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The Lineage and Buddhism in Sri Lanka

Ramani Hettiarachchi

Senior Lecturer, Department of History, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.

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ABSTRACT

The conventional thinking on the '*gnatisiya Parampara*' (hereditary succession) and '*Shiyanishiya Parampara*' (pupillary Succession) tradition in the kandyan area is that it was primarily, economically determined. But this research will inquire into the structure of political power and legitimacy, social factors- both caste and service tenor system, internal fraternity conflict and external forces that draw these parties onto conflicts paving the way for the formation of their lineage tradition. The new sectarianism was possible not only because of caste mobility in society but also because the colonial state was prepared to promote such division and competition to legal recognition.

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Introduction

This study on the succession or lineage among the community of Buddhist sangha in Sri Lanka seeks to examine to what extent the principles laid down by the Buddha in establishing the institution of sangha have been followed in Sri Lanka. Among the fundamental objectives of establishing the institution of the sangha by the Buddha are the creation of a democratic organization based on common ownership of property and engaged in learning and practice of the dhamma and its propagation. The Buddhist Vinaya (code of discipline) and other instructions to monks have been intended to avoid emergence of private ownership of property and a sense of individuality among the monks. An example of this is the episode of the City of Kosambi where a conflict arose between two factions of the sangha known as 'dharma-dhara' and 'vinaya-dhara'. The Buddha addressing those monks advised them to give up their dispute and to live peacefully. But the monks would not listen to the Buddha and reconcile. The Buddha was disgusted and left the city to spend the rainy season in the Parileyya forest. When the monks of the two factions were compelled to meet the Buddha after the rains, the Buddha advised them that the basic principle of his code of conduct was 'unity'. The Buddha further stated that the idea of 'community' is the principle on which a united fraternity of monks has to be established. This is expressed in Pali as 'vinayo namasa sanassa ayu' - the life of the order is discipline (Majjhimanikāya Atuva, 1962, p.880). This implies that the sangha should solve their problems through cordial and peaceful means. This is institutionalized in the 'vinaya karma providing a mechanism for the monks to solve monastic problems and conflicts peacefully through democratic ways. 'yvakivancha bhikkawe Bhikkhu samagga sannipathissanthi samagga uttabbissanthi samagga sangakaraniyni' (Maha parinibbana sutta). [The Buddha's administration of the sangha, resembled that of a real democratic system. Though in fact, he was in command of the sangha, he did not appear to have exercised that power. The Mahaparinibbana Sutta reports him as telling Ananda that he never thought of him in self as 'managing' the sangha as depending on him] (Maha parinibbana sutta, 1999. P.62.)

Further, the Buddha has stated 'Sukhā sanghassa sāmaggi' - the unity of the sangha is pleasurable.' This underlines further the importance of peace and unity in the community of monks (Anguttara nikaya, 1999).

Another important aspect in the institution of the sangha is the concept of 'common ownership of property.' This is also accepted as the basis of a democratic social order. The Vinaya disallows marriage for monks and as a result there is no possibility of an institution of a family or the need for genealogies in the community of the sangha. The concept of 'Sāṅghika' incorporates the idea of common ownership of property. According to this everything given to a Buddhist monk must be received not as a personal gift, but as a common gift for all the 'sangha' or members of the community. In the 'Dakkhināsutta' preached by the Buddha when Maha Prajapati Gotami offered him a robe personally, the Buddha advised her to offer it to the sangha as a common gift but not to him as a personal one. When it is offered to the sangha, the Buddha too will become a receiver (Majjhimanikāya, 1974, p.523).

