mandala*)

Except in a few examples found from Anuradhapura [(**fig.7.31a1-a3**—Archaeological museum, Jetavanārāma), **fig.7.31b1-b5**—Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura], Polonnaruwa (**fig.7.7b**), Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra (**fig.7.37a**), Mannarama (**fig.7.37b**), Puvarasankulama—Archaeological museum, A’pura—

²⁵ “...*nīlapītalohitādivicittavaṇṇo bhyāmaprabhā parikkhittvavilāso...*” *MBv.* 82: Pp. 40: see also Wikramagama, *Sri Lankāve Baudhha Pratimā Kalāva*, 36

²⁶ *Mp.* II. 166-7

²⁷ “...*suvaṇṇavaṇṇo abhirūpo dassaṇṇyo, puratthima kāyato suvaṇṇavaṇṇā raśmi uṭṭhahitvā asīti-hattha-tṭhānamgaṇhāti...*” *Sv.* III. 972

(**fig.7.37c**), Colombo museum (**fig.7.37d**), Atamabagaskadavala—Archaeological museum, Vavuniya—(**7.37e**), and the seated image at Tantirimale (**fig.7.53a**), there is no evidence that the halo as in the Indian images of Gandhāra or Mathurā was indicated in any manner. All these images (though it is not conclusive in the **fig.7.7b**) are of the seated posture, with the gesture of meditation (*samādhi*), and belonged to the 4th-10th centuries CE. Schroeder assumes that the bust found from Polonnaruwa (**fig.7.7b**) and the image in the **fig.7.7a** must have been imported from the Āndhra Pradesh.²⁸

The possibility of a halo is suggested in the case of the seated image found from Toluvila (**fig.7.28d**) where there is a small rectangular block of stone left uncut at the back of the head. Commenting on this particular socket, Charles Godakumbura states; “Such a portion of the stone could have been useful for the fixing of the statue to a pillar or to a wall. But placed as it is the block of stone could not have reached a wall unless part of the statue itself was embedded in the wall. It is therefore clear that this block of stone served for fixing the *prabhā maṇḍala* (halo) to the statue.”²⁹ A similar indication is evident in the four seated images that project to the four cardinal directions at the Medirigiriya Vatadāge (see **fig.7.34a1, 34a2, & 34a3**) and the two images found in the image house of the same site, which would have had a *prabhā maṇḍala* or a *catra*.³⁰ But in the absence of any findings that would resemble a halo, this explanation is purely conjectural.

Many of the surviving examples do not provide any evidence to prove that they had the *prabhā maṇḍala* (halo). In the image at Katuvana Raja Mahā Vihāra (**fig.7.55c**) the radiance is indicated as a shining sun. The few images with simple halo are, therefore,

²⁸ Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, 118, 148, 21A & 31D

²⁹ Godakumbura, *Budu Piḷima= Buddha Statues*, 28, Pl. No. 12

³⁰ Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, 132-3, Pl. 28B-G

suggestive of foreign influence of later periods. However, it is evident that the halo was not a prominent characteristic of the Sri Lankan Buddha image.

In the Sri Lankan Buddha image, the typical radiance (*prbhā mandala*) is evident as a part of the aura surrounding the body, during the later period as in the standing and seated images in the **fig.7.17a**, **7.55b2** and **b3** (Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra),³¹ **fig.7.22b** & **7.55g** (Gaṅgārāmaya Raja Mahā Vihāra, Kandy), **fig.7.22c** (Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala), all of which belong to the 18th century, except **fig.7.17a** (Discussed under characteristics of *uṣṇīśa*). **Fig.7.17a**, however, resembles the characteristics of the stone statue of Ruvanvālisāya (**fig.7.2a**) and that of Medavacchiya (**fig.7.2d**), which belong to the 2nd-3rd centuries CE, and the elements of the standing Buddha image at Gaṅgārāmaya, Kandy (**fig.7.22b**). Anuradha Seneviratna believes that the seated images of Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra resemble the characteristics of those belonging to the Anuradhapura period, despite the distorted add-ons and renovations through the course of time.³² Otherwise, none of these images indicates the sun disk of the Greek Apollo,³³ which was the dominant character of the Gandhāra images of Kushan, nor do they represent the illuminating radiance of the Indian gods as marked in the Mathurā images.³⁴

Several seated Buddha images such as 1) A plaque of the seated Buddha image (**fig.7.33**)³⁵ 2) Akbopura Raja Mahā Vihāra (**fig.7.43b**) 3) Silā Cetiya, Mihintale (**fig.7.43c**) 4) Maṅgala Raja Mahā Vihāra, Seruvila (**fig.7.47a, 47b1, & 47b2**) 5)

³¹ Seneviratna, *Golden Rock Temple of Dambulla*, 71

³² Seneviratna, *Golden Rock Temple of Dambulla*, 71

³³ See Ch. 4. n. 60, 61

³⁴ See Ch. 4. n. 118

³⁵ The small plaque made out of schist depicts the Buddha under the cobra hood while accompanied by two Nāga-Rājas in *namaskāra mudra* on the right and two *nāginis* on the left with flutes. Due to the unfamiliar characteristics, it is assumed that it was imported from Andhra Pradesh. The original plaque belongs to the Private Collection of S.W.O. de Silva, and a duplicate is exhibited in the Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura. See Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, 130, Pl. 27a

Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra (**fig.7.55b5**), display cobra hoods at the back of the Buddha's head, where the Buddha is seated on its coils. The particular characteristic may represent the fifth of the seven weeks after enlightenment when under the Mucalinda-Tree he was shielded from rain by the seven-hooded Cobrā-king Mucalinda.³⁶ All these images depict the nine-hooded canopy along with central hood on top,³⁷ except the Dambulla image (**Fig.7.55b5**), which has one central hood with two small hoods on either side. According to Martin Wickramasinghe:

The nine-hooded head of the cobra suggests the halo which the Indian sculptors developed into a very beautiful ornamented disc as in the Sārnāth Buddha image. The sculptor disciplined by the philosophy of Buddhism succeeds in effacing from the cobra all its venomous and terrifying aspects.³⁸

Although the Cobra hood in **fig.7.43c** (Silā cetiya, Mihintale) is missing, the three tiers representing the rear half of the Cobra, upon which the Buddha is seated, testifies that the image might have been canopied by the cobra hood. No evidence can be traced for such an innovation in Indian images perhaps because the seven weeks spent at the Bodhi Tree after Enlightenment was not a theme depicted in sculpture.

The typical characteristic of the seated Buddha image found from the Maṅgala Raja Mahā Vihāra, Seruvila (**fig.7.43a**)³⁹ is the canopy of the Bodhi Tree under which the Buddha is seated. The image is carved out of a monolithic slab where the image is placed on a rectangular pedestal in the posture of meditation (*samādhi*) representing the gesture of meditation (*Samādhi*) and the *vīrāsana*. The image possibly marks the Great Enlightenment of the Buddha under the Bodhi Tree at Bodh Gayā. However, the halo

³⁶ *JātakaA*. 109

³⁷ Godakumbura, *Budu Pilima= Buddha Statues*, 28, Pl.14

³⁸ Wickramasinghe, *Buddhism and Art*, 160, fig.13

³⁹ Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculpture of Sri Lanka*, 130-31, Pl. 27C

surrounding the head and the canopy of the Bodhi Tree, which is not evident in early images, suggest its appearance at a later date.

A similar feature is found in many Indian images of the very early stages in varying degrees and styles. For instance, the Mathurā sculptor used the canopy of the Bodhi Tree on top of the halo, along with the attendant deities on either side (**fig.4.2a**), whereas the Gandhāra sculptor employed the same element along with the images of the bodhisattvas on either side (**fig.4.14b, 14c, & 14d**). On the contrary, in the southern region, the canopy of the Bodhi Tree evolved as a branch of a tree, which was flanked by dwarfs bearing flowers or garlands (**fig.4.26a & 4.26b**), whereas the north-eastern region used the same element in the shape of a hood that provided the shade for the image as evident in **fig.4.51c** and **4.51d**- Farukhabad and Bodh Gayā, and **fig.4.53c** and **4.53d**- Nālandā. None of these characteristics, except the canopy, is evident in the Sri Lankan image. Thus, it is apparent that the canopy of the Bodhi Tree in this image is entirely an indigenous motif that depicted the Enlightenment of the Buddha under the Bodhi Tree.

7.1.3 The circular mark in between the eye brows (*ūrṇā*)

The *ūrṇā* or the soft, white-colored hair curled clockwise, that emits light in between the eye brows is one of the thirty-two greater marks of the Buddha.⁴⁰ However, “nor does one ever find any mark between the eye-brows which may be taken as *ūrṇā*,”⁴¹ in Sri Lankan Buddha images, except in the standing Buddha image at Maha Illuppallama (**fig.7.1b**), the head found from Anuradhapura (**fig.7.8a**), and the seated Buddha image

⁴⁰ See Appendix II.I Thirty Two characteristics of the Great Being (*mahāpuruṣalakṣaṇa*)

⁴¹ Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, 68

found from the *Āsanaghara*, Abhayagiriya (**fig.7.26a**).⁴² Charles Godakumbura identifies this as a *tilaka* (beauty spot),⁴³ and not as a *ūrṇā* (the hair curled clockwise in between the eye-brows). According to the first description of a Buddha image that was erected by king Devānampityatissa, or the later known image that was placed in the relic chamber of Mahātūpa by the king Duṭṭhagāmani Abhaya, the *Mahāvamsa* does not give any account of an *ūrṇā*. But, the *Vamsattappakāsinī* describes that there was a *ūrṇā* of silver color as if it was on a golden wall.⁴⁴ King Dhātusena's Buddha image at Abhayuttara Vihāra,⁴⁵ and king Dappula of Rohaṇa's image of the Victor Buddha,⁴⁶ had a *ūrṇā* in between the brows.

Even though, it is not revealed that the image in **fig.7.26a** was imported from India, the standing image found in the farm yard of Maha Illuppallama (**fig.7.1b**) is thought to have been imported from Āndhra Pradesh during the 3rd century CE. The assumption was based on several reasons; 1) the limestone used for the image is not found in Sri Lanka, while the pedestal proves to be locally made. 2) The *ūrṇā* mark of the forehead, is of typical Amarāvati character.⁴⁷ However, the particular element is evident in later images belonging to the eighteenth century as evident in **fig.7.22b** (Gaṅgārāmaya, Kandy), **fig.7.22c** (Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala). Significantly, it is limited to the standing images.

The *ūrṇā* was found in the Buddha images of Āndhra school, where the most controversial assumptions regarding the evolution of the Sri Lankan Buddha is discussed,

⁴² Chandra Wikramagamage, *Anuradhapura Pūjanīya hā Rājākīya Sthāna*, new ed. (Maharagama: Taranjee Printers, 2010), 53, Pl.43

⁴³ Godakumbura, *Budu Pllima= Buddha Statues*, 27, Pl.10

⁴⁴ “*uṇṇaloṃ pi rajatamayaṃ katvā kataṃ; taṃ pana suvaṇṇabittiyam appitarajatabubulakaṃ viya sobhittha.*” *Vp.* Ch. XXX. 10-15 (p.544)

⁴⁵ *Mv.* Ch. XXXVIII, 63

⁴⁶ *Cv.* Ch. XLV, 61-2

⁴⁷ Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, 104 Pl.18C

and in Gandhāra as well as in Mathurā: see **fig.4.2a**, **4.2b**, and **4.2c** (seated images found from Mathurā), **fig.4.7a**, **4.7b**, and **4.7c** (standing images found from Mathurā), **fig.4.9a**, **4.9b**, and **4.9c** (Seated images found from Gandhāra), and almost all the standing images of Gandhāra, **fig.4.25a**, **4.25b**, **4.25c**, **4.25d**, **4.30a**, **4.30b**, **4.30c**, and **4.30d** (Amarāvati).

7.1.4 The distinctive physical appearance: facial expressions [eyes, eye-brows, (in certain cases the moustache), smile, ear lobes]

7.1.4.1 The facial expressions of the Sri Lankan Buddha images show a greater difference between India and Sri Lanka. There are no Buddha statues with a smile in Sri Lanka. D.T. Devendra explains this special feature,

The Ceylon Buddhist considers the Teacher to have risen above any inclination to fit into a special situation. The Buddha was the preceptor. He showed the Way and was no companion of others' moods. He taught that as a man must conquer anger and hatred so, too, must he conquer love and joy. So that it is lofty serenity, unruffled by human passions which the sculptor most associated with the Buddha.⁴⁸

The facial expression of the Sri Lankan Buddha images seeks to portray the Perfect Enlightenment that the Buddha achieved in his life.

7.1.4.2 The eyes are half-closed, and precious jewels were inlaid in them.⁴⁹

According to Ulrich Von Schroeder "The eyes are inset with rock-crystals, with the pupils originally filled in with a dark substance or small gems." In standing images: Buddha triad of Medirigiriya (**fig.7.4a**), Nāgalakanda (**fig.7.9b**), Ayitigeveva (**fig.7.10a**), Girihandu Sāya (**fig.7.10d**), Velgamvehera (**fig.7.10e**), Mahakachchikodi (**fig.7.11b**), Yatāla Vehera (**fig.7.11a & 7.12c**), Thūpārāma, Polonnaruwa (**fig.7.13a2**), Matara (**fig.7.14e**), Veheragala (**fig.7.15b**),⁵⁰ Pabalu Vehera (**fig.7.20b**), and the seated

⁴⁸ Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, 71

⁴⁹ Wilhelm Geiger, *Culture of Ceylon in Medieval Times*, ed., Heinz Bechert, 101

⁵⁰ Schroeder, *The Golden Age of the Sculpture in Sri Lanka*, 52, Pl. 13

images: Abhayagiri monastery (**fig.7.26a & 26b**), Jetavanārāma (**fig.7.30b**), Horovpotana (**fig.7.35b**), Komārikawela (**fig.7.35d**), Veherabāndimūkalāna (**fig.7.35g**), Silā cetiya, Mihintale, (**fig.7.43c**), Gal Amuna, Medirigiriya (**fig.7.44a**), Pankuliya (**fig.7.44d2**), Veheragala (**fig.7.48d**),⁵¹ and Polonnaruwa Vatadāge (**fig.7.54a1-a3**), the eyes of the images are missing. The empty eye sockets suggest that they were inlaid with some special substance, i.e. crystal, ruby. These images recall the historical references regarding the consecration ceremonies held by various kings during different reigns,⁵² and the placing of gems in the eyes of the Buddha image by some other kings.⁵³ The jeweled eye found in recent excavation of the Abhayagiriya monastery confirms the existence of the custom of inlaying eyes with gems (**fig.7.63**) in the Buddha images.⁵⁴ However, open-eyes are evident in the seated image of bronze in the Colombo museum (**fig.7.40a**).⁵⁵ Martin Wickramasinghe thus, suggests that the particular image might have been made by an ignorant Ceylonese sculptor, or a non-Buddhist Dravidian artist.⁵⁶

7.1.4.3 The face is oval in shape and gives a natural effect to the entire body.

⁵¹ “[T]he semi-closed eyes directed downwards and still inset with crystals, the Buddha appears to be in a state of total detachment from the surrounding world.” See Schroeder, *The Golden Age of Sculpture in Sri Lanka*, 44, Plate 9

⁵² The first reference regarding the ceremony of the consecration of the eyes of the Buddha image is recorded in the Mahāvamsa by the mythical Nāgarāja Mahākāla at the request of the king Aśoka See *Mv.* Ch.V, 94

⁵³ King Buddhadāsa (371 CE-400 CE) placed the jewel that he received from the snake as a gift in the eyes of the Perfectly Enlightened One (*Cv.* Ch. XXXVII, 123), king Dhātusena (460 CE-478 CE) made a pair of eyes of costly jewels into the eyes of the Buddha image at Abhayuttara vihāra, since the one that was placed by the king Buddhadāsa was lost (*Cv.* Ch.XXXVIII. 62), Paṇḍu king stole the jewels of the two eyes of the Buddha image in the Thūpārāma during the period of unstable polity (*Cv.* Ch. L, 24), king Parākramabāhu (1051 CE-1053 CE) placed the eyes of the image of the Victor Buddha in the sermon house by his own hands (*Cv.* Ch. LXXIII, 78)

⁵⁴ Wikramagamage, *Sri Lankāve Baudha Pratimā Kalāva*, 30, fig.13c.

⁵⁵ Dohanian, *Mahayana Buddhist Sculpture of Ceylon*, 93, fig.63

⁵⁶ “Some of the features are contrary to the tradition of the Buddhist sculpture of Ceylon. The open eyes, charming smile, absence of erectness of body and neck suggest the human aspect of the Buddha when he was preaching. Probably the creation of an artist who ignored the conventional iconography, or of a Dravidian artist who was not a Buddhist.” Wickramasinghe, *Buddhism and Art*, 161, Page 50, fig.15

7.1.4.4 The position of the body is firm and fixed, in keeping with the anatomical structure of a human body. According to D.T. Devendra, “There is a sense of firmness and weight but never a hint of muscular effort. It truly expresses the carriage of the body of the Buddha as he sat with his back lightly touching the Bodhi Tree, according to tradition. It is also the position indicated for meditation.”⁵⁷ This character is very much evident in **fig.7.28a**, **fig.7.28b**, **fig.7.28d** as well as in the seated image of Puvarasankulama (**fig.7.44b**). Commenting on the particular seating position of the image at Vijjādhara Cave at Uttarārāma, Polonnaruwa (**fig.7.54b2**), Zimmer states;

The outlines of the figure, extremely bold and simple, offer no distracting or fascinating details, or lures of sensual charm. For instead of suggesting the grace of divine cosmic saviors in the garb of eternal Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, this figure is intended to present a portrait-model of the Buddhist spiritual superman as he would appear on the earthly plane. The ideals expressed are those of Hinayana asceticism, which knows nothing of any grace flowing forth from the transcendental divine savior, but demands and expects everything from the relentless soul-force and self-control of the individual.⁵⁸

What is emphasized is the simplicity of the body, which as I believe, is applied to many images that belong to the later period. Evidence can even be traced from the standing images at Ruvanvālisāya (**fig.7.2a**),⁵⁹ Avukana (**fig.7.3c**), and those of Uttarārāma (**fig.7.19a**) and Tivaṅka Image house, Polonnaruwa (**fig.7.19b**) as well as in the seated images at Medirigiriya (**fig.7.34a1-a3 & 7.34b**), the seated images that are displayed in the Archaeological museum, Polonnaruwa (**fig.7.49a1, 49a2, & 7.53b1**), those at Pabalu Vehera (**fig.7.49b**), Tantirimale (**fig.7.53a**), and Vasingamuva National Park (**fig.7.53c2**) and from the Vatadāge (**fig.7.54a1-a3**), and Uttarārāma (**fig.7.54b1 & b2**) of

⁵⁷ D.T. Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, 69

⁵⁸ Heinrich Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. I, 172, Vol. II, fig. 467

⁵⁹ While D.K. Dohanian assumes that this image belongs to at least 2nd century CE, and reminiscent of the colossal image at Avukana, Ulrich Von Schroeder assumes that the image belongs to 8th century CE. See D.K. Dohanian, “Colossal Buddha at Avukana,” *Archives of the Chinese Art in America*, Vol. XIX (1965), p.22, fig.12: U. V. Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculpture of Sri Lanka*, 1990, 200-1, Plate 52G

Polonnaruwa. All of them display natural characteristics that are not evident in any of the Indian examples. Martin Wickramasinghe says with regard to the well-known *Samādhi* statue in Anuradhapura (see **fig.7.28a**):

The trunk, arms and hands of the Anuradhapura statue give the impression that they are attuned to the mood of spiritual calm, which is wonderfully suggested by its face, eyes, mouth and the sitting posture. The weight of the two arms and hands rests on the lap of the statue, but the arms do not suggest the relaxation of the arms of a person who enjoys laziness. They suggest the sensitiveness of the arms of a yogi with a well-controlled mind and a rigidly disciplined body.⁶⁰

The Indian images as in **fig.4.2a, 4.2b, 4.2c, 8a and 8b** (found from Mathurā), **fig.4.9a, 4.9b, 4.9c, 4.19a, and 19b** (Gandhāra), **fig.4.25c, 4/30a, 4.30c, and 30d** (Amarāvati), on the contrary, are more elaborate and less natural.

7.1.4.5 The waist-band and the inner-robe (*andane*) of Mathurā (fig.4.7a, 4.7b, & 4.7c), Amarāvati (fig.4.30a, 4.30d, 4.32a, & 32b), and some of the masterpieces of Indian images is not evident in early Sri Lankan Buddha images. It is in Sri Lanka a later development as noted in the standing images in **fig.7.10d (Girihandu Sāya), **fig.7.10e** (Velgamvehera) **fig.7.13a2** (Thūpārāma, Polonnaruwa),⁶¹ **fig.7.15b** (Veheragala), and in **fig.7.19b** (Tivaṅka Image House, Polonnaruwa). However, D.T. Devendra highlights an exceptional feature of the Padaviya Buddha image where “the lower waist, that is the region of the lower belly, is dressed in front of the design of the lotus petals. The separating incisions of the petals are quite clear, though quite stiffly tendered. This strange idea deserves investigation, although this example is presumably the only known one.”⁶² (See **fig.7.11e**).⁶³ The under garment is only depicted right below the lower edge of the drapery.**

⁶⁰ Wickramasinghe, *Aspects of Sinhalese Culture*, 60

⁶¹ Godakumbura, *Budu Piḷima=Buddha Statues*, 25, Plate No.06

⁶² Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, 70

7.1.4.6 The earlobes: while some early Buddha images as **fig.7.2d** (Medavachchiya), **fig.7.3b** (Sässeruva), **fig.7.3c** (Avukana), the bronze images of Kankanodai (**fig.7.15a**), Veheragala (**fig.7.15b**), Uttarārāma/Gal Vihāra (**fig.7.19a**), Godapitiya Raja Mahā Vihāra, Akuressa (**fig.7.23c**), the bronze image at Colombo museum (**fig.7.23d**), and the seated images as in the relic chamber, Mihintale (**fig.7.24**), Detiyamulla (**fig.7.28e**), Seruvila (**fig.7.47a, & 47b1-b2**) have been portrayed with long earlobes, many images found from the early period such as in **fig.7.6e** (Colombo museum), **fig.7.26a, 7.26c, 7.26d, & 26e** (Abhayagiriya), and the **fig.7.28a** (Samādhi Buddha image at Mahamevunā Uyana), **fig.7.28c** (Archaeological museum, Jetavanārāma), **fig.7.28d** (Toluvila Samādhi image), do not display long ear lobes. Among the eighty minor characteristics, long ears are listed.⁶⁴ Thus, the later evolved Buddha images like **fig.7.35d** (Komarikawela), **fig.7.36a** (Vāhalkada, Ruvanvālisāya), **fig.7.40a** (Colombo museum, original place is unknown), and **fig.7.40b** (Badulla, now in Colombo museum) display long ear lobes.

7.1.4.7 The hands in Sri Lankan images are arranged in an easy and comfortable position. In the standing images, the right hand displays the gesture of fearlessness while the left hand holds the robe (discussed below). In the seated images; the right hand rests on the left so gently. However, in early images, they were cupped.⁶⁵ (See **fig.7.26a & 7.26c**- Abhayagiriya monastery, **fig.7.28a**—outer circular road, Abhayagiriya).

7.1.4.8 The legs: The anatomical arrangement of the feet is natural in that the heel and the toes are prominent and rounded to a realistic view. Commenting on the particular

⁶³ Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, 102, fig.10 (Photo courtesy: Colombo, Archaeological Department, 1897).

⁶⁴ See Appendix II.II – Eighty Minor Characteristics of the Buddha

⁶⁵ Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, 69-70

character, Martin Wickramasinghe highlights; “In the seated figure of the early period, the round and protruding heel and the curve of the foot are modeled anatomically in defiance of the unnatural features attributed to the Buddha image in religious books. In later Buddha figures we find a flat sole without the heel and the arch, in accordance with the canonical features enumerated in the books on the Buddha.”⁶⁶

7.1.4.9 Gilding of bronze images: Many of the early images made of bronze are gilded⁶⁷ as in standing images of Kurunegala (**fig.7.9a & 7.9d**-Ridī Vihāra), Nālandā Gedi Ge (**fig.7.9c**), Kankanodai (**fig.7.15a**), and in the bronze images at Veheragala (**fig.7.15b**⁶⁸ & **7.45c**). The seated image found from the stūpa at Mihintale (**fig.7.24**), that of Vāhalakada, Ruvanvālisāya (**fig.7.36a**), and Anuradhapura (**fig.7.36b**), Abhayagiriya (**fig.7.36c**), seated images housed in the Archaeological museum, Jetavanārāma (**fig.7.38a-d**), the bronze image in the Colombo museum (**fig.7.40a**) and that of Badulla (**fig.7.40b**), seated image of the Metropolitan museum (**fig.7.45a**), seated image found from Medirigiriya (**fig.7.45e1**) and those from Udattapola (**fig.7.45e2 & 7.45e3**) also show that they were gilded.

7.1.5 Monastic Robe

The monastic garment of the Sri Lankan Buddha image neither represented heavy robes with deeply engraved schematic lines, nor did it cover both the shoulders as in Gandhāra, or Mathurā sculptures. Instead, they were “in regular schematic folds, covered

⁶⁶ Wickramasinghe, *Aspects of Sinhalese Culture*, 50

⁶⁷ Paranavitana, *Glimpses of Ceylon's Past*, 41

⁶⁸ The image has the remains of red color, in addition to the golden color applied on the surface of the bronze, solid cast image. See Schroeder, *The Golden Age of the Sculpture in Sri Lanka*, 52, Plate 13

only the left shoulder.”⁶⁹ Some similarity is seen in Amarāvati Buddha images as distinct from those of Gandhāra or Mathurā. It was once believed that it was a distinctive character of Amarāvati Buddha images and influenced the Sri Lankan Buddha images. But, an in-depth examination shows that the Sri Lankan Buddha image shows unique elements that are not evident in Amarāvati.

The monastic robe, which covered the left shoulder, appears as if it is attached to the body as in the **fig.7.1a** (Kuchchiveli), **fig.7.2a** (Ruvanvālisāya), **fig.7.2c** (Pidurangala), **fig.7.3c** (Avukana), **fig.7.5a1** and **5a2** (Jetavanārāma Archaeological museum), **fig.7.6d** (Mannarama),⁷⁰ **fig.7.12a** (Ālāhana Pirivena, Polonnaruwa), **fig.7.12b** and **12c** (Yatāla Vehera, Tissamaharama), **fig.7.12d** (Toragalla), **fig.7.13a1** (Thūpārāma),⁷¹ **fig.7.19a** (Uttarārāma) and **fig.7.19b** (Tivaṅka Image House) of Polonnaruwa, and the seated images in the Samādhi attitude at the Abhayagiriya (**fig.7.26a, 26b, 26c, 26d, 26e, & 7.28a**), Archaeological museum, Jetavanārāma (**fig.7.28c**), and Toluville (**fig.7.28d**). Whereas the monastic garment of the standing images is marked by lightly engraved single or double channeled grooves, in the seated images, it is indicated by one to two lines that extends through the left shoulder up to the right waist (See the back of the seated image found from Puvarankulama i.e. **fig.7.44b-2 (Back)**).

Examining the garment of the limestone Buddha image of Ruvanvālisāya—now in Colombo museum—(**fig.7.10c**), Nandadeva Wijesekara states; “the robe clings to the

⁶⁹ Raghavan, *India in Ceylonese History, Culture, and Society*, 99

⁷⁰ The robe in this particular image is so transparent that the abdominal curves of the body are shown through the garment. This is yet not visible in the lower part of the body. Charles Godakumbura assumes that this statue has some resemblance to Cambodian images. See Godakumbura, *Budu Pilima=Buddha Statues*, 26, Plate No. 07

⁷¹ Emphasizing the naturalistic arrangement of the channels of the garment, Charles Godakumbura suggests that the images in the particular image house would have been made earlier than those of Uttarārāma. See Godakumbura, *Budu Pilima=Buddha Statues*, 25, Plate No. 06

body and has no folds. This is strongly reminiscent to the Sārnāth Buddha image (5th century CE), although the robe is portrayed in Amarāvati style.”⁷² M.D. Raghavan is of the same opinion: “Early Buddha-images of Ceylon have drapery in relief in regular schematic folds, the drapery covering only the left shoulder. It represents the style of the image that originated in the school of Amarāvati of the first to third centuries A.D. This style of folded drapery persisted in later centuries, as is seen in the colossal rock-cut image of the Buddha, at Avukana. This drapery is closer to the Amarāvati style than to the usual style of Anuradhapura images of about the 4th century or of Polonnaruwa images of the 12th century...The drapery of these late Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa images is of thin clinging material without folds. The great stone Buddha in the ruins of Abhayagiri vihāra in Anuradhapura is a well-known example.”⁷³ One may not agree with them because:

- 1) The monastic robe of the Amarāvati appears heavy and bulky in that the edge of the robe (see **fig.4.30a**) is short and hangs down in a stylistic manner.
- 2) The channels of the robe of Amarāvati Buddha images are more reminiscent to those of Gandhāra or Mathurā images in that they are deeply engraved.
- 3) Through the heavy robe, the lines and edges of the under garment and the physical characteristics are visible.

D.T. Devendra re-emphasizes the unique character of the robe in the Sri Lankan image:

A groove runs from the front of the right shoulder to back. The robe is indicated by a thick edge on the chest, otherwise it clings smoothly to the body. At the back, however, the folds are clearly demarcated branching off in opposite directions from a thick central band serving for the folded edge of the robe. The design strongly suggests inspiration from the branch of the coconut tree. The termination of the inner garment is shown a mere one inch longer than the outer

⁷² Wijesekara, *Early Sinhalese Sculpture*, 244, fig.6

⁷³ Raghavan, *India in Ceylonese History, Culture, and Society*, 99

robe which later had a thick swag. The lower belly is much less prominent than in the case of the (Toluvila seated image).⁷⁴

Regarding the seated image of the *Āsanaghara* at Abhayagiriya (**fig.7.26a**), Charles

Godakumbura noted:

In front of the folds of the robe are noticeable only over the left arm and the calf of the left leg. On the back of the statue the ribbed folds of the robe are well preserved. The loose-end of the robe gathered on the left arm and spread over the left leg has its hem sculptured conspicuously on the rear side. The treatment of the robe is unusual.⁷⁵

D.T. Devendra analyzes the distinction of the robe between the standing and seated images:

The robe was diversely treated. In the principal Abhayagiri image, two ridges which mark the edge are the sole suggestions of the covering. The robe of the third Abhayagiri image has several ridges to indicate the folds and these are arranged symmetrically but well-spaced, unlike in somewhere they are much closer together and schematic. There was variety, but the earlier images were certainly plainer.⁷⁶

There are several exceptional examples: the torso of the dolomite image of standing posture in the Ruvanvālisāya (**fig.7.7a**),⁷⁷ in which the drapery covers both the shoulders, the limestone image found from Thūpārāma (**fig.7.32**—now in Colombo museum). With regard to the former—torso belonging to the fourth century CE—(**fig.7.7a**), there is no evidence to support that Sri Lanka had the Buddha images that cover both the shoulders (*ubhayāṅśa pārupana*), and this particular work is thought to be made by a foreign artist.⁷⁸ Only example that provides the hint of having a similar garment is the bust of the Buddha found from Polonnaruwa (**fig.7.7b**) in which the

⁷⁴ Devendra, *The Buddha image and Ceylon*, 87, Plate VIII

⁷⁵ Godakumbura, *Budu Pilima= Buddha Statues*, 27, Plate 10

⁷⁶ Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, 70

⁷⁷ This is the only example found from Sri Lanka with both the shoulders covered, except the head of the Buddha which indicates its monastic garment as having both shoulders covered (**fig.7.7b**) that is displayed in the Colombo museum (4th century CE),, which also displays the halo around the head. Colombo Museum Register No. 17. 422.340

⁷⁸ Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, 70

remains of the garment appear surrounding the neck. “The open eyes rather fit a standing image than a Buddha seated in meditation.”⁷⁹ M.D. Raghavan states: “Images of the Buddha with both shoulders covered, as we find in later Indian images, are almost unknown in Ceylon.”⁸⁰ The two bronzes (**fig.7.40a & 40b**—Colombo museum) display deeply engraved channels with the falling monastic robe up to the edge of the wrist of the left hand (*ardha ubhayāṅśa pārupana*), and two standing images of bronze: 1) Gadaladeniya (**fig.7.21a**), 2) Colombo museum (**fig.7.21b**), where the monastic robe appears unrealistic.

The limestone image of Ruvanvālisāya (**fig.7.7a**) displays the characteristics of the standing images of Sārnāth as in **fig.4.46b** and later evolved images of Nālandā and Kurkihār as in **fig.4.55b** and **55c**. The seated image in the Colombo museum (**fig.7.32**) also resembles the northern tradition of the Indian Buddha images as evident in **fig.4.10a** (Sahr-i-Bahlol), and **fig.4.10b** (Berlin museum). These images suggest some foreign influence, or must have been manufactured by an artist who trained in the particular Indian style, or might have been imported from India. But by no means do they show the iconographic characteristics of the Amarāvati Buddha images.

Apparently, there are two different depictions of the arrangement of the monastic robe: The single-lined channels are evident in the standing images. **Fig.7.3b** (Sāsseruva), **7.3c** (Avukana), **fig.7.6a** (Vavunikulam), **fig.7.6b** (Anuradhapura), **fig.7.10b** (Yatāla Vehera), **fig.7.13a1** and **13a3** (Thūpārāma, Polonnaruwa), **fig.7.13b** (Atadāge), **fig.7.17a** and **17b** (Dambulla and Māligāvila), in the seated images as in **fig.7.31a1** (Jetavanārāma Archaeological museum), **fig.7.32** (Anuradhapura), **fig.7.40a** (bronze image in the

⁷⁹ Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, 118, 139 & 148-9, Plate 21A & 31D

⁸⁰ Raghavan, *India in Ceylonese History, Culture and Society*, 99

Colombo museum), **fig.7.55b1-b4**, which are placed in the Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra, and in the reclining images of Uttarārāma, Polonnaruwa (**fig.7.60**), and Galapota Raja Mahā Vihāra, Bentota (**fig.7.61a**).

Double-lined channels are evident in the standing images shown in **fig.7.1a** (Kucchiveli), **fig.7.2a** and **7.10c** (Ruvanvālisāya), **fig.7.4b** (Pidurangala), **fig.7.6d** (Mannarama), **fig.7.11d** (Chunnakam), **fig.7.13a2** (Thūpārāma, Polonnaruwa), in the seated images of Uttarārāma, Polonnaruwa (**fig.7.54b1 & b2**), and in the reclining image of Tantirimale (**fig.7.59b**). In several instances, the monastic robe appears in wavy lines as evident in the standing images i.e. **fig.7.9d** and **fig.7.22c** (Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala), **fig.7.22b** (Gaṅgārāmaya, Kandy), **fig.7.23a** (Archaeological museum, Peradeniya), **fig.7.23b** and **7.23d** (Colombo museum), **fig.7.55d** (Laṅkātilaka Raja Mahā Vihāra, Kandy), and in the reclining image of **fig.7.58b1** (Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra). However, the dominant arrangement is the lightly arranged monastic garment with no channels, but indicated by one or two lines that cross over the left shoulder. These characteristics are not evident in Indian Buddha images.

While the reclining images of Bambaragastalava (**fig.7.57**) and Pidurangala (**fig.7.58a**) have been decorated with a plaster of lime and mortar, they have also been colored with red, yellow, and white pigments. The two reclining images at Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra (**fig.7.58b1 & 58b2**) are simply monolithic and attached to the original rock. Despite the fact that both the images have been made by carving the original rock during the similar period, it is apparent that the monastic robe of the image in **fig.7.58b1** has been modified during a later period (perhaps during the 18th century CE) as if its style

is similar to the reclining images of the Galapota Raja Mahā Vihāra, Bentota (**fig.7.61a**), and Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala (**fig.7.61b**), both of which belong to the eighteenth century.

A special feature is the application of color pigments on the limestone or dolomite images: the standing images of Mannarama (**fig.7.6d**), Chunnakam (**fig.7.11d**), Thūpārāma, Polonnaruwa (**fig.7.13a1 & 13a3**), Archaeological museum, Polonnaruwa (**fig.7.16a, 16b, & 16c**), Māligavila (**fig.7.17b**), Buduruvagala (**fig.7.18a**), Tivaṅka Image (**fig.7.19b**), Laṅkātilaka Image House (**fig.7.19c**) and Hātadāge (**fig.7.201a1-a3**) at Polonnaruwa, Gaṅgārāmaya, Kandy (**fig.7.22b**),⁸¹ as well as in the seated images of Abhayagiriya (**fig.7.26a, 26c, & 26d**), and Anuradhapura (**fig.7.31b1-b3**) show the evidence of the particular application. This would have been similar to the application of golden color in many of the metal images found from ancient sites such as. Mihintale (**fig.7.24**), Vāhalkada of Ruvanvālisāya (**fig.7.36a**), Badulla (**fig.7.40b**), and the metal image now placed in the Colombo museum (**fig.7.40a**). This feature is entirely absent in early Indian Buddha images, except a few metal images found from Nālandā and Kurkihar.

7.1.6 Bandolier or Hemapatta

A unique characteristic of the monastic robe of the Sri Lankan Buddha image is the bandolier (*hemapatta*), which was set up over the left shoulder as in the early images such as Mihintale (**fig.7.24**), seated images in the Archaeological Museum, Jetavanarama

⁸¹ Cūlavamsa describes that the king Kirti Sri Rājasinghe “caused a fair statue of the Conqueror, nine cubits high, to be hewn out by cunning workmen, skilled in the art of cutting stone and the like crafts. And he covered that beautiful and graceful statue with leaf of gold, so that it looked like the living Buddha.” See Cv. Ch. C, 181-83. At present the, image shows the remains of the gold color in the arms and some parts of the body, except the plaster made of lime and mortar, colored with red that was used to illustrate the monastic robe.

(**fig.7.30a5-a8 & 7.38a-38d**) and in the bronze images of Medirigiriya (**fig.7.45e1**), Veheragala (**fig.7.48d**)⁸² and the image displayed in the Archaeological museum, Polonnaruwa (**fig.7.48f**), and the standing images of Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra (**fig.7.22a1 & a2**), as well as later images as in **fig.7.22c** (Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala), **fig.7.23a** (Archaeological museum, Peradeniya). It was a popular character during the 18th century, as evident in **fig.7.55c** (Katuvana Raja Mahā Vihāra), **fig.7.55d** (Laṅkātilaka Raja Mahā Vihāra), **fig.7.55e** (Gadaladeniya), **fig.7.55g** (Gaṅgārāmaya, Kandy), **fig.7.55h** (Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala), and in the seated image of Hindagala Raja Mahā Vihāra (**fig.7.55j**).

The application of particular element in the reclining images is also evident from the eighteenth century as in **fig.7.58b1** (Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra), **fig.7.61a** (Galapota Raja Mahā Vihāra, Bentota), **fig.7.61b** (Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala),⁸³ and in **fig.7.62a & 62b** (Colombo museum). D.T. Devendra assumes that this would be the “bandolier of gold” (*Hemapatta*), added to the Buddha image by the king Dhātusena, which has been suggested as the strap thrown over the left shoulder to suspend the begging bowl.⁸⁴ According to Cūlavamsa, king Dhātusena⁸⁵ and king Dappula of Rohaṇa caused *hemapatta*,⁸⁶ over the left shoulder, representing the string on which the Buddha

⁸² Schroeder, *The Golden Age of the Sculpture in Sri Lanka*, 44, Plate 9. Schroeder believes this element as the *Saṅghāti*, and was not prominent prior to 8th century CE. But, the particular element cannot be identified as the *Saṅghāti* because it does not represent the cloak, which covered the two undergarments: *antarāvāsaka* and *utatrāsangha*. Vogel, *Catalogue of the Archaeological Museum at Mathura*, 35 (see chap. 4. n.121). Nonetheless, the particular element was popular in the seated images of Sri Lanka from the very early period as evident in the article found from Mihintale **See. fig.7.24**

⁸³ According to the literary evidence, the image would belong to the period of Kīrti Sri Rājasinghe. Cūlavamsa describes that the king caused a great sleeping Buddha with fine brick and Mortar and clay, and many other images of the Buddha also seated and erect, along with a fair image of Ānanda, those of Maitreya Bodhisattva, Nātha-Deva, and the king Duṭṭhagāminī. See *Cv. Ch. C. 245-50*

⁸⁴ Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, 68

⁸⁵ *Cv. Ch. XXXVIII*, 63

⁸⁶ *Cv. Ch. XLV*, 61

used to wear the alms-bowl.⁸⁷ However, this iconographical character neither appears in Gandhāra Buddha images nor does it populate in those of Mathurā. Nor is it an element in the Amarāvati Buddha images.

7.1.7 Gestures (*Mudrā*)

According to D.T. Devendra,

The hands show the greatest difference between the Ceylon and the Indian image. Whilst the latter freely used the entire *repertoire of mudras*, the symbolism in Ceylon was confined to two. These are the *dhyāni* and the *abhaya*. The *abhaya mudrā* is indicated in only two instances among the seated stone figures at Anuradhapura, that is, at Pankuliya and the Abhayagiri (third). These have been ascribed to later dates without specific grounds. Among bronzes there is the large Buddha image and an elegant small one, the latter from Bell's collection, in the Colombo museum. The other seated images are in *dhyāni mudrā*. There are no instances of *bhū sparśa*, *varada*, and *vitarka mudrās*. Three instances of *bhūmisparśa mudrā* occur in Colombo museum. One is a small clay seal with a legend in Sinhalese characters of the ninth century, an image that Coomaraswamy thought as belonged to a foreign country, and a hollow cast golden image found from the excavations of the Western Monastery in Anuradhapura, generally dated to the latest period of the ancient city.⁸⁸

An in-depth examination of gestures in standing and seated Buddha images in Sri Lanka affirms the foregoing statement. Accordingly, the most popular gesture in the standing images is fearlessness (*abhaya*) whereas that of meditation (*dhyāna/samādhi*) is obvious in seated images.

7.1.7.1 Hand gestures in the standing images:

1. *Abhaya* (gesture of fearlessness):

⁸⁷ Geiger, *Culture of Ceylon in Medieval Times*, 101

⁸⁸ Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, 72

1. I *abhaya mudrā* of the right hand in frontal position in combination with the gesture of the cock comb (*kataka hasta*) turned backward while holding the robe in the curvature of the left hand.
1. II *abhaya mudrā* in the right hand in profile appearance, in combination with the gesture of the cock comb (*kataka hasta*) turned backward while holding the robe in the curvature of the left hand.
1. III *abhaya mudrā* in the right hand in frontal position, in combination with the gesture of boon giving (*varada*) in the left hand.
- I.V *abhaya mudrā* in the right/left hand, while the remaining hand is placed alongside the body in relaxed position.

Table 7.1 shows the appearance of the above combinations in the standing images. The particular employment confirms that it was the most salient gesture in the standing images.

2. *Avadhāna mudrā* (Gesture of awareness)

This is unique to Sri Lankan Buddha images, especially in the colossal standing Buddha images, where the right hand clasps over the left as in the standing images found in Ālāhana Pirivena (**fig.7.12a**), Yatāla Vehera (**fig.7.12b & 12c**⁸⁹), Toragalla (**fig.7.12d**),⁹⁰ standing image of bronze, received from the ‘customs office of the London Dealer’s Collection,’⁹¹ (now in the bronze collection of Colombo museum- **fig.7.12e**), Uttarārāma, Polonnaruwa (**fig.7.19a**),⁹² and in one

⁸⁹ D.T. Devendra, “An Unusual Hand Position in Ceylon Statuary” *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 19 No.2 (1956), 130, Plate IV. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3248709>, accessed November 13, 2011

⁹⁰ Archaeological museum Panduvas Nuvara. see Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, 150, 32G

⁹¹ Devendra, “An Unusual Hand Posture in Ceylon,” 129, fig.1

⁹² Due to this particular gesture some believes that it is “a representation of Ananda, the personal attendant of the Buddha, giving over passing away of the Master, which the recumbent figure supposed to represent.

among many standing images in the Cave No.2-(*Maharaja Lena*) of the Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra (**fig.7.22a3**). D.T. Devendra sees the same gesture in the mutilated wooden standing image found from the Aritṭha-pabbata vihāra at Ritigala, which has been discovered by H.C. P. Bell.⁹³ In all his examinations, along with an early painting found in the vestibule of the Tivaṅka image house,⁹⁴ D.T. Devendra assumes that the particular gesture represents a disciple (perhaps Ananda, the best disciple from the Buddha's life) rather than an image of the Buddha. However, the discovery of similar images alone from different locations prove that the particular gesture represents none other than the Buddha. Significant to the present study is that no evidence has been found from India.

3. Both hands are resting alongside the body with no gestures as in **fig.7.23c** (Godapitiya Raja Mahā Vihāra, Akuessā).

7.1.7.2 Hand gestures in the seated Buddha images

1. *samādhi/dhyāna* (meditation): This is the predominant gesture in almost all the seated Buddha images throughout the entire Sri Lankan tradition from the beginning until up to the 18th century CE. **Table 7.2** describes in detail with selected examples its contribution to the present study. This reveals that the particular

But the standing figure also has such iconographic characteristics as are of distinctive of the Buddha. By the unusual pose of the hands, it is perhaps intended to represent Buddha as the one who sorrows for the sorrows of others." See Paranaviatana, *Sinhalayo*, 51: Commenting on the same image Charles Godakumbura points to the similar images found from Yatāla Dāgaba, Tissamahārāma (**fig.7.12b & 12c**), and the image at Golden Rock Temple (**fig.7.22a3**) and some paintings from Yapahuva and Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala, all of which represent the Buddha as the proof of a "statue none other than that of a Buddha. See Godakumbura, *Budu Piḷima=Buddha Statues*, 23, Pl. No. 01

⁹³ Devendra, "An Unusual Hand Posture in Ceylon" 130-31, fig.2, n6, n7.

⁹⁴ Devendra, "An Unusual Hand Posture in Ceylon" 133, fig. d

gesture was recognized as the most predominant other than the gestures that are described below;

2. *Samādhi/Dhyāna* (meditation) *mudrā* in combination with *bhū sparśa mudrā* (Gesture of Earth Touching) is rarely found in Sri Lankan Buddha image other than in a few images i.e. 1) the seated Buddha image found from the Great Bodhi Tree, Anuradhapura (**fig.7.27a**), 2) the seated Buddha image displayed in the Colombo museum (**fig.7.41a**)⁹⁵ 3) the seated Buddha image in the Archaeological Department, Trincomalee (**fig.7.41b**)⁹⁶ 4) the seated image of Uda Aludeniya (**fig.7.52d**).

Of them, **fig.7.27a** of the Great Bodhi tree resembles the iconographical characteristics of an early period while the remaining images display characteristics of later developed Indian images such as those in Nālandā of the 10th -11th century CE (Compare to the images of **fig.4.53a**, **4.53b**, **4.54a**, **4.54b**, and **4.54c**-from Nālandā and Kurkihār). Therefore, it is apparent that these images belong to two different traditions; whereas **fig.7.27a** represents the native elements, other images might have foreign influence. The distinction is emphasized by U.V. Schroeder:

There is only one Buddha image with the *bhūmisparśa mudrā* known in Sri Lanka. This gesture is associated with the victory of Śākyamuni over Māra and the attainment of Enlightenment under the Bodhi-Tree at Bodh Gayā (Bihar, North India). The setting up of this icon at the Sri Mahā Bodhi Shrine at Anuradhapura is, therefore, of special significance. It is also meaningful that this sculpture is the largest known Sinhalese stone image of the seated Buddha carved in the round. It resembles the famous “*samādhi* Buddha at the Abhayagiri Vihāra complex and appears to be contemporary.”⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Coomaraswamy, *Bronzes from Ceylon*, 6, 20, Plate XXVII, fig.177 (Present place is unknown)

⁹⁶ Recovered from the paving stone of the Vatadāge at Tiriyāya, and preserved in the Archaeological Department Trincomalee (Tiriyāya 34). See Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, 194, Pl.49A

⁹⁷ Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, 23 & 115, fig.1, Pl. 25G

3. *Abhaya mudrā* in the right hand in frontal position in combination with the gesture of blessing (*āśīrvāda mudrā*) in the left hand i.e. **fig.7.44d1** (Pankuliya). According to Charles Godakumbura, “The fingers of the left hand are bent forward and the end of the robe hangs down on both sides of it.”⁹⁸ This is a typical combination of gestures in Sri Lankan Buddha images. Nanadadeva Wijesekara states: “The significance in this image from the other images of *dhyāna mudrā* with folded arms, and meditative stare is the simple expression and life like attitude as represented in the act of blessing “*āśīrvāda mudrā*.”⁹⁹ However, Charles Godakumbura assumes that the particular gesture cannot be recognized since it is severely weathered.¹⁰⁰
4. *Dharmacakra mudrā* (Gesture of Teaching) is rarely employed in Sri Lankan Buddha image in that only the seated images found from Abhayagiriya (**fig.7.27b & 7.27c**) are assumed to have the particular gesture, yet inconclusively.
5. *Vitarka mudrā* (Gesture of Intellectual argument) is evident in combination with
- I. the *dhyāna mudrā* as in **fig.7.39a** (Kolambagama), **fig.7.40a** (Colombo museum),¹⁰¹ and
- II. the *kataka hasta* (cocks comb) *mudrā* as in **fig.7.40b**¹⁰² (Badulla-now in Colombo museum).

⁹⁸ Godakumbura, *Budu Piḷima= Buddha Statues*, 27, Pl.No.11

⁹⁹ Wijesekara, *Early Sinhalese Sculpture*, 54

¹⁰⁰ Godakumbura, *Budu Piḷima= Buddha Statues*, 27

¹⁰¹ Martin Wickramasinghe identifies this gesture as that of preaching (*dharmacakra*). Martin Wickramasinghe, *Buddhism and Art*. (Colombo: M.D. Gunasena, 1972), 161, Fig.15. But, it is clear that the particular gesture does not denote any hint of the gesture of preaching. See **fig.4.10a, 10b, 10c, 10d, & 10e, fig.4.12a, fig.4.14a, 14b, 14c & 14d** for the particular gesture. The only hint of having such images in Sri Lanka is found from Anuradhapura as evident in **fig.7.27b & 27c**.

¹⁰² Schroeder, *The Golden Age of the Sculpture in Sri Lanka*, 34, Pl. 3: M.D. Raghavan describes the gesture of the right hand as *jñāna mudrā*, while the left hand holds the edge of the garment. See Raghavan, *India in Ceylonese History, Culture and Society*, 10: Anannda Coomaraswamy suggests the typical gesture in the right hand as similar to those found from Buddhavāni in the Madras Presidency. See Coomaraswamy, *Bronzes from Ceylon, Chiefly in the Colombo Museum*, 6, 20, Pl. XVII, fig. 46

They appear to be a later development. Although M.D. Raghavan emphasizes the stylistic characteristics of the Badulla image (**fig.7.40b**) as belonging to those of the Gupta art,¹⁰³ the particular image does not resemble those of India of the particular period. Comparable to the images in **fig.4.36a** (Mankuvar) and **4.36b** (Sārnāth), which belong to the 6th century CE., it is the only example of a similar kind that has so far been found in Sri Lanka.

This examination confirms that the most popular gesture in the standing images of Sri Lanka is *abhaya* along with *kataka hasta*, *vitarka*, and *varada* while in the seated images the most frequently used is *dhyāna/samādhi mudrā*. Those of *Bhū sparśa*, *dharmacakra*, and *vitarka* occur infrequently. Contrary to the typical Sri Lankan application, in India, the most popular gestures of the seated images of Mathurā were the *abhaya*, *varada*, and *vitarka* (see **fig.4.2a & 4.2b, 4.4a, 4b, & 4c** in Mathurā), and that of *dharmacakra* (see **fig.4.10a, 10b, 10c, 10d, & 10e, 4.12a, 4.14a, 14b, 14c, & 14d** in Gandhāra). Less frequent are *abhaya* (see **fig.4.9a, 9b, & 4.15**) and *dhyāna mudrā* (see **fig.4.9c, 4.13a, & 4.13b**). Amarāvati used the widest range of gestures: 1) *dhyāna/samādhi* (see **fig.4.25a, 25b, 25c, 25d, 4.27b, 4.28a, 28b, & 4.29**, 2) *vitarka* + *dhyāna* (see **fig.4.24a**, 3) *bhū sparśa* + *dhyāna* (see **fig.4.24b, 4.26a, 4.27a, 27c**), and 4) *dharmacakra* (see **fig.4.26b**). Yet the differences in execution show that the Sri Lankan sculptors have developed their own tradition.

¹⁰³ Raghavan, *India in Ceylonese History, Culture and Society*, 101

7.1.8 Posture of the Sri Lankan Buddha images

Sri Lankan Buddha images display three types of postures; 1) Standing 2) Seated, and 3) Reclining, from the very early periods. The standing images belong to three sub-categories:

7.1.8.1 The posture of standing Buddha images (*bhaṅga*)

1. **Standing upright (*samabhaṅga*)** as in **fig.7.1a, & 7.2b** (Kuchchiveli), **7.1b** (Maha Iluppallama), **fig.7.2a** (Ruvanvālisāya), **fig.7.2c** (Pidurangala). Its subsequent development can also be observed in **fig.7.5a1** and **a2** (Jetavanārāma Archaeological museum), **fig.7.6d** (Mannarama), **fig.7.6e** (Colombo museum), **fig.7.9a** (Kurunegala), **fig.7.9c** (Nālandā Gedi Ge), **fig.7.9d** (Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala) as well as in the standing image found from Chunnakam (**fig.7.11d**), all of which belong to the 6th -8th centuries CE.
2. **The standing posture in a flexed position with one leg bent forward (*dvibhaṅga*)** as in **fig.7.3c** (Avukana, 4th century), and **fig.7.5b1** and **5b2** (Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura). The images of **fig.7.12c** (Yatāla Vehera) and **fig.7.12d** (Toragalla) give the impression of being more relaxed. A somewhat different style is evident in the standing image at the Archaeological museum, Polonnaruwa (**fig.7.16b**), in which the body is turned to the left while the left leg is bent. In the bronze image of Veheragala (**fig.7.15b**), the left leg is bent forward.
3. **The standing posture in a flexed position where the body is bent at three points: neck, waste, and knee (*tribhaṅga*)**. This kind of images is mostly evident during the later Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa periods as in the standing images

of the Ālāhana Pirivena (**fig.7.12a**), Yatāla Vehera, Tissamahārāma (**fig.7.12b**), which are thought to be belonging to the 7th -8th centuries CE, in the standing image of the Uttarārāma/Gal Vihāra (**fig.7.19a**),¹⁰⁴ that of the Tivānka image House (**fig.7.19b**), and Laṅkātilaka (**fig.7.19c**),¹⁰⁵ all of which belong to the 12th century CE.

A typical characteristic of the standing Buddha images of Sri Lanka is their monumentality in that their gigantic size is unmatched in India, as already noted by several art historians whose observations were discussed in Chapter Six. Scholars believe the particular monumentality as the typical technique that the Sri Lankan sculptors applied to represent the Buddha's 'superhuman greatness'.¹⁰⁶ While some of them are free standing sculptures in the round as in Maha Iluppallama (**fig.7.1b**), Pidurangala (**fig.7.2c**), Maha Raja Lena, Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra (**fig.7.17a**), Māligāvila (**fig.7.17b**), some are carved in the rock as high relief as in Sässeruva (**fig.7.3b**), Avukana (**fig.7.3c**),¹⁰⁷ Buduruvagala (**fig.7.18**),¹⁰⁸ and Uttarārāma, Polonnaruwa (**fig.7.19a**).¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ Godakumbura, *Budu Piḷima=Buddha Statues*, 24, Pl. No. 03

¹⁰⁵ Raghavan, *India in Ceylonese History, Culture, and Society*, 100: This is thought to be the largest of the standing Buddha images in the country. See Godakumbura, *Budu Piḷima=Buddha Statues*, 24, Pl.No. 04

¹⁰⁶ Paranavitana, *Sinhalayo*, 39: Raghavan, *India in Ceylonese History, Culture, and Society*, 99: Schroder, *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, 142

¹⁰⁷ Godakumbura, *Budu Piḷima= Buddha Statues*, 23

¹⁰⁸ Godakumbura, *Budu Piḷima= Buddha Statues*, 24, Pl.No.2

¹⁰⁹ According to the *Cūlavamsa*, kings of this period have restored the early images, erected, or performed both activities. King Parākaramabāhu I erected 'nine incomparable, three-storeyed image houses and diversely adorned with images (Cv. Ch. LXXVIII.35), creating out of brick and stucco an elixir for the eye, he built the standing image for the Tivanka image (Cv. Ch. LXXVIII.39), erected a standing image at Laṅkātilaka Vihāra, which was an elixir for the eyes, which had the size of the living Buddha (Cv. Ch. LXXVIII.54), three statues (two sitting images and one recumbent image) of Uttarārāma (Cv. Ch. LXXVIII.74-75), and restored the three- storeyed image house with costly images near the Rajavesibujangamaṇḍapa (Cv. Ch. LXXVIII.79-80). He also erected three image houses of three storeys in the suburb of Sihapura (Cv. Ch. LXXVIII.84-85), three three-storeyed image houses at Vijita Pura with three beautiful images (Cv. Ch. LXXVIII. 87). In Rajarata the same king restored six thousand one hundred decayed image houses, and built three hundred new image houses (Cv. Ch. LXXIX.15), in Punnakama of Dakkhinadesa he erected one-hundred image houses (Cv. Ch. LXXIX.62-63), and restored another twenty-four ruined image houses (Cv. Ch. LXXIX.65), in Rohaṇa he erected forty-three two-storeyed image houses (Cv. Ch. LXXIX.73), and restored two-hundred and seventy-four large image houses and seven

The same skill of making the colossal images in brick and mortar is evident in the Tivaṅka Image House (**fig.7.19b**), and in the Image House at Laṅkātilaka (**fig.7.19c**), both of which are located at Polonnaruwa. The custom of having low-relief sculptures on the living rock is also evident i.e. Dova (**fig.7.3a**) of the later Anuradhapura period.

According to Senarat Paranavitana,

Some of the Buddha images belonging to the late Anuradhapura period are of colossal size. The image of Avukana, carved on the face of the rock, is almost in the round and with the lotus pedestal, 41' in height. The Buddha image at Sasseruwa is somewhat smaller. The group of colossal images carved on the face of a rock near Buduruvagala near Vellavaya comprises a Buddha image in the Centre, attended by bodhisattvas on either side. Each of the Bodhisattvas is attended by a female companion on one side, and a male on the other. The central figure is over fifty feet in height, and the others are in proportion to it. The image at Avukana near Kalaveva may be of the same date as the tank, and Sasseruva Buddha might be even somewhat earlier. The figures at Buduruvagala are not so much in high relief as the Avukana figure, and the details have been finished partly in plaster.¹¹⁰

7.1.8.2 The posture of seated Buddha images (*āsana*)

Sri Lankan sculptors have made seated Buddha images from the very early periods as evident in **fig.7.24** (Mihintale) and the position of legs in the sitting posture is the most obvious characteristic which indicates its independent origin and evolution from the Indian prototype. In Sri Lankan seated images with no exception down the ages and even today, “the legs are not shown interlocked, the almost universal yogic pose in India.”¹¹¹ The strictly yogic *padmāsana* of the Indian prototype in which the legs are so twisted that both soles turn upwards is totally absent in Sri Lanka. Instead the Sri Lankan

temples for images in recumbent posture (Cv. Ch. LXXIX.77-78). King Parākramabāhu II restored the temple of recumbent image of the Buddha and the temple of Tivaṅka image at Kalyāṇi gāma (Cv. Ch. LXXXV.66), erected an octagonal image house with a stone image of the Buddha in Hattaganvalla temple (Cv. Ch. LXXXV.77-78),

¹¹⁰ Paranavitana, *Sinhalayo*, 38

¹¹¹ Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, 68

image has adopted the *vīrāsana*, in which the Buddha is represented as seated comfortably in the manner of meditation. M.D. Raghavan defines it as “*ardhapadmāsana*, the folded legs lying gently one over the other,” which is entirely different from the *padmāsana*, the interlocked *dhyāni* yogic pose of Indian art.”¹¹² Thus, in the Sri Lankan image, the legs are placed in a relaxed meditative position by placing the right leg over the left, with no resemblance of rigidity. According to D. T. Devendra, the Sri Lankan sculptor has excluded the “the conception of the Mahā Yogi.”¹¹³

Highlighting the difference between the two styles of *āsana*: *Padmāsana* and *Vīrāsana*, Panindra Nath Bose states:

Most, if not all, of the sitting Buddha images of ancient Ceylon have an easily identifiable feature which is absent from Indian images of the same posture. The sitting Buddha images of India are in the cross-legged posture called *padmāsana* which is defined as a sitting posture in which the right foot is placed on the left thigh and the left one on the right thigh... The seated images of Anuradhapura period never represent in such a posture. Instead, it represents the *vīrāsana* (hero-posture), one leg (right foot) [is] placed on the other (left) thigh, and the other foot to be turned backward.¹¹⁴

Martin Wickramasinghe distinguishes the *āsana* of the Sri Lankan image from the Indian images, on the basis of permanent comfort (*sthira sukha*)¹¹⁵ in the cross-legged posture *pallaṅkāśana* (*paryāṅkāśana*), “which is a peculiarity of Ceylon images.”¹¹⁶ Virendra Kumar Dabral, of course, is of the opinion that the Sri Lankan *āsana* leads to confusion as he thinks that the Indian posture is the proper one.

Buddha images of Sri Lanka differ from Indian images of the same posture. The sitting Buddha images of India are in the ‘cross-legged’ posture called *padmāsana*. In this posture the right foot is placed on the left thigh and the left foot is placed on the right thigh. The Indian posture is proper and needs no elaboration, but the

¹¹² Raghavan, *India in Ceylonese History, Society and Culture* 99

¹¹³ Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, 68

¹¹⁴ Panindra Nath Bose, ed., *Indian Silpa Sastra*. (Delhi: Bharatiya Publishing House, 1978), 57-58

¹¹⁵ Wickramasinghe, *Aspects of Sinhalese Culture*, 52-53, 60

¹¹⁶ Wickramasinghe, “The Development of the Buddha Image in Ceylon,” 51

images of Sri Lanka particularly at Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa vary and lead to confusion. Many believe that they are all ‘cross-legged.’ The Sri Lankan images of Buddha are not in *padmāsana* and totally dissimilar to Indian ones.¹¹⁷

He offers no evidence for his conclusion that the Indian posture is the proper one.¹²³

The seated images of Sri Lanka with this unique characteristic are those of Abhayagiriya monastery (**fig.7.26a, 7.26b, 7.26c, 7.26d, 7.26e, & 7.26f**), outer circular road,

Abhayagiriya (**fig.7.28a**), Toluvila (**fig.7.28d**), Medirigiriya (**fig.7.34a1-a3 & 7.34b**),

seated images of Seruvila (**fig.7.47a, & b1-b2**), and of Uttarārāma, Polonnaruwa

(**fig.7.54b1 & b2**) as well as the bronze image of in the Veheragala Raja Mahā Vihāra

(**fig.7.48d**).¹¹⁸ M.D. Raghavan identifies the posture of the Uttarārāma image as

vajrāsana,¹¹⁹ though he does not offer any justification. According to D. T. Devendra, “in

mediaeval images, the feet are given some rhythmical movement and, as it were, curve

slightly upward.”¹²⁰ (See **fig.7.39c**- Riet Berg museum, Zurich, **fig.7.39f**- Pallepola Raja

Mahā Vihāra **fig.7.45e1**-Medirigiriya, **fig.7.52a**-Abhayagiriya monastery, **fig.7.55b1-b3**

& b6-Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra, **fig.7.55d**-Lañkātilaka Raja Mahā Vihāra, Kandy, and

fig.7.55e-Gadaladeniya Raja Mahā Vihāra). (See **Table 6.2**-Seated images in the Gesture

(*mudrā*) and Posture (*āsana*) of Meditation (*samādhi*)*dhyāna*).

For the ‘interlocking’ feet of the cross-legged posture in Indian images see **4.2a,**

2b and **2c**- Mathurā, **fig.4.9a, 9b** and **9c**- Gandhāra), except several examples found from

Amarāvati (**fig.4.25b, 4.25d**). This character is found in a few Sri Lankan images as in

the images displayed in the Colombo museum (**fig.7.40a**),¹²¹ Badulla (**fig.7.40b**),¹²²

¹¹⁷ Dabral, *Buddhist Art in India and Sri Lanka: A Critical Study*, 78

¹¹⁸ “The magnificent characteristics of this image are not found in any where in India or South East Asia.” See Schroeder, *The golden Age of the Sculpture in Sri Lanka*, 44 Pl. 9

¹¹⁹ Raghavan, *India in Ceylonese History, Culture, and Society*, 100, Pl. 9, fig. i

¹²⁰ Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, 69

¹²¹ Schroeder, *The golden Age of the Sculpture in Sri Lanka*, 35, Pl. 4

¹²² Schroeder, *The golden Age of the Sculpture in Sri Lanka*, 34, Pl. 3

fig.7.41a (Colombo museum) and the image found from the Vatadāge of Girihandu Sāya (**fig.7.41b**). Apparently, the particular seating position was not popular in Sri Lankan Buddha images.

U.V. Schroeder explains the difference by associating it with the concept of the four mortal (*manuṣi*) Buddhas of the Theravādins of Sri Lanka:

Four seated Buddha images displaying the *dhyāna mudrā* and facing the four cardinal directions of a monument, such as *bodhighara* or *dāgaba*, are identified by the Theravadins as the last four Manuṣi Buddhas, namely: Krakucchanda (north), Kanakamuni (east), Kaśyapa (south), Śākyamuni (west).¹²³ They can also be considered as the manifestations of the cosmic aspect of the ‘Four Quarters.’ Such identification could well be applied to the *vatadāge* structures with intact images at Medirigiriya (Polonnaruva District), and at Polonnaruva. As these two monuments are dated at least four hundred years apart, the cosmic function of the Buddha images may not have been interpreted in the same manner... In the cases where the four Buddhas facing the cardinal directions are depicted with various *mudrās*, such as the *bhūmiṣparśa*, *varada*, *dhyāna* and *abhaya*, they may represent cosmic aspects of the Buddha Śākyamuni, or Tathāgatas. Such compositions of the northern countries were also unknown in Sri Lanka.¹²⁴

7.1.8.3 The posture of reclining Buddha images

Unlike in India, Sri Lanka provides evidence of Buddha images in the reclining posture from very early times. The best preserved examples of early reclining images are found from Bamabaragastalava, Kumana (**fig.7.57**), and at Pidurangala (**fig.7.58a**). A similar image has been found from Konwewa near the ancient tank, which was canopied

¹²³ “The Mānuṣi Buddhas are the Buddhas of the present aeon. According both the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna teaching, Śākyamuni was not the only Buddha to appear in the present kalpa, but was preceded by the Buddhas Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, and Kasyapa, thus forming part of a group of four Buddhas of this world era... Each of the Mānuṣi Buddhas is associated with a direction of space. The correspondence is usually given as Krakucchanda at the centre, Kanakamuni to the south, Śākyamuni to the west, and the future Buddha Maitreya to the north. But, on the stūpa, another schema of correspondence operates: Maitreya, who is distinguishable by his Bodhisattva garb, is concealed at the centre, and the first of the terrestrial Buddhas, Krakucchanda, is moved to the North.” See Adrian Snodgrass, *The Symbolism of the Stūpa*. (Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asian Program, Cornell University, 1985), 131-32

¹²⁴ Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculpture of Sri Lanka*, 103

by the hood of Mucalinda Nāga Rāja.¹²⁵ Inscriptions and the other archaeological findings around Kumana prove that the area was settled from the period of king Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya.¹²⁶ Thus, the date of the reclining image shown in **fig.7.57** would go back at least to the 1st century BCE-1st century CE. Both the images (**fig.7.57 & 7.58a**) are of similar technique using lime plaster and color pigments.

Sri Lanka seems to have made the reclining Buddha images using clay and lime plaster as the primary material at an early stage.¹²⁷ In its subsequent development, stone has been used as in the reclining images of the Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra (**fig.7.58b1 & 7.58b2**), which are assumed to have belonged to the late Anuradhapura period.¹²⁸ Of these, the image in the Devarāja Lena, Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra (**fig.7.58b1**) is carved out of the original rock in the high relief technique so that the back of the body is attached to the rock. The same technique is evident in the reclining images of Attaragollewa (**fig.7.59a**), Tantirimale (**fig.7.59b**), and at Uttarārāma, Polonnaruwa (**fig.7.60**) where the image is carved out of the original rock. The style of the reclining images of Galapota Raja Mahā Vihāra, Bentota (**fig.7.61a**) and that of Ridī Vihāra (**fig.7.61b**) appear to be of a somewhat different technique in which stone is supplemented by a lime and cement plaster on which the yellow and red colors indicate the monastic robe. This became the traditional style of the 18th century sculpture and painting in the country. The reclining images made of bronze, now in the Colombo museum (**fig.7.62a & 7.62b**) have been made by using the solid-caste method, a popular technique applied in bronze images (both Buddha and Bodhisattva) in the country.

¹²⁵ A.S.C.1891, 8: Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 165

¹²⁶ Ellavala Medhananda Sthavira, *The Sinhala Buddhist Heritage in the East and the North of Shri [i.e. Sri] Lanka*. (Colombo: Dayavamsa Jayakody and Co., 2005), 45-46

¹²⁷ A.S.C. 1899, p.9

¹²⁸ Wikramagama, *Sri Lankāve Baudha Pratimā Kalāva*, 37-38

Buddha images in the reclining posture are found in India only during the late Gupta period as in Ajantā Cave No.09 and 26 (see **fig.4.48a & 48b**). The distinction is emphasized by Senarat Paranavitana:

It is noteworthy that colossal images of this type carved in rock faces are not found in India, but figures of much larger dimensions were carved on rock faces by Buddhists in what is now called Afghanistan. Colossal Buddha images in the recumbent position on the rock faces are extant at Alahera and Tantirimale... The artist in creating them has evidently contemplated on the Buddha as Dasabala (ten powers).¹²⁹

7.1.9 The pedestal (*pītikā*)

Other than in a few images from later Anuradhapura period, the lotus pedestal has not been frequently used in Sri Lanka. Heinrich Zimmer explains that it was because of the early Buddhist concept of the Buddha as an earthly being, as opposed to his transcendental nature that evolved with the Mahāyāna in India, and thus, “the figure stands—like the Gautama himself—on the ground.”¹³⁰

7.1.9.1 Pedestals of standing Buddha images

Many of the early standing Buddha images of Sri Lanka are placed on a circular pedestal with simple line decorations. (**fig.7.4a, 7.5a1 & 7.5a2, 7.6e, 7.9b, 7.10a, 7.10d, 7.11a, 7.11c, 7.13b, 7.13c, 7.14c, 7.20a1-a3, 7.20b, 7.21b, 7.23a & 7.23b**) or a rectangular pedestal (**fig.7.3b, 7.14d, 7.18a, 7.23c, 7.23d**). Some others were simply attached to the ground with no pedestal as in (**fig.7.2a, 7.2b, 7.2d, 7.5b1 & b2, 7.6a & 7.6b, 7.10b & 10c, 7.14a, 7.16a, 7.16b, 7.16c, & 7.17c**). There are, of course, minor variations: Velgamvehera image (**fig.7.10e**) is placed on the circular pedestal on a

¹²⁹ Paranavitana, *Sinhalayo*, 39

¹³⁰ Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. I. 171

rectangular Podium, and the pedestal of the Maha Iluppallama image (**fig.7.1b**) is a decagon. According to Charles Godakumbura:

[A] trapezoid block of stone attached to the soles of the feet had been used to socketing the statue to the pedestal. This tenon had served with part of the feet. The lotus pedestal to which this statue had been fixed was also found from the site, but it is of crystalline lime-stone and not of the same material as the statue.¹³¹

On account of the lotus petals forming a slightly curved ten-sided polygon, this image appears to have been imported from a foreign country.

The application of the lotus pedestal (**padma pīṭikā**) is evident in the later 4th century CE as evident in the standing image at Avukana (**fig.7.3c**),¹³² Buddha triad at Pidurangala (**fig.7.4b**), the standing image found from Mannarama (**fig.7.6d**),¹³³ those found from Kurunegala (**fig.7.9a**), Nālandā Gedi Ge, Matale (**fig.7.9c**), Thūpārāma Image House, Polonnaruwa (**fig.7.13a2**¹³⁴ & **7.13a3**), Uttarārāma, Polonnaruwa (**fig.7.19a**),¹³⁵ Gadaladeniya (**fig.7.21a**), and some images of the Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra (**fig.7.22a1 & 7.22a2**).

7.1.9.2 Pedestals of seated Buddha images

The majority of the seated images were placed on a rectangular pedestal, suggestive of the evolution of the *Āsanaghara*, the symbolic presence of the sacred throne of the Buddha where he attained enlightenment, and was of an object of veneration in India as well as in Sri Lanka. Once the image of the Buddha was placed on

¹³¹ Godakumbura, *Budu Piḷima=Buddha Statues*, 24, Pl.No. 03

¹³² Godakumbura, *Budu Piḷima=Buddha Statues*, 23, Pl. No. 01

¹³³ “The original lotus-pedestal of the statue has been recovered.” Godakumbura, *Budu Piḷima=Buddha Statues*, 26, Pl.No. 07

¹³⁴ Godakumbura, *Budu Piḷima=Buddha Statues*, 25, Pl.No. 06

¹³⁵ L. Prematilleke, “The Identity and Significance of the Standing Figure at the Gal-Vihāra, Polonnaruwa, Ceylon,” *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 28. No.1 (1966), 61. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3249317>, accessed June 26, 2011

the particular seat, the image as well as the seat became the objects of veneration (see discussion in Chapter 5.4). It was also a custom to place the image of the Buddha in the relic chambers on a throne made out of precious materials.¹³⁶ Such rectangular pedestals are evident in **fig.7.26b** (Abhayagiriya), **fig.7.44a** (Gal Amuna), **fig.7.44d1** and **d2** (Pankuliya), **fig.7.48c** (Kavudulla), **fig.7.49b** (Pabaḷu Vehera) and **fig.7.54a1-a3** (Vatadāge, Polonnaruwa).¹³⁷ Seated images from Udattapola (**fig.7.46a & 7.46b**) are placed on rectangular pedestals with several tiers. The hollow pedestal of the seated bronze image at Veheragala Raja Mahā Vihāra (**fig.7.48d**) could have been a receptacle.

The rectangular pedestal was occasionally used as a reliquary to enshrine relics and other objects. Referring to the Maṇḍalagiri Vihāra (Medirigiriya), Senarat

Paranavitna states:

Each pedestal rested on a roughly fashioned slab of stone which served as the lid of a stone receptacle with a number of holes—the type referred to in Bell's Archaeological Reports by the term *yantragala*. The receptacle under the pedestal of the central image is a square slab of limestone measuring 2ft. 6in. square, and 6 in. in thickness. It was divided in to 25 compartments, five in each row. Each compartment had been scooped into a hollow and in a number of these were found various auspicious objects originally deposited in them... The receptacle itself was placed over a brick-lined pit, 1ft. 2 ½ in. by 1ft. and 1ft. 10 in. in depth.¹³⁸

This particular characteristic is absent in Indian images.

Later bronze Buddha images were placed on a pedestal attached to the image.

Other than these images, the early seated images were obviously placed on the ground or on a rectangular base. So the images appeared as they were sitting on the ground in the meditating attitude as in the seated Buddha images from Abhayagriya monastery

¹³⁶ *Mv.* Ch. XXX, 72

¹³⁷ Paranavitana, *Glimpses of Ceylon's Past*, 96-97

¹³⁸ Paranavitana, *Glimpses of Ceylon's Past*, 95-96

(**fig.7.26a, 7.26c, 7.26d, & 7.26e**), the outer circular road, Abhayagiriya (**fig.7.28a**), Toluville (**fig.7.28d**), and numerous others.

Another element entirely absent in India is the pedestal suggesting the coils of a Cobra on which the image of the Buddha is placed as in **fig.7.43b** (Akropura Raja Mahā Vihāra,¹³⁹ **fig.7.43c** (Silā Cetiya, Mihintale),¹⁴⁰ **7.47a**,¹⁴¹ **7.47b1**, and **47b2**¹⁴² (Maṅgala Raja Mahā Vihāra, Seruvila), **fig.7.55b5** (Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra), and **fig.7.56a** (Leslie de Saram Collection, Colombo museum).¹⁴³

Apart from the pedestals discussed above, the following exceptional examples have been found in Sri Lanka:

- 1) The double lotus pedestal (dvitva padma pīṭikā) as in the images at Veheragala (**fig.7.48d**),¹⁴⁴ Toluville — now in the Colombo museum— (**fig.7.48e**), and Uda Aludeniya (**fig.7.52d**).
- 2) The lotus pedestal with decorative elements as in **fig.7.41a** (Colombo museum),¹⁴⁵ and **fig.7.41b** (Vatadāge, Girihandu sāya).¹⁴⁶ Here the Buddha image is placed on the lotus pedestal which is supported by a rectangular podium with four foundational legs. The frontal piece of the pedestal is decorated with the figures of two lions on either side. The attenuation of the same tradition is evident in the bronze image of Jetavanārāma (**fig.7.41c**) where the image is placed on a

¹³⁹ Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, 130-31, 27D : National museum, Trincomalee, S 177

¹⁴⁰ Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, 130-31, 27F (M-08)

¹⁴¹ Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka* 130-31, 27B (Mangala Raja Mahā Vihāra, Seruvila 06-10)

¹⁴² Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka* 130-31, 27F (Mangala Raja Mahā Vihāra, Seruvila 06-10)

¹⁴³ Coomaraswamy, "Bronzes from Ceylon, Chiefly in the Colombo Museum," 6, 19, Pl. XV, 38,

Collection of Leslie de Saram CMR No. 11.176.264

¹⁴⁴ J.E. Van Lohuizen-de-Leeuw, "The Ancient Art of Sri Lanka," *Serendip*. Vol.2. No.3 (July-September, 1983), 12, Pl. No.4

¹⁴⁵ Coomaraswamy, "Bronzes from Ceylon, Chiefly in the Colombo Museum," 6, 20, Pl. XXVII, 177, Present position is not available

¹⁴⁶ Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, 194, Pl. 49A solid cast, gilt bronze, recovered from the paving stone of the Vatadāge at Girikhanda Vihāra, Tiriyāya, Archaeological Dept. Trincomalee, Tiriyāya 34

simple rectangular pedestal. In addition to the decorations with lotus, the pedestal of the seated image at Kotavehera, Dādigama (**fig.7.55e**) is decorated with *vajra* (thunderbolt) symbols.

The main characteristics of the **fig.7.41a** and **7.41b** suggest their resemblance to the images of the 8th-10th centuries in Nālandā and Bengal such as the images of Farukhabad (**fig.4.51c**), Nālandā and Bengal (**fig.4.53a & 53b**).

- 3) The lotus cushion with the lion pedestal/ throne of the seated image at Vijjādhara Cave at Uttarārāma (**fig.7.54b2**) resembles the Gupta images of Sārnāth (Compare with **fig.4.38**), regarding which Heinrich Zimmer observes, “Yet the Buddha himself, in keeping with the Hīnayāna view, is loaded with will power and relentless determination; being solid. Though not weighty, and as far as possible from that suggestion of evanescence or immanent evaporation which characterizes the transcendental beings of inner vision.”¹⁴⁷
- 5) The double-lotus cushion (arranged inward-outward) which is supported by a rectangular podium is evident in **fig.7.42a** (Kotagama),¹⁴⁸ **fig.7.42b** (Anuradhapura),¹⁴⁹ **fig.7.42c** (Colombo museum),¹⁵⁰ **fig.7.46c** (Anuradhapura), and in **fig.7.46d** (Horovpotana). The peculiarity of these images is the arch surrounding the body, which resembles the elements of the later Indian images in Amarāvati. See **fig.4.28a** and **28b** (Kuvam, Chingleput and Kanchipuram) **fig.4.50** (Bengal), and **fig.4.53a** and **53b** (Nālandā and Bengal).

¹⁴⁷ Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. I, 172, Vol. II, fig.467

¹⁴⁸ Coomaraswamy, *Bronzes from Ceylon*, 6, 19, Pl. XIV fig 33, CMR 13.112.288

¹⁴⁹ Coomaraswamy, *Bronzes from Ceylon*, 6, 19, Pl. XIV, fig 35, CMR 13. 114.288

¹⁵⁰ Coomaraswamy, *Bronzes from Ceylon*, 6, 19, Pl. XV, fig 39, CMR 11.186.265

The lotus pedestal is evident in early Buddha images of Amarāvati. According to Heinrich Zimmer:

Here Buddhas surrounded by stūpas (symbolizing their final nirvāna, their attainment of the ultimate goal) are seen standing on expanded lotus calyxes. This symbolism, which seemed a little out of place in conservative Ceylon, is completely appropriate to the Mahayana; for here the legends do not insist on the human character and earthly births of the Buddhas.¹⁵¹

The fact that the Vijjādhara Cave at Polonnaruwa was a Mahāyāna institute would similarly explain its lotus pedestal with the lion throne. **(fig.7.54b2)**

Apart from the foregoing evidence, the pedestals with decorative elements in the frontal panel are also evident in a few seated images such as Kotavehera, Dādigama-now in Colombo museum **(fig.7.55f)**, and in the seated image of Gaṅgārāmaya, Kandy **(fig.7.55g)**. None, however, have the symbolic representations such as the deer and the *dharmacakra* on the pedestal to signify the First Sermon or the three daughters of Māra to depict the moment of enlightenment as in **fig.4.26b** (Amarāvati) or in **fig.4.36a** and **36b** (Mathurā & Sārnāth). D.T. Devendra remarks: “The First Sermon, so popular a favorite in India and indicated by *dharmacakka*, is totally absent in Sri Lanka. With the wheel flanked by two deer on the base of the seat it makes a pretty natural picture. But Ceylon does not possess a single example of either the *mudrā* or the park scene.¹⁵²”

7.1.10 Auspicious marks and symbols

Decorative elements such as auspicious marks and symbols are very rarely associated with the Buddha image in Sri Lanka:

¹⁵¹ Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. I, 173, Vol. II, Pl.92 left

¹⁵² Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, 72

1. The standing image from Kucchiveli (**fig.7.2b**): has two rosettes between the ankles, which D. T. Devendra refers to as “a decorative detail known from Ceylon for the first time.”¹⁵³ In addition, Charles Godakumbura identifies a *cakra* (wheel) symbol on the pedestal and a *vajra* (thunder-bolt) on the front side. These probably indicate that this image is of Mahāyāna origin.¹⁵⁴ The seventh century Sanskrit inscription found nearby suggests the date of the image to be around the same period even though its characteristics suggest an earlier date.
2. The Buddha Triad at Pidurangala (**fig.7.4b**), where a colonnaded roof with two pillars in between the statues are above the images.
3. The three Buddha images of Buddha (**fig.7.42a**- Kotagama, and **fig.7.42b**- Anuradhapura, **fig.7.42c**-Colombo museum) with an arch crowned by the lionhood. These images have certain characteristics of the Indian images that evolved in and around the southern and north-east region during the latter half (15th-16th centuries CE) as evident in **fig.4.35** (Tamilnādu) and, **fig.4.54b** (Kurkihār). The archway of Dragons (*makara Torāṇa*) is seen in **fig.7.17a** and **fig.7.22a2** (Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra).¹⁵⁵ An archway in a different style, decorated with certain floral and animal motifs all around the body, is evident in **fig.7.46a** and **46b**-Udattapola, **fig.7.46c**-Anuradhapura, and in **fig.7.46d**-Horovpotana. These images typically demonstrate the imported/borrowed characteristics of the Indian prototypes though their dates are of dispute.
4. Except in a few examples, such as in the feet of the reclining Buddha images at the Maha Raja Lena, Dambulla (**fig.7.58b2-1**), and Uttarārāma, Polonnaruwa

¹⁵³ Devendra, *Classical Sinhalese Sculpture*, 23-24

¹⁵⁴ Godakumbura, *Budu Pilima= Buddha Statues*, 26, Pl. 8

¹⁵⁵ Seneviratna, *Golden Rock Temple of Dambulla*, 53

(**fig.7.60-1**), the auspicious marks are not visible on the soul or palm of the images. In fact, marks depicted in the Dambulla image are simply decorative motifs that do not emphasize any auspicious mark. According to D.T.Devendra, “this lack cannot be explained away on the theory that any such marks may have been shown in whatever coating had been applied to the image. Auspicious marks should, even in a rare case, be shown in relief on the stone. Such was the case in India where a large number shows them.”¹⁵⁶

5. A unique instance of *pādajālā*, a decorative element for the feet, is evident in the archaeological findings of the Veheragala Raja Mahā Vihāra (**fig.7.15b**),¹⁵⁷ though it was not attached to a particular image.
6. A canopy above the head is seen in the seated image of the Vijjādhara Cave (Elfin Grotto)¹⁵⁸ at Uttarārāma, Polonnaruwa (**fig.7.54b2**), in which a hood is in the shape of parasol (*catra*). It is surrounded by the pantheon of five divine Buddhas (*panca dhyāni Buddha Maṇḍala*).¹⁵⁹ The diadem of the divine figure to the left of the central image represents the emblem of a Buddha suggesting that it must be the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, as described in *Sādhanamālā*.¹⁶⁰ Although the iconographical elements of the figure to the right of the image are not clear, it can

¹⁵⁶ D.T. Devendra, *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, 68

¹⁵⁷ Wikramagamage, *Principles of Buddhist Iconology*, 33, Pl.7b: Wikramagamage, *Sri Lankave Bauddha Pratimā Kalāva*, Pl. 2a

¹⁵⁸ The name was given by D. T. Devendra in his “An Unusual Hand Position in Ceylon Statuary” *Artibus Asiae*, 126

¹⁵⁹ Wikramagamage, *Sri Lankave Bauddha Pratimā Kalāva*, 25, Pl.11c.

¹⁶⁰ According to *Sādhanamālā*, *Kasarpaṇa Avalokiteśvara* bears the emblem of the *Dhyāni* Buddha Amitābha. “The worshipper should think himself as the god (Kasarpana) from whose body radiate rays of crore of moons. He wears the Jatāmakuta (crown of matted hair), holds the image of Amitābha on his head, and sits on the moon over the double lotus in the Ardhaparyāṅka attitude.” See Bhattacharya, *Indian Buddhist Iconography*, 128-9

be assumed as that of Maitreya, the future Buddha.¹⁶¹ A canopy of the Bodhi Tree is evident above the head of the seated image at Maṅgala Raja Mahā Vihāra, Seruvila (**fig.7.43a**).

Buddha images wearing crowns, necklaces and other jewelry as those of the Pāla-Sena period of India under Tantric or Vajrayāna influence have not been found in Sri Lanka.