Thus the Buddha made it clear that the common ownership of property is one of the most important principles in the institution of Buddhist sangha. This process of 'Sāṅghikakarana' or the 'giving to all members of the community' is further illustrated in the 'Chīvarakk handhaSutta' in the Mahavagga. 'Bhikkhu Sanghassadema' - means giving alms or other offerings to the community of monks (Mahavaggapali, 1951). The prominent idea in the concept of common property relates to ownership of land, houses and other gifts. In the section on 'offering of 'arama' - monasteries' in the Chullavagga pali, it has been explained that there is no provision for private ownership of property in the community of the sangha and also that all monasteries, caves etc. offered by the laity should belong to the entire community of monks. (Chullavagga pali, II, 1982, P.128). monasteries, caves etc. offered by the laity should belong to the entire community of monks. (Chullavagga pali, II, 1982, P.128).

When the treasurer of the City of Rajagruha sought permission to donate a monastery, Buddha told him that such gifts should be given to the 'sangha' (community) and not to

individuals. 'Agata Anagata Catudisa Sagasa' means monasteries and caves etc. are given to the 'sangha' of the four quarters who have come or who are yet to come'. Thus this concept of common property implies the need to create a special community devoid of individuality and egoistic motives. In addition to these values, the Buddha expected to create a community of monks consisting of persons possessing a high standard of intelligence. The Buddha has stated, 'Paññānārānamratanam'- wisdom is the gem for men'. Among vocations of a Buddhist monk learning the dhamma, understanding and perusing it, and spreading it have been highlighted. In relation to the learning of 'dharma' for the development of wisdom, the Buddha has pointed out the correct way in the Alagaddupama Sutra. In this 'sutra', Buddha has taught that one should understand instructions correctly before practicing them (Majjhimanikāya, part III, 2001, p.224). Further the Buddha led his disciples of monks focusing on critical thinking and independent perception.

Origin of Sangha Lineage (Parampara) in Sri Lanka

A strong influence of this tradition of lineage upon the Order of sangha in Sri Lanka was seen during the Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa periods. The acceptance of property introduced a new concept in to the organization of sangha. The earliest donations, mostly of caves, were made "To the sangha of the four directions, present and absent" or in other words, to the entire sangha. It is very lightly that donations of other type of dwelling, situated in parks, were of a similar character, but donations of sources of income were made from the start to individual monasteries. As a result of this practice, the monastery came to represent not merely a group of resident monk but also a corporate property owning institution (Sulubodhi Vansaya., 1991, pp. 32-33).

In R.A.L.H. Gunawardhana's view glory of the monks of the Abhayagiriya with regard to their learning and adherence to Vinaya had spread as far as Java (Gunawardhana, 1979, p.17). The reason for disappearance of that fame the Sri Lankan monks had gained during the subsequent period is a matter for further investigation. In a study of this period it is expected to examine the objectives of the lineage of the sangha established by the office of 'Sangharaja' (Saranankara) and to find to what extent his objectives have been meaningful. The biography of Mahakashyapa Thero throws some light on this subject. As mentioned in Saddharmalankara, written during the Gampola period, intelligence, education, virtue etc. are among the qualities for continuous maintenance of lineages based on teacher-student relationship. This text has placed more emphasis on the ability to bear the responsibility of maintaining the 'sasana' or the religion. This highlights that the perpetuation of the 'sasana' required the continuity of the community of the sangha organized on a lineage system based on teacher-student relationship (Buddadaththa, p.80).

'Generation' or 'lineage' had been in use in the community of the sangha as a means of its continuance. We can see two systems of succession in Sri Lanka, I. Succession from teacher to pupil and II. Succession based on relationship cum pupil. As an example for the succession on teacher-student relationship we can consider the Dharmakirti lineage of Palabattagala. This has been mentioned in the Saddharmalankara as "the Dharmakirti lineage that descends from the teacher-student lineage of Mahakashyapa Sthavira of the forest monastery" (Saddharmalankaraya, 1934, p.532). Further, this lineage was connected to the monks of the forest monastery at Dimbulagala. Another lineage of monks of this nature called 'Vilgammula' lineage (parampara) was in

existence during the reign of King Parakramabahu iv. According to the 'Sulu Bodhivamsa', a monk of the Vilgammula lineage who was a 'Sanghanayaka' or a chief monk resident of the Kelani Vihara, was the author of the Simhala Bodhivamsa. The Sulu Bodhivamsa mentions further that this monk was a descendant of the 'Gantala Karmabavalan' generation which originated at the time of King Kitsirimevan and was the tenth member of that lineage (Sulubodhi Vansaya, pp. 32-33).