7.1.11 Attendant deities

Except few examples, the use of decorative elements is solely absent in Sri Lankan Buddha images. The following instances testify to the appearance in Sri Lankan Buddhist tradition;

1) On either side of the rock cut image at Buduruwagala (**fig.7.18a**) with a white limestone plaster and colors and pigments applied on it (presently fallen out),¹⁶² exists a cluster of carvings: Buddha, Bodhisattva, and attendants, which is said to have belonged to the 9th century CE. On the right are the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara in the middle, Tārā and Vajrapāni on either side (**fig.7.18a-1**); and on the left are three standing images of bodhisattva Maitreya, and two attendant deities (**fig.7.18a-2**). However, the assembly of the attendant deities in this panel is entirely different from those with the Indian Buddha images as in **fig.4.2a** (Katrā), **fig.4.2c** (Mathurā-now in Boston museum), and in **fig.4.14a, 14b, and 14c** (Gandhāra).

2) Two attendant deities are evident on either side of the seated Buddha image at the Vijjādhara Cave at Uttarārāma, Polonnaruwa (**fig.7.54b**). According to Charles

¹⁶¹ Bhattacharya, *Indian Buddhist Iconography*, 78

¹⁶² Wijesekara, *Early Sinhalese Sculpture*, 244, fig. 8

Godakumbura, “The *torāṇa* (ornamental arch) behind the statue, the *cāmara* (yak-tail) bearers and deities on both side and partially sculptured *chatra* (parasol) are all part of the original rock.”¹⁶³ They appear along with the five divine Buddhas of the later Mahayana tradition.

3) The following seated Buddha images are carved in square shaped niches: 1. Seated image of Tantirimale (**fig.7.53a**), 2. Seated image in the Polonnaruwa Archaeological museum (**fig.7.53b1**), and 3. Seated images in the Vasgamuwa National park (**fig.7.53c1 & c2**). Among those, **fig.7.53a** is highlighted due to the figures of deities on either side and the figures of animals standing upright below the motifs. Since the site is believed to have a Tantric influence during a certain period, this must have been an outcome of their influence.

4) Dambulla Rock Temple preserves a seated image with two monks standing on either side (**fig.7.55b6**). They may be the two chief disciples: Śāriputra and Moggalāna.

7.2 Concluding remarks

The fore-going examination of the iconographical evolution of the Buddha images of Sri Lanka from the earliest known to those of the eighteenth century has highlighted the following characteristics of the Sri Lankan image as opposed to the Indian prototype:

1. **Protuberance of the skull (*uṣṇiśa*)** - None similar to the Indian prototype; early statues depict a naturally shaven head and later have such elements as *ketumālā*, *ransipuñja* or *ransiśikhāmaṇi* and *siraspata*, which are unknown in India;

¹⁶³ Godakumbura, *Budu Pilima= Buddha Statues*, 28, Pl.13

2. **Halo (*Prabhā maṇḍala*)** - No evidence that the halo as in the Indian images of Gandhāra or Mathurā was indicated in any manner;
3. **The circular mark in between the eye brows (*ūrṇā*)** - No mark between the eye-brows which may be taken as *ūrṇā*;
4. **The facial expression** – No smiling Buddhas;
 - Eyes** – Half-closed, and precious jewels inlaid in them;
 - Face** – Oval in shape;
 - Position of the body** - Firm and fixed, in keeping with the anatomical structure of a human body;
 - Ear lobes** - Do not display long ear lobes other than in later brinze images;
 - Waist-band and the inner-robe (*andane*)** - Not evident in early images but a later development as noted in the standing images;
5. **Monastic robe** - Neither represented a heavy robe with deeply engraved schematic lines nor did it cover both the shoulders;
6. ***Hemapatta* or bandolier** - A unique characteristic of the monastic robe of the Sri Lankan Buddha image and not found in India;
7. **Hand gestures (*mudrā*)** - Confined to two: the *dhyāna* and the *abhaya mudrās*; no instances of *bhū sparśa*, *varada*, *dharmacakra*, and *vitarka mudrās*; *Avadhāna mudrā* (Gesture of awareness) is unique to Sri Lankan colossal standing Buddha images, where the right hand clasps over the left;

8. **Size of the Buddhas (standing and seated)** – The monumentality in gigantic size depicting the Buddha’s ‘superhuman greatness’ is unmatched in India;
9. **Posture (*Āsana* or *Bhanga*)-**
- Standing images-** The position of the legs in the standing images prove to have three styles: *samabhaṅga*, *dvibhaṅga*, and *tribhaṅga*, for which no evidence is traced from early Indian images. Colossal images of the type carved in rock faces are not found in India;
- Seated images-** The position of legs in the sitting posture is the most flagrant characteristic which indicates its independent origin and evolution from the Indian prototype; In the Sri Lankan seated images with no exception down the ages and even today the legs are not shown interlocked as in the almost universal yogic pose in India;
- Reclining images -** Buddha images in the reclining posture using clay and lime plaster as the primary material from very early times; Buddha images in the reclining posture are found in India only during the late Gupta period;
10. **Pedestal (*pīṭikā*) -** The lotus pedestal has not been frequently used in Sri Lanka; the figure stands—like the Gautama himself—on the ground; rectangular pedestal was occasionally used as a reliquary to enshrine relics and other objects.
- Pedestals of standing Buddha images:** Many of the early standing Buddha images, of Sri Lanka are placed on a circular pedestal with simple line decorations; lotus pedestal appear after the 4th century;

Pedestals of seated Buddha images: The majority of images are placed on a rectangular pedestal, suggestive of the evolution of the *Āsanaghara*; rectangular pedestal was occasionally used as a reliquary to enshrine relics and other objects; such *yantragala* is absent in Indian images; symbolic representations such as the deer and the *dharmacakra* on the pedestal to signify the First Sermon or the three daughters of Mara to depict the moment of enlightenment totally absent in Sri Lanka;

11. **Auspicious marks and symbols** - Decorative elements such as auspicious marks and symbols are very rarely associated with the Buddha image in Sri Lanka other than in images associated with Mahāyāna institutions;
12. **Attendant deities** – restricted to Mahāyāna shrines only.

Over ninety per cent of the images subjected to this iconographic analysis differ from the Indian images and conform strictly to the characteristics listed above. Any image that does not conform to these characteristics is found to be either imported from India or done by non-Sri Lankan artisans. The sheer volume of differences between the two traditions amply proves that the Sri Lankan Buddha image not only originated independently but had also had a remarkably independent evolution.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER SEVEN

Table 7.1: Different combinations of the gesture of fearlessness (*abhaya*) in the standing Buddha images in Sri Lanka

Description	Image (in fig. No.)	Place of recovery	Period	Place preserved
<i>abhaya mudrā</i> in the right hand in frontal position in combination with the gesture of cock comb (<i>kataka hasta</i>) turned backward in the left hand, while holding the robe in the curvature of the elbow.	fig. 7.1b	Maha Illuppallama	2 nd -3 rd century CE	Government farm, Maha Illuppallama
	fig. 7.2d	Medavachchiya	4 th -5 th century CE	Archaeological museum, A'pura
	fig. 7.3a	Dova	4 th -5 th century CE	Dova Raja Mahā Vihāra, B'wela.
	fig. 7.3b	Sässeruva	5 th century CE	Sässeruva Raja Mahā Vihāra
	fig. 7.4a	Medirigiriya	4 th -5 th century CE	Archaeological museum, Medirigiriya
	fig. 7.4b	Pidurangala	4 th -5 th century CE	Archaeological museum, A'pura
	fig. 7.9a	Kurunegala	7 th century CE	Archaeological museum, A'pura
	fig. 7.10b	Yatāla Vehera	7 th -8 th centuries CE	Arch. museum, Yatāla Vehera
	fig. 7.10d	Girihandu Sāya	7 th -8 th centuries CE	Archaeological museum, Tiriyāya
	fig. 7.15a	Kankanodai	8 th -9 th centuries CE	Archaeological museum, A'pura
fig. 7.15b	Veheragala	8 th -9 th centuries CE	Archaeological museum, A'pura	
fig. 7.18a	Buduruwagala	9 th -10 th centuries CE	Buduruwagala, Buttala	

<i>abhaya mudrā</i> in the right hand in profile view in combination with the gesture of cock comb (<i>kataka hasta</i>) turned backward in the left hand, while holding the robe in the curvature of the elbow	fig.7.2c	Pidurangala	4 th -5 th centuries CE	Raja Mahā Vihāra, Pidurangala
	fig.7.3c	Avukana	4 th -5 th centuries CE	Avukana, Kalā Vāva.
	fig.7.9c	Nālandā Gedi Ge, Matale	7 th century CE	Nālandā Gedi Ge, Matale
	fig.7.9d	Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala	6 th -7 th centuries CE	Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala
	fig.7.10c	Ruvanvālisāya	7 th -8 th centuries CE	Image House, Ruvanvālisāya
	fig.7.10e	Velgamvehera	7 th -8 th centuries CE	Velgamvehera, Periyakulama
	fig.7.17a	Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra.	8 th -9 th centuries CE	Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra.
	fig.7.17b	Māligāvila	8 th -9 th centuries CE	Māligāvila Raja Mahā Vihāra, Buttala
	7.22a1 & a2	Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra	18 th century CE	Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra
fig.7.22b	Gaṅgārāmaya, Kandy	18 th century CE	Gaṅgārāmaya, Kandy	
<i>abhaya mudrā</i> in the right hand in frontal position in combination with the gesture of boon-giving (<i>varada</i>)	fig.7.21a	Gadaladeniya	13 th -14 th centuries CE	Colombo museum
	fig.7.21b	Place unknown	13 th -14 th centuries CE	Colombo museum
	fig.7.22c	Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala	18 th century CE	Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala

<i>abhaya mudrā</i> in the right/left hand in frontal position while the remaining arm and hand are gently placed alongside the body in relaxed position	fig.7.23a	Kandy	18 th century CE	Archaeological museum, Peradeniya
	fig.7.23b	Not known	18 th century CE	Colombo museum
<i>abhaya mudra</i> in the left hand in frontal position, while the right hand is gently placed alongside the body in relaxed position	fig.7.23d	Place unknown	18 th century	Colombo museum

Note: The broken hands of the following standing images prove to have had the *abhaya mudrā* in combination with one another gesture mentioned above.

fig.7.2a (Ruvanvālisāya), **fig.7.2b** (Kuchchiveli), **fig.7.5a1 & 2** (Jetavanārāma), **fig.7.5b1 & 5b2** (Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura), **fig.7.6a** (Vavunikulam), **fig.7.6b** (Anuradhapura), **fig.7.6c** (Maradankadawala), **fig.7.6d** (Mannarama), **fig.7.6e & 7.11c** (Colombo museum), **fig.7.9b** (Nāgalakanda), **fig.7.10a** (Aytigevāva), **fig.7.11a** (Yatāla Vehera), **fig.7.11b** (Mahakachchikodi), **fig.7.11d** (Chunnakam), **fig.7.13a1-a3** (Image House, Thūpārāma, Polonnaruwa), **fig.7.13b** (Atadāge, Polonnaruwa), **fig.7.13c** (Budu Gal Ge), **fig.7.14a** (Detiyamulla), **fig.7.14b** (Mūdu Mahā Vihāra), **fig.7.14c** (Veheradivullana), **fig.7.14d** (Tissamahārāma), **fig.7.14e** (Matara), **fig.7.16a-c, & 17c** (Archaeological museum, Polonnaruwa), **fig.7.20a1-a3** (Hātadāge) and **fig.7.20b** (Pabaḷu Vehera).

Table 7.2: Seated Buddha images of Sri Lanka with the gesture of meditation (*samādhi/dhyāna mudrā*) and the posture (*āsana*) of meditation (*vīrāsana*)

Image (in fig. No.s)	Place of recovery	Period	Place preserved
Fig.7.24	Relic chamber, Minhintale	1 st century CE	Colombo museum
Fig.7.28d	Toluvila, Anuradhapura	3 rd -4 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.32	Thūpārāma	4 th century CE	
Fig.7.37d	Not known	6 th -7 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.42a	Kotagama, Kegalle	6 th -7 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.42b	Anuradhapura	6 th century CE	
Fig.7.42c	Not known	6 th century CE	
Fig.7.48a	Not known	8 th -9 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.48e	Toluvila	8 th -9 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.50c6	Not known	8 th -9 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.51	Udu Dumbara	10 th century CE	
Fig.7.55f	Kotavehera Raja Mahā Vihāra, Dedigama	18 th century CE	
Fig.7.56a	Not known	18 th century CE	
Fig.7.25a1-a5	Anuradhapura	3 rd century CE	Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura
Fig.7.26a	<i>Āsanaghara</i> , Abhayagiriya	3 rd -4 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.28b	Anuradhapura	3 rd -4 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.28e	Detiyamulla	3 rd -4 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.29a	Outer city, Anuradhapura	3 rd -4 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.29b	Pathamaka cetiya	3 rd -4 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.29c	Horovpotana	3 rd -4 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.29d	Mannarama	3 rd -4 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.29e	Citadel, Anuradhapura	3 rd -4 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.31b1-b5	Anuradhapura	4 th century CE	
Fig.7.33	S.W.O. de Silva, Colombo	5 th century CE	
Fig.7.35a	Abhayagiriya	6 th -7 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.35b	Valaskunuveva,	6 th -7 th centuries CE	

Fig.7.35c	Tirappankadawala	6 th -7 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.35e	Puvarasankulama	6 th -7 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.35g	Veherabendimukalana	6 th -7 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.36c	Abhayagiriya	6 th -7 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.37c	Puvarasankulama	6 th -7 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.44b	Puvarasankulama	7 th -8 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.45c	Veheragala	7 th -8 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.45e1	Medirigiriya	7 th -8 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.45e2-3, & 46a-b	Udattapola	7 th -8 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.45e4-5	Padaviya	7 th -8 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.46c	Anuradhapura	7 th -8 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.46d	Horovpotana	7 th -8 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.48d	Veheragala	8 th -9 th century CE	
Fig.7.50d1-8	Anuradhapura	8 th -9 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.50d12-13	Veheragala	8 th -9 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.50e	Udattapola	8 th -9 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.52a	Abhayagiriya	9 th -10 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.52b	Atambagaswewa	9 th -10 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.52c	Ichchankulama	9 th -10 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.28c	Jetavanārāma	3 rd -4 th centuries CE	Archaeological museum, Jetavanārāma
Fig.7.29f	Jetavanārāma	3 rd -4 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.30a1-a8	Jetavanārāma	3 rd -4 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.30b	Jetavanārāma	4 th century CE	
Fig.7.31a1-a3	Jetavanārāma	4 th century CE	
Fig.7.38a-38d	Jetavanārāma	6 th -7 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.41c	Jetavanārāma	6 th -7 th centuries CE	

Fig.7.36a	Vāhalkada, Ruvanvālisāya	6 th -7 th centuries CE	Chief incumbent, Mahāvihāra monastery.
Fig.7.28a	Outer circular Road, Abhayagiriya	3 rd -4 th centuries CE	Outer circular road, Abhayagiriya,
Fig.7.26d Fig.7.26e	Abhayagiriya Abhayagiriya	3 rd -4 th centuries CE 3 rd -4 th centuries CE	Archaeological museum, Abhayagiriya
Fig.7.26b Fig.7.26c	Abhayagiriya Abhayagiriya	3 rd -4 th centuries CE 3 rd -4 th centuries CE	Abhayagiriya monastery
Fig.7.35d	Komarikawela	6 th -7 th century CE	Komarikawela ancient site
Fig.7.34a1-a3 Fig.7.34b	Medirigiriya Image House, Medirigiriya	6 th -7 th centuries CE 6 th -7 th centuries CE	Medirigiriya ancient site
Fig.7.36b	Anuradhapura	6 th -7 th centuries CE	Private Collection in the USA.
Fig.7.37a Fig.7.55b1-b6	Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra	6 th -7 th centuries CE 18 th century CE	Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra
Fig.7.35f Fig.7.37b Fig.7.37e	Vavunikulama Mannarama Atambagaskadawala	6 th -7 th centuries CE 6 th -7 th centuries CE 6 th -7 th centuries CE	Archaeological museum, Vavuniya
Fig.7.39b Fig.7.41b	Tiriyāya Vatadāge, Girihandu Sāya	6 th -7 th centuries CE 6 th -7 th centuries CE	Archaeological museum, Trincomalee.
Fig.7.39c	Not known	6 th -7 th centuries CE	Riet Berg museum Zurich.

Fig.7.39d	Dedigama, Kotavehera	6 th -7 th centuries CE	Archaeological museum, Dedigama
Fig.7.39e	Not known	6 th -7 th centuries CE	Metropolitan museum of Art, Samuel Ellenberg Collection
Fig.7.45a	Not known	7 th -8 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.45b	Not known	7 th -8 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.39f	Pallepola, Kandy	6 th -7 th centuries CE	National museum Kandy
Fig.7.50f	Pallepola, Kandy	8 th -9 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.43a & b	Maṅgala Raja Mahā Vihāra, Seruvila	6 th -7 th centuries CE	Maṅgala Raja Mahā Vihāra, Seruvila
Fig.7.47a	Maṅgala Raja Mahā Vihāra, Seruvila	8 th century CE	Archaeological museum, Seruvila
Fig.7.47b1 & b2	Maṅgala Raja Mahā Vihāra, Seruvila	8 th century CE	
Fig.7.43c	Ambastala Vatadāge, Mihintale,	6 th -7 th centuries CE	Raja Mahā Vihāra, Mihintale.
Fig.7.44a	Galamuna, Medirigiriya	7 th -8 th centuries CE	Gal Aamuna Ancient site.
Fig.7.44c	Tiriyāya	7 th -8 th centuries CE	Archaeological museum, Tiriyāya
Fig.7.45d1-d3	Tiriyāya	7 th -8 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.50a1-a2	Tiriyāya	8 th -9 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.50b1	Tiriyāya	8 th -9 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.50b4	Tiriyāya	8 th -9 th centuries CE	
Fig.7.50c1-c5	Tiriyāya	8 th -9 th centuries CE	

Fig.7.48c	Kavudulla	8 th -9 th centuries CE	Archaeological museum, Medirigiriya.
Fig.7.44d2	Pankuliya	7 th -8 th centuries CE	Aśokārāma, Pankuliya
Fig.7.48b	Menikdena	8 th -9 th centuries CE	Menikdena Raja Mahā Vihāra.
Fig.7.48f Fig.7.49a1 & a2 Fig.7.53b1 & b2	Polonnaruwa Polonnaruwa Polonnaruwa	8 th -9 th centuries CE 8 th -9 th centuries CE 10 th century CE	Archeological museum, Polonnaruwa
Fig.7.49b Fig.7.54a1-a3 Fig.7.54b1-b2 Fig.7.54c1-c3	Pabalu Vehera, Polonnaruwa Vatadāge, Polonnaruwa Uttarārāma, Polonnaruwa Thūpārāma, Polonnaruwa	8 th -9 th centuries CE 12 th century CE 12 th century 12 th century CE	Polonnaruwa ancient site
Fig.7.50a3	Not known	8 th -9 th centuries CE	County of Los Angeles museum
Fig.7.50d9-d11	Tiriyāya	8 th -9 th centuries CE	Archaeological Department, Trincomallee
Fig.7.50b2 & b3	Not known	8 th -9 th centuries CE	University museum, Peradeniya
Fig.7.53a	Tantirimale	10 th -11 th centuries CE	Raja Mahā Vihāra, Tantirimale
Fig.7.53c1-c2	Vasgamuwa	10 th century CE	Vasgamuwa National Park, Polonnaruwa
Fig.7.55a	Pulligoda Caves	12 th century CE	Pulligoda Cave Temple
Fig.7.55c	Katuvana Raja Mahā Vihāra	18 th century CE	Katuvana Raja Mahā Vihāra Getabaru

Fig.7.55d	Laṅkātilaka Raja Mahā Vihāra, Kandy	18 th century CE	Laṅkātilaka Raja Mahā Vihāra, Kandy
Fig.7.55e	Gadaladeniya Raja Mahā Vihāra	18 th century CE	Gadaladeniya Raja Mahā Vihāra
Fig.7.55g	Gaṅgārāmaya, Kandy	18 th century CE	Gaṅgārāmaya, Kandy
Fig.7.55h Fig.7.55i	Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala	18 th century CE 18 th century CE	Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala
Fig.7.55j	Hindagala	18 th century CE	Hindagala Raja Mahā Vihāra, Peradeniya
Fig.7.56b	Kelaniya	18 th century CE	Kelaniya Raja Mahā Vihāra, Kelaniya.

CHAPTER 08

THE DISTINCTIVE ICONOMETRIC ELEMENTS OF THE SRI LANKAN BUDDHA IMAGE

8.1 Śilpa Texts or Technical Manuals

Another aspect of stylistic criticism to determine how much Sri Lankan Buddhist art was dependent on the Indian prototypes is iconometry, by which is meant the technical specifications of measurements and proportions as laid down in *śilpa* manuals. These technical manuals were not only meant for the training of artisans but also for prescribing the particular standards to be applied to their later professional work. *śilpa* manuals exist on various subjects in both India and Sri Lanka. The present chapter is devoted to examine the manuals that prescribe the technique of image-making, which date from the 5th century CE up to at least the 11th century CE to investigate whether there had been any influence from India upon the Sri Lankan Buddha image.

The system of *daśatāla* is the most prominent standard of measurements in making Hindu and Buddha images, according to the *śilpa* manuals in both countries. While Indian *śilpa* manuals mainly focus on prescribing certain elements and proportions of the Hindu deities i.e. Brahma, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Śaṅkara, etc., some of them are devoted partly to describe the iconography and iconometric proportions of the Buddha image.¹ They make no specific references to how the Buddha image should be made. In addition, no evidence is thus far found to confirm that the Indian artisans made the Buddha images according to the system of *daśatāla*.

¹ T.A. Gopinatha Rao, "Tālamāna or Iconometry: Being a concise account of the measurements of Hindu Images as given in the Āgamas and other authoritative works," *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India (e)*.No.3. (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, India, 1920), 39-40

Nonetheless, Sri Lankan *śilpa* manuals, so far found, deal with every detail on how to make the Buddha image according to the prescriptions of *daśatāla* (particularly of *uttama daśatāla*). There is also ample evidence to the effect that the Sri Lankan artisans followed specified formulas to make the images with greater attention. In comparison, the instructions on certain iconometric proportions in Indian *śilpa* texts had not been strictly applied in making images of Hindu deities while Sri Lankan artisans have followed the prescribed techniques and skills in making the Buddha images.

Therefore, an investigation of the iconometric data and their application in practice is important because scholars comparing Indian and Sri Lankan Buddha images, and rushing to conclusions on Indian influence on Sri Lanka have seldom paid any attention to this aspect. The Sri Lankan sculptors had strictly followed the techniques and skills specified in technical manuals whereas Indian sculptors have not done so. The ensuing examination of Indian and Sri Lankan *śilpa* texts will reveal:

1. The unique technical aspects of the Sri Lankan Buddha image with its specifically applied local characteristics.
2. Highlight the differences with the so-called Indian prototypes not observed by such scholars.

8.1.1 Indian *śilpa* texts

The relevant Indian *śilpa* texts that prescribed the elements of iconography and the iconometry can be identified under following;

1. *Sādhanamālā*, *Niṣpaṇṇayogāvali*, *Viṣṇudharmottara* etc., which describe the iconography of the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, *śaktis* (female counterpart of the

Buddhas and bodhisattvas), attendant deities as well as the animals, vehicles and other iconographic aspects that belong to the later Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition.

2. *Brihat Saṃhitā* (BS) of Varāha Mihira, and *Sukranītisāra* (SK) of Sukra that describe in detail the various aspects of polity, society, culture, religion as well as certain prescriptions for making religious shrines and idols.
3. *Samyaksambuddhabhāṣitapratimālakṣaṇam* (SPL), *Pratimā-māna-lakṣaṇa* (PML), and *Kriyāsamuccaya* (KS) of Jagaddarapana that focus on describing the iconometric proportions of various images, and image houses.
4. Later developed Indian *śilpa* texts such as *Śilparatna*, *Kāśyapaśilpa*, *Mānasāra śilpa śāstra*, which focus entirely on the Hindu pantheon.²

While the texts in the first group mainly describe the iconography, the manuals in the 2nd and 3rd categories partly recommend some standard techniques, modes, and styles of making images of various types. Of these, *Brihat Saṃhitā* belonging to the Gupta period (5th century CE), is the earliest manual to deal with iconometry, specifying the proportions of the component elements of images. While the author devotes a larger number of verses to describe the iconography of Viṣṇu, Śiva and Sūrya, the two verses that describe the Buddha defines him as the “father of the world,” “benevolent to all,” and having “serene mind” (Ch.LVII.44 & Ch. LIX.19).³ With regard to the iconography of the Buddha, BS states: “[The Buddha image] should be shown with his palm and soles marked with the figure of a lotus, a placid countenance, very short hair (*sunīca-keśa*), and seated on a lotus-seat.”⁴ These are characteristics of later Buddha images of India than

² *BM*. Introduction, xii

³ “*Pit-eva jagato bhavati Buddhaḥ, sarvahitasya, śāntamanasā.*” *BS*. 18-9, 44

⁴ पद्ममाङ्कितकरचरणः प्रसन्नमूर्तिः। - पद्मासनोपविष्टः पितेव जगतो मवति बुद्धः॥ *BS*. Ch. LVIII.44.

those evolved in Mathurā or Gandhāra and do not agree with the iconographical elements of those images as shown in **fig.4.2a, 2b, and 2c**. No information can be traced of the standing Buddha images. Nor does BS prescribe the proportions and elements of the Buddha image even though it deals with the making the idols of Hindu pantheon i.e. Rāma, Vairocana, Viṣṇu (**See Table 8.1**).

Sukranītisāra, on the other hand, states that “the king should build temples for Viṣṇu, Śaṅkara, Gaṇeṣa, Sun, and Pārvati in the square or in the centre of the village” (Chapter IV verses 132-133),⁵ and describes the images of Rākṣasas Nara, Nāraṣyana, Rāma, Naṛisimha, Vāṇa, Vali, Indra, Bhārgava (Paraśurāma), and Arjuna that are to be made using the *uttama daśatāla*. But it does not deal with the Buddha image.⁶ (**See Table 8.1**).

The *Samyaksambuddhabhāṣitapratimālakṣanam* and *Pratimā-māna-lakṣaṇa* are entirely devoted to describe the iconometric proportions of the images, though not specifically of the Buddha image. SPL begins with the legendary story of how to venerate the Buddha when he was away from Jetavana.⁷ Śāriputra is said to have asked the Buddha, according to the text continues as follows:

Śāriputra : “After your departure or *parinirvāna*, how are the good believers to show their veneration?”

Buddha : “After I have departed or have attained *parinirvāna*, images should be made for worship, and veneration—high and round like the banian tree *nygrodha-parimaṇḍala kāya*... The images should be equal in dimension to the full fathom *vyāma*, spun of outstretched hand, and they should possess the due bodily proportions and the auspicious signs.”⁸

⁵ SK. 166

⁶ SK. Ch. IV, Section IV, verses 280-335. Subsequent to the particular verses, the text describes the characteristics and proportions of the image of Gaṇeṣa (336-372), and other deities; no reference to the Buddha image.

⁷ According to the legend, the Buddha was staying the Jetavana and returned after preaching *dhamma* to his mother in the Tāvatiṃsā heaven.

⁸ SPL, Introduction, 8-9

The proportions are prescribed in two sections:

1. Measurements, beginning from *uśnīṣa*, the head protuberance of the Buddha up to the neck (*grīvā*),
2. The divisions from the neck, to the heels, *gulpha*.

The description focuses on making the Buddha images according to the proportions of *uttama daśatāla* of 125 *aṅgulas* (see **Table 8.3a**), while also describing the four special varieties of the facial shapes i.e. shape of the full-moon (Tathāgata), the hen (bodhisattva), the square (Lokapālas and Devarājas), and the sesame seed (*Buddha mātā*), and the bodily proportions of the images of the Bodhisattvas attesting to its relationship to later developed Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition.

Pratimā-māna-lakṣaṇa (7th century CE), by an author named Atreya-tilaka claims that the text was written down from the Buddhist *śāstras*⁹ and describes the proportions of the images based on *navatāla*,¹⁰ of 116 ½ *aṅgulas*, and *daśatāla* of 125 *aṅgulas* (See **Table 8.3a**), of which the Buddha images are to be made using none other than the *daśatāla*.¹¹ Yet no image of the Buddha in India conforms to this requirement. The iconographical descriptions of the *navatāla* system mentions lion posture and the arms made like the trunk of an elephant¹² as the elements of the Buddha image whereas a variety of auspicious marks like the conch, lotus, flag, thunderbolt, wheel, *svastika*,

⁹ Salutation to the Buddha !! Whatever the theories regarding the measurement of *Pratimā* (image) have been propounded by the sages of old in the *Atreya-tilaka* and other old Buddhist *śāstras*, collecting them all together in proper order and bowing down to the Buddha omniscient God, the *lakṣaṇa* (theory) of the images is being stated. See *PML*. 1-2

¹⁰ In this case, the text does not mention the particular images to be made using the *navatāla* system. Since the description begins just after the salutation to the Buddha, it can be assumed that the author describes the proportions of the Buddha image.

¹¹ *PML*, 112-113

¹² *PML*. 76

bracelet, pitcher, moon, umbrella, *śrīvatsa*, hook, trident, barley-garland, and *vasudhā*¹³ is prescribed for the making the idols of Hindu deities.

8.1.2 Sri Lankan *śilpa* texts

On the contrary, Sri Lanka has its own treatises that prescribe the iconometric proportions of the Buddha images from an entirely different perspective. Two treatises have so far been found:

1. *Mañjusrībhāṣita vāstuvīdyā śāstra and citrakarma śāstra* (CS) belonging to 4th-6th centuries CE,
2. *Bimbamāna* ascribed to *Śāriputra* (BM) composed during 7th-11th centuries CE, along with a rare manuscript of *Ālekhyalakṣaṇa* which describes the measurements, and techniques of paintings of the Buddha image.

While *Mañjusrībhāṣita vāstuvīdyā śāstra and citrakarma śāstra* stands as two volumes of one major manual that deals with two aspects of art and architecture, the *citrakarma śāstra* (CS), as the second of the two, continues from the 4th chapter prescribing certain standards for image making. In particular, chapters VIII and XIV treat the iconometry of the Buddha image as installed in the image house, while chapter XVI describes the five divine Buddhas that were introduced later with the evolution of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The text refers to three kinds of images: Buddha, Bodhisattvas,¹⁴ and divine beings. Yet, the iconometric measurements and proportions are for the

¹³ *PML*, 54-5

¹⁴ *CS*. Ch. VIII 1-2

standing and seated Buddha images (See **Table 8.3b**). The Mahāyāna bias of the treatise is similar to that of *Brihat Samhitā*, and *Samyaksambuddhabhāṣitapratimālakṣanam*.

Contrary to all such texts that are found in India and Sri Lanka, providing their evidence in support of the later developed divine characteristics of the Buddha image, *Bimbamāna* ascribed to Śāriputra focuses entirely on prescribing the iconometric proportions of the standing, seated, and reclining Buddha images, and there is no reference to other images. Several copies are found in Sri Lanka and the text appears to be a part of a major volume. Walter Marasinghe suggests that it is a part of a text called “*Śāriputra Gautamīya Śāstra*,” which evinces the influence of early Buddhist (Theravāda) tradition.¹⁵ The significance of this manual is the unique descriptions of the different measuring patterns of the Buddha image, unlike the descriptions of bodhisattvas, deities, and other minor spirits.

Bimbamāna appears to be unique to the Buddhist tradition of Sri Lanka for several reasons;

1. This is the only text that identifies the measurements of the *uttama-daśa-tāla* with reference to the making of Buddha image, whose iconometric standards have actually been applied to the Buddha images of Sri Lanka (See **Table 8.3b**). Although, *SPL* and *PML* of India prescribe the measurements of *daśatāla*, they neither refer to the Buddha image alone, nor does any evidence prove their application to the Indian images. It is only in Sri Lanka, that the Buddha images of colossal size and prescribed measurements have been made.
2. Indian texts make no reference to *BM*.

¹⁵ *BM*. Introduction, ix

3. Unlike the Indian *śilpa* texts as well as *CS* in Sri Lanka, *BM* prescribes the measurements and proportions of the seated and reclining Buddha images; in addition to the standing Buddha images (**See Appendix III**).
4. No reference is made in it to the icons of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas of the Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition.
5. The text prescribes five different sizes for making the Buddha image;
 - i. *Alpa bimba* (less than 2 cubits)
 - ii. *Adhama bimba* (2-5 cubits)
 - iii. *Madhyama bimba* (5-8cubits)
 - iv. *Uttama bimba* (8-12 cubits)
 - v. *Mahā bimba* (12-80cubits).¹⁶

BM for the first time refers the monumentality of colossal images, which do not figure in Indian or other Sri Lankan texts.

8.2 Distinction of Sri Lankan *śilpa* manuals

The above comparison confirms that the two Sri Lankan texts have unique characteristics which are absent in any of the Indian *śilpa* texts. Therefore, they need to be analyzed to seek further evidence for the independent characteristics and evolution of the Sri Lankan Buddha image. This analysis will include;

1. Standards of measurements
2. Types of images
3. Materials and techniques,

¹⁶ *BM*. vs.7-9

8.2.1 Standards of measurements

Apparently, *aṅgula* and *tāla* are the standard units of measurement in both Sri Lankan and Indian iconometry, of which the smallest unit is the *aṅgula* (See Table 8.2). The earliest reference to one such unit is found in *Samantapāsādikā*, the commentary to the *vinaya*,¹⁷ which suggests that the Buddhists must have used certain standards of measurement prior to the advent of Hindu texts that described the proportions of measurements of Hindu icons. In technical terms, *aṅgula*, the smallest unit of measurement is the finger-breath, whereas the length of the *tāla* (equal to the Sinhala *viyata*) was the length between the extended thumb and the little finger. *Tāla* was considered the most important and accepted measurement applied to Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain images.¹⁸ In theory, an *aṅgula* as the standard measurement is twofold; 1. Absolute *aṅgula*. 2. Relative *aṅgula*. The following Table describes the two types;

Absolute <i>aṅgula</i>	Relative <i>aṅgula</i>
8 <i>paramāṇu</i> = 1 <i>Rathareṇu</i>	1. The length of the middle digit of the middle finger of the sculptor, architect, or the devotee who builds the image = <i>Mātrāṅgula</i>
8 <i>Rathareṇu</i> = 1 <i>Romāgra</i>	
8 <i>Romāgra</i> = 1 <i>Likṣa</i>	
8 <i>Likṣa</i> = 1 <i>Yūka</i>	
8 <i>Yūka</i> = 1 <i>Yava</i>	
8 <i>Yava</i> = 1 <i>Uttama navāṅgula</i>	2. Divide the whole length of the image to be erected into 124, 120, 116 parts = <i>dehāṅgula</i> , <i>deha-labdhāṅgula</i> ¹⁹
7 <i>Yava</i> = 1 <i>Madhyama navāṅgula</i>	
6 <i>Yava</i> = 1 <i>Adhama navāṅgula</i>	

The CS describes nine standards, which the artisan can choose from according to the purpose of the image and these are:

1. Measurements taken in terms of the cubits (*hasta*).

¹⁷ Sp. IV. 922

¹⁸ The length between the little finger and the thumb finger= the width of the palm from the bent of the wrist to the tip of the middle finger= length or width of the face. See BS, 412: Wikramagamage, *Principles of Buddhist Iconology*, 44

¹⁹ T.A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Volume I in 2 Parts. (Delhi: Low Price Publications, reprint 1999), Appendix B, 1-2

2. Measurements in comparison with those of the image-house.
3. Measurements in comparison with those of the base.
4. Measurements in comparison with those of the pillars.
5. Measurements in comparison with those of the door.
6. Measurements in comparison with those of the sanctum sanctorum.
7. Measurements in comparison with those of the three kinds of *aṅgulas*:
 - I. *mānāṅgula*,
 - II. *mātrāṅgula*, and
 - III. *verāṅgula*, which makes nine standards.²⁰

BM, on the other hand, describes five types of images, of which the Buddha images should be made of using the standards of *uttama* and *mahā bimba*.²¹

The standard measurement of the afore-mentioned criteria is the *hasta*, equal to the standard measurement called *tāla* (See **Table 8.2**), which is then increased by “three, four, and six *aṅgulas* respectively up to nine *hastas* to create sixty-five, forty-nine, and thirty-three measurements in number. The text also prescribes the particular measurements for the colossal images.”²² Though it does not specifically describe the measurement of the *aṅgula*, it appears that the artisans must have employed the standard measuring unit called *aṅgula*, which is equal to the length of eight barley corns (*yava*). This apparently confirms that the Sri Lankan *śilpa* texts deal with the making of colossal Buddha images unlike those of India. It also may explain why no colossal Buddha statues were made in India while Sri Lanka has several impressive examples.

²⁰ CS. Ch.VI 1-2

²¹ *BM*. 7-9 (see above n.16)

²² CS. Ch.VI. 3-4

8.2.2 Types of images

John F. Mosteller shows the discontinuity between the prescriptions of the Indian *śilpa* manuals and their application in the Indian Buddha images;

In India, systems of proportion were and are defined by the vertical height of the human figure depicted in the image calculated in terms of a module. A variety of modules are mentioned in texts. Principal among these are the units called *aṅgula* and *tāla*. *Aṅgula*, which literary means the “finger,” is said by many texts to correspond to the width of the middle finger of the patron of the image. It is through such a relationship—between the measure of the living patron and the measure of the image — that the two are brought into meaningful association, whereby the patron derives a unique and lasting merit from the creation of the image... In contrast, it has been possible to demonstrate that the module used for the early north Indian sculpture was not based upon an absolute measure taken from a living body. Instead, the modular unit was calculated, as it is still, in a very practical way by the sculptors themselves, by subdividing the stone surface to be used for the image into a prescribed number of equal parts. This subdivision was and is done along with the vertical line drawn on the block’s surface, which corresponds to the vertical axis of the figure to be carved; each division represents the module. Therefore, in the case of an image that is to be made using the nine-module system (most common in ancient India), the axis is divided into nine equal parts. This simple procedure produces what can be called a modular ruler. This ruler is then used by the sculptor to guide the drawing of the constructive device, permitting him to establish its lines and points with the proper measured distances between them.²³

His analysis reveals two facts; 1) the image making in India was a merit making activity from the beginning of the early period. 2) Although there were certain canonical prescriptions regarding the proportions and measurements of the images, the sculptors have applied a rather practical method, most possibly the measurement of relative *aṅgula*, which was determined by the volume of the material they worked on. **Diagram 8.1** and **8.2**, the standing Buddha images belonging to the 5th century CE examined by Mosteller, reveal that the proportions of both *navatāla* and *taśatāla* measurements, prescribed in Indian *śilpa* texts, have not been applied in the Indian Buddha image, nor do they

²³ John F. Mosteller, “The Problem of Proportion and Style in Indian Art History: Or Why all Buddhas In fact do not look Alike,” *Art Journal*, Vol. 49, No. 4, New Approaches to South Asian Art (Winter, 1990), 389-90

correspond to the proportions and measurements prescribed in them. Instead, they reveal the further developed iconographical characteristics as well as the proportions of measurements applied by the artist to make the image “beautiful.”²⁴

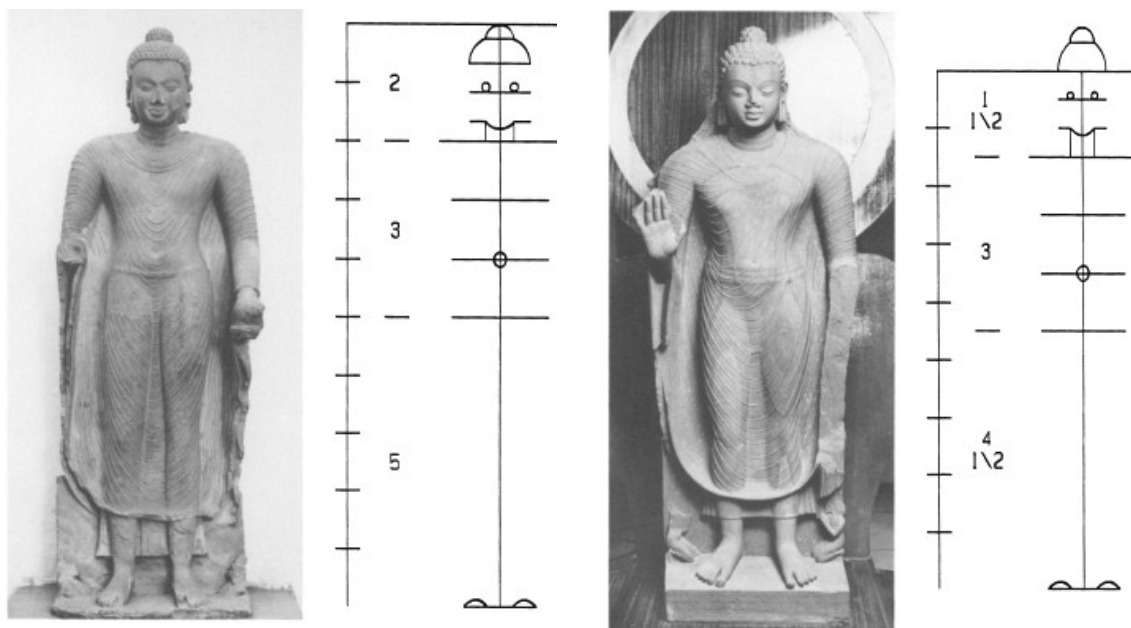


Diagram 8.1 & 8.2 Proportions of the standing images of *daśatāla* and *navatāla* system in Indian Buddha images

Contrary to this aspect, Sri Lankan images prove to have followed the prescribed proportions in the *śilpa* texts and erected the colossal images, too. **Diagram 8.3**, the colossal standing Buddha image of Avukana, thought to have erected during the 4th-5th century CE (**fig.7.3c**) is made according to the system of *navatāla*.

In addition to the prescriptions for the standing Buddha images, CS deals with two postures of the seated Buddha image:

²⁴ “Beauty” is a necessary part of the Indian images according to *śilpa* texts. See Panindra Nath Bose, *Principles of Indian Śilpaśāstra with the text of Māyāśāstra*. (Delhi: Bharatiya Publishing House, 1978), 7-8

1. *Sattvaparyāṅkāśana*,²⁵

2. *Badrāsana*,²⁶

The latter described posture is more intricate than what is prescribed in *BM*, which gives the measurements of three kinds of seated/meditative images (*yogāsana*),²⁷ and the reclining images,²⁸ for which no evidence can be traced in Indian *śilpa* texts.



Diagram 8.3 The distribution of the proportions of the standing Buddha mage at Avukana, according to the system of *navatāla*

With regard to the *Sattvaparyāṅkāśana*, *CS* states; “The all-knowing and most benevolent one, benefactor of all beings [should appear] to be absorbed in deep

²⁵ *CS*. Ch. XV. verse 37

²⁶ *CS*. Ch. XV. verse 38

²⁷ *BM*. Verses 86-111

²⁸ *BM*. verses 112-128

meditation, gentle and serene, and properly seated in the *caturaśra* posture.”²⁹ Although, the description of *caturaśra* is not clear, apparently it must have had an impact on the proportions of the image. In the posture of *Badrāsana*, the legs of the image should hang down while the upper part is the same as the former prescriptions. The height of the seat is four *aṅgulas*.³⁰ According to the text, the plumb lines of the *badrāsana* image should be arranged as nine in front and nine behind, and the root of the penis should be taken as the centre by which [the legs are to be placed] two *aṅgulas* apart.³¹ While the former posture is unclear, that of *badrāsana* has not been found in Sri Lankan images except that of Maitreya found from the Veheragodella in Ambalantota (See fig.8.1). According to the prescriptions of *BM*, the seat (*āsana*) of the seated image would be of 1/3, 1/4, or 1/5 of the total height of the image.³²



Fig.8.1 Maitreya Buddha image. Veheragodella, Ambalantota

BM in particular describes the proportions of the reclining Buddha image of which the measuring standards and the plumb-line (*sūtra*) arrangement are entirely different from those of standing and seated images. The measurements of the reclining images are necessarily relative to the length and breadth of the image house. Accordingly, following measurements and proportions have been prescribed;³³ (See **Appendix III.III**).