The focus of this study will be the developments in the 'generation' or 'lineage' system in the community of monks in more recent times and how it has affected the traditional value system of the order of monks. We will be analyzing first the nature of the relationship between the concepts of 'inheritance' and property. There are three systems of lineage identifiable and out of the more prevalent is the Sisyanusisya paramparawa where succession and the trusteeship over the temple property falls on the first pupil or the first ordained pupil of an incumbent priest. According to the variga-Parampara system, the successor to the property of an individual priest or to the property that had devolved on a priest by virtue of his office as the incumbent head of the temple, may be a relation of the priest in question and this relation could be a priest himself or a laymen. According to the "Sivuru Paramparawa" system a priest may grant his personal property or that of the temple of which he is the head, to a relation who must necessarily be a priest and the successors of this recipient priest themselves must likewise be priests. An instance of the Variga parampara system may be noticed in Vatapuluva 'talpata' or the ola-leaf grant pertaining to the Embala vihara in Kandy dated Ad 1699. Its recorded that the grant of lands made by a priest named Devamitta Silavamsa to his elder sister, Soma Ethana, the lands having devolved on him as a share to meet his priestly requisites out of the land given to maluve Ganninnanse (Mirando, 1985, p.123).

Two instances of the succession under the Sivuru parampara system may be cited, first, in the 'sannass' dated AD 1808 given under the hand of Sri Wickrama Rajasimha and the second, in a deed of gift to the Bomaluwe Vihara. The 'sannasa' records the grant of lands given to Imbulvela Anomadassi which is to be held after him by his relations who themselves must be priest. In the latter Vaththegama Devarakkita Therunnanse granted temple lands to Gunarathana Bhiksunvahanse, his younger brother (ibid., p.126).

In an epigraph Vilgammula mahimi claims descent from the Gangatalan Karambavalan family, while the monastery is described as property of his family for ten generations. Furthermore, he mentions that Gatara-Pirivenatana, the incumbent of the Gatara Pirivena as his successor of the Bandu-parampara. In addition to this, Sri Rahula of Thotagamuve claims in his 'Padasadana-Tika' that he was the grandson of a hierarch named Uuturumula Rahula who hailed from Sariputta Mahasami of Polonnaruwa (Nanavimala, p.111).

Legal Procedure Relating to Lineage

The original sources of the law are undoubtedly the Buddhist scriptures or the three-pitakas. These pitakas contain a large body of rules and regulations with reference to the conduct of the sangha succession to ecclesiastical property, and so forth, but the Buddhists of Sri Lanka have not adopted all these rules and our courts have only given effect to such rules as have been adopted in this country. For instance, notwithstanding the rules of absolute poverty, sangha

generally hold considerable private property at their disposal and on their death these properties descend to their lay heirs. Again, a bhikku may acquire property by special gift or bequest and he may inherit from his brothers or sisters or mother, or if he be the only child, he has a right to his father's property in preference to collaterals. The jurisdiction exercised by the Asgiriya and Malwatta chapters in appointing incumbents to vacant temples where the line of succession has been broken appears to have no support in the pitakas, which confer that power upon the entire sangha (Dissanayake, 1963, p. 250).

Incumbent or viharadhipathi is an office unknown to the Vinaya. The vinaya make provision for the appointment of a great number of special officers of viharas. Sangha who frequent a monastery for purposes of meditation must notify the dwelling in the monastery to the comenter keeper, the chief elder of the vihara (Mahathera) and the officer in charge of the village (ibid., p.253)

Succession to Incumbencies and Rights and Duties of Sangha

There are four classes of pupils or antevāsika, namely:

1. Pabbajjantevasika,
2. Upasampadantevasika,
3. Nissayantevasika,
4. Dhammantevasika.

The word antevāsika or pupil is equivalent to Sinhalese Shishya.