²⁹ CS. Ch. XV 34b-35

³⁰ CS. Ch. XV 38

³¹ CS. Ch. XV 39

³² *BM*. vs. 11

³³ *BM*. vs.114-128

1. The length of the image house should be divided into 16 parts, of which one part of either corner should be left vacant, and the remainder can be occupied by the reclining image.
2. *Madhya sūtra* is suspended through the back of the lower edge of the ear, side of the pendent of the ear, the navel, the tip of the penis, and in between the knees up to the end of the feet.
3. *Pārṣva sūtra* must be drawn from the side of the *uṣṇīśa*, neck, below the elbow and the wrist and over the middle finger through the ankle.
4. *Mukha sūtra* is suspended through the middle of the *usnisa*, centre of the forehead, tip of the nose, side of the breast, and the side of the lower hip.
5. *Vaṁsa sūtra* is drawn from the edge of the palm and the abdominal section.
6. *Netra sūtra* is suspended through the bottom of the lower arm.
7. The space between the two feet is 2 *aṅgulas*.
8. The distance between the skin (*carma*-where the seat and the image meet) and the lower nipple is 6 *aṅgulas*.
9. The space between two nipple points is 11 *aṅgulas*.
10. The width of the bent arm is 9 *aṅgulas*. The distance between the arm pit and the elbow of the [same] hand is 22 *aṅgulas*. The distance between the elbow and the wrist is 18 *aṅgulas*.
11. The space between the tip of the nipple and the edge of the elbow is 12 *aṅgulas*.
12. The tip of the thumb of the bent arm, the ear line, and the neck is in one parallel line. The edge and the arm pit of the upper arm is parallel to each other.

13. The wrist of the upper arm is placed 2 *anṅulas* above. The tube of the upper ear is extended through the cheek up to the neck.

14. The height of the pillow is equal to that of the face.³⁴

The above directions, though not specified, clearly apply to the *uttama daśatāla* which was the accepted measurement used to make the standing and seated images.

Such instructions in manuals are unique to Sri Lankan Buddha images. This is one reason that Sri Lankan images appear as realistic images rather than the ‘apparitional beings.’³⁵ These iconometric details further establish that the Sri Lankan Buddha image evolved without any Indian influence.

8.2.3 Equipment and the Techniques

The suspension of plumb lines determined the height and the breadth of the image to be erected. Both Indian and Sri Lankan manuals speak of six kinds of measurements.

1. *Māna* - vertical measurements of the image from the head to the feet
2. *Pramāṇa* - breath or the horizontal measurement of the body
3. *Unmāna* - elevation of certain limbs i.e. Breasts, nipple, knee etc.
4. *Parimāṇa* - circumference or the girth of the image
5. *Upamāṇa* - measurements of the interspaces
6. *Lambamāṇa* - measurements taken along the plumb-lines³⁶

³⁴ *BM*. Verses 118-28

³⁵ “It is represented in the monumental Buddha figure from Amarāvati. From the second century A.D... Their silent grandeur foreshadows the more slender and delicate grace and the inward-turned yogic absorption of the classic Hīnayāna style of Ceylon rather more than the mirage-like apparitions of Gupta Buddhas.” Zimmer, *Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. I. 169-70

³⁶ *CS*, Introduction lii, Ch. XV 1-3: Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Appendix B, 6

While Indian texts show less concern about the manufacturing techniques, the Sri Lankan texts have specific prescriptions for the suspension of plumb lines in standing, seated, and reclining images. Accordingly, the main equipment of the artisan was the *Lambatatuva*,³⁷ which he used to obtain the proportions of different limbs of the image. Whereas the vertical measurements were identified as *pañca tāla* (five measures),³⁸ i.e. *madya sūtra* (*Brahma sūtra*), 2) *karṇamūla sūtra*, 3) *karṇabāhya sūtra*, 4) *kakṣa sūtra*, and 5) *pārśva sūtra*,³⁹ the horizontal measurements were obtained by drawing eight main string lines namely;

1. *keśānta-sūtra* - limit of the front-hair
2. *akṣi-sūtra* - running across the middle of the two eyes
3. *nāspūta-sūtra* - marking the end of the nose-tips
4. *hanvatta-sūtra* - passes through the chin
5. *hikkā-sūtra* - passes across the hiccup or base of the neck
6. *sthana-sūtra* - runs across the middle of the breast
7. *nābhi-sūtra* - passes through the centre of the navel
8. *medha-sūtra* - touches the root of the penis.⁴⁰

A frame specifically made for the alignment of horizontal and vertical arrangement of plumb-lines and strings ensured that images conformed to specified measurements. (See **Diagram 8.4a & 4b**). Walter Marasinghe describes how plumb-lines were utilized;

³⁷ While Chandra Wikramagamage and Ananda Coomaraswamy as well as Benjamin Rowland use the Sinhala term *Lambatatuva*, E.W. Marasinghe names it as *Lambaphalaka*, See CS, Introduction lii, fig.18: Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Appendix B, 29, Plate 4

³⁸ Rowland, *Art and Architecture of Indi*, 366

³⁹ CS. Ch. XV, 4-9

⁴⁰ CS, Introduction, lii-iii

The Lamba-phalaka is a wooden framework with a number of holes for the several strings to pass through... This is held horizontally over the image being made with the strings hanging perpendicularly by the weight of the plummets suspended. Along the perimeter of the plank a margin of three *aṅgulas* is left out and, therefore, the suspension of string is confined to a frame measuring 62x18 *aṅgulas*... The middlemost string is suspended in front is known as *brahma sūtra*, or *Madhya sūtra*, and passes through the middle of the forehead, in between the two eye-brows, through the tip of the nose, the middle of the navel, the middle of the penis, between the thighs and between the two shin bones. A second line is suspended along the extreme of the hips and the loins and the middle of the foot. Thus is known as the *pārṣva sūtra*. The third string called *karṇa sūtra* is suspended along the outer edge of the ear, the middle of the breast, the middle of the thigh and the leg, the outer limit of the shin bone (?), and the edge of the fourth toe. The next is the *kakṣā sūtra* which passes through the arm-pit (*kakṣā*), outside the hip, outside the root of the thigh, along the side of the knee, and of the little toe, and along the (inner) side of the arm. The fifth line is suspended touch the middle of arm, and the end of the hand. A similar set of four strings is suspended on the other side of the *brahma-sūtra*.⁴¹

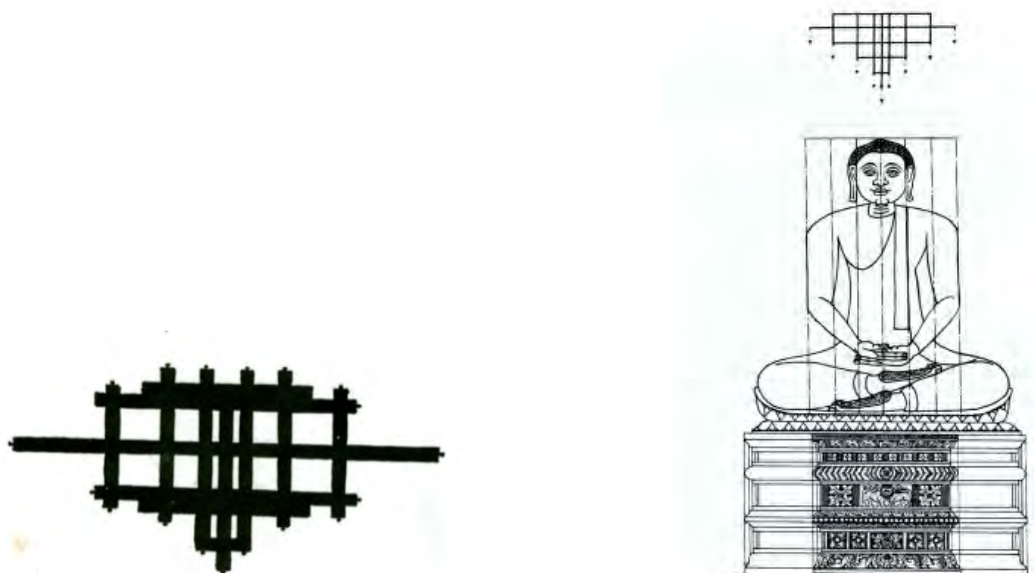


Diagram 8.4a & 4b Level of measurement (*Lambatatuva*) and the method of the suspension of plumb lines

⁴¹ CS, Introduction, Iiii: *BM*, Introduction x-xi: Wikramagama, *Sri Lankāve Bauddha Pratimā Kalāva*, 54

According to Ananda Coomaraswamy, the particular seated image (**fig.7.28a**) at Abahayagiriya outer circular road (Mahamevunā Uyana) was manufactured under such a manufacturing method.⁴² Benjamin Rowland emphasizes;

For the actual carving of the image from the block stone, the sculptor employs a kind of pointing machine or *lamba tatuva*, a wooden frame from which plumb lines are suspended to indicate the exact amount of cutting necessary at various points to disengage such features as the tip of the nose, the ears, shoulders, etc. The diagram of the frame itself and the suspension of the cords in front of an actual image are self-explanatory.⁴³

Whereas chapter XV of *CS* deals with the specific technique with fourteen cotton lines,⁴⁴ *Bimbamāna* describes the suspension of particular plumb lines, implying the author's understanding of the particular tool.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, both the texts emphasize the importance of utilizing the proper plumb lines in manufacturing a perfect image.

BM in particular mentions a typical system of alignment in making a seated image: *caturmāna*. Accordingly, the following four dimensions should be of the same length (**See Diagram 8.5**);

1. From the edge of the fore-head to the seat (*pīṭikā*).
2. From the left shoulder to the tip of the right knee.
3. From the right shoulder to the tip of the left knee.
4. From the left knee to the right knee.⁴⁶

⁴² Ananda Coomaraswamy, *Medieval Sinhalese Art*: being a monograph on medieval Sinhalese arts and crafts, mainly as surviving in the eighteenth century, with an account of the structure of society and the status of the craftsmen, (Broad Campden, Essex House Press, 1908), 152

⁴³ Rowland, *Art and Architecture of India*, 368-9 fig.295

⁴⁴ *CS*, Ch. XV

⁴⁵ *BM*, 69-73

⁴⁶ *BM* (2), 105: See for details Wikramagamage, *Sri Lankāve Baudha Pratimā Kalāva*, 53, plan 3



Diagram 8.5 The alignment of proportions of a seated Buddha image according the *Caturmāna*

Such instructions or technical terms are not available in the early Indian *śilpa* texts i.e. *Brihat Samhitā*, *Sukranītisāra* etc., with regard to the image making described in them. Here again, such instructions do not appear to have been applied in making Indian Buddha images.

8.3 Concluding remarks

It is quite apparent that the frequently highlighted perfectness in Sri Lankan Buddha images is nothing but the result of the particular iconometric measurements, for which no evidence can be traced from India.

It is also clear that the indigenous manufacturing techniques employed by the Sri Lankan sculptors must have contributed to distinctive characteristics of the Sri Lankan Buddha image. The following are significant:

1. The iconometry of Sri Lankan Buddha image testifies to having its own measurements, proportions, and standards for which no evidence can be found from Indian treatises.
2. The proportions of *uttama daśatāla* in making the Buddha images are found only in Sri Lankan Buddha images.
3. The prescriptions of early *śilpa* texts in India do not correspond to the measurements, proportions, and standards of the available Buddha images in India.
4. The application of similar elements (not the same) is evident in Hindu images belonging to a later period than those were introduced by the Sri Lankan sculptor.

Thus, it is apparent that the iconometric proportions of Sri Lankan Buddha images are by no means similar to those of the Indian Buddha images. Sri Lankan Buddha image is not influenced by any Indian prototype as far as iconometrical evidence is concerned.

Table 8.1: Application of the particular standards to the images according to Indian and Sri Lankan *śilpa* texts

System of measurement	Sub divisions	Sri Lanka		India			
		<i>CS</i>	<i>BM</i>	<i>BS</i> ⁴⁷	<i>SK</i>	<i>SPL</i>	<i>PML</i>
<i>Solostāla</i>		_____	_____	_____	Pisācas, Asuras (Hiraṇyakassapa, Vṛita, Hiraṇyākṣa, Rāvaṇa, Kumbhānda, Namichi, Niśumba, Sumbha, Mahīsāsura, Raktavija)	_____	_____
<i>Dolostāla</i>		_____	_____	_____	Chānsi, Bahirava, Vetāla, Narasiṅha, Vārāha, Hayaśirṣa, and others with vehement type.	_____	
<i>Daśatāla</i>	<i>Uttama daśatāla</i>	Buddha ⁴⁸	Buddha	_____	Rākṣasas Nara, Nārāyana, Rāma, Naṛasiṃha, Vāṇa, Vali, Indra, Bhārgava (Paraśurāma), Arjuna,	<i>Brahman</i> , divine sages, <i>Brahma-rākṣas</i>	Brahman, <i>cārikā</i> goddess, sages, Brahma-rākṣas, divine beings, Buddhas
	<i>Madhyama daśatāla</i>	Bodhisattva	_____	Rāma, Bali, Virocana ⁴⁹		_____	_____
	<i>Kaṇiṣṭha/Adhama</i>	Divine beings ⁵⁰		_____	_____	_____	_____

⁴⁷ The text describes the *daśatāla* (120), *navatāla* (108), *aṣṭatāla* (96), *saptatāla* (84) identifying them as the highest

⁴⁸ CS. Ch. VIII 1-2

⁴⁹ Although the text describes the system of measurements as *daśatāla*, *navatāla*, *aṣṭatāla*, and *saptatāla*, it does not prescribe the particular images to be erected using such measurement. Its only emphasis is on the gods mentioned in accordance with the system of *120aṅgulas*. Apparently, the particular distinctions appear in Indian images on a later period than Brihat Saṃhitā. Thus, it is hard to investigate what images that Varāhamihira expected from the particular reference other than these images. See BS, 412-13

⁵⁰ CS. Ch. VIII 2-3

	<i>daśatāla</i>						
<i>navatāla</i>		<i>Gāndharvas</i> and Lord of Serpents	_____	_____	Gods	_____	Gods
<i>Navārdhatāla</i>		Goddesses and female deities	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>Aṣṭatāla</i>		Garuda, Daityakas,	_____	_____	Men	Female deities	Gods and goddesses
<i>Saptatāla</i>		<i>Pisāca</i>	_____	_____	Dwarfs, females	Infants, <i>vināyakas</i> , <i>yakṣas</i> , human beings	_____
<i>Śadtāla</i>		Cripple	_____	_____	<i>kumāra</i>	_____	Children, Generals of <i>vināyakas</i> , and <i>yakṣas</i>
<i>Pancatāla</i>		dwarfs	_____	_____	<i>vālas</i>	<i>vāmana</i>	_____
<i>Caturtāla</i>		Bhūta	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>Trīyatāla</i>		Kinnaras	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

CS=Mañjuśrībhāṣitacitrakarmaśāstra **BM**=Bimbamāna ascribed to Śāriputra **BS**= Brihat Saṁhitā **SK**= Sukranītisāra **SPL**= Samyaksambuddhabhāṣita Buddhapratimālakṣaṇam
PML= Pratimā-māna-lakṣaṇa

Table 8.2: Iconometric measurements, materials, and the prescribed images in the Indian, and Sri Lankan *silpa* texts.

	India					Sri Lanka	
	<i>BS</i>	<i>SK</i>	<i>SPL</i>	<i>PML</i>	<i>KS</i>	<i>CS</i>	<i>BM</i>
Scheme of measurement	<p>8 <i>paramāṇu</i> = 1 <i>raja</i> 8 <i>rajas</i>=1 <i>vālāgra</i> 8 <i>vālāgra</i> =1 <i>likṣā</i> 8 <i>likṣā</i> =1 <i>yūkā</i> 8 <i>yūkā</i> =1 <i>yava</i> 8 <i>yavas</i> =1 <i>aṅgula</i> 1 <i>goloka/kalā</i> =2 <i>aṅgulas</i> 1 <i>tāla</i>⁵¹/<i>vitasti</i>/<i>hasta</i> = 12 <i>aṅgulas</i> 2 <i>tālas/vitastis</i> =24 <i>aṅgulas</i> 2 <i>hastas</i> =24 <i>aṅgulas</i></p>	<p>1 <i>tāla</i> =12 <i>aṅgulas</i> 4 <i>aṅgulas</i> = 1 <i>muṣṭi</i></p>	<p>1 <i>tāla</i> =12 <i>aṅgulas</i> 4 <i>aṅgulas</i> =1 <i>muṣṭi</i></p>	<p>1 <i>Tāla/vitasti</i> /<i>mukha</i> =12 <i>aṅgulas</i> 1 <i>aṅgula</i> = 8 <i>yavas</i> 2 <i>aṅgula</i> <i>s</i>= <i>goloka/ kalā</i></p>	<p>1 <i>Tāla</i> =12 <i>aṅgulas</i> 1 <i>aṅgula</i> =8 <i>yavas</i></p>	<p>1 <i>hasta</i> =1 <i>tāla</i> 1 <i>tāla</i> =12 <i>aṅgulas</i> 1 <i>aṅgula</i> =8 <i>yavas</i></p>	<p>1 <i>tāla/mukhamāṇa</i> =13 ½ <i>aṅgulas</i> 1 <i>bhāga</i> = 4½ <i>aṅgulas</i> 1 <i>veda</i> = 4 <i>aṅgulas</i> 1 <i>kāla/kalaka</i> = 2 <i>aṅgulas</i> 1 <i>mātrā</i> = 1 <i>aṅgula</i> 1 <i>yava</i> =1/8 <i>aṅgula</i>⁵²</p>
Materials	Ivory, Gold, Copper, Metal,	Sands, Pastes, Paints,	Gold, Silver, Copper, Metal,	Gold, Silver, Copper, Metal,	Gold, Silver, Copper,	Gold, Silver, Brass,	

⁵¹ Text does not use the term *tāla* as the unit of measurement. Instead it uses the term *hasta* which is equal to the unit of *tāla* (1 *hasta*=12 *aṅgulas*). *BS*. 413

⁵² *BM*. verses, 23-4: *BM* (2): 23-4

	Silver, Wooden (<i>dārumaya</i>), ⁵³ Iron, Bronze, Nāga	Enamel, Earth, Wood, Stone, Metal	Wooden, Stone, Clay	Wooden, Stone,	Metal, Wooden, Stone, Clay	Copper, Stone, Clay ⁵⁴	
Images to be venerated	Sun, moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Rāhu, Ketu, Yama, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Kubera, Śiva	Viṣṇu, Śaṅkara, Ganeṣa, Sun, Pārvatī			Śiva, Viṣṇu, Brahma, Pārvatī, Lakṣmī	Buddha, bodhisattva, divine beings, Gāndharava, Female goddesses, Garidas, Garuda, Daityakas, Pisācas.	Buddha

BS- *Brihat Saṃhitā*, SK *Sukranītisāra*, SPL- *Sambuddhabhāṣita Buddhapratimālakṣaṇam* PML- *Pratimā-māna-lakṣaṇa*, KS- *Kriyāsamuccaya*, CS- *Mañjusrībhāṣita citrakarma śāstra*, BM-*Bimbamāna*

⁵³ In the *vanasampraveśādhyāya* (Ch. LVIII) of *Brihat Saṃhitā* describes the forbidden timbers for making images: “trees that grow on a cremation ground, by the road-side, near a temple, on anthills, in parks and penance groves, of *caitya-vṛkṣas*, of those growing at the confluences of rivers, and nurtured with great care, bent ones, growing very close to other trees, overgrown with creepers, of those that have fallen themselves or are dried and burnt by fire, and of those that contain bee-hives (Ch. LVIII.1-4).” Contrary, the text prescribes the timber to be used by different castes; *devadāru*, *sandun*, *śami*, and *madhūka* for the images or *liṅgas* made by Brāhmaṇas; *ariṣṭa*, *aśvatta*, *khadira*, and *bilva* for the images made by Kṣatriyas; *jīvaka khadira*, *sindhuka*, and *syandana* for the images made by Vaiśyas; and *tiduka*, *kesara*, *sarja*, *arjuna*, *āmra* and *sāla* for the images installed by Śudras. BS. 408

⁵⁴ Gold-Prosperity, Silver-Progress of living beings, Brass-Acquisition of dwelling places, Copper-Progress and happiness to the ruler, and monks. Stone-Prosperity and welfare, Clay-increase of power. In particular, the text describes that the moving images should not be made by clay (*arcya*). Those images should be made out of crystal, metals i.e. gold, stone, or wood. Contrary, the images made out of metal, gold, crystal are not prescribed for household worship. They are to be made from clay by means of obtaining the future success. See CS. Ch. IX. 9-11, Ch. XVI 138-144. On the other hand, *Śāriputra* describes that the images of hollow cast might cause malevolent effects to the wife and the property of the sculptor, causes famines, fear of enemies to the king, and destruct the image. See BM. vs. 1-12.

Table 8.3a: Application of the iconometric proportions in Indian images

Length of the Limbs	BS (1)	SK (2)		SPL (3)	PML (4.1)	PML (4.2)	KS (5)
Whole figure to top of forehead	9 <i>tāla</i>	10 <i>tāla</i>	9 <i>tāla</i> ⁵⁵	10 <i>tāla</i>	9 <i>tāla</i>	10 <i>tāla</i>	10 <i>mukha</i>
Crown of the Head (<i>uṣṇīśa</i>)	4 ⁵⁶	6 ⁵⁷	4	4	4		4
Skull				4	4 ½	4	16 ½ from the lower edge of the skull to the chin.
Three parts of the face (forehead, tip of the nose, lower tip of the jaw)	12	13	12	13 ½	12	12 ⁵⁸	
Neck				4	4	4	4
Neck to Breast	12	13	12	12 ½	12	40 ⁵⁹	12 ½
Breast to navel	12	13	12	12 ½	12		12 ½
Navel to penis	12	13	12	12 ½	12		12 ½
Thighs	24	26	24	25	24	26	25
Knee	4	5	4	6	4	5	6
Shank	24	26	24	25	24	26	25
Foot, height	4	5	4	6		8 ⁶⁰	6
Total	<i>tāla</i> =9 <i>Aṅgula</i> =108	<i>tāla</i> = 10.1 <i>Aṅgula</i> =119 <i>Yava</i> =952	<i>tāla</i> =9 <i>Aṅgula</i> =108	<i>tāla</i> =10.5 <i>Aṅgula</i> =125 <i>Yava</i> =1000	<i>tāla</i> = 116 ½ <i>Aṅgula</i> =112 <i>Yava</i> = 869	<i>tāla</i> = 10.5 <i>Aṅgula</i> =125 <i>Yava</i> =1000	<i>tāla</i> =10.5 <i>Aṅgula</i> =124 <i>Yava</i> =992

⁵⁵ *The SK*. Ch. IV, Section IV, 187-194 (170). The text does not specifically describe the proportions of the other heights, emphasizes that the measurements should accordingly be divided for *seven*, *eight*, and *ten tālas*. See *SK*. Ch. IV. verse 195

⁵⁶ According to Nagnajit, the face including the total height of the hair is 16 *aṅgulas*. At that point, the *uṣṇīśa* should be 4 *aṅgulas* in length (16-12=4). *BS*. 418, n3

⁵⁷ In addition to the original height of the image, there is a *mani* of 1 *aṅgula*.

⁵⁸ No reference to *uṣṇīśa*. See *PML*. verse 113

⁵⁹ The body=26 *aṅgulas*, the hip =2 *kalās*, and waist=5 *kalās* see *PML*. verse 114

⁶⁰ Ankle=3 *aṅgulas* + lower part=5 *aṅgulas*. See *PML*, verses 115-16

Table 8.3b: Application of the iconometric proportions in Sri Lankan images

	<i>Mañjuśrībhāṣita citrakarmasāstra</i>				<i>Bimbamāna</i> ascribed to <i>Śāriputra</i>	
Length of the limb	Standing images of <i>Uttama daśatāla</i> ⁶¹ (See Appendix III.II)	Standing images of <i>madyama daśatāla</i> ⁶²	Standing images of <i>kañiṣṭha daśatāla</i>	Seated image ⁶³ (See Appendix III.I)	Standing images of <i>Uttama daśatāla</i> (See Appendix III.II)	Seated images (See Appendix III.I)
Head-Medhamula	62 <i>aṅgulas</i>	120 <i>aṅgulas</i>	116 <i>aṅgulas</i>			62 <i>aṅgulas</i> ⁶⁴
Medha-mula-end of the feet	62 <i>aṅgulas</i>					
<i>Uśnīṣa</i> -end of hair	4 <i>aṅgulas</i> 3 <i>yavas</i>	4 <i>aṅgulas</i>	4 <i>aṅgulas</i> (2 <i>kolakas</i>)	4 <i>aṅgulas</i> 3 <i>yavas</i>	4(<i>uṣṇīṣa</i> =8 <i>yavas</i> + <i>śīrṣa</i> =3 <i>aṅgulas</i>)	4 ½ (<i>uṣṇīṣa</i> = 1 ½ + <i>śīrṣa</i> =3 <i>aṅgulas</i>)
End of hair-eye-brows	4 <i>aṅgulas</i> 3 <i>yavas</i>	4 <i>aṅgulas</i> 3 <i>yavas</i>	4 <i>aṅgulas</i> 6 <i>yavas</i>		1 <i>bhāga</i> =4½ <i>aṅgulas</i>	13 ½ <i>aṅgulas</i>
Eye-line-nose tip	4 <i>aṅgulas</i> 3 <i>yavas</i>	4 <i>aṅgulas</i> 2 <i>yavas</i>	8 <i>aṅgulas</i> 1 <i>yava</i>	13 <i>aṅgulas</i>	1 <i>bhāga</i> =4½ <i>aṅgulas</i>	
Nose tip- lower limit of jaw	4 <i>aṅgulas</i> 3 <i>yavas</i>	4 <i>aṅgulas</i> 3 <i>yavas</i>			1 <i>bhāga</i> =4½ <i>aṅgulas</i>	
Lower limit of jaw-hiccup	4 <i>aṅgulas</i>	4 <i>aṅgulas</i>	4 <i>aṅgulas</i>	3 <i>aṅgulas</i> 4 <i>yavas</i>	4 <i>aṅgulas</i> (lower limit of the neck)	3 ½ <i>aṅgulas</i>

⁶¹ CS. Ch. VIII 9-40, Ch. XIV 3-72 (includes the description of 32 major characteristics and the 80 minor characteristics).

⁶² CS. Ch. VIII 41-50, Ch. XIV 73-101 (includes the description of 32 major characteristics and the 80 minor characteristics).

⁶³ CS. Ch. XV 19-25

⁶⁴ In the seated images the particular height was measured from the edge of the seat to the edge of hair. *BM.* 88

					$\frac{1}{2}$ <i>aṅgulas</i> + hiccup to the end of the neck = $3 \frac{1}{2}$ <i>aṅgulas</i>)	
Hiccup-chest limit	13 <i>aṅgulas</i> 4 <i>yavas</i>	39 <i>aṅgulas</i>	25 <i>aṅgulas</i>	27 <i>aṅgulas</i>	1 Tala= 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ <i>aṅgulas</i>	27 <i>aṅgulas</i>
Chest-end of navel	13 <i>aṅgulas</i> 4 <i>yavas</i>		1 Tala= 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ <i>aṅgulas</i>			
End of navel-root of the penis	13 <i>aṅgulas</i> 4 <i>yavas</i>		12 <i>aṅgulas</i> 4 <i>yavas</i>	13 <i>aṅgulas</i>	1 Tala= 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ <i>aṅgulas</i>	13 $\frac{1}{2}$ <i>aṅgulas</i>
Thigh pole	27 <i>aṅgulas</i>	26 <i>aṅgulas</i>	25 <i>aṅgulas</i>	27 <i>aṅgulas</i>	2 Talas= 27 <i>aṅgulas</i>	
Knee	4 <i>aṅgulas</i>	4 <i>aṅgulas</i>	4 <i>aṅgulas</i>	4 <i>aṅgulas</i>	4 <i>aṅgulas</i> ⁶⁵	
Shank	27 <i>aṅgulas</i>	26 <i>aṅgulas</i>	25 <i>aṅgulas</i>	27 <i>aṅgulas</i>	2 Talas= 27 <i>aṅgulas</i>	
Feet	4 <i>aṅgulas</i>	4 <i>aṅgulas</i>	5 <i>aṅgulas</i>	4 <i>aṅgulas</i>	4 <i>aṅgulas</i>	
Total	124 <i>aṅgulas</i> Tāla=10	120 <i>aṅgulas</i> Tāla=10	116 <i>aṅgulas</i> Tāla=10		124 <i>aṅgulas</i>	

⁶⁵ Although the text describes that the length of the knee and the feet are to be of 2 *bhāgas*, here it is taken as 4 *aṅgulas*, contrary to its actual measurement *bhāga*= 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ *aṅgulas* in compliance with the particular employment in the images. See *BM.* vs.33, n10

CONCLUSION

The hypothesis which this dissertation seeks to establish is a refutation of a view held by a host of national and international archaeologists, art historians, and critics and students of Buddhist culture. They considered India to be the fountainhead of all aspects of Buddhism and Buddhist culture and assumed that whatever evolved in Sri Lanka had to originate in India and continually influenced by India. Accordingly, the Buddha image, too, was regarded as based on Indian prototypes.

The prestige in which these scholars had been held for over one and a half centuries, both in Sri Lanka and abroad demands that their opinions are not dismissed lightly. This entailed four years of not only intensive research into all available literary sources but also field studies covering a wide range of subjects. The preceding chapters indicate how this research was organized and conducted.

The following conclusions were reached at the end of each chapter brings us systematically to the proof of the hypothesis that the Sri Lankan Buddha image originated and evolved independently:

1. The phase of aniconic or non-human representations of the Buddha in India and its absence in Sri Lanka.

The vast range of pre-historic paintings and engravings as well as the sculptures found from the Indus valley civilization prove that India had a rich and varied experience in representing the human figure in every aspect of life: society, culture, religion, and the daily life. The finest examples are come from the figurines and seals of the Indus-Sarasvati civilization. The particular examples testify that the human figure has appeared in the socio-cultural and religious settings in the Indian subcontinent over several

millennia prior to the appearance of Buddhist art. The question to be asked therefore is why the Buddha was not represented in the anthropomorphic form in the early stage.

The Pāli canon does not provide any hint of possible restrictions about the portrayal of the Buddha in human form. On the contrary, the evidence is that the Buddha emphatically appreciated beauty and encouraged artistic creativity in literature and art. Yet, in the phase where the life of the Buddha was depicted in sculpture as in the early stūpas such as Bhārhut, Sānchi, Amarāvati, and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, the Buddha was represented symbolically with the Bodhi tree, the footprint (*buddhapāda*), the wheel of Dharma (*dharmacakra*), the flame of fire, the parasol (*catra*), and the lotus (*padma*) etc.

This phase of representing the life of the Buddha without the Buddha is totally absent in the Buddhist art of Sri Lanka. The only aniconic representations are a few examples of the *footprint* carved in monolithic stones which were supposedly used as decorative elements and a single instance of a composite representation of the Buddha, Dhamma, and the Saṅgha, which were symbolized by the footprint, canopied by the parasol, decorated with the wheel of Dhamma on the sole, and the two lotus buds on either sides in the monolithic carving. The symbols that were found in Sri Lanka i.e. the footprint (the most prominent symbol) with various decorative elements such as the *catra*, *dharmacakra*, *padma*, *svastika*, never represented the Buddha in the aniconic form. They were simply used as decorative elements either in front of the religious buildings, or as a part of the monastic complex as an indication of sanctity. If the Buddhist art of Sri Lanka was influenced by India, how was this phase was flagrantly skipped?

2. Transition from aniconic to anthropomorphic representations of the Buddha in Indian art under the foreign influence and the absence of similar influence of Sri Lankan art

India has had a tradition of representing such religious figures as *yakṣa*, *yakṣi*, and *deva*, and all the other characters i.e. kings, donors and disciples, both monastic and lay, that were represented in the human form in the sites where the Buddha alone is portrayed in the medium of the aniconic symbols. The transitional phase from the aniconic representation of the Buddha to that of the human figure was a significant departure from the tradition and has been assumed to be an innovation of non-Indian adherents to Buddhism, who, in this case are the Kushans, who were also exposed to Graeco-Roman artistic traditions. This phase, too, was skipped in Sri Lanka due to its insularity. Except a few panels that are thought to have been imported from India, there is no evidence to prove that Sri Lankan sculptors were exposed to any foreign influence.

3. Evolution of the Buddha image in India as an object of worship.

The next phase shows the development of the image of the Buddha in the anthropomorphic form in 1. Gandhāra, and 2. Mathurā, during the 1st century CE under the patronage of Kushans. Whereas the Gandhāra Buddha image evolved under the inspiration of Graeco-Bactrian cult image, the Mathurā Buddha image developed with the native influence of the yakṣa cult. In both these aspects, the evolution of the Buddha image took place as a result of the later developed Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition in which the image of the Buddha was an object of worship, or its construction was an act of merit making. The new branches of Buddhism also included the concept of many Buddhas and bodhisattvas, including cosmic *dhyāni Buddhas*.

Thereby the Indian sculptor developed the icon of the Buddha in Indian art tradition under such inspirations with certain iconographic elements that portrayed the divine or supra- mundane aspects of the Buddha. Such iconographic elements included the protuberance (*uṣṇīśa*), the circular mark between the eye-brows (*ūrṇā*), the halo (*prabhā maṇḍala*), physical characteristics such as the moustache, wide-open eyes, muscular over emphasis, long ear lobes as well as the subtle smile elaborating the physical strength, typical monastic garment resembling the Roman Toga or pallium (obviously based on regional and chronological development), certain hand gestures (*mudrā*) i.e. *abhaya*, *dharmacakra*, *dhyāna/samādhi*, *vitarka*, in which the standing Buddha images were modeled in the majestic posture, and the seated images were in the cross-legged position of *padmāsana*. In addition, the pedestal was decorated with certain aspects of the Buddha's life i.e. like the defeat of Māra, the First Sermon, and flanked by divine figure, bodhisattvas, or attendant deities. All these iconographical characteristics are conspicuously absent in the early Buddha images of Sri Lanka.

The examination revealed that the evolution of the Buddha image in the selected four regions of India portrays distinctive characteristics that resembled the native as well as foreign influence over the particular period. Whereas its origin was observed in Gandhāra and Mathurā, the subsequent developments i.e. the Mathurā and Sārnāth in the Gupta period, and Bengal, and Nālandā as the centers in the Pāla-Sena period, showed the greater differences, from which no inspiration could be evolved in the Sri Lankan Buddha images.

4. Origin and the Development of Buddhist art in Sri Lanka.

With the introduction of Buddhism to Sri Lanka under the patronage of the king Aśoka, Mauryan technicians are recorded to have accompanied Saṅghamittā, and could have played a role in the early Buddhist architecture represented by the Stūpa and the Bodhi Tree and the monastic complexes of Mahāvihāra and Cetiyaḥabbata. But the Buddha image was unknown to Mauryan Buddhism.

Yet, literary references in the Sri Lankan historical tradition testify to the making of Buddha images from the time of the king Devānampiyatissa, who received Mahinda and Saṅghamittā with Buddhism as well as Buddhist relics, to have placed in the monastic complexes or to be deposited in the stūpa relic chambers. Archaeological findings from several ancient sites prove the credibility of the descriptions relating to the following mentioned in the Mahāvamsa:

I The moving of the “Great stone image of the Buddha” (*ūrusilā patimā*) of the king Devānampiyatissa (247 BCE-207 BCE) by the king Jetṭhatissa I (323 CE-333 CE) to the Pācīnatissapabbata Vihāra, and its transfer to the Abhayagiri Vihāra by the king Mahāsena (334 CE-361CE). Although the particular image cannot be identified among the images of the ancient Anuradhapura, the chronicler reveals that the king made the Buddha image immediately after the introduction of Buddhism to the country, and his successors revered it either by moving it to a more secure place, or decorating it with precious jewels, or renovating it for the benefit of the countrymen.

The significance in all these references is that it was not highlighted as an object of worship, but as a ceremonial object, or an object of honor.

II The placing of a seated Buddha image by the king Duṭṭhagāmaṇī (101 BCE-77 BCE) in the relic chamber of Mahātūpa. The chronicler informs that it was a seated image decorated with precious jewels and was placed on a throne. The image was deposited in the relic chamber of Mahātūpa, hence no one can see the image thereafter.

The reference to a seated image is significant. If it was inspired by the Katrā image of Mathurā, as assumed by some scholars, the iconographical variations show no connection whatsoever. Further to its iconographical differences, there is no evidence to support that India exercised the deposit of the Buddha images in the stūpa relic chambers. It is only in Sri Lanka such evidence is found. If it was so influenced that the images of the Buddha must have been placed on a decorated pedestal for the devotees to worship.

If the Sri Lankan Buddha image was influenced by the Amarāvati Buddha images, as other scholars postulate, that was chronologically impossible. In Amarāvati, the seated Buddha images became popular several hundred years later than the standing Buddha image, possibly during the 8th century CE. It is, therefore, tenable that the Sri Lankan Buddha image was conceived independently from both Katrā and Amarāvati.

Further the evidence from the relic chamber of Mihintale, where seated Buddha images were discovered in the relic chamber as well as wall paintings elsewhere as in Mahiyangana, Demaḷa Mahā Sāya, and Tivaṅka Image House, Polonnaruwa, testify to the practice of illustrating scenes of the life of the Buddha ‘here and there’ on the interior walls of the stūpa, and painting all the images (of the Buddha) in wrought gold. This again is a Sri Lankan innovation. Two factors are revealed:

- I. The scenes of the life of the Buddha in Indian Buddhist art were displayed on the exterior panels of the stūpa gateways in narrative form (i.e. in Sānchi the depictions were in rectangular or square panels while Bhārhut represented the scenes in the circular shaped medallions) where the disciples could educate themselves by seeing the stories at the time they enter into to the circumambulation path.
- II. The presence of the Buddha in all those scenes was indicated by aniconic symbols i.e. footprint (*buddhapāda*), wheel of Dharma (*dharamacakra*), Bodhi Tree, sacred throne (*vajrāsana*), parasol (*catra*), the trident (*triśūla*), and lotus (*padma*) etc.,

Both these aspect which are prominent in the Indian art are not evident in the Sri Lankan Buddhist art. If, in any case, the Sri Lankan sculptors were influenced by the Indian prototypes, they would have represented the Buddha in the aniconic form similar to those in the Indian Buddhist sites i.e. Bhārhut, Sānchi, Amarāvati, and Nāgarjunakoṇḍa etc., The few evidence so far found from different locations in the country have proved that they were either imported from India or made by the ‘faithful workmen’ trained in Amarāvati, and not the Sri Lankan products.

5. Iconographic characteristics specific to the Sri Lankan Buddha Image.

The detailed examination of the scholarly theories on the Buddha images of Sri Lanka reveals that:

- I. Some scholars believe that the seated Buddha images of Anuradhapura i.e. the Samādhi Buddha statue of the outer circular road, and that of Toluvila are

superior to those of Indian images, while some others believe that they have been influenced by Katrā image of Mathurā in the Kushan age.

- II. Some scholars are of the opinion that the standing Buddha images in Sri Lanka have followed the Āndhra prototype of Amarāvati.

But a very important Prākṛit inscription datable to the 2nd-3rd centuries CE at Nāgārjunaḥkoṇḍa shows that the Sri Lankan monks were playing a dominant role in the region in that

- III. They had established a Sīhalavihāra (a Sinhala monastery) with specifically applied Sri Lankan architectural elements i.e. cetiyaghara and Bodhighara;
- IV. The Sri Lankan Buddhist monks in whose honor these shrines were donated were credited with having gained recognition for promoting Buddhism in Gandhāra, Kāshmir, China, and various parts of the Indian subcontinent.

In addition, the Sri Lankan Saṅgha has to its credit a vast range of innovations in Buddhist literature, art, architecture, and missionary role that have lasted from the 3rd century BCE to the present times both nationally and internationally.

Ample evidence has come to light of the presence and contribution of Sri Lankan monks in India, China and elsewhere: e.g. Epigraphical evidence of a Sīhalavihāra in Bodh Gayā, the succession of Āryadeva to Nāgarjuna as the abbot of Nālandā, the mural depicting the arrival of Siṅhalas to Sri Lanka in the paintings of Ajanthā, the visit of five Sri Lankan monks in the fourth century to the capital of China “with three Buddha images made of Jade,” and the Ratuboka inscription of Indonesia on “the Abhayagiriya vihāra of the Sinhalese ascetics, trained in the discipline of the best of the Jinas.” Sri Lankan Buddhist works were also translated into Chinese as Cie-tao-lung

(Vimuttimagga) and Shan-jian-lu-piposha (Vinaya commentary). One should be looking for Sri Lankan influence on art and architecture of these countries than vice versa.

The iconographic comparison of the early Sri Lankan images with contemporary Indian Buddha images reveals no evidence of protuberance (*uṣṇīśa*), the circular mark between the eyes (*ūrṇā*), the halo (*prabhā maṇḍala*), the attendant deities, the figures of dwarfs or divine beings on the edge of the nimbus, and the over emphasized physical characteristics. On the other hand, the sheer monumentality, the fully shaven head, the representation of un-pleated robe with lines across the chest and ankles, and above all, the avoidance of the uncomfortable *padmāsana/vajrāsana* posture of the crossed legs of the Sri Lankan images prove independent origin.

6. Iconographic Evolution of the Sri Lankan Buddha Image from the beginning to the Eighteenth century.

The comprehensive analysis of the iconographic characteristics of the Sri Lankan Buddha image from its earliest examples to eighteenth century was undertaken to trace any inspiration from the Indian Buddha images affecting the evolution of the Sri Lankan Buddha image. The examination revealed that the iconographic characteristics of the Sri Lankan Buddha images down the ages were entirely opposed to those of India in that no evidence of protuberance (*uṣṇīśa*), halo (*prabhā maṇḍala*), circular marks between the eye brows (*ūrṇā*), the extra-ordinary physical characteristics i.e. wide-open eyes, moustache, the smile, the muscular over-emphasis etc., the monastic robe that covered both the shoulders, the cross-legged seated position, the vast range of hand *mudrās*, the pedestals with decorative elements as well as the attendant deities were traced.

Instead, the images displayed some indigenous characteristics in that the following elements were highlighted:

1. The *raṃsijāla*, *raṃsi-sikhāmaṇi* as well as the *siraspata* covering the head.
 2. Slender physical characteristics i.e. the half-closed eyes, the oval-shaped face, the firm and fixed body, the natural ear-lobes, along with natural muscular emphasis.
 3. Monastic robe that covered the right shoulder and was depicted by the lightly grooved channels unlike the Indian images.
 4. Bandolier or the *hemapatta* over the left shoulder, which is unique to Sri Lankan images.
 5. The limitation of gestures to *abhaya* in the standing images, and *dhyāna/samādhi* in the seated images in contrast to the Indian use of many gestures.
 6. The depiction of three different postures: 1. standing images with the postures of *samabhaṅga*, *dvibhaṅga*, and *tribhaṅga*, 2. The relaxed seated posture of *vīrāsana*, and 3. reclining images from the very early period, contrasting the tradition of Indian Buddha image.
 7. The absence of the lotus pedestal along with the scenes of the Buddha's life accounts.
 8. The absence of the auspicious marks, attendant deities, and decorative elements except the few examples found from the early Mahāyāna monastic settlements.
7. The distinctive Iconometric proportions of the Sri Lankan Buddha image
A further examination of the śilpa manuals of India and Sri Lanka revealed that

- I. The iconometric proportions of Sri Lankan Buddha images were unique to its tradition in that the proportions of *uttama daśatāla* in making the Buddha images have only been applied in the Sri Lankan Buddha images.
- II. The iconometric proportions that have been prescribed in the Indian śilpa manuals have not been applied by the Indian sculptor. They have rather applied a practical method of proportions that was entirely based on the size and the volume of the material they used. Thus, the available evidence does not correspond to the prescriptions of the Indian śilpa manuals.
- III. Such prescriptions in the Indian images are only evident in the statues of the Hindu gods which has been taken place at a later period than those in Sri Lanka.

The foregoing analytical examinations with special attention to the stylistic criticism based on iconographical and iconometric characteristics confirm the following conclusions:

1. The origin of the Buddha image in India took place under the influence of Kushans in Gandhāra and Mathurā, by employing distinctive characteristics. None of those appear in Sri Lankan Buddha images.
2. The iconographic characteristics employed in the two traditions are distinct to each other. Gandhāra Buddha image displays elements of Graeco-Bactrian deities and those of Mathurā demonstrate the characteristics traceable to the native cult images of yakṣas. On the contrary, the Buddhist sites at Amarāvati and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa apply the Buddha image in reliefs or motifs on the exterior walls of the stūpa dorm (*garbha*) as a decorative element, prior to the making of image

as a free standing sculpture. None of these characteristics are evident in the Sri Lankan Buddha images.

3. While India evolved the image of the Buddha from the aniconic symbols to that of the icon, this stage was completely skipped in Sri Lanka.

Thus, the hypothesis with which the present study was undertaken has been established with ample evidence that is, **“The Sri Lankan Buddha image displays iconographic characteristics different and distinct from the Buddhist and Hindu iconography of India and therefore suggests an independent origin unrelated to either Graeco-Roman model of Gandhāra or that of yakṣa type in Mathurā, or those of Amarāvati and Nāgārjunaḥ, all of which influenced the development of Indian Buddha image,”** has been proved.

Since the present study was conducted under certain limitations, the following study areas are suggested for further investigations:

1. The chronological sequence of the Sri Lankan Buddhist sculptures with an attempt to date early Buddha images with greater certainty;
2. An in-depth study of socio-cultural and political relations between ancient Sri Lanka and India conducted without prejudice to assess the international role of the Sri Lankan Saṅgha;
3. A detailed study of the śilpa texts that describe the iconography and iconometry of the images, in order to examine the typical techniques, and attributes that the sculptors of the two traditions employed to evolve a distinctive tradition of Buddha image.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I- CHRONOLOGY OF THE SRI LANKAN KINGS

Different scholars have offered different chronological distributions about the Sri Lankan rulers from the third century BCE to the eighteenth century CE. The key source for constructing the chronology is the chronicles; *Dīpavaṃsa*, *Mahāvāṃsa*, *Cūlavāṃsa*, and *Rājāvaliya*. However, the main difficulty that every scholar has faced is the ambiguity of the period of early rulers. Thus, it was with great enthusiasm that the scholars have made their contributions to offer a credible date to certain kings from the information they capture from the chronicles. Wilhelm Geiger has assigned the Sri Lankan chronology depending on the information of the chronicles; different scholars have offered certain changes from the latest investigations. The present study employed the following chronology described by Wilhelm Geiger as the primary source.¹ The relationship of each king to his successor is given according to the descriptions of *Mahāvāṃsa*, *Cūlavāṃsa*, and *Rājāvaliya*, (which is summarized in the *Pūjāvaliya*).²

Name of the King	Period	No. of years	Relationship
Vijaya	483 BCE-445 BCE	38yrs	Eldest son of Siṅhabāhu and Siṅhasīvali, Great Grandson of the King of Vaṅga
Upatissa (interregnum)	445 BCE-444 BCE	1 year	Chief Minister of Vijaya
Paṇḍuvāsudeva	444 BCE-414 BCE	30yrs	Nephew of Vijaya from India
Abhaya (Interregnum)	414 BCE-394 BCE	20yrs	Son of Paṇḍuvāsudeva,
Tissa (Interregnum)		17yrs	Second son of Paṇḍuvāsudeva. Younger brother of Abhaya.

¹ *Cūlavāṃsa: being the More Recent Part of the Mahāvāṃsa*, Part I & II, edited and translated by Wilhelm Geiger, London: Pāli Text Society, 1973, first published 1929

² Pv. 768-805

Paṇḍukābhaya	394 BCE-307 BCE ³	70yrs	Grandson of Paṇḍuvāsudeva
Muṭasiva	307-247 BCE	60yrs	Son of Paṇḍukābhaya
Devānampiyatissa	247-207 BCE	40yrs	Son of Muṭasiva
Utṭhiya	207-197 BCE	10yrs	Son of Muṭasiva, brother of Devānampiyatissa
Mahāsiva	197-187 BCE	10yrs	Son of Muṭasiva, brother of Devānampiyatissa and Utṭhiya.
Sūratissa	187-177 BCE	10yrs	Son of Paṇḍukābhaya (brother of Utṭhiya) ⁴
Sena and Guttika	177-155 BCE	22yrs	Conquered Sūratissa in a war
Asela	155-145 BCE	10yrs	Youngest son of Muṭasiva, brother of Devānampiyatissa
Elāra	145-101 BCE	44yrs	Tamil king who defeated Asela
Duṭṭhagāmaṇi Abhaya	101-77 BCE	24yrs	Eldest son of Kāvan Tissa, the ruler of the southern region (<i>Rohana deśa</i>)
Saddhā Tissa	77-59 BCE	18yrs	Younger brother of Duṭṭhagāmaṇi Abhaya
Thūlathana	59 BCE	01mth 10 days	Second son of Saddhā Tissa
Laṅja Tissa	59-50 BCE	10yrs	Eldest son of Saddhā Tissa
Kallaṭa Nāga	50-43 BCE	05yrs	Third son of Saddhā Tissa, brother of Laṅja Tissa
Vaṭṭagāmaṇi Abhaya (reign I)	43BCE	05 months	Fourth son of Saddhā Tissa
Pullahattha ⁵			Tamil Chief
Bāhiya			Chief Minister of Pullahattha
Panya Māra	43 BCE-29 CE	14 yrs7 mths	Prime Minister of Bāhiya
Pilaya Māra			Chief Minister of Panya Māra
Dāṭika			Chief Minister of Pilaya Māra
Vaṭṭagāmaṇi Abhaya (reign II)	29BCE-17 BCE	12yrs 05 mths	Fourth son of Saddhā Tissa
Mahācūli Mahātissa (Mahadāliya Tissa) ⁶	17 BCE-3 BCE	14yrs	Son of Kallaṭa Nāga, Nephew and adopted son of Vaṭṭagāmaṇi Abhaya
Cora Nāga	3 BCE-9 CE	12yrs	Son of Vaṭṭagāmaṇi Abhaya, Cousin brother of Mahācūli Mahātissa
Kudā Tissa	9 CE-12 CE	03yrs	Son of Mahācūli Mahātissa
Anulā	12 CE-	05yrs ⁷	Widow of Kudā Tissa

³ Geiger specifically does not mention the interregnum period of seventeen years. Instead, he mentions the entire period, which includes the interregnum and the ruling period of Paṇḍukābhaya as ninety years.

⁴ Pv. 770

⁵ Five Tamil rulers who reigned the country by defeating Vaṭṭagāmaṇi Abhaya

⁶ Pv. 773

	16 CE		
Kūṭakaṇṇa Tissa (Makalaṇ Tissa) ⁸	16 CE- 38 CE	22yrs	Son of Kudā Tissa
Bhātikābhaya	38 CE- 66 CE	28yrs	Son of Kūṭakaṇṇa Tissa
Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga (Mahadāḷiyāmāna)	67 CE- 79 CE	12yrs	Brother of Bhātikābhaya
Āmaṇḍagāmaṇī Abhaya	79 CE- 89 CE	10yrs	Son of Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga
Kaṇirajānu Tissa	89 CE- 92CE	03yrs	Brother of Āmaṇḍagāmaṇī Abhaya
Cūlābhaya	92 CE- 93 CE	01 year	Son of Āmaṇḍagāmaṇī Abhaya
Queen Sīvalī	93 CE	04 mths	Sister of Cūlābhaya
Iḷanāga	93 CE- 102 CE	09yrs ⁹	Nephew of Āmaṇḍagāmaṇī Abhaya
Caṇdamukhasiva	103 CE- 112 CE	9yrs	Son of Iḷanāga
Yasalālakatissa	112 CE- 120 CE	08yrs	Younger brother of Caṇdamukhasiva
Subharāja	120 CE- 126 CE	06yrs	Hall porter of Yasalālakatissa
Vasabha	127 CE- 171 CE	44yrs	Member of the Lambhakaṇṇa clan
Vaṅkanāsikatissa	171 CE- 174 CE	03yrs	Son of Vasabha
Gajabāhugāmaṇī (Gajabahu I)	174 CE- 196 CE	22yrs	Son of Vaṅkanāsikatissa
Mahallaka Nāga	196 CE- 202 CE	06yrs	Uncle of Gajabāhugāmaṇī
Bhātikatissa	203 CE- 227 CE	24yrs	Son of Mahallaka Nāga
Kaṇiṭṭhatissa (Cūlatissa) ¹⁰	227 CE- 245 CE	18yrs	Younger brother of Bhātikatissa
Kujjanāga	246 CE- 248 CE	02yrs	Son of Kaṇiṭṭhatissa
Kuñcanāga	248 CE- 249 CE	01 year	Brother of Kujjanāga
Sirināga I	249CE- 268 CE	19yrs	Brother-in-Law of Kuñcanāga
Voharikatissa	269 CE- 291 CE	22yrs	Son of Sirināga I
Abhayanāga	291 CE-	08yrs	Younger brother of Voharikatissa

⁷ According to *Pūjāvaliya*, she reigned the particular period with the help of Balat Sivuvā (One year and two months), Vatuka (one year and two months), the Chief Minister (two months), Vasukī (one year and one month), and by herself for four months. See *Pv. 774*

⁸ *Pv. 774*

⁹ According to *Pūjāvaliya*, he reigned six years. See *Pv. 775*

¹⁰ *Pv. 775*

	299 CE		
Sirināga II	300 CE- 302 CE	02yrs	Son of Voharikatissa
Vijayakumāra	302 CE- 303 CE	01 year	Son of Sirināga II
Samḅhatissa	303 CE- 307 CE	04yrs	A member of the Lambhakaṇṇa clan
Sirisamḅhabodhi	307 CE- 309 CE	02yrs	A member of the Lambhakaṇṇa clan
Goṭābhaya (Meghavannābhaya)	309 CE- 322 CE	13yrs	A member of the Lambhakaṇṇa clan (Minsiter)
Jeṭṭhatissa I	323 CE- 333 CE	10yrs	Eldest son of Goṭābhaya
Mahāsena	334 CE- 361/2 CE	27yrs	Brother of Jeṭṭhatissa I
Sirimeghavaṇṇa ¹¹		28yrs	Son of Mahāsena
Jeṭṭhatissa II	362CE- 409 CE	9-10yrs	Brother of Sirimeghavaṇṇa
Buddhadāsa		29yrs	Son of Jeṭṭhatissa II
Upatissa I		42yrs	Eldest son of Buddhadāsa
Mahānāma		22yrs	Brother of Upatissa I
Sotthisena	409 CE- 431 CE	22yrs	
Soththisena	431 CE	01year	Son of Mahānāma (born to a Tamil woman)
Chattagāhaka ¹²	431 CE- 432 CE	01year	Daughter of Mahānāma (born to the Sinhalese queen)
Mittasena	432 CE- 433	01year	A Plunderer who took over Chattagāhaka
Paṇḍu	433 CE- 460 CE		A Tamil Invader
Pārinda			Son of Paṇḍu
Khuddapārinda		27yrs	Younger brother of Paṇḍu
Tiritara			Successor of Khuddapārinda
Dāṭhiya			Successor of Tiritara
Pīṭhiya			Successor of Pīṭhiya
Dhātusena		460 CE- 478 CE	18yrs
Kassapa I	478 CE- 496 CE	18yrs	Son of Dhātusena (born to a Pallava woman)
Moggallāna I	496 CE- 513 CE	18yrs	Son of Dhātusena (born to the Sinhalese queen), Brother of Kassapa I
Kumāradhātusena	513 CE- 522 CE	09yrs	Son of Moggallāna I
Kittisena	522 CE	09mths	Son of Kumāradhātusena
Siva I	522 CE	25days	Uncle of Kittisena
Upatissa II	522 CE-	1year	A member of the Lambhakaṇṇa clan

¹¹ *Cūlavamsa* begins from the description of King Sirimeghavaṇṇa

¹² *Pūjāvaliya* refers to a king named Lāmāṇitissa who reigned for six years succeeding Sottisena, instead of Chattagāhaka. See *Pv.* 778

¹³ The period of six Dravidian kings see *Cv.* Ch. XXXVIII. 11-34

	524 CE	06mths	
Silākāla (Abāsaḷamevan)	524 CE- 537 CE	13yrs	A Prince of Lambhakaṇṇa clan
Dāṭhāpabhūti (Dāpuḷusen)	537CE	06mths	Second son of Silākāla
Moggallāna II	537 CE- 556 CE	20yrs	Nephew of Dāṭhāpabhūti, cousin brother of Moggallāna II
Kittisirimegha	556 CE	19days ¹⁴	Son of Moggallāna II
Mahānāga	556 CE- 559 CE	3yrs	Minister of war who is an member of Okkāka clan.
Lāmāni Singānā	559 CE- 568 CE	9yrs	Member of Lambhakaṇṇa clan
Aggabodhi I	568 CE- 601 CE	34yrs	Nephew of Mahānāga
Aggabodhi II	601 CE- 611 CE	10yrs	Nephew and son-in-Law of Aggabodhi I
Samghatissa	611 CE	02mths	Brother of the sword-bearer of Aggabodhi II
Moggallāna III	611 CE- 617 CE	06yrs	Chief Commander during the reign of Aggabodhi I, member of the Lambhakaṇṇa clan
Silāmeghavaṇṇa (Assiggāhaka) ¹⁵	617 CE- 626 CE	09yrs	Sword-bearer of Moggallāna III
Aggabodhi III (Sirisāṅgabo)		16yrs	Son of Silāmeghavaṇṇa
Jeṭṭhatissa III		05mths	Member of Lambhakaṇṇa clan
Aggabodhi IV (Silāmeghavaṇṇa?)		05mths	
Dāṭhopatissa I		12yrs	Chief Commander of Jeṭṭhatissa III, member of Lambhakaṇṇa clan
Kassapa II	641 CE- 650 CE	09yrs	Brother of Aggabodhi III
Dappula I	650 CE	03mths ¹⁶	Member of Okkāka clan who came from Southern part of the country.
Dāṭhopatissa II	650 CE- 658 CE	09yrs	Member of Lambhakaṇṇa clan
Aggabodhi IV (Sirisāṅgabo) ¹⁷	658 CE- 674 CE	16yrs	Younger brother of Dāṭhopatissa II
Datta	674 CE- 676 CE	02yrs ¹⁸	Member of Okkāka clan
Hattadāṭṭha	676 CE	06mths	
Mānavamma	676 CE- 711 CE	35yrs	Son of Kassapa II
Aggabodhi V	711 CE- 717 CE	06yrs	Son of Mānavamma

¹⁴ According to *Pūjāvaliya*, he reigned 19 years. See *Pv.* 779

¹⁵ *Pūjāvaliya* records him as Assiggāhaka. See *Pv.* 780

¹⁶ *Pūjāvaliya* refers that he reigned for sixteen years See *Pv.* 780

¹⁷ *Pv.* 780

¹⁸ According to *Pūjāvaliya* he reigned from two years and six months. See *Pv.* 780

Kassapa III	717 CE- 724 CE	07yrs	Younger brother of Aggabodhi V
Mahinda I	724 CE- 727 CE	03yrs	Younger brother of Kassapa III
Aggabodhi VI	727 CE- 766 CE	40yrs	Son of Kassapa III
Aggabodhi VII	766 CE- 772 CE	06yrs	Son of Mahinda I
Mahinda II (Salamevan Mihindu) ¹⁹	772 CE- 792 CE	20yrs	Son of Aggabodhi VI
Udaya I (Dappula II)	792 CE- 797CE	05yrs	Son of Mahinda II
Mahinda III	797 CE- 801 CE	04yrs	Son of Udaya I (Dappula II)
Aggabodhi VIII	801 CE- 812 CE	11 yrs	Brother of Mahinda II
Dappula (II) III	812 CE- 828 CE-	16yrs	Younger brother of Aggabodhi VII
Aggabodhi IX	828 CE- 831 CE	03yrs	Son of Dappula (II) III
Sena I	831 CE- 851CE	20yrs	Younger brother of Aggabodhi IX
Sena II	851 CE- 885 CE	35yrs	Younger brother of Sena I
Udaya II	885 CE- 896 CE	11 yrs	Younger brother of Sena II
Kassapa IV	896 CE- 913 CE	17yrs	Brother of Udaya II, son of Sena II
Kassapa V	913 CE- 923 CE	10yrs	Son of Sena II
Dappula III	923 CE	07mths	Nominated king by Kassapa V ²⁰
Dappula IV	923 CE- 934 CE	12yrs	Younger brother of Kassapa V
Udaya III (II)	934 CE- 937 CE	3yrs	Son of Mahinda III, nephew of Sena II
Sena III	937 CE- 945 CE	9yrs	Brother of Udaya III (II)
Udaya IV (III)	945 CE- 953 CE	8yrs	Younger brother of Udaya III (II), brother of Sena III
Sena IV	953 CE- 956 CE	3yrs	Brother of Sena III
Mahinda IV	956 CE- 972 CE	16yrs	Younger brother of Sena IV, Son of Kassapa V
Sena V (Salamevan) ²¹	972 CE- 981 CE	10yrs	Son of Kassapa V born to the Kalinga princes
Mahinda V	981 CE-	36yrs	Younger brother of Sena V

¹⁹ Pv. 781

²⁰ Neither *Cūlavamsa* nor *Pūjāvaliya*, or *Rājāvaliya* mentions his relationship to his predecessor.

²¹ *Pūjāvaliya* and *Rājāvaliya* name him as Salamevan and assign 10 years of reign. See Pv. 782

Interregnum	1029 CE	12yrs	
Vikramabāhu I (Kassapa)	1029 CE- 1041 CE	12yrs	Son of Mahinda V
Kitti	1041	7 days	Minister of War under Vikramabāhu I
Mahālānakitti	1041 CE- 1044 CE	3yrs	Provincial leader of Rohaṇa
Vikkamapaṇḍu	1044 CE- 1047 CE	3yrs ²²	Son of Mahālānakitti
Jagatipāla	1047 CE- 1051 CE	4yrs ²³	A Prince from Ayodhyā, a member of the fraternity of Rāma.
Parākrmabāhu I (Parākrmapāṇḍi) ²⁴	1051 CE- 1053 CE	2yrs	Son of Vikkamapaṇḍu
Loka (Lokissara)	1053 CE- 1059 CE	6yrs	Dwelt of Makkhakudrūsa
Kassapa	1059 CE	6mths	Son of Mahinda V's sister, Husband of Lokitā, and father of Moggallana.
Vijayabāhu I ²⁵	1059 CE- 1114 CE	55yrs	Son of Lokitā
Jayabāhu	1114 CE- 1116 CE	02yrs	Brother of Vijayabāhu I ²⁶
Vikramabāhu II	1116 CE- 1137 CE	21yrs	Son of Vijayabāhu I born to the Kalinga princess Tilokasundarī. ²⁷
Gajabāhu II	1137 CE- 1153 CE	22yrs	Son of Vikramabāhu II
Parākrmabāhu I	1153 CE- 1186 CE	33yrs	Son of Mānābharāṇa and Ratnāvali, Grandson of Vijayabāhu I
Vijayabāhu II	1180 CE- 1187 CE	1 year	Nephew of Parākrmabāhu I
Mahinda VI	1187 CE	5mths ²⁸	Member of the Kuliṅga clan who slew Vijayabāhu II
Niśsaṅkamalla	1187 CE- 1196 CE	9yrs	Sub-king of Vijayabāhu II from Kalinga Deśa who over threw Mahinda VI
Vīrabāhu I	1196 CE	01 day	Son of Nissaṅkamalla
Vikramabāhu III	1196 CE	03mths	Younger brother of Nissaṅkamalla
Coḍagāṅga	1196 CE- 1197 CE	09mths	Nephew of Nissaṅkamalla
Līlāvati	1197 CE- 1200 CE	03yrs	Queen of Parākrmabāhu I
Sāhassamalla	1200 CE-	02yrs	Member of Okkāka clan

²² According to *Cūlavamsa*, he reigned only for one year. See Cv. Ch.LVI.10-12

²³ According to *Pūjāvaliya*, this king reigned for one year. See Pv. 782

²⁴ According to *Pūjāvaliya*, this king reigned only for one year. See Pv. 782

²⁵ According to the historical relationship, he is the Kitti, who was born to the princes named Lokitā, who had four sons from Moggallana" Kitti, Princess Mittā, Mahinda and Rakkhita. See Cv. Ch. LVII 40-42

²⁶ According to *Pūjāvaliya*, this king reigned for thirteen years. See Pv. 782

²⁷ According to *Pūjāvaliya*, this king reigned for twenty-eight years. See Pv. 782

²⁸ According to *Pūjāvaliya*, this king reigned for five days. See Pv. 783

	1202 CE		
Kalyāṇavatī	1202 CE- 1208 CE	06yrs ²⁹	Queen of Nissaṅkamalla
Dhammāsoka	1208 CE- 1209 CE	01year	Royal prince ³⁰
Anīkāṅga	1209 CE	17days	A king from Coḷa kingdom
Līlāvatī	1209 CE- 1210 CE	01year	Queen of Parākrmabāhu I
Lokissara	1210 CE- 1211 CE	05mths ³¹	
Līlāvatī	1211 CE	07mths	Queen of Parākrmabāhu I
Parākramapaṇḍu II	1211 CE- 1214 CE	03yrs	Member from the Paṇḍu country.
Māgha	1214 CE- 1235 CE	21yrs ³²	King from the Kāliṅga country
Vijayabāhu III	1232 CE- 1236 CE	04yrs	King from the Māyā region of the country.
Parākrmabāhu II	1236 CE- 1271 CE	35yrs	Elder son of Vijayabāhu III
Vijayabāhu IV	1271 CE- 1273 CE	02yrs	Eldest son of Parākrmabāhu II
Buvanekabāhu I	1273 CE- 1284 CE	11 yrs	Second son of Parākrmabāhu II, younger brother of Vijayabāhu IV
Parākrmabāhu III	1284 CE- 1291 CE	7yrs	Second son of Parākrmabāhu II, younger brother of Buvanekabāhu I
Buvanekabāhu II	1291 CE- 1302 CE	11 yrs	Son of Buvanekabāhu I
Parākrmabāhu IV	1302 CE- 1346 CE	44yrs	Son of Buvanekabāhu II
Buvanekabāhu III (Vannibuvanekabāhu)			
Vijayabāhu V			
Buvanekabāhu IV	1346 CE- 1358 CE		Successor of Parākrmabāhu IV, regional ruler of Gaṅgāsiripura, which was situated near the Mahāvāḷukāṅga
Parākrmabāhu V	1348 CE- 1360 CE		
Vikrmabāhu IV	1347 CE- 1375 CE		
Buvanekabāhu V	1360 CE- 1391 CE	20yrs	

²⁹ Although *Cūlavamsa* states that she reigned for 06 months, the chronology agrees that she has reigned for 06 years. At that point the description of *Pūjāvaliya*, which records the period as six years can be more accurate. See for details *Cv.* Ch. LXXX. 33-34 and its chronological description in p. XIV & *Pv.* 784

³⁰ According to *Pūjāvaliya*, once the king Anīkāṅga arrived at Sri Lanka, he came to Polonnaruwa and killed his son Dhammāsoka and the minister of war Eḷalu Ā Bo, and ruled the country for seventeen days. See *Pv.* 784

³¹ *Cūlavamsa* states that he reigned for nine months. *Cv.* Ch. LXXX 47-48

³² *Pūjāvaliya* refers that the king Māgha reigned for nineteen years. See *Pv.* 785

Vīrabāhu II	1391 CE- 1397 CE	6yrs	
Vijayabāhu VI	1405 CE- 1411 CE		
Parākrmbāhu VI	1410 CE- 1468 CE	52yrs	Member of the clan of <i>Sūrya</i> who hailed from Jayavaḍḍhanapura
Jayabāhu II	1468 CE- 1473 CE	05yrs	Grandson of Parākrmbāhu VI
Buvanekabāhu VI	1473 CE- 1480 CE	07yrs	Successor of Jayabāhu II who overthrew the king
Parākrmbāhu VII (Paṇḍita Parākrmbāhu)	1480 CE- 1484 CE	04yrs	Successor of Parākrmbāhu VII
Parākramabāhu VIII (Vīra-Parākramabāhu)	1484 CE- 1518 CE	24yrs	
Parākramabāhu IX (Dharma-Parākramabāhu)	1506 CE- 1528 CE	22yrs	Son of Parākramabāhu VIII
Vijayabāhu VII	1509 CE- 1521 CE	18yrs (12yrs?)	Son of Parākramabāhu VIII
Buvanekabāhu VII	1521 CE- 1550 CE	21yrs	
Vīravikkama	1542 CE-?	45yrs?	Member of the lineage of Sirisaṅghabodhi
Māyādhanu	1521 CE- 1581 CE	70yrs	Youngest son of Buvanekabāhu VII, member of the lineage of Sun (<i>sūryavamsa</i>).
Dharmapāla	1551 CE- 1581CE		Successor of Buvanekabāhu VII who depended on Portuguese by adopting Christianity as his faith.
Rājasīṅha I	1581 CE- 1593 CE		Son of Māyādhanu who killed his father and adopted the faith of Śiva
Vimaladharmasūriya I (Konappu Baṇḍāra)	1592 CE- 1601 CE	12yrs	Son of Vīrasundara, partisan of Rājasīṅha I who was banished to Goa
Senāratna	1604 CE- 1635 CE	25yrs	
Rājasīṅha II	1635 CE- 1687 CE	52yrs	Son of Senāratna
Vimaladharmasūriya II	1687 CE- 1707 CE	22yrs	Son of Rājasīṅha II
Sri Vīraparākrmanarendra- siṅgha	1707CE- 1739 CE	32yrs	Son of Vimaladharmasūriya II
Srī Vijaya Rājasīṅgha	1739 CE- 1747 CE	08yrs	Brother of the queen of king Sri Vīraparākrmanarendra-siṅgha (from Madurāpura)
Kitti Srī Rājasīṅgha	1747 CE- 1782 CE	35yrs	Brother of the queen of Srī Vijaya Rājasīṅgha (from Madurāpura)
Srī Rājādhiraṅgha	1780 CE- 1798 CE	18yrs	Younger brother of Kitti Srī Rājasīṅgha

Srī Vikrama Rājasiṅha	1780 CE- 1815 CE	18yrs	Sister's son of Srī Rājādhirājasiṅha (son of Sri Vīraparākrmanarendra- siṅha?)
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**APPENDIX II.1- THIRTY-TWO MARKS OF A GREAT BEING
(MAHĀPURUṢĀLAKṢAṆA)**

The first reference regarding the thirty-two marks of a Great Being is found in the *Lakkhana sutta* of *Dīgha Nikāya*.³³ According to its description there are two possibilities of having such marks: 1) *Cakravartin*, or Universal Monarch. 2) The lay person who goes homeless, and attains the Buddhahood.³⁴ Later on the *śadaṅga* or the ‘Six Limbs Paintings,’ also attributed the iconography or *rūpa bedha* as the foremost elements of a divine being.³⁵ *Pūjāvaliya*, the 13th century treatise composed by the Chief of the Mayurapāda Pariveṇa also refers to the particular characteristics.³⁶ The following list is based on the thirty-two marks described in the *Lakkhana sutta*.

1. He has feet with level tread. This is one of the marks of a great man.
2. On the soles of his feet, wheels appear thousand-spoked, with tyre and hub.
3. He has projecting heels
4. He has long fingers and toes
5. He has soft and tender hands and feet
6. His hands and feet are net-like (webbed?)
7. He has high-raised ankles like rounded shells.
8. His legs are like an antelope’s
9. Standing and without bending, he can touch and rub his knees with either hand.
10. His male organs are enclosed in a sheath.
11. His complexion is like bronze, the color of gold

³³ DN. 30, *Anatta Lakkahana sutta*, 142-179: Rahula, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, 66

³⁴ DN. 30, *Anatta Lakkahana sutta* 142-4

³⁵ See for details O.C. Ganguly, *Śadaṅga or, the Six Limbs of Indian Painting*. (Calcutta: Indian Society for Oriental Art, 1968

³⁶ Pv. 141

12. His skin is delicate and so smooth that no dust can adhere to his body
13. His body hairs are separate, one to each pore.
14. His body hair turns upward, every hair of it blue black in color like eye-paint, in little curling rings, curling to right
15. His body is divinely straight
16. He has the seven convex surfaces.
17. The front part of his body is like a Lion's.
18. There is no hollow between his shoulders
19. His proportions have the symmetry of the banyan-tree: the length of his body is equal to the compass of his arms, and the compass of his arms is equal to his height
20. His bust is evenly rounded.
21. He has a perfect sense of taste.
22. He has jaws like a lions
23. He has forty teeth.
24. He has regular teeth.
25. There are no spaces between his teeth.
26. The eyeteeth are very lustrous.
27. His tongue is long.
28. He has a divine voice, like that of the Karavika-bird.
29. His eyes are intensely blue.
30. He has eyelashes like cow's.
31. The hair between his eyebrows is white, and soft like cotton down.
32. His head is like a royal turban.

APPENDIX II.II- EIGHTY MINOR CHARACTERISTICS (*ASĪTI-ANUVYAÑJANĀNI*) OF THE BUDDHA IMAGE

Like the thirty-two major characteristics that are listed above, the eighty minor characteristics are not found in the Pāli commentaries or Chinese *Āgama sūtras*.

However, the term has been used in Chinese *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra* of the *Dīrghāgama*, and *Aśoka sūtra* of the *Samyuktāgama*. Although, the characteristics are not mentioned, from these it is clear that the term was well-established in the early Buddhist tradition, yet apparently it is an interpolation to its original text.

However, it is clear that the eighty minor characteristics are an inter-related part of the thirty-two major characteristics, since they explicitly elaborate the former elements in its later version. The explanation of the characteristics are, nonetheless found in the *Apadāna*,³⁷ and in the first part of the *Milindapaññā* as it was describing the distinguishing marks of the Tathāgata. However, the complete list is found in the later developed *sūtras* i.e. *Mahābhiniṣkramaṇa sūtra*, which was translated into Chinese by Jñānagupta in 587 CE. The only reference to the particular characteristics is found in the 13th century treatise *Pūjāvaliya* in its description of the birth of the Prince Siddhārtha.³⁸ From this, it is apparent that the author of the text, the Chief of the Mayurapāda Pariveṇa wanted to ascribe the particular characteristics to the historical event, and establish the concept in the early Buddhist tradition. Though these elaborations have no particular relationship to the early Buddhist texts, they appear to be interrelated to the characteristics of the Great being described in the *Lakkhana sutta*, and more elucidated in its later development. The following list is based on the list described in such texts.³⁹

³⁷ *Ap. I. Buddhavaggo Paṭhamo*, 1-6

³⁸ *Pv. 142-43*

³⁹ See for details Xing, *The Concept of Buddha*, 28-34

1. Beautiful fingers and toes.
2. Well-proportioned fingers and toes.
3. Tube-shaped fingers and toes.
4. Pink color fingernails and toenails.
5. The tip of the fingernails and toenails are slightly upturned.
6. Smooth and rounded fingernails and toenails with no ridges.
7. Rounded and undented ankles and wrists.
8. Feet of equal length.
9. Beautiful walk as that of a king-elephant.
10. Stately walk like that of a king-lion.
11. Beautiful walk, like that of a swan.
12. Majestic walk, like that of a royal ox.
13. Right foot leads when walking.
14. Knees have no protruding kneecaps.
15. Dwells the appearance of a great man.
16. Navel is without blemish.
17. Deep-shaped abdomen.
18. Clockwise marks on the abdomen.
19. Rounded thighs like banana sheaves.
20. Arms shaped like an elephant's trunk.
21. Thick or thin skin as it should be.
22. Unwrinkled skin.
23. Spotless body without lumps.
24. Unblemished body from above and below.
25. Body is absolutely free of impurities.

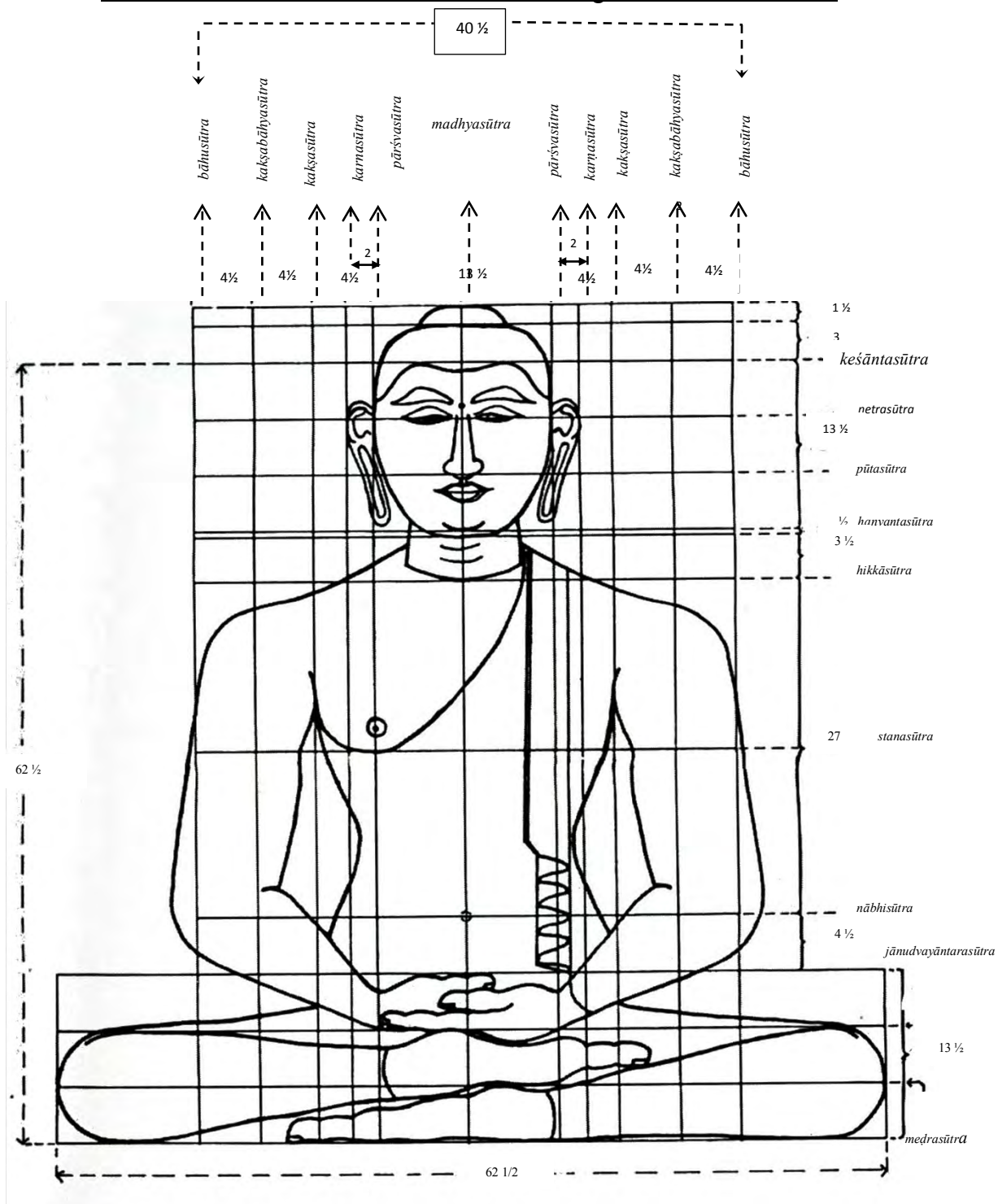
26. No right elbow.
27. Has a protruding nose.
28. Well-proportioned nose.
29. Upper and lower lips are equal in size with a rosy tint.
30. Teeth are unblemished and with no plaque.
31. Teeth are long like polished conches.
32. Teeth are smooth and without ridges.
33. Five sense-organs are unblemished.
34. Four canine teeth are crystal and rounded.
35. Face is long and beautiful.
36. Cheeks are radiant.
37. Lines on palms are deep.
38. Lines on palms are long.
39. Lines on palms are straight.
40. Lines on palms have a rosy tint.
41. Body emanates a halo of light extending around him for two meters.
42. Cheek cavities are fully rounded and smooth.
43. Eyelids are well proportioned.
44. Five nerves of eyes are unblemished.
45. Tips of the bodily hair are neither curved nor bent.
46. Has a rounded tongue.
47. Tongue is soft and has a rosy-tint.
48. Ears are long like lotus petals.
49. Earholes are beautifully rounded.
50. Sinews and tendons don't stick out.

51. Sinews and tendons are deeply embedded in the flesh.
52. Topknot is like a crown.
53. Forehead is well-proportioned in length and breadth.
54. Forehead is rounded and beautiful.
55. Eyebrows are arched like a bow.
56. Hair of the eyebrows is fine.
57. Hair of the eyebrows lies flat.
58. Has large brows.
59. Brows reach the outward corner of eyes.
60. Skin is fine throughout the body.
61. Entire body has plentiful signs of good fortune.
62. Body is always radiant.
63. Body is always refreshed like a lotus flower.
64. Body is exquisitely sensitive to touch.
65. Body has the scent of sandalwood.
66. Body hair is consistent in length.
67. Has fine bodily hair.
68. Breath is always fine.
69. Mouth always has a beautiful smile.
70. Mouth has the scent of a lotus flower.
71. Hair has the color of a dark shadow.
72. Hair is strongly scented.
73. Hair has the scent of a white lotus.
74. Hair curled right-ward.
75. Hair located in right place.

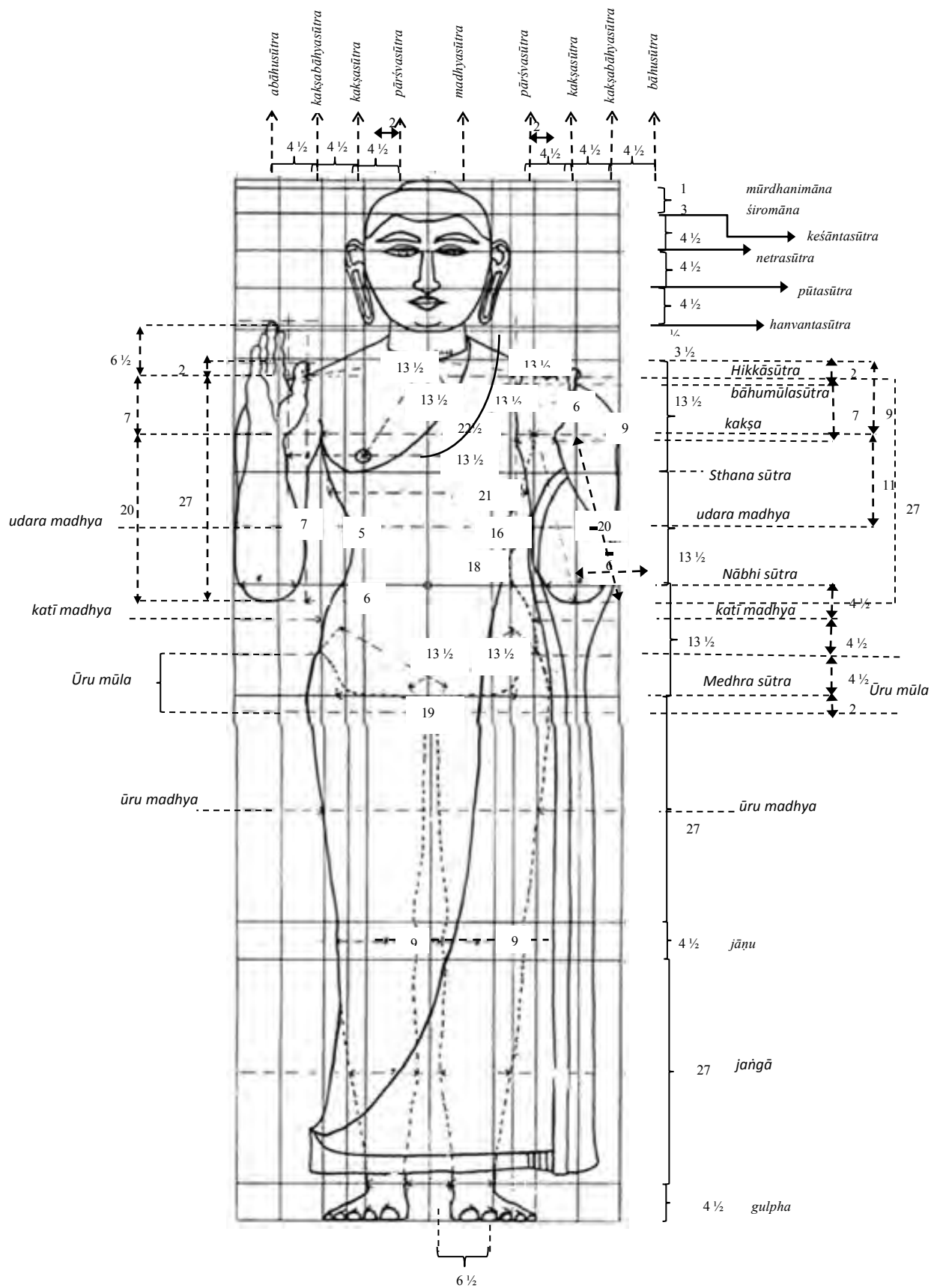
76. Hair does not turn grey.
77. Fine hair.
78. Untangled hair.
79. Hair has long curls.
80. A topknot as if crowned with a flower garland, and illuminated all the times.