- Pabbajjantevasika or pupils by robing is a pupil who has been admitted to the status of pabbajja /samanera through formal robbing or ordination by his preceptor or Upagghaya (Upadhiyaya)

- Upasampadantevasika or pupil by ordination is a pupil who receives the upasampada ordination from his preceptor: no person under 20 years of age receive this ordination, and it can only be conferred by an ordained Bhikku of 10 years standing.

- Nissayantevasika or pupil by obedience (or dependence) after the Upasampada ordination, every bhikku so ordained must undergo a period of dependence or Nissaya.

- Dhammantevasika or pupil by instruction. There is nothing to prevent a bhikku choosing for his instructor a bhikku other than those who have robed or ordained him, or given him a Nissaya (ibid., 257).

Urulawatte was succeeded by his pupil Dambawa Anunayaka Unnanse, who was succeeded by his two pupils Ambagoda and Doratiyawe, the former being the senior pupil. Doratiyawe was disrobed by the king and banished and Ambagoda disrobed and became a layman for some time. After the British rule was established both put on robes again, took possession of the vihare. Goluwewa unnanse claiming through Doratiyawe as his only surviving pupil brought an action against Dambawa unnanse as the only surviving pupil of Ambagoda. The Judicial Commissioner and Assessors were of opinion that the claim of both parties should be dismissed, the vihare declared vacant, and that a fit person should be selected from the pupils of the original incumbent and his two successors, Dambawa and Ambagoda, to fill the incumbency. The selection to be made by the notice to all the pupils of the incumbents to assemble at the Maligawa and there undergo examination before the principle priests of the Asgiri establishment and certain chiefs, and that the pupil found best qualified be nominated to the vacancy, agreeably to the tenor and intention of the sannas. Pursuant to the order of court of 26th March 1828, the assessors and other chiefs in presence of the principal priest, and stated that Galagama

Indrajothi unnanse was the most eligible person for the incumbency (Lawrie, 1896, p.93).

Another court case reported as following: Pevadeniya Indajoti Nayaka unnanse, Konwewa Kuda unnanse and three other layman claimed the temple and its endowments, which formed an appendage of the Huduhumpola vihare, where of plaintiff was the Nayaka or chief priest. First defendant claimed to be incumbent as the pupil of Konwewa Buddharakkhita unnanse. One claimant held that the incumbency of this vihare does not descend by siyana-sisya paramparawa, but was the gift of the priest of Huduhumpola vihare (ibid.,).

Walivita Saranankara and the Lineage System

Saranankara and his colleagues of the Silvat Samagama, when they met people who wished to be admitted to the order, made them wear the yellow robe made them observe the ten precepts and they were called 'SilvatTāna.' The Sangharaja who started a lineage system through the 'Silvat Samagama', addressed his pupils as 'My pupil sons'. As mentioned in the Sangharaja Sādhu Cariyava', his activities were not confined to one area only. He attracted students for his 'Silvatsamāgama' even from such distant villages as Alutnuvara, Ahugoda and Tihagoda (Sadhuchariyava, 1969, p.18). Further, as reported by Moratota Dhammakkhanda in his diary, he had ordained some of his pupils as 'samanera'-novice monks. During that period, these lines of succession among monks split further into divisions and sub-divisions. The lineage of the Saranankara expanded so much that at the monastic school at Niyamakanda that he founded, the number of students is reported to have increased to seven hundred (ibid.). He then raised the status of the sangha and their moral and spiritual behaviors by re-establishing the valid ordination. At the first 'upasampada' ceremony, it has been reported that over five hundred novice monks received higher ordination and three thousand 'samanera' novice monks were admitted to the order (Ibid. p.19). These numbers make it clear how fast the movement started by Saranankara had spread in the Island.