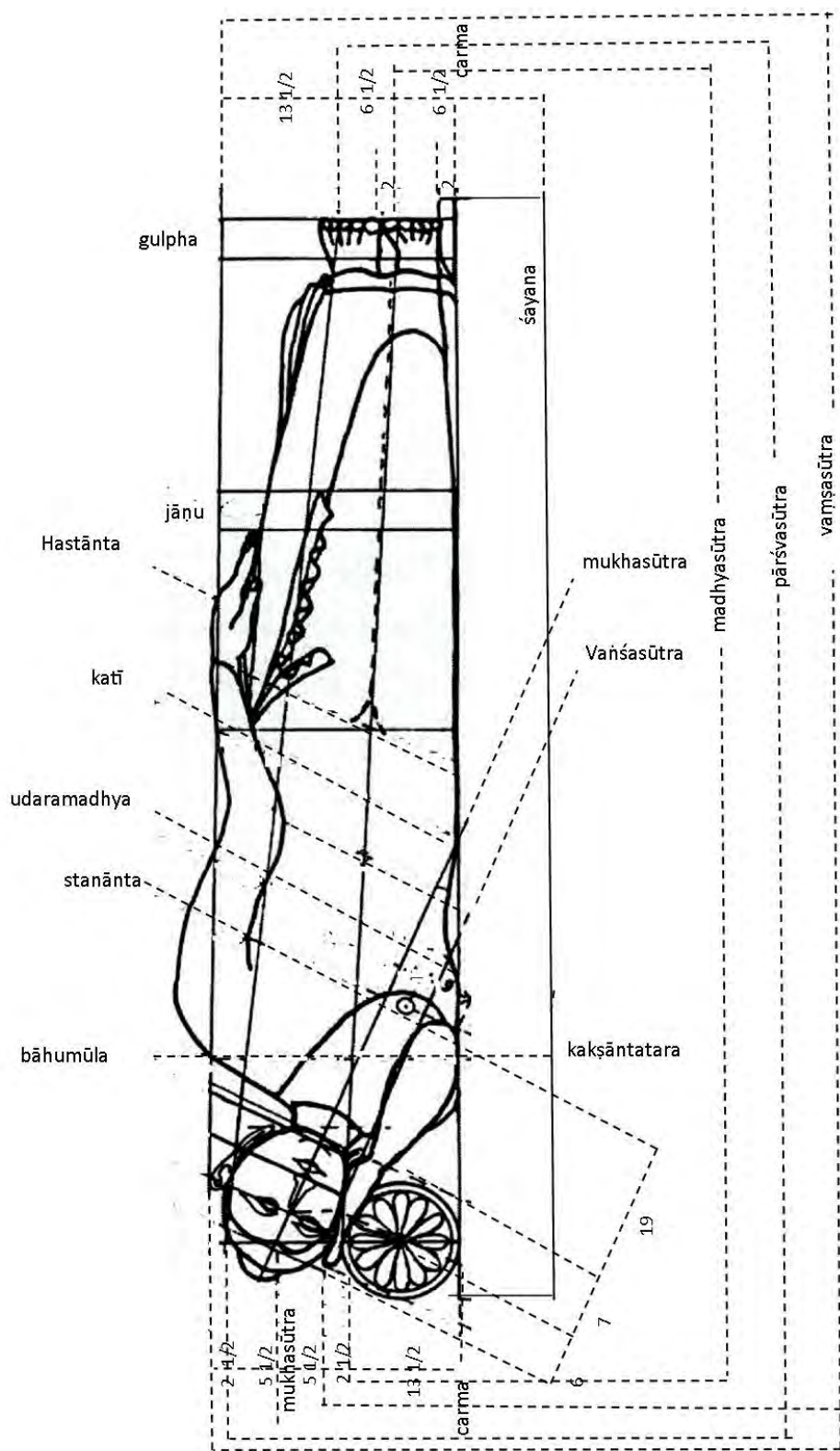
APPENDIX III: ICONOMETRIC MEASUREMENTS OF BUDDHA IMAGES ACCORDING TO *BIMBAMĀNA*

III.1 Iconometric formula of the seated Buddha images of *uttama daśatāla*.



III.II Iconometric formula of the standing Buddha images of *uttama daśatāla*.





III.III Iconographic proportions of the reclining Buddha image according to *Uttama Daśa Tāla*

APPENDIX IV- GESTURES (MUDRĀ) OF THE BUDDHA IMAGES



Abhaya mudrā



Varada mudrā



Kataka hasta mudrā



Vitarka mudrā



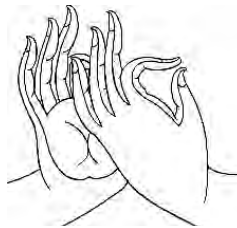
Avadhāna mudrā



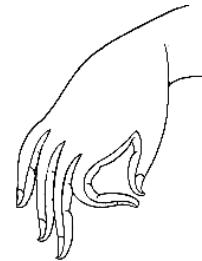
Āhvāna mudrā



Dhyāna/Samādhi mudrā

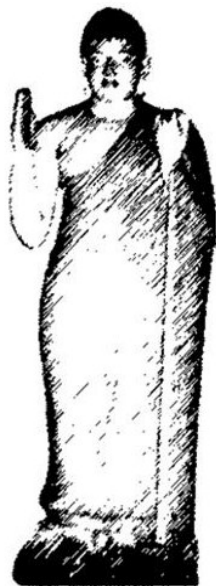


Dharmacakra mudrā



Bhūmi-sparṣa mudrā

**APPENDIX V- STANDING, SEATED, AND RECLINING POSTURES OF THE
BUDDHA IMAGES**



Standing posture of *Samabhāṅga*



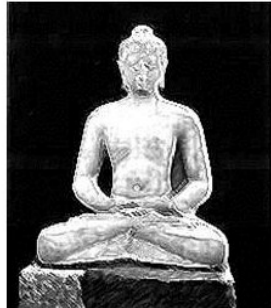
Standing posture of *Dvibhāṅga*



Standing posture of *Tribhāṅga*



Seated posture of *Vīrāsana*



Seated posture of *Padmāsana*



Seated posture of *Badrāsana/Pralambhapādāsana*



Reclining posture of *Śayanāsana*

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- abhiśeka* - The ritual of coronation of the king, which involved the lustration. In Sri Lanka, the particular ritual took place when a new king was enthroned. Also in Sri Lanka, the Buddha image of the Abhayuttara Vihāra was named as Abhiśeka. King Dhātusena coronated it with golden and jeweled ornaments (*Mv.* Ch. XXXVIII. 67-68), while the commander of the Kassapa I made an image house for the particular image which was dedicated with ceremony of coronation.
- aṅgula* - (Skt. *aṅgula*) the measure of standard obtained by the finger, or the thumb finger, particularly the finger's breadth, which is technically equal to eight barley-corns, according to *śilpa* texts. Twelve *aṅgulas* make one *Tāla/hasta*, and based on the particular measurement, ancient artists manufactured the images of deities (See **Table 8.2**)
- Antarāvāsaka* - One of the three garments of the monastic robe, particularly the lower garment. See *tricīvara*.
- Anāthapiṇḍika* - Buddha's chief benefactor who purchased a land from the prince Jeta, the son of king Prasenajith, and erected the Great monastery called Jetavana for the Buddha and the monastic community to stay during the rainy (*vassa*) season.
- animisalocana* - Fixed-gaze. According to the Buddhist legends, the Buddha, after the Enlightenment spent seven weeks of seven days under the Bodhi tree (*Ficus religiosa*), where he enlightened. of which he paid his respect with *animisalocana* to the Great Bodhi Tree in the second week.
- anuttarajñāna* - The Highest wisdom that the Great Being can endow with.
- ardha ubhayāṅśa pārūpana-* The monastic robe covering the left shoulder and the left hand, which hangs down from the left shoulder.
- Arhat/arahant* - A “worthy being” of veneration who destroyed all the defilements in the worldly life and thereby awakened. The epithet was essentially used to describe the Buddha.

- Aśvatta* - The tree of the Gautama Buddha. It has been used in the early Buddhist sites i.e. Sānchi along with other trees to depict the lineage of the Buddhas.
- Ādi Buddha* - “Svayaṃ Bhū’ or the Self existent, from whom the five divine (*dhyāni*) Buddhas i.e. Vairocana (centre), Amitābha (west), Akṣobhya (east), Amoghasiddhi (north), and Ratnasambhava (south) were emanated. **See also *dhyāni Buddhas*.**
- Ālinda* - An open terrace or verandah in front of a building possibly attached to the main entrance.
- Ānanda* - The Buddha’s main disciple and the most reliable treasurer of the Buddha’s teaching (*Buddha dharma*).
- Āsana* - The seated posture of the Buddha, Bodhisattva, and Hindu images. Popular seated postures of the Buddha images are *padmāsana* (lotus seat or the cross-legged position), *vīrāsana/yogāsana/sattvaparyāṅkāśana* (the right foot is placed on the seat while the left foot is placed on the right leg), and *badrāsana/lambhapādāsana* the two legs are hanging down from the seat). **For details see Appendix V.** In addition, *Vajrāsana* was the seated posture with cross-legged, interlocked with both the soles of the feet that are turned upward, besides its identification as the sacred throne where the Buddha was assumed to have seated at the time of his enlightenment.
- Āsanaghara* - Unique architectural construction of Sri Lanka, literally a pillared house in that was a huge slab of stone symbolizing the sacred throne of the Buddha.
- bhadrapīṭa/badhapīṭa* - “Auspicious seat.” In Sri Lankan sculpture the symbol has been used as one of the eight auspicious marks (*aṣṭamaṅgala lakṣaṇa*).
- Bhakti* - Devotion or love towards a religious deity, by which the devotee pays his/her honor, or respect by performing certain ritual acts.
- bhaṅga* - The flexed position of the standing images in which the image is posed. Three popular positions of the Sri Lankan Buddha images are: ***samabhaṅga***-standing upright with straight legs, and no bents in the body, ***dvibhaṅga***- standing upright with two bents: the waist and the knee, and

tribhaṅga- standing upright in which the limbs of the body are bent from three points: neck, waist and knee.

- Bodhighara* - “House for the Bodhi Tree,” which is a unique Sri Lankan architectural type that was made to demarcate the sacred area for the Bodhi Tree with a stone wall and 2-4 entrances.
- Bodhimaṇḍa* - The platform of terrace, often erected around the Bodhi Tree for the purpose of circumambulation, also used to identify the stone slab that is decorated with flowers on it.
- Bodhisattva* - One who has attained the path of awakening as a Buddha, but waiting compassionately in the human realm for the welfare of the sentient beings, especially when they cry in need of help. According to early Buddhist understanding, the previous lives as well as the present life prior to the Buddhahood of the Gautama Buddha is also called *bodhisattva*.
- Buddhapāda* - The footprint of the Buddha. In early Buddhist art, the *footprint* was used as a symbol to represent the Buddha to depict his life events i.e. the Great departure, the descent from Saṅkassa etc. In Sri Lanka, it is a carved stone slab representing the sacred imprint called *siripatulgal*.
- Cakra* - One of the auspicious symbols that were depicted in the Buddha’s palm or feet. It also portrayed the Buddha’s First Sermon when depicted with 8, 12, or 24 spokes (**see for details dharmacakra**).
- Cakravarti/ Cakravartin-* The universal monarch who uses the seven treasures to conquer the four corners of the human realm, and rule the entire world.
- Caitya/cetiya* - **See stūpa.**
- Caityaghara/Cetiya-* “The house for *stūpa/caitya*,” unique Sri Lankan architectural construction, which was built to house the *stūpa*. Evidence can be traced from Thūpārāma, Laṅkāra, and Ambastala cetiya, Mihintale.
- Carma* - Skin.
- catra* - The parasol held above the head of the Buddha, or the symbol that marked the presence of the Buddha, which emphasized his royal inheritance.

- catrāvali* - Conical arrangement of 7-9 *catras* on top of the relic chamber (*dhātugarbha*) of *stūpa*.
- cāmara* - The flywhisks that were held on either side of the religious images, or on top, similarly used as yak-tail.
- Chiton* - The rectangular cloth that was worn by Greek men and women. Men's cloth was a knee-long fabric, whereas the women wore it up to the floor-length.
- dharmacakra* - Wheel of Dharma that symbolizes the Buddha's First Sermon as well as his teaching. In early Indian Buddhist Art the wheel symbol was represented with 8, 12, or 24 spokes.
- Dharma-kāya* - "The body of Law/Dharma," "The Spiritual Body." One of the three bodies (*trikāya*). See also *trikāya*, *nirmāṇa-kāya*, *sambhoga-kāya*.
- Dharmarājikā - Simile for *stūpa*. According the historical evidence the 84,000 *stūpas* that the king Aśoka erected were called Dharmarājikā.
- Daśabala* - Ten powers of the Buddha by which he exercised his influence. The ten powers are;
 1. *sthānāsthānājñānabalam*- The power of knowing what is possible and what is impossible.
 2. *karmavipākajñānabalam*- The power of knowing results of actions.
 3. *nānādhimuktijñānabalam*- The power of knowing different inclinations.
 4. *nānādhātujñānabalam*- The power of knowing the world with its various elements.
 5. *Indriyavarāvarajñānabalam*- The power of knowing the superior and inferior qualities of the human faculties.
 6. *sarvatragāmaṇīpratipattijñānabalam*-The power of knowing the causes of conduct that lead for every destination of life.
 7. *sarvadhyanavimokṣasamādhisamāpattisaṅkleśar-yavadānavyutthānajñānabalam*- The power of knowing all the defilements, cleanings, and the emergence of contemplation, liberations, meditative concentrations, and the final attainment.
 8. *pūrvanivāsānusmṛtijñānabalam*- The power of remembering the previous lifes/births.

9. *cyutyutpattijñānabalam*- The power of knowing the death and rebirth.
10. *āśravakṣayabalam*- The power of knowing the destruction and corruption.¹
- Daśatāla* - Standard of measurement, which is equal to 120 *aṅgulas*.
See aṅgula.
- dhyāni Buddhas* - Vairocana, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, Amoghasiddhi, Akṣobhya, the five divine (*dhyāni*) Buddhas who were emanated from the *Ādi Buddha/Svayaṃ Bhū*.
- dvibhaṅga* - **See bhaṅga.**
- Ekānśika Saṅghati* - The monastic robe that covers one shoulder.
- Garbha/dhātugarbha* - The relic chamber of a *stūpa*.
- Gedi Ge - Image House.
- Halo - *Prabhā maṅḍala*, a circle of rays surrounding the head of the Buddha image. While early Gandhāra sculptor used the simple sun disk, the Mathurā sculptor used the disk with two guardian deities on either side, or the canopy of the Bodhi Tree in the centre.
- harmikā* - The circular pavilion attached to the square shaped structure atop the relic chamber of the *stūpa*, on top of which was erected the *catrāvalī*.
- himation* - A garment consisting of rectangular piece of cloth wrapped around the neck and upper part of the body, usually used by Greek imperials (similar to *chiton*).
- kaṭina* - Also named as *kaṭina cīvara*, *kaṭina vastra*, the monastic robes, specially offered to the community of monks, after the *vassa* period by performing the ceremony of *kaṭina* (*kaṭina piṅkama*). Once the robes are offered, they are considered a property of the Saṅgha.
- keśāvataṃsa* - Diadem of rays.
- ketumālā* - A bright and colorful aureole, or a cluster of rays, illuminated as a flame of fire on top of the head of Buddha.
See also siraspata.

¹ MN. I. No. 12. *Mahāsīhanāda sutta*. 93-95

- Koravakgala* - The architectural balustrade or the railing that was carved by the two sides of the stairway leading to the Buddhist *stūpas* and image houses in Sri Lanka. The particular element was comprised of either the head of a lion (*siṅha*), dragon (*makara*), or occasionally with floral designs.
- Krobylos - The particular hair arrangement on top of the head of the Greek Gods. In some Greek images i.e. Apollo Belvedere, this knot was placed slightly above the forehead, and often held by an ornament.
- lambhakarṇa* - Long ears of the Buddha. This is one of the eighty minor characteristics of the Great Being (see **Appendix II.II**).
- Lambatatuva* - A wooden equipment that was used to obtain the plumb-line measurements of the standing, seated, and reclining images.
- maṅgala* - Auspicious.
- mahāpuruṣa lakṣaṇa* - The characteristics of the Great Being. According to *Lakkhaṇa sutta* of *Dīgha Nikāya*, he dwells thirty-two major characteristics (see **Appendix II.I**).
- Mahāsāṅghika* - precursors of the Mahāyāna Buddhism.
- Mahāvihāra* - “The Great Monastery.” The first Buddhist monastery in Sri Lanka which was set up by the king Devānampiyatissa, under the instructions of Mahinda Thero.
- Mahāyāna - “Great Vehicle.” Also known as the Northern Buddhism, the form of Buddhism developed around 1st-2nd century in India, and spread around North and East Asian countries. They, while accepting the *Tripitaka* as the central doctrine, also uphold a vast number of philosophical and devotional practices. The most prominent of such practices is the great compassion (*mahākaruṇā*) and wisdom (*prajñā*), the essential components of enlightenment manifested in bodhisattvas who have postponed their *nirvāna* to assist the sentient beings until they liberate from *saṃsāra*.
- Maitreya* - According to Theravāda Buddhist tradition, he is at present living in Tuṣita heaven until he is born in the human realm, and will become the future Buddha after the present era (*kalpa*) of the Gautama Buddha. Later developed Buddhist

śilpa texts identify him as a bodhisattva who flanks the Buddha along with the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara.

- Māra* - An evil who personified the death, and the temptation. He had a combat with the bodhisattva Gautama prior to his enlightenment, and many Buddhist sites have employed this event in their illustrations as a popular theme of art to depict the Buddha's enlightenment.
- Mucalinda* - A Cobra king who provided the shade for the Buddha by canoping his hood above the head and coiling around the Buddha's body during the storm that was created by the Māra after his enlightenment.
- mudrā* - The gestures of images. The artists applied the particular gestures to symbolize the personal characteristics of the divine being. In Buddhist iconography following gestures have been employed: *samādhi* (meditation), *vitarka* (intellectual argument), *abhaya* (fearlessness), *varada* (boon-granting), *dharmacakra* (teaching), *bhūmi sparśa/bhū-sparśa* (earth-touching), *anjali/ namaskāra* (salutation). **For details see Appendix IV.**
- Makara* - The dragon.
- Makara toraṇa* - The arch or the gateway decorated with the head and the body of the dragon.
- mal-āsana* - The stone slabs that were placed at four cardinal points of the *stūpa* for devotees to offer flowers and other objects to venerate the Buddha's relics.
- Mādhyamaka* - One of the two main philosophical streams developed within the Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition, which stemmed from the commentarial descriptions of Nāgarjuna in the 2nd century CE.
- Muragala* - The guard-stone, usually erected on either side of the stair case leading to the religious buildings in Sri Lanka along with the moonstone (*sandakada pahaṇa*) and the architectural balustrade (*koravakgala*).
- nāga* or *nāginī* - the figures of male and female cobra figures. In ancient India, the worship of *nāga* and *nāginī* was a popular cult, and so was depicted in Indian art. According to Sri Lankan chronicles, one of the tribes that existed in Sri

Lanka when the Buddha first visited the country was *nāgas*. In early Sri Lankan sculpture, the guard-stones (*muragala*) with the figures of *nāga* and *nāginī* were in vogue during the early period.

<i>Nāgarāja</i>	-	Cobra king
<i>Navatāla</i>	-	A particular standard of measurement applied by the artists to make images, which is equal to 108 <i>āṅgulas</i> . See <i>āṅgula</i>.
<i>Nirmāṇa-kāya</i>	-	“The body of transformation,” one form of <i>trikāya</i> , by which the Buddhas and bodhisattvas can appear in different forms (<i>veśa</i>). See also <i>Trikāya</i> , <i>dharmakāya</i> , <i>sambhogakāya</i> .
<i>Padma</i>	-	Lotus.
Padmanidhi and Saṅkhanidhi-		Two well-known guard-stones (<i>muragala</i>) portraying the Sri Lankan craftsmanship, so named based on the symbols they were holding in their hands. Whereas the Padma-nidhi bears a lotus bud (<i>Padma</i>), Saṅkha-nidhi carries a conch-shell (<i>saṅkha</i>). In both the examples, the symbols are considered two auspicious marks, and the guardian figures are assumed of protecting the wealth.
<i>Padmāsana</i>	-	see <i>āsana</i> .
<i>Padhānaghara</i>	-	(Piyangal) Meditation hall of the monastery.
<i>Pallium</i>	-	Pallium is the narrow band of cloth worn around the neck, and shoulder with two hanging pendants: one in the front and the other behind, usually worn by the Pope. In the ancient times it was worn by the High Priest of the Pagan territory to imitate the Hebrew ephod (the garment worn by the Chief Priest of the Hebrew Church).
<i>panca dhyāni Buddha</i> <i>Maṇḍala</i>	-	Sacred circle of five divine Buddhas. See <i>dhyāni Buddhas</i>.
<i>Parinirvāna</i>	-	The term used for the Buddha’s death or the ‘final passing away to <i>nirvāna</i> .’ Also termed as <i>mahāparinirvāna</i> .
<i>Paṭimāghara</i>	-	(Piḷima Ge). The image house.
<i>Pāsāda</i>	-	Castle or palace.

- pesā* - Three ringed foundational steps at the base of the Sri Lankan *stūpas*.
- pīṭikā* - The pedestal of the images on which it is placed. There are two kinds of pedestals that the early Buddha images were placed: the lion pedestal (*siṃhāsana*) in which the pedestal was decorated with motifs of two lions on either sides, or the lotus pedestal (*padma pīṭikā*) in which the pedestal is comprised of a lotus. The lotus pedestal occasionally comprises of two lotuses, arranged in the upward and downward combination called double lotus pedestal (*dvitvapadmapīṭikā*). Often, this iconographical element is confused with posture (*āsana*) of the images in which the legs are positioned (**for details see *āsana***).
- prabhā maṇḍala* - **See Halo.**
- raṃṣi-cūlāmaṇi* - A shining coil of hair, decorating the Buddha's head.
- raṃsipuñja* - A shining mass (probably a gem or gold ornament) decorating the Buddha's head.
- raṃsīśikhāmaṇi* - Shining element on top of the *ketumālā*.
- ratna-vedikā* - The jewel-seat.
- śaḍ varṇa* - The six colors of the *prabhā maṇḍala* around the Buddha's head: blue (*nīla*), yellow (*pīṭa*), red (*lohita*), white (*odāta*), orange (*mānjeṣṭa*), and the combination of all colors (*prabhāśvara*).
- Śakra* - The Lord of the Tuṣita/Tāvatiṃsā heaven who is also the chief of the gods.
- Śakti* - Energy. The female counterpart of the bodhisattva.
- Śākyamuni* - An epithet for the Gautama Buddha, which derives the meaning "the sage of Śākyas." Literally, Śākya is the clan to which the Buddha was belonged, prior to his departure.
- Śākyasiṅha* - Another epithet for the Gautama Buddha which connotes him as the "Lion of the Śākyas."
- Śāriputra* - One of the two chief disciples of the Buddha with the most comprehensive knowledge of the Buddha's teaching.

- Śāstra* - The scientific study, text, or treatise.
- śikhākāra* - The shape of cone, or heap.
- śilpa* - The techniques and skills that were applied in making the images. India as well as Sri Lanka provides the composition of such *śilpa* texts.
- Saṅgha - Buddhist monastic community.
- saṅghāti* - One of the three garments of the monastic robe, mostly covering the upper part of the body. **See *tricīvara*.**
- Sambhoga-kāya* - “Body of enjoyment” one of the *trikāya* aspects. The splendid body of the Buddha in paradise, or heaven. See also *trikāya*, *Dharma-kāya*, *Nirmāṇa-kāya*.
- samabhaṅga* - **See *bhaṅga*.**
- Sandakadapaṇa* - “Moonstone.” Unique architectural element in Sri Lanka, obviously a semi-circular stone slab, placed at the bottom of the short staircase leading to the *stūpa*, or image house (*Piḷima Ge*) as the first step. The centre of the stone was a half-lotus, surrounding which were several concentric bands. The inner most band was decorated with a group of swans moving one after the other; second band was a design of foliage, usually called *liyavāla*, the third was a carving of animals: elephant (*Āt*), horse (*As*), lion (*Siha*), and cow (*gava*) in a procession, and the outer most band is decorated with carving of flames. The carvings, from outer most band to the half-lotus, symbolically described certain stages of life and the bliss of attainment. The element was always accompanied by an architectural balustrade (*koravakgala*), and a guard-stone (*muragala*).
- Sarvāstivāda - One of the progressive sects of Theravāda Buddhism, also known as the Vaibhāṣika. They believed that everything empirical was impermanent, except the dharma factors which are eternally existing realities. For them, dharma functions progressively, or instantly, producing the empirical phenomenon of the world, which changes the function of world accordingly.
- siṅgha* - The lion.

- siṃhāsana* - The rectangular pedestal with the motifs of lion on either sides on which the seated Buddha images were placed. See ***pīṭikā***.
- siraspata* - Flame of fire placed on the top of the head of Buddha. See ***ketumālā***.
- siripatulgal.* - see ***Buddhapāda***
- Sīhanāda* - “The roar of lion.” An epithet for the Buddha’s voice.
- stūpa* - An architectural construction, arranged like a mound, which usually contains the relics, occasionally called as *caitya*, *dhātugarbha* or *dharmarājikā*. Every Buddhist country has developed its own form and style of *stūpa* containing the Buddha’s relics. While India provides the early evidence of such an architectural innovation i.e. Bhārhut, Sānchi, and Amarāvati, Sri Lanka have its own style developed within the tradition. Japan has its *stūpa* in the form of a pagoda, called *sotobā*, China calls it *Tā*, which derives the meaning of *stūpa* in Sanskrit.
- sunīca-keśa* - Short hair of the Buddha’s head.
- Svastika* - An auspicious symbol of the Buddha’s foot which meant the ‘provider of benefits,’ or “beneficent.” (*su*= good, benefit; *asti*= being; *ka*= making, providing).
- svayaṃ-bhū - Self-Existent Person/ *Ādhi Buddha*.
- Tathāgata* - An epithet used for the Gautama Buddha, which meant “Thus come,” or “Thus gone,” often uttered by the Buddha to identify himself.
- Tāla* - The standard of measurement used in ancient śilpa texts to obtain the proportions of the images that helped to make the images perfect icons. See ***aṅgula*, *daśatāla***.
- Togā* - The garment of the Imperial Roman.
- Theravāda* - “The doctrine of the Elders,” also named as *Hīnayāna* by the Mahāyānists. They consider Pāli Tripitaka as the main doctrine, which derived its earliest formation as a result of the 3rd Buddhist Council patronized by the king Aśoka, and spread over sixteen countries including Sri Lanka.

- tribhaṅga* - The flexed position of the standing Buddha image in which the body is bent from three points: neck, waist, knee. See ***bhaṅga***.
- tricīvara* - Three parts of the monastic garment: *antarāvāsaka*, the lower garment, an undergarment, hanging low down and bound to the loins with a girdle, (*uttrāsaṅgha*), the upper garment, which covers the breast and the shoulders, and reaches below the knee, and third, the cloak (*saṅghāti*).
- Trikāya* - *dharmakāya*, *sambhogakāya*, *nirmānakāya*, the aspects of three bodies, developed during the 3rd-4th centuries CE. as one of the three doctrinal teachings of the Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition. It describes the teaching and the nature of the Buddha.
- Tripitaka* - The original Pāli canon that comprises the three major sections of the Buddhist teaching, *sūtra*, *vinaya*, and *Abhidhamma*.
- Triratna* - The three main jewels of Buddhism: Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha (the monastic community).
- Trisūla* - Trident.
- Tuṣita* - The name of the heaven where the prince Siddhartha temporarily lived until he got the final birth in the human realm. Likewise, bodhisattva Maitreya stays in the *tuṣita* heaven to be born in the human realm, and protect the Buddha's teaching.
- ubhayāṅśa pārūpana* - Monastic robe covering both the shoulders.
- ūrṇā* - The circular mark curled clock-wise in between the eye brows of the Buddha images. This is one of the thirty-two characteristics of the Great Being (See **Appendix II.I**).
- uṣṇīśa* - The protuberance on top of the Buddha's head (skull) that makes his head appear as turbaned. This is also one of the thirty-two marks of the Great Being according to Lakkhana sūta (See **Appendix II.I**). Whereas Gandhāra sculptor applied this element as the *krobylos* (see **krobylos**) of the Greek gods, the Mathurā sculptor used the same element in the shape of the snail-shell coil (*kapārda* style) .
- Uttarāsaṅgha* - One of the three garments of the monastic robe, usually covering the upper part of the body. See ***tricīvara***.

- vadu riyan* - A typical standard of measurement used by the Sri Lankan craftsmen, which was equal to 20 inches.
- Vajra* - Thunderbolt or diamond. Indra's weapon, according to Hindu Purāṇas.
- Vajrāsana* - The diamond throne on which the Buddha is said to have seated at the time of his enlightenment. Also identifies as the sitting posture with legs inter-locked, and both soles of the feet turning upward, similar to *padmāsana*. **See āsana.**
- Vajrayāna* - “Diamond” or “Thunderbolt” Vehicle, one form of Buddhism developed in India during the 5th century CE. It is always debated that whether this school was developed as one branch of Mahāyāna Buddhism, or as a distinctive tradition developed beside Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhist ideology. However, at present its home is considered Tibet, from which it derived the name “Tibetan Buddhism.”
- Vassa* - The rainy season in which the monks spend sixty days in the monastery observing particular *vinaya* rules. Usually, the *vassa* season falls in the first day of Āsaḷa (August) full moon day and ends by the II (November-December) full moon Poya day with the festival of *kaṭina*. (*kaṭina piṅkama*). **See also kaṭina.**
- Vatadāge* - The circular shrine, usually erected around the *stūpa* with a hemispherical roof similar to *caityaghara*. **See caityaghara.**
- Vāhalkada* - Architectural front piece, placed at the four cardinal points, unique to Sri Lankan *stūpas*.
- Vihāra* - Buddhist temple, also occasionally called as *vihāraya*, *vihāre*, *vihārage*.
- Victor* - An epithet for the Buddha, meaning the one who prospered the world.
- Vinaya* - The monastic code of the monks.
- Vīra* - “Hero.” Religious Teacher who superseded the life, occasionally named Mahāvīra, “The Great Hero.”
- yamaka-prātihārya* - Double Miracles performed by the Buddha, obviously with fire and water.

- yakka/yakṣa* - A group of minor deities who possess magical powers to cause malevolent effects to the human beings.
- Yakkinī/yakṣi* - the female of the *yakka*
- Yogācāra - “Mind-only,” a form of Buddhism that developed as an outgrowth of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The final goal of the followers of this tradition is the realization of mind/consciousness to attain the final wisdom. However, they do not promote meditation as an intense practice to reach the particular goal. Its counter-development was the Mādhyamaka tradition.

**ORIGIN AND THE EVOLUTION OF SRI LANKAN BUDDHA IMAGE
INDEPENDENT OF THE INDIAN PROTOTYPE**

VOLUME II: ILLUSTRATIONS

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- 7.3b** Sässeruva, Anuradhapura- Standing Buddha image. *5th century CE*.
- 7.3c** Avukana- Standing Buddha image. *4th-5th centuries CE*.
- 7.4a** Medirigiriya- Standing Buddha Triad. *4th century CE*.
- 7.4b** Pidurangala- Standing Buddha Triad. *4th-5th centuries CE*.
- 7.5a1-2** Jetavanārāma Archaeological museum- Standing Buddha images. *5th-6th centuries CE*.
- 7.5b1-2** Anuradhapura Archaeological museum- Standing Buddha images, *5th-6th centuries CE*.
- 7.6a** Vavunikulam- Standing Buddha image. *5th-6th centuries CE*.
- 7.6b** Anuradhapura- Standing Buddha image. *5th-6th centuries CE*.
- 7.6c** Maradankadawala- Standing Buddha Image. *6th century CE*.
- 7.6d** Mannarama- Standing Buddha image. *6th century CE*.
- 7.6e** Colombo museum- Standing Buddha image. *6th (3rd-5th?) century CE*.
- 7.7a** Anuradhapura- Standing Buddha image with *ubhayāṅśa-pārupana*. *5th-6th centuries CE*.
- 7.7b** Polonnaruwa- Bust of a Buddha image with *uhayāṅśa-pārupana*. *5th-6th centuries CE*.
- 7.8a-c** Anuradhapura Archaeological museum- Head of the Buddha. *6th century CE*.
- 7.9a** Kurunegala- Standing Buddha image. *7th century CE*.

- 7.9b Nāgalakanda, Minneriya- Standing Buddha image. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
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- 7.10a Ayitigevāva- Standing Buddha image. *7th-8th centuries CE.*
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- 7.10c Ruvanālisāya- Standing Buddha image. *7th-8th centuries CE.*
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- 7.11a Yatāla Vehera- Standing Buddha image. *7th-8th centuries CE.*
- 7.11b Mahakachchikodi- Standing Buddha image. *7th-8th centuries CE.*
- 7.11c Colombo museum- Standing Buddha image. *7th-8th centuries CE.*
- 7.11d Chunnakam- Standing Buddha image. *8th century CE.*
- 7.11e Padaviya- Standing Buddha image. *8th century CE.*
- 7.12a Ālāhana Pirivena, Polonnaruwa- Standing Buddha image. *7th-8th centuries CE.*
- 7.12b Yatāla Vehera- Standing Buddha image. *7th-8th centuries CE.*
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- 7.12d Toragalla, Kurunegala- Standing Buddha image. *8th century CE.*
- 7.12e Colombo museum- Standing Buddha image. *7th-8th centuries CE.*
- 7.13a1-3 Thūpārāma, Polonnaruwa- Standing Buddha images. *8th century CE.*
- 7.13b Atadāge, Polonnaruwa- Standing Buddha image. *8th century CE.*
- 7.13c Budu Galge, Ampara- Standing Buddha images. *8th century CE.*
- 7.14a Detiyamulla- Standing Buddha image. *8th century CE.*
- 7.14b Mūdu Mahā Vihāra, Ampara- Standing Buddha image. *8th century CE.*
- 7.14c Veheradivullāna, Monaragala- Standing Buddha image. *8th century CE.*
- 7.14d Tissamaharama- Standing Buddha image. *8th century CE.*
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- 7.15a Kankanodai- Standing Buddha image. *8th-9th centuries CE.*
- 7.15b Veheragala, Anuradhapura- Standing Buddha image. *8th-9th centuries CE.*
- 7.16a Polonnaruwa- Standing Buddha image. *8th-9th centuries CE.*
- 7.16b Polonnaruwa- Standing Buddha image. *8th-9th centuries CE.*
- 7.16c Polonnaruwa- Standing Buddha image. *8th-9th centuries CE.*
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- 7.17b Māligāvila- Standing Buddha image. *8th-9th centuries CE.*
- 7.17c Polonnaruwa- Standing Buddha image. *8th-9th centuries CE.*
- 7.18a Buduruwagala, Māligāvila- Standing Buddha image. *9th-10th centuries CE.*
- 7.18a-1 Buduruwagala, Māligāvila- Panel bearing a group of Bodhisattvas including Avalokiteśvara and Tārā. *9th-10th centuries CE.*
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- 7.19b Tivaṅka image house, Polonnaruwa- Standing Buddha image. *12th century CE.*

- 7.19c** Laṅkātilaka image house, Polonnaruwa- Standing Buddha image. *12th century CE.*
- 7.20a1-3** Hātadāge, Polonnaruwa- Standing Buddha images. *12th century CE.*
- 7.20b** Pabaḷu Vehera, Polonnaruwa- Standing Buddha image, *12th century CE.*
- 7.21a** Gadaladeniya- Standing Buddha image. *13th-14th centuries CE.*
- 7.21b** Colombo museum- Standing Buddha image. *13th-14th centuries CE.*
- 7.22a1-3** Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra- Standing Buddha images. *18th century CE.*
- 7.22b** Gaṅgārāmaya, Kandy- Standing Buddha image. *18th century CE.*
- 7.22c** Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala- Standing Buddha image. *18th century CE.*
- 7.23a** Peradeniya Archaeological museum- Standing Buddha image. *18th century CE.*
- 7.23b** Colombo museum- Standing Buddha image made of ivory. *8th century CE.*
- 7.23c** Godapitiya Raja Mahā Vihāra, Akuressa- Standing Buddha image. *18th century CE.*
- 7.23d** Colombo museum- Standing Buddha image. *18th century CE.*
- 7.24** Relic Chamber, Kaṇṭaka *caitya*, Mihintale- Seated Buddha image. *1st century BCE.*
- 7.25a1-5** Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura- Seated Buddha images. *3rd century CE.*
- 7.26a** Āsanaghara, Abhayagiriya- Seated Buddha image No.1. *3rd-4th centuries CE.*
- 7.26b** Āsanaghara, Abhayagiriya- Seated Buddha image No.2. *3rd-4th centuries CE.*
- 7.26c** Abhayagiriya- Second Samādhi Buddha image. *3rd-4th centuries CE.*
- 7.26d** Vālimaluwa, Abhayagiriya- Seated Buddha image. *4th century CE*
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- 7.27b** Abhayagiriya- Torso of a seated Buddha image. *3rd-4th centuries CE.*
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- 7.28a** Abhayagiriya outer circular road- Samādhi Buddha image. *3rd-4th centuries CE.*
- 7.28b** Anuradhapura- Seated Buddha image. *3rd-4th centuries CE.*
- 7.28c** Jetavanārāma- Seated Buddha image. *3rd-4th centuries CE.*
- 7.28d** Toluvila- Samādhi Buddha image. *3rd-4th centuries CE.*
- 7.28e** Dātiyamulla- Seated Buddha image. *3rd-4th centuries CE.*
- 7.29a** Anuradhapura outer city- Seated Buddha image. *3rd-4th centuries CE.*
- 7.29b** Paṭhamaka *cetiya*, Anuradhapura- Seated Buddha image. *3rd-4th centuries CE*
- 7.29c** Horovpotana, Tirappankadawala- Seated Buddha image. *3rd-4th centuries CE.*
- 7.29d** Mannarama- Seated Buddha Image. *3rd-4th centuries CE*
- 7.29e** Citadel, Anuradhapura- Seated Buddha image. *3rd-4th centuries CE.*
- 7.29f** Jetavanārāma- Seated Buddha image. *3rd-4th centuries CE*
- 7.30a1-8** Jetavanārāma- Seated Buddha images. *4th century CE.*

- 7.30b Jetvanārāma- Seated Buddha Image. *4th century CE.*
- 7.31a1-3 Jetavanārāma- Seated Buddha images with halo. *4th century CE.*
- 7.31b-5 Anuradhapura- Seated Buddha images with halo. *4th century CE.*
- 7.32 Thūpārāma- Seated Buddha image with *ardha ubhayāṅśa pārupana*. *4th century CE.*
- 7.33 Seated Buddha image under the canopy of the cobra hoods. *5th century CE.*
- 7.34a1-3 Medirigiriya Vatadāge- Seated Buddha images. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.34b Image House, Medirigiriya- Seated Buddha image. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.35a Abhayagiriya- Seated Buddha image. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.35b Valaskunuveva, Horovpotaṇa- Seated Buddha image. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.35c Tirappankadavala- Seated Buddha image. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.35d Komarikawela- Seated Buddha image. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.35e Puvarasankulama- Seated Buddha image. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.35f Vavunikulama- Seated Buddha image. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.35g Veherabendimukalana- Seated Buddha image. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.36a Vāhalkada, Ruvanvālisāya- Seated Buddha image. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.36b Anuradhapura- Seated Buddha image. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.36c Abhayagiriya- Seated Buddha image. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.37a Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra- Seated Buddha image. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.37b Mannarama- Seated Buddha image, *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.37c Puvarasankulama- Seated Buddha image. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.37d Colombo museum- Seated Buddha image. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.37e Atambagaskadavala- Seated Buddha image. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
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- 7.39a Kolambagama Raja Mahā Vihāra, Kurunegala. Seated Buddha image. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.39b Tiriyāya- Seated Buddha image. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.39c Riet Berg museum, Zurich- Seated Buddha image. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.39d Dedigama, Kotavehera- Seated Buddha image *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.39e Metropolitan museum of Art, Samuel Ellenberg Collection. Seated Buddha image. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.39f Pallepola- Seated Buddha image. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.40a Colombo museum- Seated Buddha image. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.40b Badulla- Seated Buddha image. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.41a Colombo museum- Seated Buddha image. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.41b Vatadāge, Girihandu Sāya- Seated Buddha image. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.41c Jetavanārāma- Seated Buddha image. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.42a Kotagama, Kegalle- Seated Buddha Image. *6th century CE.*
- 7.42b Anuradhapura- Seated Buddha image. *6th century CE.*
- 7.42c Colombo museum- Seated Buddha image. *6th century CE.*
- 7.43a Maṅgala Raja Mahā Vihāra, Seruvila. Seated Buddha image under the canopy of the Bodhi Tree. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.43b Akbopura Raja Mahā Vihāra, Seruvila. Seated Buddha image under the canopy of the Cobra hood. *6th-7th centuries CE.*
- 7.43c Silā cetiya, Ambastala Vatadāge, Mihintale- Seated Buddha image on the tiers of cobra. *6th-7th centuries CE.*

- 7.44a Gal Amuna, Medirigiriya- Seated Buddha image. *7th-8th centuries CE.*
- 7.44b Puvarasankulama- Seated Buddha image. *7th-8th centuries CE.*
- 7.44c Tiriyāya- Seated Buddha image. *7th-8th centuries CE.*
- 7.44d1-2 Pankuliya- Seated Buddha image. *7th-8th centuries CE.*
- 7.45a Metropolitan museum of Art, Samuel Ellenberg Collection- Seated Buddha image. *7th-8th centuries CE.*
- 7.45b Metropolitan museum of Art, Kromos Collection- Seated Buddha image. *7th-8th centuries CE.*
- 7.45c Veheragala- Seated Buddha image. *7th-8th centuries CE.*
- 7.45d1-3 Tiriyāya- Seated Buddha images. *7th-8th centuries CE.*
- 7.45e1 Medirigiriya- Seated Buddha image. *7th-8th centuries CE.*
- 7.45e2-3 Udattapola- Seated Buddha images. *7th-8th centuries CE.*
- 7.45e4-5 Padaviya- Seated Buddha images. *7th-8th centuries CE.*
- 7.46a, b Udattapola- Seated Buddha images. *7th-8th centuries CE.*
- 7.46c Anuradhapura- Seated Buddha image. *7th-8th centuries CE.*
- 7.46d Horovpotana- Seated Buddha image. *7th-8th centuries CE.*
- 7.47a Maṅgala Raja Mahā Vihāra, Seruvila- Seated Buddha images under the canopy of the cobra hood. *8th century CE.*
- 47b1-2 Maṅgala Raja Mahā Vihāra, Seruvila- Seated Buddha images under the canopy of the cobra hood. *8th century CE.*
- 7.48a Colombo museum- Seated Buddha image. *8th-9th centuries CE.*
- 7.48b Menikdena- Seated Buddha image. *8th-9th centuries CE.*
- 7.48c Kavudulla- Seated Buddha image. *8th-9th centuries CE.*
- 7.48d Veheragala- Seated Buddha image. *9th century CE.*
- 7.48e Toluville- Seated Buddha image. *8th-9th (6th?) centuries CE.*
- 7.48f Polonnaruwa- Seated Buddha image. *8th-9th centuries CE.*
- 7.49a1-2 Polonnaruwa- Seated Buddha image. *8th-9th centuries CE.*
- 7.49b Pabaḷu Vehera- Seated Buddha image. *Polonnaruwa. 8th-9th centuries CE.*
- 7.50a1-2 Tiriyāya- Seated Buddha image. *8th-9th centuries CE.*
- 7.50a3 Unknown (County of Los Angeles museum)- Seated Buddha image. *8th-9th centuries CE.*
- 7.50b1 Tiriyāya- Seated Buddha image. *8th-9th centuries CE.*
- 7.50b2-3 Unknown (University of Peradeniya museum)- Seated Buddha images. *8th-9th centuries CE.*
- 7.50b4 Tiriyāya- Seated Buddha image. *8th-9th centuries CE.*
- 7.50c1-2 Tiriyāya- Seated Buddha images. *8th-9th centuries CE.*
- 7.50c3-5 Tiriyāya- Seated Buddha images. *8th-9th centuries CE.*
- 7.50c6 Unknown (Colombo museum)- Seated Buddha image. *8th-9th centuries CE.*
- 7.50d1-4 Anuradhapura- Seated Buddha images. *8th-9th centuries CE.*
- 7.50d5-8 Anuradhapura- Seated Buddha images. *8th-9th centuries CE.*
- 7.50d9-11 Tiriyāya- Seated Buddha images. *8th-9th centuries CE.*
- 7.50d12-13 Veheragala- Seated Buddha images. *8th-9th centuries CE.*
- 7.50e Udattapola- Seated Buddha image. *8th-9th centuries CE.*
- 7.50f Pallepola Raja Mahā Vihāra- Seated Buddha image. Kandy. *8th-9th centuries CE.*

- 7.51** Udu Dumbara- Plaque of the seated Buddha image. *10th century CE.*
- 7.52a** Abhayagiriya- Seated Buddha image. *9th-10th centuries CE.*
- 7.52b** Ambagaswewa- Seated Buddha image. *9th-10th centuries CE.*
- 7.52c** Ichchankulama- Seated Buddha image. *9th-10th centuries CE.*
- 7.52d** Uda Aludeniya- Seated Buddha image. *10th century CE.*
- 7.53a** Tantirimale- Seated Buddha image. *10th-11th centuries CE.*
- 7.53b1-2** Polonnaruwa- Seated Buddha images. *10th century CE.*
- 7.53c1-2** Vasmamuwa National Park- Seated Buddha images. *10th century CE.*
- 7.54a1-3** Vatadāge, Polonnaruwa- Seated Buddha images. *12th century CE.*
- 7.54b1-2** Seated Buddha images. Uttarārāma, Polonnaruwa. *12th century CE.*
- 7.54c1-3** Thūpārāma image house, Polonnaruwa- Seated Buddha images. *12th century CE.*
- 7.55a** Pulligoda Cave- Seated Buddha image. *12th century CE.*
- 7.55b1-6** Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra- Seated Buddha images. *18th century CE.*
- 7.55c** Katuvana Raja Mahā Vihāra- Seated Buddha image. *18th century CE.*
- 7.55d** Laṅkātilaka Raja Mahā Vihāra, Kandy- Seated Buddha image. *18th century CE.*
- 7.55e** Gadaladeniya Raja Mahā Vihāra- Seated Buddha image. *18th century CE.*
- 7.55f** Dedigama (now in Colombo museum)- Seated Buddha image. *18th century CE.*
- 7.55g** Gaṅgārāmaya, Kandy- Seated Buddha image. *18th century CE.*
- 7.55h** Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala- Seated Buddha image. *18th century CE.*
- 7.55i** Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala- Painting of a seated Buddha image. *18th century CE.*
- 7.55j** Hindagala, Peradeniya- Seated Buddha image. *18th century CE.*
- 7.56a** Leslie de Saram Collection, Colombo museum- Seated Buddha image. *18th century CE.*
- 7.56b** Kelaniya Raja Mahā Vihāra- Seated Buddha image. *18th century CE.*
- 7.57** Bamabaragastalawa, Kumana- Reclining Buddha image. *1st-2nd centuries CE.*
- 7.58a** Pidurangala- Reclining Buddha image. *5th-6th centuries CE.*
- 7.58b1** Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra- Reclining Buddha image. *5th-6th centuries CE.*
- 7.58b2** Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra- Reclining Buddha image. *12th century CE.*
- 7.58b2-1** Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra- Feet of the image with the wheel symbol. *12th century CE.*
- 7.59a** Attaragollewa, Elahera- Reclining Buddha image. *10th century CE.*
- 7.59b** Tantirimale- Reclining Buddha image. *10th century CE.*
- 7.60** Uttarārāma, Polonnaruwa- Reclining Buddha image. *12th century CE.*
- 7.60-1** Uttarārāma, Polonnaruwa. Feet of the image with the wheel symbol. *12th century CE.*
- 7.61a** Galpota Raja Mahā Vihāra, Bentota- Reclining Buddha image. *18th century CE.*
- 7.61b** Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala- Reclining Buddha image. *18th century CE.*
- 7.62a** Colombo museum- Reclining Buddha image. *18th century CE.*
- 7.62b** Nilagama- Reclining Buddha image. *18th century CE.*
- 7.63** Abhayagiriya monastic complex- An eye made of gem.