The Sinhala Vimanavastu Prakarana provides useful information on lineage system that prevailed at this time. The aristocrats of the upcountry appear to have restricted ordination as monks only to members of higher castes as a strategy of retaining the right over the vast temple for themselves. This situation in the order of monks had been recorded in the 'Kadadora Seettuva' as follows: "It is a major issue at this time that ordination is limited only to a certain section in society on account of caste discrimination and through that it is further limited to their relatives, who are a minor section of that caste." As Saranankara, lifted that restriction and allowed men of every caste to be ordained, he is regarded as a revolutionary. Moreover, he did not care for the discrimination based on up-country and low-country division and tried to develop a unitary community of monks.

After the establishment of the Siamese chapter it was seen that the king appointed the Saranankara sangaraja and his deputy, as well as the head of two importance monastic establishment in Kandy (Asgiriya and Malwaththa). All the monasteries in the kingdom were loosely affiliated to these two places. These scattered monasteries were separately endowed and their incumbency passed as usual from teacher to pupil. But any dispute arose regarding the incumbency or a benefice, an appeal could be made to the king who was the final arbiter. It is likely that the number of monks who desired such arbitration was considerable, for the RajadiRajasimha Kathikavata lays down that Bhikkus should communicate

with the king only through their respective heads (Jayatilake, 1955, p.45-46). Saranankara maintained friendly relations with the monks of the low-country even at the stage when he was referred to as asilvattāna (1730). Sending a handwritten letter to the monks (Silvattānas) of the low-country he requested all of them to read it. After the higher ordination ceremony held in 1753, he had appointed a chief monk for the southern part of the country – Wehelle Dhammadinna. Further he caused the incumbency of the Sri Pada to be given to the Wehelle generation of monks with the approval of the king. However, as the Moratotavata reveals, it was not possible to continue the system founded by Saranankara Sangharaja unhindered:

Villages offered were maintained in due manner
After some time, they ordained their own children
Assuming powers to themselves, inheriting everything
They did not allow anyone else enter the order, except themselves. (Morathotta, 1813)

This shows how some monks tried to retain the right of land and property to themselves by allowing members of some selected families only to become monks. Under these circumstances, King Kirti Sri Rajasinghe delegated power to Ven. Moratota Dhammakhandha to cleanse the ‘Sasana’ of immoral monks and to support monks of good conduct (Pallaththara, 2002, p.86).

We shall now examine how the attempts of the Wālivita Sangharaja to introduce a more democratic sangha lineage system was hampered and disrupted by forces of regionalism and family favoritisms. Another phase in the development of the institution of the sangha was the partitioning of lineages into minor groups based on caste identity. These factors are often inseparably interrelated. For example, the caste factor is essentially connected to regionalism which in its turn is related to sectarianism. In examining this process we can see that the concept of community and unity of the sangha between the low country and the up country at the time of Saranankara was replaced by forces of separatism. A determining factor in this development was the appearance of individual temples in both those regions and the emergence of a new sponsorship system with more parochial vested interest and their own agendas. For example, some prominent up country families such as Kobbekaduva, Ratwatte, Nugawela etc., for the purpose of demonstrating their family status and wealth, built temples on the lands they donated. The Gonigoda temple in the Kandy district was built by Dunuwila Disave on a land gifted by him while the Kobbekaduva family built the Kobbekaduva Vihara on the lands granted by them (Thundeniya, 1967, p.23). The famous Suriyagoda Vihara was built by Vijayasundara Senarat Vijayakoon Mudali. M.B. Nugawela, (ibid.,68) another prominent aristocrat of the up-country built the Udugala Nigrodha temple on a land belonging to his family and provided for its maintenance (Ibid., p 60). The Tikiribogahagoda Vihara at Kamburadeniya was built by Muhandiram Nilame of the Kamburadeniya Walawwa who retained it under his control. A noteworthy feature of this Vihara is that the sponsor’s younger brother becoming a monk and lived at the Vihara as family property. Thus the building of Viharas by private individuals and their involvement in maintaining them violated the initial requirement that donations to temples were in the name of the sangha from the four directions and for those who visited the temple or who did not. All these affected the unity and cordial relationships in the community of monks.