Fig.2.1 Karabād-Superimpositions with human (stick) figures.



Fig.2.2 Bhimbetkā- Masked Dancers with Swords, Spears and Daggers.



Fig.2.3a Bhimbetkā - Two men under a shelter.



Fig.2.3b Bhimbetkā - White elephant with a human figure.



Fig.2.3c Bhimbetkā- Riders on elephant.



Fig.2.3d Bhimbetkā - White dancers in a row.



Fig.2.4a Bhimbetkā - A group dance representing humans.



Fig.2.4b Bhimbetkā - Man walking with a dog



Fig.2.6 Bhimbetkā - An illustration of a ritual performance.



Fig.2.5 Sabarakāntha - A stūpa with a dome and catra.



Fig.2.7 Mohenjo-Dāro- The Priest King



Fig.2.8
Mohenjo-Dāro-
The female
figure of a
Dancing Girl.



Fig.2.9a



Fig.2.9b



Fig.2.9c

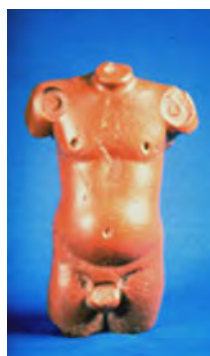


Fig.2.10a1 (profile) & **a2** (frontal) view of
the male torso - Harappā

Fig.2.9
Mohenjo-
Dāro-
Female
figures
that
represent
the fertility
and
productivity.



Fig.2.9d



Fig.2.9e



Fig.2.10b1 (frontal) & **b2** (rear) view
of the male torso- Harappā.



Fig.2.11a (above) & **2.11b** (below) Mohenjo-Dāro-
Man in the *yogic* position surrounded by animals.



Fig.2.11c Mohenjo-
Dāro- Man in the seated
position adorned with
the crown of three
pipal leaves.



Fig.2.11d Mohenjo-Dāro-Man in seated
position on the ground with a ritual
performance.



Fig. 2.12a (left) & **2.12b** (above) Mohenjo-Dāro-Seals depicting combat between animals and humans.



Fig. 2.13a (above-left) **2.13b** (above-right) & **2.13c** (left) Mohenjo-Dāro-Scenes representing different ritual acts.



Fig. 2.14a Barābar Hills- The entrance of the Sudhama Cave.

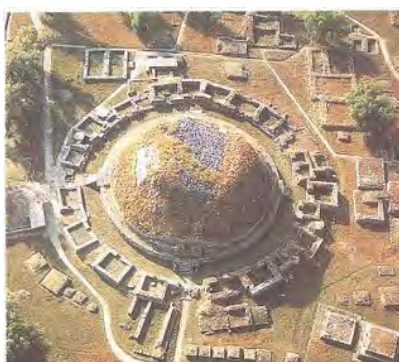


Fig. 2.14c Taxilā-View of a recent excavation of a Dharmarājikā, erected by the King Aśoka.



Fig. 2.15a Bodh Gayā-*Vajrāsana* placed under the Bodhi tree.



Fig. 2.14b Barābar Hills- The Arched entrance of the Lomas Rishi Cave.



Fig. 2.15b Bodh Gayā Footprint (*Buddhapāda*).



Fig.2.16a (left), **2.16b** (centre) & **2.16c** (right) Bodhi Gayā- Medallions representing the incidents of the Buddha's Life. **a)** A devotee worshipping the Buddha. The Buddha is represented by the *Bodhi Tree* **b)** The laying of Gold coins on the ground of the Jetavana monastery. The Buddha is represented by the *Bodhi Tree*. **c)** The visit of Sakka and Pancasika to the Buddha in the Indasāla Cave. The Buddha is represented by the *āsana* in the cave.



Fig.2.17a Sārnāth-
Aśokan pillar with
four lion heads.



Fig.2.17b Sānchi -
Aśokan pillar with four
lion heads.



Fig.2.18 Udayagiri- A wall painting depicting the Worship of the *Bodhi Tree*.



Fig.2.19a (left) & **2.19b** (right). Relief sculptures belonging to Post-Aśokan period representing the incidents of the Buddha's life. **a)** The Enlightenment **b)** The First Sermon



Fig.2.20a (above) & **2.20b** (below) Mitra-suffix coins with the symbols i.e. *trisūla*, *stūpa*.



Fig.3.1a (left) & **3.1b** (right) Bhārhut.-
Nativity of the Prince Siddhārtha.



Fig.3.2a (left- West Pillar of the Northern Gateway) & **3.2b** (below- North Pillar of Eastern Gateway) Sānchi- Nativity of the Prince Siddhārtha.



Fig.3.2c (left- South end of Eastern Gateway) & **3.2d** (right- North end of Western Gateway) Sānchi - Nativity of the Prince Siddhārtha.



Fig.3.2e Stūpa No.II Ground Balustrade. Sānchi- Nativity of the Prince Siddhārtha



Fig.3.3a Amarāvati- Various scenes relating to the birth of Prince Siddhārtha.



Fig.3.3b (above-left), **3.3c** (above-right), **3.3d** (left) Amarāvati- Nativity of the Prince Siddhārtha.



Fig.3.4a Nāgārjunakōṇḍa- Queen Māyā presenting the Prince to the king Suddhodana.





Fig.3.4b Nāgārjuna-koṇḍa-The presence of the four guardian deities to obtain the Prince from Queen Māyā. The presence of the prince is indicated by the parasol (*catra*).



Fig.3.4c Nāgārjuna-koṇḍa- Dream of Queen Māyā.



Fig.3.5 Bhārhut-Great Departure. The parasol (*catra*) is held above the horse to mark the presence of the prince Siddhārtha.



Fig.3.6a (Middle architrave of Eastern Gateway) Sānchi- Events relating to the Great Departure in narrative style. The presence of the prince



Fig.3.6b West pillar of Eastern Gateway. Sānchi- Four major events prior to the Departure. The presence of the prince is marked by the parasol (*catra*).



Fig.3.7 Piṭalkhorā-Rider-less Horse leaving the city Gate. The parasol (*catra*) is held above the horse to mark the prince's presence.



Fig.3.8a (left) & **3.8b** (right) Amarāvati-Rider-less Horse leaving the city Gate. The parasol (*catra*) is held above the horse to mark the prince's presence.



Fig.3.8c (above) & **3.8d** (right) Amarāvati-The Great Departure. Prince Siddhārtha appears in the human form under the parasol (*catra*).



Fig.3.8e Amarāvati- The Great Departure and the Enlightenment in the same panel. Devotees pay their reverence to the departed bodhisattva, even before his enlightenment.



Fig.3.8f Amarāvati- The Great Departure and the Enlightenment in the same panel.



Fig.3.9 Bodh Gayā- Great Enlightenment, indicated by the Bodhi Tree surrounded by the railing.



Fig.3.10 Outer face of the Prasenajith pillar, Bhārhut.- The Enlightenment, and the Enlightened Buddha indicated by the Bodhi Tree .



Fig.3.11a South pillar of Eastern Gateway, Sānchi- The Enlightenment marked by the Bodhi Tree and the Trident (*trishūla*).



Fig.3.11b West end of the Northern Gateway, Sānchi- The Enlightenment, indicated by the Bodhi Tree .



Fig.3.11c Top of the West end of the Northern Gateway, Sānchi. The Great Enlightenment, indicated by the Bodhi Tree and the throne in a decorated bodhighara.



Fig.3.11d (above-interior of the middle architrave of the Northern Gateway) & **3.11e** (below-middle architrave of the back of the Western Gateway) Sānchi- Defeat of Māra.



Fig.3.11f -(back of the middle architrave of the Eastern Gateway) Sānchi-The Buddha (indicated by the Bodhi Tree) is being worshipped by animals and Nāgas rejoicing his Enlightenment.



Fig.3.11g (Back of the north pillar of Western Gateway) Sānchi-The Buddha (marked by the *Bodhi Tree*) is being worshipped by animals and Nāgas rejoicing his Enlightenment.



Fig.3.12a (left) & **3.12b** (below) Amarāvati-Conversion of the Māra by the Buddha after his Enlightenment. The presence of the Buddha is marked by the *Bodhi Tree* and the *empty throne*.



Fig.3.13a (left–Top of the Prasenajith Pillar) & **3.13b** (right-mortise of an octagonal pillar) Bhārhut- The First Sermon marked by the *Wheel of Dharma*.



Fig.3.14a (right-West pillar of Southern Gateway) & **3.14b** (below-Middle Architrave of the Western Gateway) Sānchi- The First Sermon marked by the *Wheel of Dharma* along with two deer.

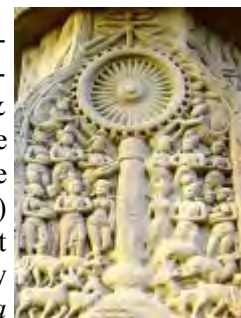


Fig.3.14c (left– Upright pillar of the Northern Gateway) & **3.14d** (right-West end of Northern Gateway) Sānchi- The First Sermon indicated by the *Wheel of Dharma* along with the two deer.



Fig.3.14e Top of the Northern Gateway, Sānchi-The indication of the Buddhist teaching by the trident (*trishūla*) atop the *Wheel of Dharma*.



Fig.3.15a (left) & **3.15b** (above) Amarāvati- The presence of the Buddha marked by the *flaming pillar*.



Fig.3.16a (left-Upper Bas relief of the Prasenajith Pillar) & **3.16b** (above-Freer Gallery of Art) Bhārhut. The *Parinirvāna* of the Buddha indicated by the *stūpa*.



Fig.3.17c (above left-Eastern face of the west pillar of the Northern Gateway) Enshrining of the relics by Malla kings, **3.17d** (above right-Back of the bottom die Northern Gateway), **3.17e** (below left -Bottom die of the west end of the Southern Gateway) & **3.17f** (below right- Back of the bottom die of Eastern Gateway) Sānchi- Worship of the relics by the devotees.



Fig.3.17a (above- Front of the middle architrave of the Southern Gateway) visit of Aśoka to the *stūpa* at Rāmagrāma & **3.17b** (below- Front of the top architrave of Eastern Gateway) *Stūpa* of the Śākyamuni Buddha, Sānchi-The *Parinirvāna* of the Buddha indicated by the *stūpas* along with the *Bodhi Trees* of the previous Buddhas.



Fig.3.17g Back of the Lower architrave of the Eastern Gateway, Sānchi- Adoration of the



Fig.3.18a (left) & **3.18b** (above) Amarāvati-Pillar reliefs. Depiction of the *parinirvāna* by the *stūpa* decorated with garlands and flowers, and worshipped by non-human and divine beings.



Fig.3.19 Lower bas-relief of the Ajātasatru pillar, Bhārhut– Miracle at Srāvastī. The Buddha is represented by a *jeweled seat*.



Fig.3.20 Front of east pillar of Northern Gateway, Sānchi– The Twin Miracle. The Buddha is represented by *two jeweled seats*.



Fig.3.21 South pillar of the Eastern Gateway. Taming of Uruvela-Kassapa. Buddha is represented by the *stone slab* between the five-headed serpent and the sacrificial fire.



Fig.3.22 Corner of the Ajātasatru pillar, Bhārhut- Preaching Abhidhamma at Tāvatiṃsā. The Buddha is presented by the *jeweled seat* with *garland marks*.



Fig.3.23 Ajātasatru pillar, Bhārhut-Descent from Tāvatiṃsā to Saṅkassa. Buddha is presented by the *footprint* with the symbol of *dharmacakra*.



Fig.3.24 Sānchi Pillar motif of Northern Gateway. Descent from Tāvatiṃsā to Saṅkassa. Buddha is depicted by the *Bodhi Tree*.



Fig.3.25 Amarāvati Bas relief. Return to Kapilavastu. Buddha is represented by the *jeweled throne* topped by *trirśūla*.



Fig.3.26a (left– pillar of Eastern Gateway) & **3.26b** (right–West pillar of the Northern Gateway) Sānchi–Return to Kapilavastu and preaching the king and subjects. Buddha is depicted by the *Bodhi Tree*.



Fig.3.26c West pillar of the Northern Gateway Sānchi. Return to Kapilavastu. Buddha is depicted by the *jeweled throne*.



Fig.3.27 Bodh Gayā- Donation of Jetavana by Anāthapiṇḍika. Buddha is depicted by the *Bodhi tree* in the middle of the gold coins.



Fig.3.28 Pillar medallion, Bhārhut-Donation of Jetavana by Anāthapiṇḍika. Buddha is depicted by the *Bodhi tree*.



Fig.3.29 Pillar of Northern Gateway, Sānchi- Donation of Jetavana by Anāthapiṇḍika. Buddha is depicted by the *vacant throne*.



Fig.3.30 Amarāvati-Subduing of Nālāgiri. Buddha is depicted by the *flaming pillar*.



Fig.3.31 Exterior of the Northern Gateway, Sānchi- Monkey offering honey to the Buddha. His presence is marked by the *Bodhi Tree* under which is the *vacant throne*.



Fig.3.32 Bodh Gayā- Visit of Nāga Erapatta. Buddha's presence is marked by the *Bodhi tree*.



Fig.3.33 Bhārhut-Visit of Nāga Erapatta. Buddha's presence is marked by the *vacant throne* surmounted by the *Bodhi Tree*.



Fig.3.34 Bhārhut- Corner pillar of the Western Gateway. Visit of the king Ajātasatru. Buddha is depicted by the *Bodhi Tree* and the *vacant throne* on which is the *footprint*.



Fig.3.35 Pillar of the Northern Gateway, Sānchi- Visit of the king Prasenajith. Buddha's presence is marked by the *vacant throne*.



Fig.3.36 Bhārhut-Pillar bas relief. Visit of Indra. Buddha is depicted by the *vacant throne* decorated with *flowers* and *garland marks*.



Fig.3.37 Sānchi - Inner face of the East pillar of the Northern Gateway. Visit of Indra to the Buddha. Buddha is depicted by the *cubical throne* with *garlands* and *flowers*.



Fig.3.38 Amarāvati- Pillar of the Western Gateway. Visit of the king Ajātasatru. Buddha is depicted by the *Bodhi Tree* and the *vacant throne* on which is the *footprint*.



Fig.3.39a (above) & **3.39b** (below) Nāgārjunakoṇḍa- Buddha is preaching Dharma to disciples. Buddha is represented in the anthropomorphic form. Note: in the **fig.3.39a**, the Buddha is seated in a different posture called *badrāsana/pralambhapādāsana*.



Fig.3.40a



Fig.3.40b



Fig.3.40c



Fig.3.40d

Fig.3.40a, 40b, 40c, & 40d Kushan coins found from Gandhāra depicting the Buddha in the anthropomorphic form as well as in a symbol of *dharmacakra*.



Fig.3.41a Reliquary of Kanishka found from the *stūpa* at Shah-ji-ki-Dheri



Fig.3.41b Reliquary found from the *stūpa* No.02 of Bimran, Gandhara.



Fig.3.42a (left) & **3.42b** (right) Gandhara-Depiction of the nativity of the Prince Siddhartha. The Prince is depicted in the anthropomorphic form.



Fig.3.42c (left) & **3.42d** (right) Gandhara-Depiction of the nativity of the Prince Siddhartha. The Prince is depicted in the anthropomorphic form.



Fig.3.43a (above) & **4.43b** (below) Gandhara- Bathing of the infant Buddha. The Prince is depicted in the human form.



Fig.3.44a (left) & **3.44b** (right) Gandhara- Events prior to the Great Departure. The halo of the central figure indicates the Bodhisattva.



Fig.3.44c (left) & **3.44d** (right) Gandhara- Depiction of the Great Departure. Prince Siddhartha is dressed with royal attire.



Fig.3.44e Gandhara- Depiction of the Great Departure. Prince Siddhartha is leaving the city gate.



Fig.3.45a Gandhāra- The Defeat of Māra. Buddha is depicted in the anthropomorphic form under the canopy of leaves.



Fig.3.45b Gandhāra- Visit of the Buddha to the Brahmins.



Fig.3.46a Gandhāra- The First Sermon. Depicted by the three inter-connected wheels.



Fig.3.46b



Fig.3.46c



Fig.3.46d



Fig.3.46e

Fig.3.46b (above-left), **3.46c** (above-centre), **3.46d** (above-right), **3.46e** (below-left) & **3.46f** (below-right). Gandhāra and Mathurā- The First Sermon. Buddha is depicted in the human form. Note: The robust qualities of the Mathurā region is evident in **fig.3.46f**.



Fig.3.46f



Fig.3.47a (above-left), **3.47b** (above-right) & **3.47c** (below) Gandhāra- *Parinivāna*. The Buddha is presented in the human form.



Fig.3.48a (left) & **3.48b** (below) Gandhāra- Miracles of Srāvasti.





Fig.3.49a (above-left), **3.49b** (above-second), **3.49c** (above-third), **3.49d** (above-right), & **3.49e** (below-left) Gandhāra- Preaching at Srāvastī. Buddha is represented by the anthropomorphic form.



Fig.3.50a (left) & **3.50b** (right) Gandhāra- Conversion of the Kassapas.



Fig.3.51a (left), **3.51b** (above-left), **3.51c** (above-centre), **3.51d** (above-right). & **3.51e** (right) Gandhāra- Visit of Indra to the Buddha in the Indrasāla Cave.



Fig.3.52 Gandhāra- Donation of Jetavana to the Buddha by Anāthapiṇḍika.

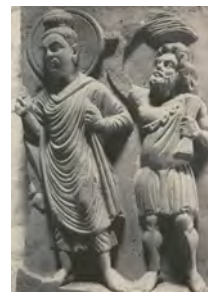


Fig.3.53a (left) & **3.53b** (right) Gandhāra- Offering of grass by Svastika, the grass cutter, to the Buddha.



Fig.4.1a & 4.1b Mathurā-Standing images of yakṣa. 2nd century BCE.



Fig.4.1c Mathurā-Seated Image of Jain Tīrtaṅkara. 1st century BCE.



Fig.4.1d Mathurā- A Panel representing Nāga and Nāginī. 1st century CE.



Fig.4.2a (above-left), **4.2b** (above-right) & **4.2c** (left) Mathurā- Seated images of bodhisattva/Buddha. 1st century CE.



Fig.4.3 Bodh Gayā- Seated image of Bodhisattva. 2nd century CE.

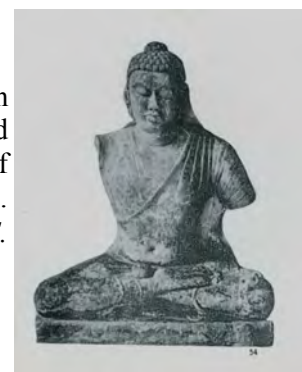


Fig.4.4a (Sīthala-Gati), **4.4b** (Anyor), **4.4c** (Boston museum), Mathurā- Seated Buddha images. 3rd century CE.



Fig.4.5 Sahet-Mahet, Mathurā- Seated Buddha Image. 3rd century CE.



Fig.4.6a (left) & **4.6b** (right) Sārnāth- Standing Buddha Images. 1st-2nd centuries CE.

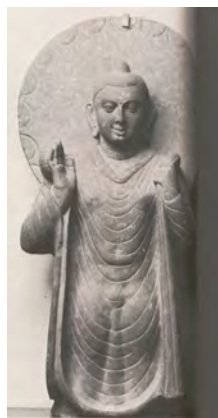


Fig.4.7a (left), **4.7b** (centre) & **4.7c** (right) Mathurā- Standing Buddha Images. 2nd century CE.



Fig.4.8a (left) & **4.8b** (right) Mathurā- Standing Buddha Images. 1st-2nd centuries CE.



Fig.4.9a (above), **4.9b** below-left-Takh-i-Bahi), & **4.9c** (below-right-Sahr-i-Bahlol), Gandhāra- Seated Buddha images. **Fig.4.9a** & **4.9b** depict the gesture of fearlessness (*abhaya*) and meditation (*dhyāna*) while **Fig.4.9c** depicts the gesture of meditation (*dhyāna*). 2nd-3rd centuries CE.



Fig.4.10a (above-left-Sahr-i-Bahlol), **4.10b** (above-centre-Berlin museum), **4.10c** (above-right-Lauriyān-Tāngai), **4.10d** (below-left-Lahore museum), & **4.10e** (below-right-Sahr-i-Bahlol), Gandhāra-Seated Buddha images with the gesture of Teaching (*dharmacakra*). 2nd-3rd centuries CE



Fig.4.11 Badalpur, Taxilā- Seated Buddha image that displays the characteristics of Mathurā images. 2nd century CE.



Fig.4.12a (left), & **4.12b** (right) Gandhāra-Seated Buddha images. **Fig.4.12a** is in *dharmacakra mudrā*. **Fig.4.12b** is in *dhyāna mudrā*. 3rd century CE



Fig. 4.13a (left) & **13b** (right) Gandhāra-Seated Buddha images that depict the extreme austerities of the Buddha. 2nd-3rd centuries CE.



Fig. 4.14a (above-left), **4.14b** (above-right), **4.14c** (below-left) & **4.14d** (below-right) Gandhāra- Seated Buddha images with bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya on either side. Note: **fig.4.14d**, in addition consists of attendant deities. *3rd-4th centuries CE.*



Fig. 4.15 Gandhāra- Seated Buddha image with Vajrapāni and female attendants. *4th century CE.*



Fig. 4.16a (above-left-Haddā), **4.16b** (above-right), & **4.16c** (left-Haddā-now in Victoria and Albert museum, London)- Gandhāra. Heads of the Buddha images. *3rd-4th centuries CE.*



Fig. 4.17a (above-right-Kabul Museum, Pakistan), **4.17b** (above-right-Musee Guimet), & **4.17c** (below-right-Kabul Museum, Pakistan), Fondukistan- Seated Buddha images displaying the Gandhāra style. *7th century CE.*

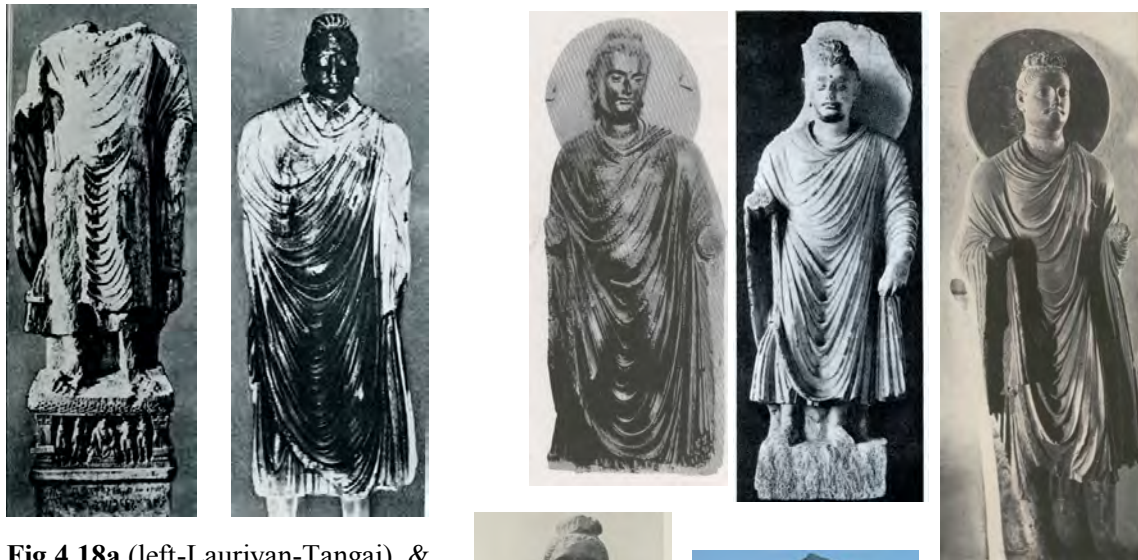


Fig.4.18a (left-Lauriyan-Tangai) & **4.18b** (right-Hastanagar), Gandhāra-Standing images of the Buddha. *1st-2nd centuries CE.*

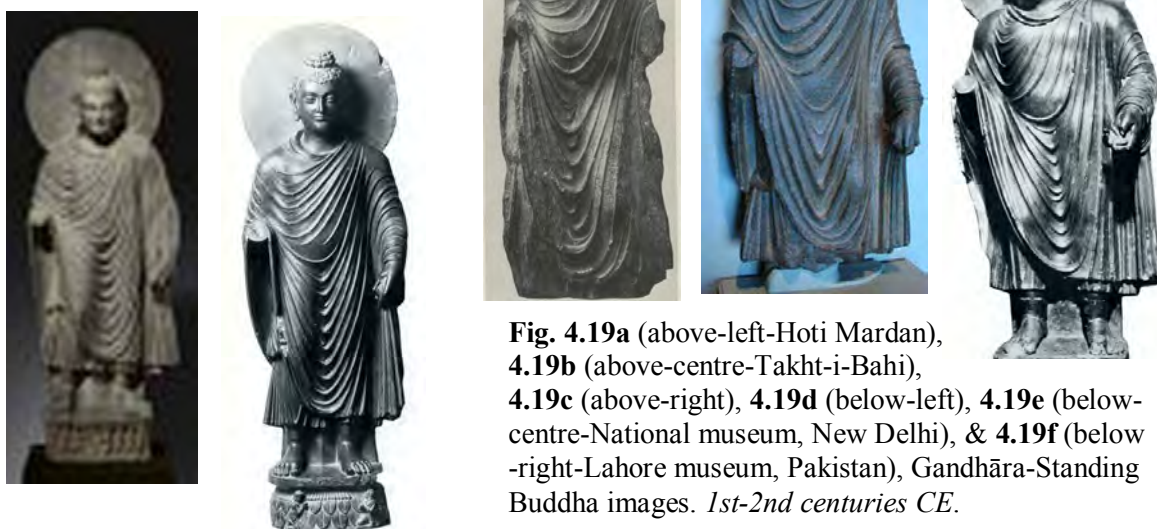


Fig. 4.19a (above-left-Hoti Mardan), **4.19b** (above-centre-Takht-i-Bahi), **4.19c** (above-right), **4.19d** (below-left), **4.19e** (below-centre-National museum, New Delhi), & **4.19f** (below-right-Lahore museum, Pakistan), Gandhāra-Standing Buddha images. *1st-2nd centuries CE.*

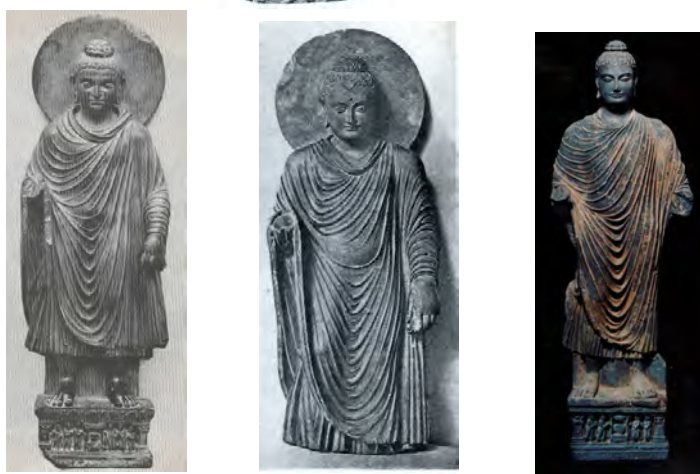


Fig.4.20a (above-left), **4.20b** (above-right), **4.20c** (below-left-Lahore museum, Pakistan), **4.20d** (below-center-Takht-i-Bahi), & **4.20e** (below-right) Gandhāra-Standing Buddha images. *2nd-3rd centuries CE*



Fig.4.21a (left) & **4.21b** (right) Bāmiyan, Afghanistan Colossal Standing Buddha images. *4th century CE*



Fig.4.22 Gandhāra- Standing Buddha image with Vajrapāni. *4th century CE*



Fig.4.23a (left) & **4.23b** (right) Amarāvati-Buddha image as a decorative element in the stūpa dome. *2nd century CE.*



Fig.4.24a (left) Kadri, Mangalore & **4.24b** (right) Guntur District-now in Madras museum, Amarāvati- Seated Buddha images. *8th-9th centuries CE.*



Fig.4.25a (left) Tyaganu, Salem District & **4.25b** (right) Malayaram, Tanjore District Amarāvati- Seated Buddha images. *11th century CE.*



Fig.4.25c (left) Siva Kanchipuram & **4.25d** (right) Tiruvetti, Amarāvati-Seated Buddha images. *11th century CE.*



Fig.4.26a (left-Rathnagiri) & **4.26b** (right-Chuttack), Orissā-Seated Buddha images. *11th century CE*



Fig.4.27a (left- Kanchipuram, 4.27b (centre- Arikamadu) & 4.27c (right- Kanchipuram). Seated Buddha images. 12th century CE



Fig.4.28a (left- Kuvam) & 4.28b (right- Karukilamanda Amman Temple). Seated Buddha images. 12th-13th centuries CE.



Fig.4.29 Nāgapattinam- Seated Buddha image. 13th century CE



Fig.4.30a Amarāvati- Standing Buddha image. 2nd-3rd centuries CE



Fig.4.30b1 & 4.30b2 Amarāvati-Heads of the Buddha images. 2nd-3rd centuries CE.



Fig.4.30c (left) & 30d (right) Amarāvati- Standing Buddha images. 2nd-3rd centuries CE



Fig.4.31 Amarāvati. Standing Buddha image. 2nd-3rd centuries CE.

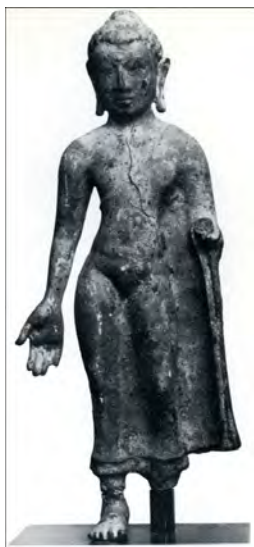


Fig. 4.32a (left) Tamilanādu & **4.32b** (right) Guntur District, Amarāvati- Standing Buddha images. *5th-6th centuries CE*



Fig. 4.33 Nāgapattinam, Amarāvati- Standing Buddha image. *10th century CE*



Fig. 4.34 Tiruvanlanjuli, Amarāvati - Standing Buddha image. *11th century CE*



Fig. 4.35 Tanjore- Standing Buddha image. *15th-16th centuries CE.*



Fig. 4.36a (left- Mankuvar) & **4.36b** (right- Sarnath), Mathurā- Seated Buddha images. *5th-6th centuries CE.*



Fig. 4.37a (left- Devni Mori) & **4.37b** (above- Mirpur Khas), Mathurā- Seated Buddha images. *5th century CE.*

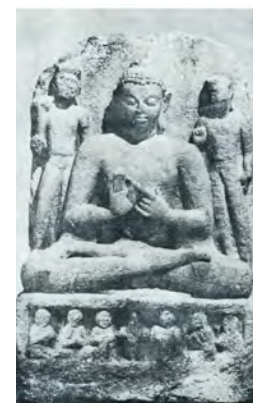


Fig. 4.38 Sarnath- Seated Buddha image. *6th century CE.*



Fig.4.39a(left), Devni Mori & **4.39b** (right), Sārnāth-(Gupta Period)- Heads of the Buddha. *5th-6th centuries CE.*



Fig.4.40a(above-left), **4.40b** (above- right), **4.40c** (below -left), & **4.40d** (below-right) Ajantā and Ellorā- Seated Buddha images. *6th century CE.*



Fig.4.41a(left) Bodh Gayā, **4.41b** (centre) Sārnāth, & **4.41c** (right), Sārnāth-(Gupta period)- Standing images. *6th century CE.*



Fig.4.42a (left), **4.42b** (centre), & **4.42c** (right). Sārnāth-(Gupta period)-Standing Buddha images. *5th century CE.*



Fig.4.43a (left) Jamalpur, **4.43b** (center), & **4.43c** (right) Mathurā
-(Gupta period)-Standing Buddha images. *5th century CE*

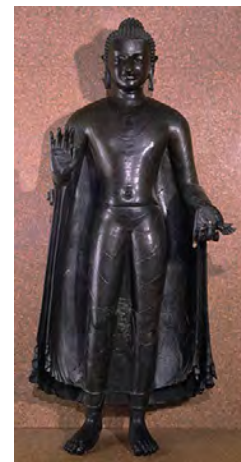


Fig.4.44a Sultanganj,
Mathurā-(Gupta peri-
od)- Standing Buddha
image. *5th century CE*



Fig.4.44b Mathurā
-(Gupta period)-
Standing Buddha
image. *5th century
CE*



Fig.4.45a (left) &
4.45b (above) Mathurā
-(Gupta period)-Standing Buddha images. *5th
century CE*



Fig.4.46a Sārnāth-
(Gupta period)-
Standing Buddha
image. *5th century
CE*

Fig.4.46b Sārnāth-
(Gupta period)-
Standing Buddha
image. *5th century
CE.*

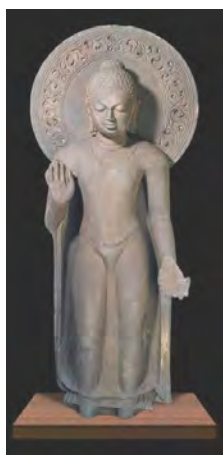


Fig.4.47a Sārnāth-
(Gupta period)-
Standing Buddha
image. *6th century
CE.*



Fig.4.47b & 4.47c Kanheri-Standing Buddha images-(Gupta period)-6th century CE.



Fig.4.48a (left- Cave No.09) & **4.48b** (below-Cave No.26), Ajantā. Reclining Buddha images. 7th-8th centuries CE.



Fig.4.49a (left-Bihar) & **4.49b** (above-Nālandā)- (Pāla-Sena period)-Seated Buddha images. 8th-9th centuries CE.



Fig.4.50 West Bengal. Seated Buddha image-(Pāla-Sena period)-9th century CE



Fig.4.51a (left-Bengal) & **4.51b** (right-Jagadisipur). Seated Buddha images-(Pāla-Sena period)-9th-10th centuries CE.



Fig.4.51c (left-Farukhabad), & **4.51d** (right-Bodh Gayā)-Seated Buddha images-(Pala-Sena period)- 9th-11th centuries CE.



Fig.4.52 Nālandā- Seated Buddha image-(Pāla-Sena period)-10th century CE.



Fig.4.53a (left) Nālandā, **4.53b** (right) Bengal- Seated Buddha images-(Pāla-Sena period)-10th century CE.





Fig.4.53c (left), **4.53d** (right) Nālandā. Seated Buddha images-(Pāla-Sena period)- 10th-11th centuries CE.

Fig.4.54a (left) Nālandā **4.54b** (center) Kurkihār & **4.54c** (right) Nālandā. Seated Buddha images-(Pāla-Sena period)-11th century CE.



Fig.4.55a (left-Kurkihār), **4.55b** (centre-Nālandā) & **4.55c** (right-Nālandā). Standing Buddha images. 10th-11th centuries CE.

Fig.4.56a Kāshmir- Seated Buddha image carved as a high relief in three slabs of stone. 8th century CE.

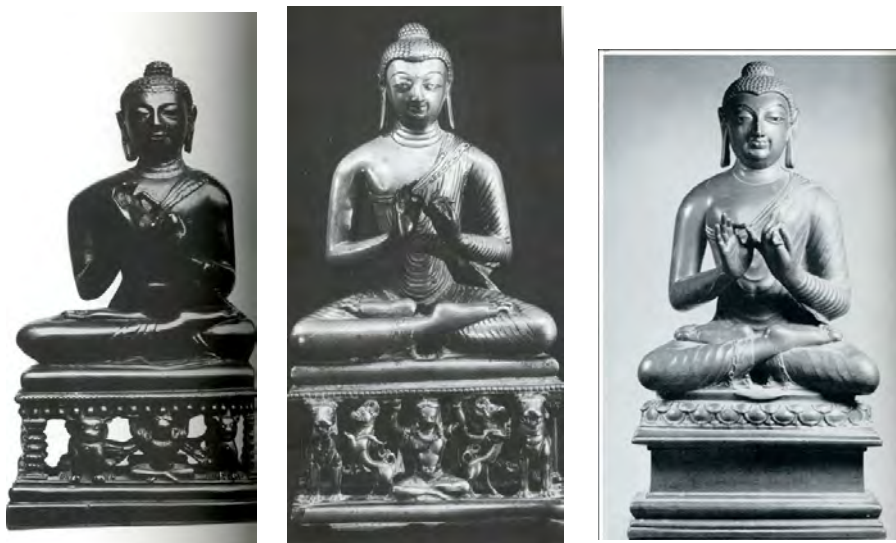


Fig.4.57a (left) Los Angeles County museum of Art, **4.57b** (centre) British museum, & **4.57c** (right) Boston museum (Cat. No.57). Kāshmir. Seated Buddha images made of bronze. 8th century CE.



Fig.4.58a (left-Boston museum, Cat. No.58) & **4.58b** (right-British museum), Kāshmir- Seated Buddha images placed on the lotus pedestal. *8th-9th centuries CE*



Fig.4.59a (above-left), **4.59b** (above-right), & **4.59c** (left). Kāshmir-Seated Buddha images made of bronze. *10th-11th centuries CE*



Fig.4.60 a (above-left), **4.60b** (above-right), & **4.60c** (left). Kāshmir-Standing Buddha images. *8th century CE*



Fig.5.1a (above) & **1b** (below) Neravana. Superimpositions of the elephant and the human figure in a ritual act.

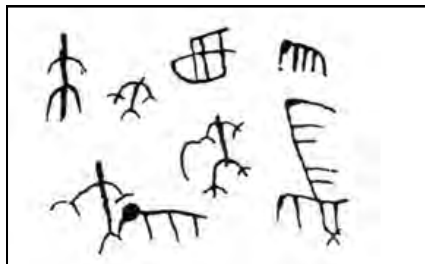
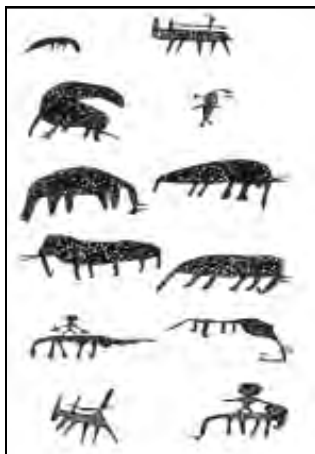


Fig.5.2a (left) **2b1** (above) & **2b2** (right) Pre-Historic Cave Paintings in Sri Lanka portraying different techniques.

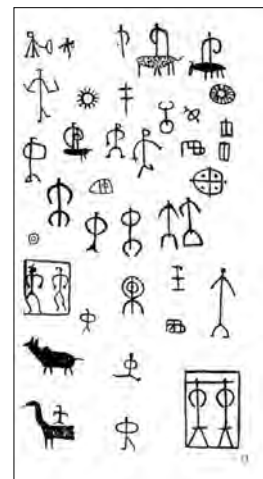


Fig.5.2c1 & **c2** Pre-Historic Cave Paintings in Sri Lanka portraying different techniques.



Fig.5.3a Anuradhapura. Seal of an elephant kneeling down in front of the shrine. 1st-2nd century BCE
Source: Department of Archaeology, Sri Lanka.



Fig.5.3b1 Anuradhapura. Symbol of triple hemisphere of an ancient Sri Lankan coin. 1st century BCE



Fig.5.3b2 Anuradhapura. Symbol of triple hemisphere in an ancient Sri Lankan coin. 1st century BCE.