Low Country Lineage

Information on the lineage system of low-country Buddhist monks can be obtained from a document that dates back to the reign of King Parakramabahu vi. ‘Vruttamālākhyāna of Sri Ramachandrabharatis mention that the Venerable Rammungoda Dipankara was once known as ‘Mahānetramula Mahāsthavira, the Chief incumbent of ‘śailantanayatana’. The term ‘śailantanayanādhipati’ has been rendered into Sinhala as ‘The Great Sthavira who was the Chief incumbent of Bentara Galapāta Vihara. According to this, Mendis Rohandhira argues that by this period the Galapata Vihara of Bentara had been affiliated to ‘Maha Net Pāmula.’ Further, there is evidence of the fact that the Galapata Vihara of Bentara had been attached to Vilgammula at the time of King Parakramabahu I. However, according to the Vruttamala, by the year 1484 A.D., it belonged to the Mahā Net Pamula and therefore this information should be subjected to further investigation. Moreover, while King Parakramabahu was collecting monks for uniting the three sects, the Mahavamsa says that Venerable Nanda residing at the Selantanayatana vihara arrived in the company of monks of the three sects. This report shows that by that time the Venerable Nanda of the Selantanayatana was in such a powerful position to assemble monks of the three sects in the southern area. Further, it is possible to conclude that this institute was in a position to command the respect of the monks of the low-country. Venerable Sangharakkhita, the author of the Vuttodaya in the colophon to his work, refers to a Seela Sthavira of the Selantarayatana which confirms the existence of a vihara at the time (Rohanadeera, PP.204-210).

In the subsequent periods, there is scarcity of information on the sangha of the low-country. The reason for this was the flight of the monks from that area in fear of the Portuguese, and Dutch persecution. During the period 1627-1753, there have been monks known by the derogatory appellation ‘Ganinnanse’ just as they were known in the up-country areas. Such monks attended to the renovation of the Viharas, Stupas etc. that were destroyed by the Portuguese and the Dutch. The Ganinnanses of the low country have been conducting themselves according to the principles, as mentioned in a ‘punyanumodana’ (transferring of merit) notice sent by Ganavolin of Ransāhagoda to King Kirti Sri Rajasingha (Polonaruwe, 1990. P.34). There is evidence of the service rendered by another Ganinnanse named Buddharakkhita Navaratne, who had received the Tissamaharama Vihara from King Vira Parakrama Narendrasinghe. He had trained some virtuous student monks while working for the development of that Vihara. The two famous monks, Sitinamaluve Dhammajoti and Vehelle Dhammadinna are believed to be descendants of the generation of the Buddharakkhita Ganinvahanse. Venerable Sitinamaluva was famous at that time not only in the low-country but also in the Kandyan kingdom. The Silvattāna of Sitinamaluve was such a capable monk that the Sangharaja of Velivita took him to Kandy to work for the progress of his Silvat Samagama. We can form an idea of the kind of respect the Kandyan kings paid to the monks of the low country from the incident of King Kirti Sri Rajasingha appointing Vehelle Dhammadinna in 1753 as custodian of the Sir Pāda [the Adam’s Peak]. It is a matter of special interest that among the monks of the low-country too a ‘generation’ or lineage’ had been developing. Accordingly, the two Ganinnanses, Sitinamaluve and Vehelle belonged to the generation of the Ganinnanse of Kadurpokuna. Those three monks living at the Kirivehera at Kataragama, Tangalle Vihara, Kasagala,