Fig.5.4a (left), **4b** (center), & **4c** (right) Relic Chamber Paintings, Kanṭaka cetiya, Mihintale. 1st century BCE



Fig.5.5a (above-left), **5b1** (above-right), & **5b2** (below-left), & **5c** (below-right) Mahiyangana stūpa. Relic Chamber Paintings. *1st (10th ?) century CE*

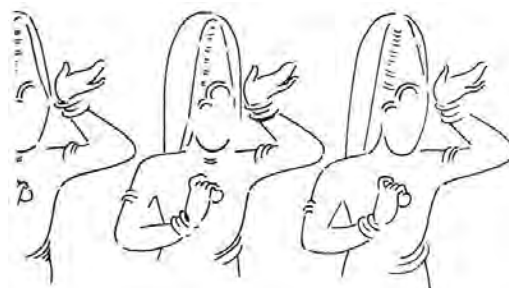


Fig.5.6 Relic Chamber Paintings, Sūtiyaghara cetiya, Dādigama *6-7th centuries CE*



Fig.5.7 Demaḷa Mahā Sāya, Polonnaruwa. Relic Chamber Paintings, *12th century CE*



Fig.5. 8a (left) & **8b** (right) Tivaṅka image house, Polonnaruwa. Paintings of the vestibule. *12th century CE*



Fig. 5.8c1(left), **8c2** (right) Tivaṅka image house, Polonnaruwa. Illustrations of celestial beings in the vestibule. *12th century CE*

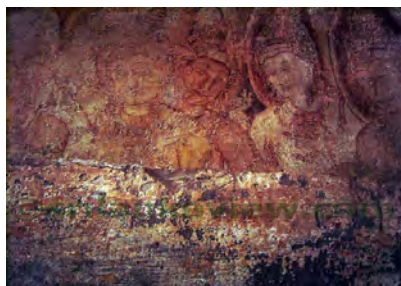


Fig. 8c3 (left), & 8c4 (right) Tivanka Image House, Polonnaruwa. Illustrations of celestial beings in the vestibule. *12th century CE*



Fig. 5.8d1 (above) & d2 (below) Tivanka Image House, Polonnaruwa. Illustrations of Jataka Stories in the vestibule. *12th century CE*

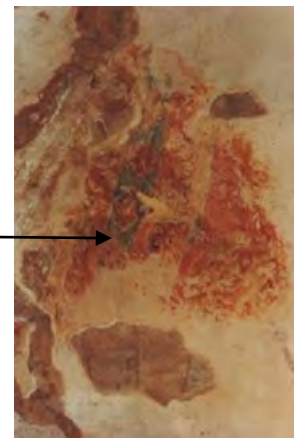


Fig. 5.9a Sigiriya Cave Paintings of Cobra-hood (*nai-pena*) Cave Pre-Christian era.



Fig. 5.9b Vessagiriya Cave Paintings. *1st century BCE*



Fig. 5.9c Karamabagala Cave Paintings. *3rd-4th centuries CE*



Fig. 5.10a Situpahuva. Cave Paintings. *3rd-4th centuries CE*



Fig.5.10b Gonagolla Cave Paintings.
5th-7th centuries CE.



Fig. 5.10c
Kudagala. Cave
Paintings.
*8th-12th centuries
CE*



Fig.5.10d
Kotiyagala.
Cave Paintings.
*5th-7th centu-
ries CE*



Fig.5.10e Mārāvīdiya.
Cave Paintings.
12th century CE



Fig.5.10f Pulligoda
Cave Paintings. *8th-
12th centuries CE*

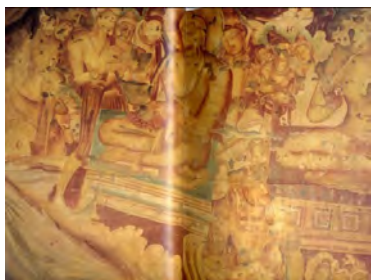


Fig.5.11a1 (left) &
11a2 (right)
Hindagala. Buddhist
Temple Paintings
12th century CE

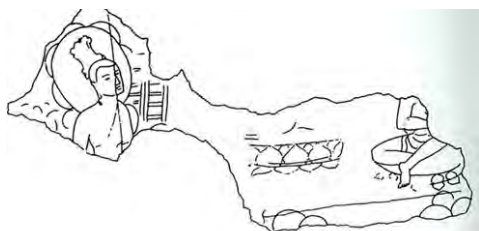


Fig. 5.11b Pidurangala Buddhist
Temple Paintings *12th century CE*



Fig.5.12a (above-left), **12b** (below-left), **12c** (above-right), & **12d** (below-right) Dambulla Cave Paintings. **A.** Ceiling paintings of the Maha Raja Lena. **B.** An Illustration of the Buddha image. **C.** Buddha is worshipped by deities. **D.** Procession of Monks. *12th-18th centuries CE*



Fig.5.13a1 (left) & **a2** (right) Anuradhapura. *Bodhighara* of Sacred Bodhi Tree. Before and after restoration. *1-2nd century BCE*



Fig.5.13b Sässeruva (Räs Vehera) *Bodhighara*. *1st-2nd centuries CE.*



Fig.5.13c1 & **13c2** Nillakgama, Kurunegala *Bodhighara*. **c1.** The view of the remains of the *Bodhighara*. **c2.** The Entrance. *4th-5th centuries CE.*



Fig.5.14a Abhayagiriya, *Āsanaghara*. 1st-2nd centuries CE



Fig.5.14b Hammillavātiya. *Āsanaghara*. 3rd century CE

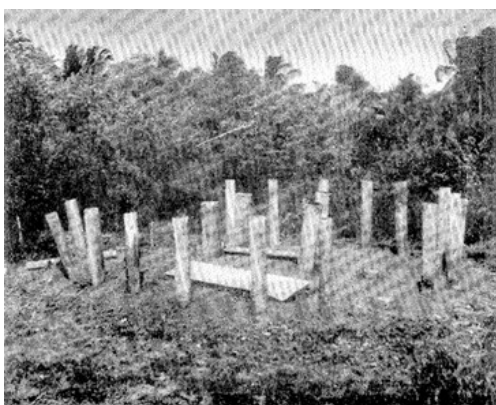


Fig.5.14c Katuvannava *Āsanaghara*. 3rd century CE



Fig.5.14d Pulukunava. *Āsanaghara*. 3rd century CE



Fig.5.14e Rankot Vehera, Polonnaruwa. *Mal-āsana*. 12th century CE



Fig.5.15a (above-left) Isurumuṇiya, Anuradhapura, **5.15b1** (below-left) & **15b2** (above) Seruvila, Trincomallee. *footprint as a square shaped seal* 1st century BCE



Fig.5.16a1 (above-left), **16a2** (above-centre) **16a3** (above-right) Seruvila, **16b1** (below-left), & **16b2** (below-right) Jetavanārāma, Anuradhapura. *Footprint with parasol (catra)*. 2nd century CE.



Fig.5.17a1 (above-left), **17a2** (above-right), **17a3** (below-left) & **17a4** (below-right) Jetavanārāma, Anuradhapura. *Footprint with the Wheel of Dharma (dharmacakra)*. 2nd-3rd centuries CE



Fig.5.17b (left) Abhayagiriya & **17c** (right) Isurumuniya, Anuradhapura. *Footprint with the Wheel of Dharma (dharmacakra)*. 2nd-3rd centuries CE



Fig.5.18a (left) Kodaikeni, Trincomalee & **5.18b** (right) Velgamvehera. *Foot-print with the Wheel of Dharma (dharmacakra)*. 3rd century CE



Fig.5.19 Ruvanvālisāya. *Foot-print with the embossed lotus buds (padma) and the parasol (catra)*. 3rd century CE



Fig.5.20a Anuradhapura (now in National museum, Colombo). *Fragment of slab depicting the Dream of Māyā*.



Fig.5.20b1 Anuradhapura (now at National museum, Colombo). *Stone slab depicting the miracle of Srāvasti*



Fig.5.20b2 Pidurangala (now in Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura). *Stone Slab depicting the Miracle of Srāvasti*.



Fig.5.20c Girihandu Sāya, Ambalantota, *Stone Slab depicting the Renunciation of Prince Siddhārtha*.



Fig.5.21 Dvāravati. *The symbol of dharmacakra*. 7th century CE



Fig.6.1a1 Anuradhapura-Thūpārāma, View of the *cetiya*ghara. 3rd century BCE



Fig.6.1a2 Anuradhapura-Thūpārāma. View of *cetiya*ghara as projected by Senarat Paranavitana



Fig.6.1b Anuradhapura-Thūpārāma. View of the monastery from distance.



Fig.6.2a Anuradhapura-Ruvanvālisāya. 2nd century BCE.



Fig.6.2b Tissamahārāma-stūpa. 2nd century BCE.



Fig.6.2c1(above) **6.2c2** (below) Anuradhapura-Abhayagiri stūpa, Before and after conservation. 1st century BCE.



Fig.6.2d1 (left) **6.2d2** (right) Anuradhapura-Jetavanārāma stūpa, Before and after conservation. 1st century CE.



Fig.6.3a (left- Western Vāhalkada) & **fig.6.3b** (right- Eastern Vāhalkada), Mihintale. 1st-2nd century CE.



Fig.6.4a (Above) **6.4b** (below). Double plat-formed *Padhānaghara*, Ritigala Monastery. 2nd-3rd centuries CE.



Fig.6.5 *Sandakadapahana* (Moonstone), Queen's Palace, Anuradhapura. 4th century CE.



Fig.6.6 *Koravakgala* (Architectural balustrade), Isurumuniya. 4th century CE.



Fig.6.7 *Muragala* (Guardstone), *Ratna Pāsāda*, Anuradhapura. 4th century CE.



Fig.7.1a Standing Buddha Image, Kuchchiveli (Trincomalee). 2nd-3rd centuries CE



Fig.7.1b Standing Buddha Image, Maha Iluppallama 2nd-3rd centuries CE



Fig.7.2a Standing Buddha Image, Ruvanvālisāya, Anuradhapura. 4th century CE



Fig.7.2b Standing Buddha Image, Kuchchiveli. 4th-5th centuries CE.



Fig.7.2c Standing Buddha Image, Pidurangala. 4th-5th centuries CE.



Fig.7.2d Standing Buddha Image, Medavachchiya. 4th-6th centuries CE. Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura, 374



Fig.7.3a Standing Buddha Image, Dova Raja Mahā Vihāra, Bandarawela. 4th-5th centuries CE.



Fig.7.3b Standing Buddha Image, Sāsseruva, Anuradhapura, 5th century CE.



Fig.7.3c Standing Buddha Image, Avukana, 4th-5th centuries CE.



Fig.7.4a Standing Buddha Triad, Medirigiriya. 4th century CE.



Fig.7.4b Standing Buddha Triad, Pidurangala 4th-5th centuries CE. Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura, G.29



Fig.7.5a1 (left) & **5a2** (right). Standing Buddha images. Jetavanārāma Archaeological museum. 5th-6th centuries CE.



7.5b1 (left) & **7.5b2** (right) Standing Buddha images. Regional Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura. 5th-6th centuries CE.



Fig.7.6a Standing Buddha Image, Vavunikulam. 5th-6th centuries CE. Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura, S.216.

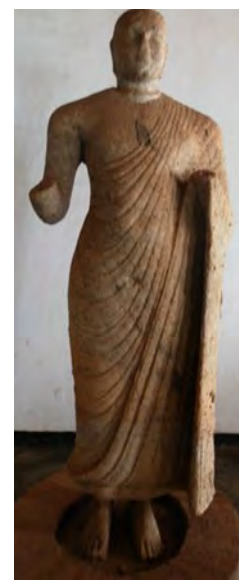


Fig.7.6b Standing Buddha image, Anuradhapura. 5th-6th centuries CE.



Fig.7.6c Standing Buddha Image. Maradankadawala. 6th century CE.



Fig.7.6d Standing Buddha Image. Mannarama. 6th century CE.



Fig.7.6e Standing Buddha Image. Colombo museum. 6th (3rd-5th?) century CE.



Fig.7.7a Standing Buddha Image with *ubhayāṅśa-pārupana*. Anuradhpaura. 5th-6th centuries CE.



Fig.7.8a (Above-left), **7.8b** (above-right), & **7.8c** (below-left) Head of the Buddha. Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura. 6th century CE.



Fig.7.7b Bust of a Buddha Image with *uhayāṅśa-pārupana*. Polonnaruwa. 5th-6th centuries CE. Colombo museum, 17.427.340



Fig.7.9a Standing Buddha Image. Kurunegala. 7th century CE. Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura, 483.8c.484



Fig. 7.9b Standing Buddha image. Nāgalakanda, Minneriya. 6th-7th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.9c Standing Buddha image. Nālandā Gedi Ge. 7th century CE.



Fig. 7.9d Standing Buddha image. Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala. 6th-7th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.10a Standing Buddha image. Ayitigevāva. 7th-8th centuries CE. Archaeological museum Anuradhapura, S.39.7



Fig. 7.10b Standing Buddha image. Yatāla Vehera. 7th-8th centuries CE. Archaeological museum, Yatāla Vehera (Unnumbered).

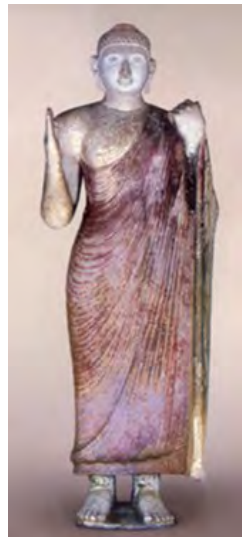


Fig. 7.10c Standing Buddha image. Ruvanālisāya. 7th-8th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.10d Standing Buddha image. Girihandu Sāya. 7th-8th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.10e Standing Buddha image. Velgam Vehera, Periyakulama. 7th-8th centuries CE.



Fig.7.11a Standing Buddha image. Yatāla Vehera. 7th-8th centuries CE.



Fig.7.11b Standing Buddha image. Mahakachchikodi. 7th-8th centuries CE.



Fig.7.11c Standing Buddha image. Colombo museum. 7th-8th centuries CE. Colombo museum Register 24.57.13.03



Fig.7.11d Standing Buddha image. Chunnakam. 8th century CE. Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura, S.4



Fig.7.11e Standing Buddha image. Padaviya. 8th century CE.



Fig.7.12a Standing Buddha image. Polonnaruwa, Ālāhana Pirivena. 7th-8th centuries CE. Polonnaruwa Archaeological museum.



Fig.7.12b Standing Buddha image. Yatāla Vehera. 7th-8th centuries CE.



Fig.7.12c Standing Buddha image. Yatāla Vehera. 7th-8th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.12d Standing Buddha image. Toragalla, Kurunegala. 8th century CE. Archaeological museum, Panduvasnuvara.



Fig. 7.12e Standing Buddha image. Colombo museum. 7th-8th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.13a1 (left) **13a2** (centre), & **13a3** (right) Standing Buddha images. Thūpārāma. Polonnaruwa. 8th century CE.



Fig. 7.13b Standing Buddha image. Atadāge, Polonnaruwa. 8th century CE.



Fig. 7.13c Standing Buddha images. Budu Galge, Ampara. 8th century CE.



Fig. 7.14a Standing Buddha image. Detiyamulla. 8th century CE.



Fig. 7.14b Standing Buddha image. Mūdu Mahā Vihāra, Ampara. 8th century CE.



Fig. 7.14c Standing Buddha image. Veheradivullana, Monaragala. 8th century CE.



Fig. 7.14d Standing Buddha image. Tissamaharama. 8th century CE.



Fig. 7.14e Standing Buddha image. Matara. 8th century CE. (National museum, Galle).



Fig. 7.15a Standing Buddha image. Kankanodai. 8th-9th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum Anuradhapura, No. 374).



Fig. 7.15b Standing Buddha image. Veheragala, Anuradhapura. 8th-9th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum Anuradhapura .No.V.I...not clear).

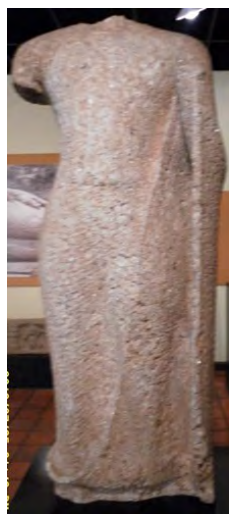


Fig. 7.16a Standing Buddha image. Polonnaruwa. 8th-9th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum Polonnaruwa).

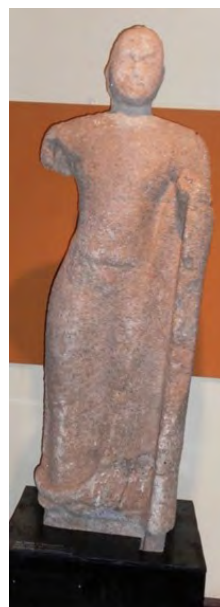


Fig. 7.16b Standing Buddha image. Polonnaruwa. 8th-9th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Polonnaruwa).

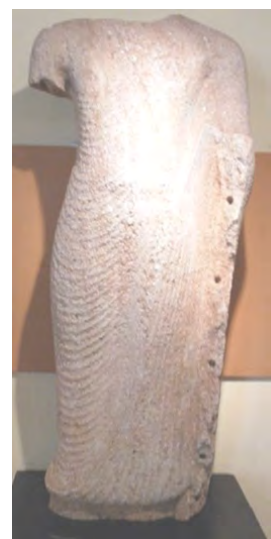


Fig. 7.16c Standing Buddha image. Polonnaruwa. 8th-9th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum Polonnaruwa).



Fig. 7.17a Standing Buddha image. *Maha Raja Lena, Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra. 8th-9th centuries CE.*



Fig. 7.17b Standing Buddha image. *Māligāvila. 8th-9th centuries CE.*



Fig. 7.17c Standing Buddha image. *Polonnaruwa. 8th-9th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum Polonnaruwa).*



Fig. 7.18a Standing Buddha image. *Buduruwagala, Māligāvila. 9th-10th centuries CE.*



Fig. 7.18a-1 (above-right panel bearing a group of Bodhisattvas including Avalokiteśvara and Tārā), & **7.18a-2** (below-left panel bearing a group of Bodhisattvas including Maitreya), *Buduruwagala, Maligawila. 9th-10th centuries CE.*



Fig. 7.19a Standing Buddha image. *Uttarārāma, Polonnaruwa. 12th century CE.*



Fig.7.19b Standing Buddha image. Tivaṅka image house, Polonnaruwa. 12th century CE.



Fig.7.20b Standing Buddha image. Pabaḷu Vehera, Polonnaruwa. 12th century CE.



Fig.7.19c Standing Buddha image. Lankātilaka image house, Polonnaruwa. 12th century CE.



Fig.7.21a Standing Buddha image. Gadaladeniya. 13th-14th centuries CE.



Fig.7.20a1 (above-left), **20a2** (above-right), & **20a3** (below-right) Standing Buddha images. Hātadāge, Polonnaruwa. 12th century CE.

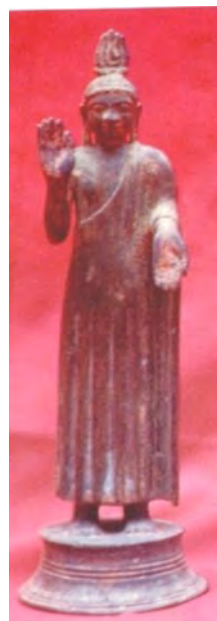


Fig.7.21b Standing Buddha image. Colombo museum (Place of origin is not known). 13th-14th centuries CE.



Fig.7.22a1 Standing Buddha images. Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra. 18th century CE.



Fig.7.22a2 Standing Buddha images. Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra. 18th century CE.



Fig.7.22a3 Standing Buddha image. Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra 18th century CE.



Fig.7.22b Standing Buddha image. Gaṅgārāmaya, Kandy. 18th century CE



Fig.7.22c Standing Buddha image. Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala. 18th century CE.



Fig.7.23a Standing Buddha image. Peradeniya Archaeological museum. 18th century CE.



Fig.7.23b Standing Buddha image made of Ivory. Colombo museum. (Place of origin is not known). 8th century CE.



Fig.7.23c Standing Buddha image. Godapitiya Raja Mahā Vihāra, Akuressa. 18th century CE.



Fig.7.23d Standing Buddha image. Colombo museum (CMR 13.120.289). 18th century CE.



Fig. 7.24 Seated Buddha image. Relic Chamber, Kaṇṭhaka caitya, Mihintale. 1st century BCE..

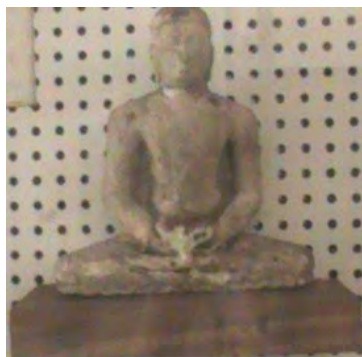


Fig. 7.25a1 (above-left), **25a2** (above-right), **25a3** (below-left), **25a4** (below-right), & **25a5** (left) Seated Buddha images. 3rd century CE. Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura (unnumbered).



Fig. 7.26a Seated Buddha image No.1. Āsanaghara, Abhayagiriya. 3rd-4th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum Anuradhapura, S-184).



Fig. 7.26b Seated Buddha image No.2. Āsanaghara, Abhayagiriya. 3rd-4th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.26c Second Samādhi Buddha image. Abhayagiriya. 3rd-4th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.26d Seated Buddha image. Vālimaluwa, Abhayagiriya. 4th century CE. (Archaeological museum, Abhayagiriya).



Fig. 7.26e Samādhi Buddha image. Abhayagiriya. 3rd-4th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Abvhayagiriya)



Fig. 7.27a Seated Buddha image. Great Bodhi Tree 3rd-4th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.27b Torso of a seated Buddha image. Abhayagiriya. 3rd-4th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.27c Seated Buddha image with the gesture of preaching. Abhayagiriya. 3rd-4th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Abhayagiriya).



Fig. 7.28a Samādhi Buddha image. Abhayagiriya outer circular road. 3rd-4th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.28b Seated Buddha image. Anuradhapura. 3rd-4th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura).

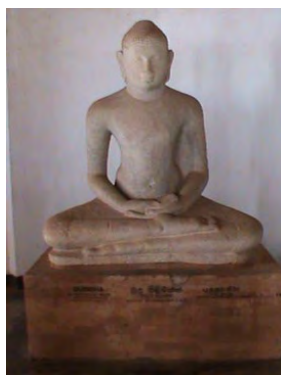


Fig. 7.28c Seated Buddha image. Jetavanārāma. 3rd-4th centuries CE. (Jetavanārāma Archaeological museum).



Fig. 7.28d Samādhi Buddha image. Toluville. 3rd-4th centuries CE. (Colombo museum, 24.54.14.4)



Fig. 7.28e Seated Buddha image. Detiyamulla. 3rd-4th centuries CE. (Anuradhapura Archaeological museum)

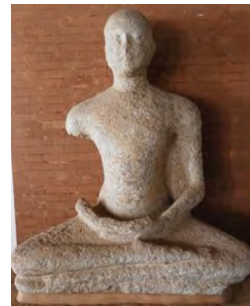


Fig.7.29a (above-left) Anuradhapura outer city, **29b** (above-centre) Paṭhamaka cetiya, Anuradhapura, **29c** (above-right) Horovpotana, Tirapankadavala, **29d** (below-left) Mannarama, & **29e** (below-right) citadel, Anuradhapura. Seated Buddha images. 3rd-4th centuries CE. (Anuradhapura Archaeological museum).

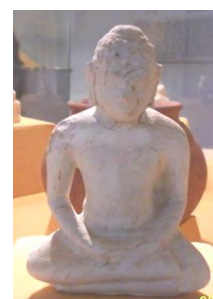
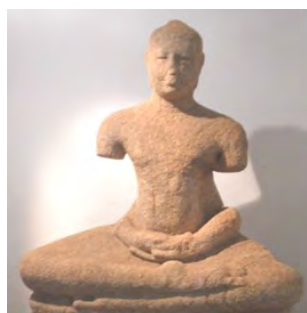


Fig.7.29f Seated Buddha image. Jetavanārāma. 3rd-4th centuries CE. (Jetavanārāma Archaeological museum).

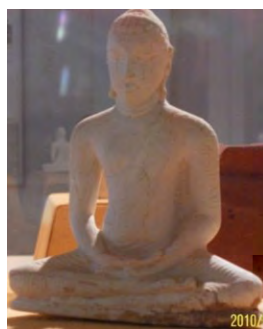
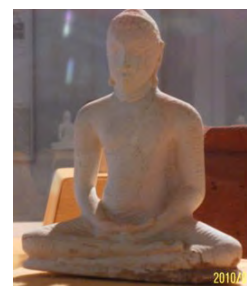


Fig.7.30a1 (above-left), **30a2** (above-centre), **30a3** (above-right), **30a4** (middle-left), **30a5** (middle-centre), **30a6** (middle-right), **30a7** (below-left), & **30a8** (below-right) Seated Buddha images. Jetavanārāma 4th century CE. (Jetavanārāma Archaeological museum).



Fig. 7.30b Seated Buddha image. Jetavanārāma. 4th century CE. (Jetavanārāma Archaeological museum).



Fig. 7.31a1 (left), **31a2** (centre), & **31a3** (right) Seated Buddha images with halo. Jetavanārāma. 4th century CE. (Jetavanārāma Archaeological museum).



Fig. 7.31b1 (left), **31b2** (second-left), **31b3** (centre), **31b4** (second right), & **31b5** (right) Seated Buddha images with halo. Anuradhapura. 4th century CE. (Anuradhapura Archaeological museum).



Fig. 7.32 Seated Buddha image with *ardha ubhayāṅśa pārupana*. Thūpārāma. 4th century CE. (Colombo museum, 24.57.243.35)



Fig. 7.33 Seated Buddha image under the canopy of the cobra hoods. Private collection of S.W.O. de Silva. 5th century CE.

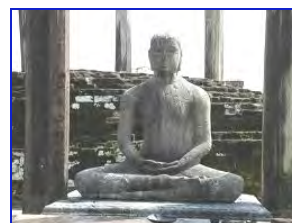


Fig. 7.34a1 (left), **34a2** (centre), & **34a3** (right) Seated Buddha images. Mādirigiriya Vatātāge. 6th-7th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.34b Seated Buddha image. Image house, Medirigiriya. 6th-7th centuries CE.

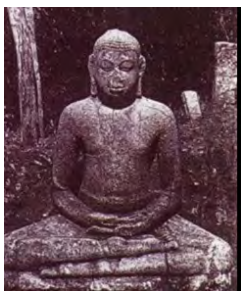


Fig. 7.35d Seated Buddha image. Komarikawela. 6th-7th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.35g Seated Buddha image. Veherabendimukalana. 6th-7th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum Anuradhapura, S.164).



Fig. 7.36b Seated Buddha Image. Anuradhapura. 6th-7th centuries CE. (Belongs to a Private Collection in the USA).



Fig. 7.35a (left) Abhayagiriya, **35b** (centre) Valaskunuveva, Horvopotana, & **35c** (right) Tirappankadavala. Seated Buddha images. 6th-7th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura: 35a (unnumbered), 35b. S.130, 35c. S.304)



Fig. 7.35e Seated Buddha image. Puvarasankulama. 6th-7th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura, S.215)



Fig. 7.35f Seated Buddha image. Vavunikulama. 6th-7th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum Vavuniya, S.214).



Fig. 7.36a Seated Buddha image (Gilt Bronze). Vāhalkada, Ruvanvālisāya. 6th-7th centuries CE. (Under the custody of Mahā Vihāra monastery).



Fig. 7.36c Seated Buddha Image. Abhayagiriya. 6th-7th centuries CE. (Archeological museum, Anuradhapura, S.304)

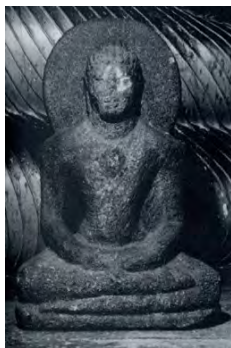


Fig. 7.37a Seated Buddha image. Cave No. III, Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra 6th-7th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.37b Seated Buddha image. Mannarama. 6th-7th centuries CE. (Archeological museum, Vavuniya, S.7)



Fig. 7.37c Seated Buddha image. Puvarasankulama. 6th-7th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura, S.3).

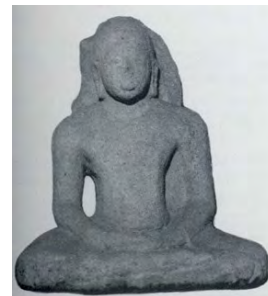


Fig. 7.37d Seated Buddha image. Colombo museum. (24.57.251.37). 6th-7th centuries CE. (Original Location is not identified).



Fig. 7.37e Seated Buddha image. Atambagaskadawala. 6th-7th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Vavuniya)

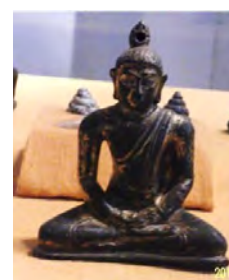
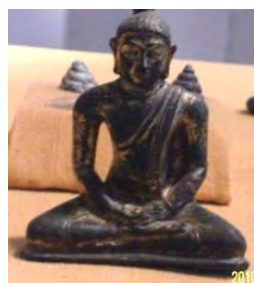


Fig. 7.38a (above-left), **38b** (above-centre), **38c** (above-right), & **38d** (left). Seated Buddha images. Jetavanārāma. 6th-7th centuries CE. (Jetavanārāma Archaeological museum).

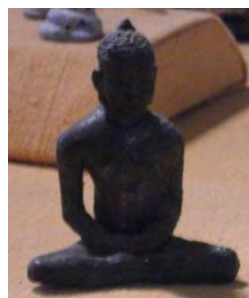


Fig. 7.39a Seated Buddha image (Bronze hollow cast). Kolambagama Raja Mahā Vihāra, Kurunegala. 6th-7th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.39b Seated Buddha image (Bronze hollow cast). Tiriyāya. 6th-7th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, T'malee, AD 20).



Fig. 7.39c Seated Buddha image (Bronze ungilt solid cast). Riet Berg museum, Zurich (R.V.I. 2204). 6th-7th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.39d Seated Buddha image (Bronze solid cast). Dedigama, Kotavehera. 6th-7th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Dedigama, 6/42)



Fig. 7.39e Seated Buddha image (Bronze ungilt solid cast). Metropolitan museum of Art. Samuel Ellenberg Collection, 1987. 142-64 6th-7th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.39f Seated Buddha image (Bronze ungilt solid cast). Pallepola. 6th-7th centuries CE. (National museum, Kandy, 37.77.215)



Fig. 7.40a Seated Buddha image (Bronze gilt solid cast). 6th-7th centuries CE. (Colombo museum, 38.058.28).



Fig. 7.40b Seated Buddha image (Bronze gilt hollow cast). Badulla. 6th-7th centuries CE. (Colombo museum, CMR13.118.289).



Fig. 7.41a Seated Buddha image (Bronze ungilt solid cast with hollow cast pedestal). Colombo museum. 6th-7th centuries CE. (Present location unknown, Coomaraswamy, *Bronzes of Ceylon*, 6, Plate XXVII, fig. 176)



Fig. 7.41b Seated Buddha image (Gilt bronze solid cast). Vatadāge, Girihandu Sāya. 6th-7th centuries CE. (Archaeological Department, T'malee, *Tiriyāya* 34).

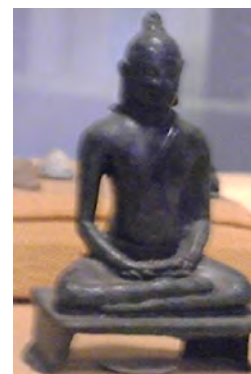


Fig. 7.41c Seated Buddha image (Gilt bronze solid cast). Jetavanārāma. 6th-7th centuries CE. (Jetavanārāma Archaeological museum, unnumbered).



Fig. 7.42a Seated Buddha image (Gilt bronze solid cast). Kotagama, Kegalle. 6th century CE. (Colombo museum, CMR 13.112.288).



Fig. 7.42b Seated Buddha image (Gilt bronze solid cast). Anuradhapura. 6th century CE. (Colombo museum, CMR 13.114.288).



Fig. 7.42c Seated Buddha image (Gilt bronze solid cast). 6th century CE. (Original location unknown, Colombo museum, CMR 11.186.265).



Fig. 7.43a Seated Buddha image under the canopy of the Bodhi Tree. Maṅgala Raja Mahā Vihāra, Seruvila. 6th-7th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.43b Seated Buddha image under the canopy of the Cobra hood. Akbopura Raja Mahā Vihāra, Seruvila. 6th-7th centuries CE. (National museum T'comalee, S.177).



Fig. 7.43c Seated Buddha image seated on the tiers of cobra. Silā cetiya, Ambastala Vatadāge, Mihintale. 6th-7th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.44a Seated Buddha image. Gal Amuna, Medirigiriya. 7th-8th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.44b-1 (front) & **44b-2** (back) Seated Buddha image. Puvarasankulama. 7th-8th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura, S.9 (18).

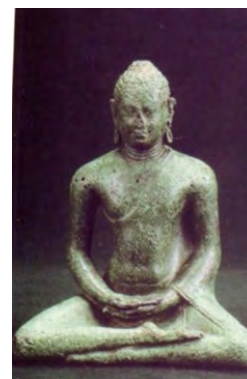


Fig. 7.44c Seated Buddha image. Tiriyāya. 7th-8th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Tiriyāya).



Fig. 7.44d1 (left) & **44d2** (right) Seated Buddha image. Pankuliya. 7th-8th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.45a Seated Buddha image (Bronze solid cast). Metropolitan museum of Art, Samuel Ellenberg Collection, 1987.142.3. 7th-8th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.45b Seated Buddha image (Bronze hollow cast). Metropolitan museum of Art, Kromos Collection Cat. No.13. 7th-8th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.45c Seated Buddha image (Bronze solid cast). Veheragala. 7th-8th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura).



Fig. 7.45d1 (above-left), **45d2** (above-right), & **45d3** (left) Seated Buddha images (Bronze hollow cast). Tiriyaaya. 7th-8th centuries CE. (Archaeological Dept. Tiriyaaya, d1-AD11, d2-AD06, d3-AD10).



Fig. 7.45e1 Seated Buddha image (Bronze solid cast). Medirigiriya. 7th-8th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura).



Fig. 7.45e2 (left) & **45e3** (right) Seated Buddha images (Bronze solid cast). Udattapola. 7th-8th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura).



Fig. 7.45e4 (above) & **45e5** (below) Seated Buddha images (Bronze solid cast). Padaviya. 7th-8th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura).



Fig. 7.46a (left), & **46b** (right) Seated Buddha images. (Bronze solid cast). Udattapola. 7th-8th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura).



Fig. 7.46c Seated Buddha image. (Bronze solid cast). Anuradhapura. 7th-8th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura).



Fig. 7.46d Seated Buddha image. (Bronze solid cast). Horovpotana. 7th-8th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura).

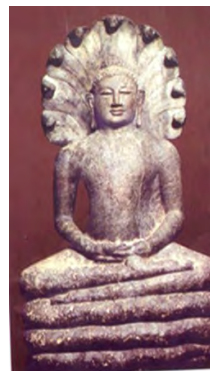


Fig. 7.47a (left), **47b1** (centre), & **47b2** (right) Seated Buddha images under the canopy of the cobra hood. Maṅgala Raja Mahā Vihāra, Seruvila. 8th century CE. (Archaeological museum, Seruvila).



Fig. 7.48a Seated Buddha image. (Bronze solid cast). Colombo museum (unnumbered). 8th-9th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.48b Seated Buddha image. Menikdena 8th-9th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.48c Seated Buddha image. Kavudulla. 8th-9th centuries CE. (Archaeological Dept. Medirigiriya).



Fig. 7.48d Seated Buddha image. (Bronze solid cast). Veheragala. 9th century CE. (Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura, V.05)



Fig. 7.48e Seated Buddha image. (Bronze solid cast). Toluville. 8th-9th (6th?) centuries CE. (Colombo museum, CMR 13.119.289).



Fig. 7.48f Seated Buddha image. (Bronze solid cast). Polonnaruwa. 8th-9th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Polonnaruwa).



Fig.7.49a1 (left) & **49a2** (right) Seated Buddha image. Polonnaruwa. *8th-9th centuries CE. (Polonnaruwa Archaeological museum).*



Fig.7.49b Seated Buddha image. Pabaḷu Vehera, Polonnaruwa. *8th-9th centuries CE.*



Fig.7.50a1 (left), & **50a2** (right) Seated Buddha image. (Bronze solid cast). Tiriyāya. *8th-9th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Tiriyāya, AD.40 & AD.39).*



Fig.7.50a3 Seated Buddha image. (Bronze solid cast). Tiriyāya. *8th-9th centuries CE. (County of Los Angeles museum, M.76.46).*



Fig.7.50b1 Seated Buddha image. (Bronze solid cast). Tiriyāya. *8th-9th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Tiriyāya, AD.19).*



Fig.7.50b2 (left) **50b3** (right) Seated Buddha images. (Bronze solid cast). *8th-9th centuries CE. (University of Peradeniya museum, G.9 & G.8).*



Fig.7.50b4 Seated Buddha image (Bronze solid cast). Tiriyāya. *8th-9th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Tiriyāya, AD.47).*



Fig.7.50c1 (left), & **50c2** (right) Seated Buddha images (Bronze solid cast). Tiriyāya. *8th-9th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Tiriyāya, AD.16 & AD.07).*



Fig.7.50c3 (left), **50c4** (centre), & **50c5** (right) Seated Buddha images (Bronze solid cast). Tiriyāya. *8th-9th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Tiriyāya, T.33, T.23, & T.24).*



Fig. 7.50c6 Seated Buddha image. (Bronze solid cast). 8th-9th centuries CE. (Place not identified. Colombo museum, 40.141.145).



Fig. 7.50d1 (left), **50d2** (second left), **50d3** (second right), & **50d4** (right) Seated Buddha images (Bronze solid cast). Anuradhapura. 8th-9th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura,, 499.12, 499.05, 499.14, & 499.11).



Fig. 7.50d5 (left), **50d6** (second left), **50d7** (second right), & **50d8** (right) Seated Buddha images (Bronze solid cast). Anuradhapura. 8th-9th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura, 499.06, 499.07, 499.09 & 499.13).



Fig. 7.50d9 (above), **50d10** (below-left), & **50d11** (below-right) Seated Buddha images (Bronze solid cast). Tiriyāya. 8th-9th centuries CE. (Department of Archaeology, T'malee, AD 35, AD 45 & AD 43).



Fig. 7.50d12 (left), & **50d13** (right). Seated Buddha images (Bronze solid cast). Veheragala. 8th-9th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura, 50d12-V.16).



Fig. 7.50e Seated Buddha image (Bronze solid cast). Udattapola. 8th-9th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura, 78).



Fig. 7.50f Seated Buddha image (Bronze solid cast). Pallepola Raja Maha Vihara, Kandy. 8th-9th centuries CE. (National museum, Kandy, 37.59.214).



Fig.7.51 Plaque of the seated Buddha image (Bronze). Udu-Dumbara, 10th century CE. (Colombo museum, 13.115.288).



Fig.7.52a Seated Buddha image (Bronze solid cast). Abhayagiriya. 9th-10th centuries CE. (Archaeological museum, Anuradhapura).



Fig.7.52b Seated Buddha image (Bronze solid cast). Ambagaswe-wa. 9th-10th centuries CE.

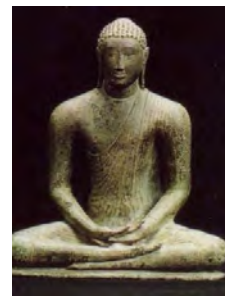


Fig.7.52c Seated Buddha image (Bronze solid cast). Iccanku-lama. 9th-10th centuries CE.



Fig.7.52d Seated Buddha image (Bronze solid cast). Uda Aludeniya. 10th century CE.



Fig.7.53a Seated Buddha image. Tantirimale. 10th-11th centuries CE.



Fig.7.53b1 (left) & **53b2** (right) Seated Buddha images. Polonnaruwa. 10th century CE. (Polonnaruwa Archaeological museum).



Fig.7.53c1 (left) & **53c2** (right) Seated Buddha images. Vasmamuwa National Park. 10th century CE.



Fig.7.54a1 (above-left), **54a2** (above-right), & **54a3** (left) Seated Buddha images. Vatadāge, Polonnaruwa. 12th century CE. .



Fig.7.54b1 (left) & **54b2** (right) Seated Buddha images. Uttarārāma, Polonnaruwa. 12th century CE.



Fig.7.54c1 (left), **54c2** (centre), & **54c3** (right) Seated Buddha Images. Thūpārāma Image House, Polonnaruwa. *12th century CE.*



Fig.7.55a Seated Buddha Image. Pulligoda



Fig.7.55b1 (left), **55b2** (centre), & **55b3** (right) Seated Buddha Images. Dambulla



Fig.7.55b4 (above), **55b5** (right), & **55b6** (below) Seated Buddha images. Golden Rock Temple, Dambulla. *18th century CE.*

Fig.7.55c Seated Buddha image. Katuvana Raja Mahā Vihāra. *18th century CE.*

Fig.7.55d Seated Buddha image. Lan̄kātilaka Raja Mahā Vihāra, Kandy. *18th century CE.*



Fig.7.55e Seated Buddha Image. Gadaladeniya Raja Mahā Vihāra. *18th century CE.*

Fig.7.55f Seated Buddha Image. Dedigama (now in Colombo museum). *18th century CE.*

Fig.7.55g Seated Buddha Image. Gaṅgārāmaya, Kandy. *18th century CE.*

Fig.7.55h Seated Buddha Image. Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala. *18th century CE.*



Fig. 7.55i Painting of a seated Buddha image. Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala. 18th century CE.



Fig. 7.55j Seated Buddha image. Hindagala, Peradeniya. 18th century CE.



Fig. 7.56a Seated Buddha image. Leslie de Saram Collection, Colombo museum (CMR 11.176.264). 18th century CE.



Fig. 7.56b Seated Buddha image. Kelaniya Raja Mahā Vihāra. 18th century CE.



Fig. 7.57 Reclining Buddha image. Bambaragastalawa, Kumana. 1st-2nd centuries CE.



Fig. 7.58a Reclining Buddha image. Pidurangala. 5th-6th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.58b1 Reclining Buddha image. Dambulla Raja Mahā Vihāra. 5th-6th centuries CE.



Fig. 7.58b2 (left) Reclining Buddha image & **58b2-1** (right) the feet of the image with the wheel symbol. Golden Rock Temple, Dambulla. 12th century CE.



Fig. 7.59a Reclining Buddha image. Attaragollewa, Elahera. 10th century CE.



Fig. 7.59b Reclining Buddha image. Tantirimale. 10th century CE.



Fig. 7.60 (left) Reclining Buddha image & **60-1** (right) the feet of the image with the wheel symbol. Uttarārāma, Polonnaruwa. 12th century CE.



Fig.7.61a Reclining Buddha image. Galpota Raja Mahā Vihāra, Bentota. 18th century CE.



Fig.7.61b Reclining Buddha image. Ridī Vihāra, Kurunegala. 18th century CE.



Fig.7.62a Reclining Buddha image. Colombo museum. 18th century CE.



Fig.7.62b Reclining Buddha image. Nilagama. 18th century CE. (Colombo museum CMR 13.117.289).



Fig.7.63 An eye made of gem, found from the excavation site of the Abhayagiriya monastic complex.