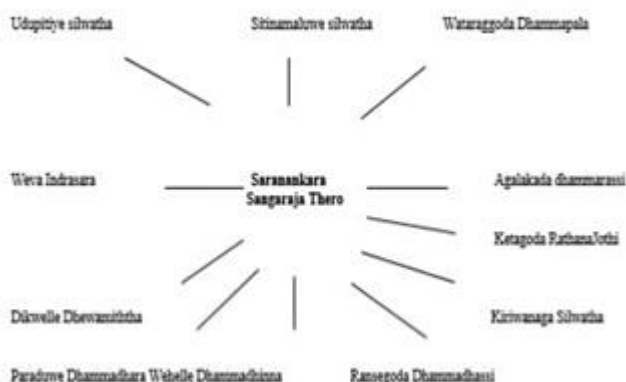
Kotavaya and Galagama in the low country exchanged their learning (what they had learned) with other 'Ganinnanses' of the region. The report of Maitland (1805-1812) helps us form an opinion on the monks of the low-country. "the monks of that area are divided into several classes. Although there is no dispute among them over the fundamental disciplinary rules of the monks, the students of (some chief monks) are divided into various sects. Those sects are named after the leader of each group or the name of the place of their residence. Although there are many sects in that area, only four out of them are regarded as important. They are the Mulkirigala sect, Vehelle sect, Wevasingama sect and Ransahagoda sect" (Ilangasinghe, 1995. P.70).

The low country sangha were however not separated into separate sects as mentioned in the Maitland report. By a letter of Venerable Watarakkgodā Dhammapala written in 1757 too, it becomes clear that the monks of the low country lived in unity at that time. "The monk of Siyambalagoda, up to the Patala Varga in the Abhidhāna, and up to the Aniyatāna the Patimokkha studied the dharma and the six monks mentioned at the beginning of this document learning and mastering other sections in the doctrine, practicing principles of the religious life, performed acts of Vinaya under the Dhammadinna of the Tangalle Vihara" (Polonnaruwe, 1990, p.35).

The Tangalle Vihara mentioned here was possibly the Vanavasa Vihara. The Venerable Dhammadinna, the Chief Monk of the low country is mentioned here by the name Vehelle Himi. Although Watarakkgodā and Dhammadinna belong to two fraternities, this letter shows that they have been working cordially like two brothers. Further in the letter sent by the Sangharaja Saranankara to the monks of the low country, "This is addressed to the 'sons of the Buddha' in the Matara area, who are living in the company of senior monks such as Watarakkgodā, Wehelle, Weva etc." Nevertheless, the Ransegoda generation is not included in this statement. The reason for this can be assumed as the generation of monks in the Ransegoda and those of the Wehelle generation lived as one fraternity (Hewawasam., 1966).

The following *ganninanses* were involved in this endeavor. (Sadhuchariyava, 1969, pp. 34-35).

Another important fact was, Wataraggodā Dhammapala therō reformed the Mulkirigala Temple and thought to their pupils amount five hundred (ibid.).



Due to the Dutch policy of suppressing Buddhism in the 18th century the Ganinnanses of the low-country had to seek safety in the Hambantota and Matara districts. Using rock-caves located in areas close to the up-country their permanent residences, they engaged in religious activities by living at safe areas such as Mulkirigala and Kataragama. If a chieftain

in a certain village offered to provide safety to a Ganinnanse he would spend his rainy season there and continue to perform his religious duties and teach his pupils. While conducting themselves according to religious principles they imparted knowledge to their students and preserved palm leaf manuscripts. The Roman Catholic Friar, Jacome Gonsalvez, while criticizing the monks of the up-country in his work 'Buddhabana Pratyaksha', has referred to the Ganinnanse of the low-country thus: 'People (Buddhist monks) of Matara are learned. Appearing to be the best among the followers of Buddhism, they have split into many sects. If they could be converted to our religion, it will be easier to convert people in other areas.' In the meantime it has been reported that a close relationship of the Buddhist monks of the up-country and low-country too have existed. It is reported that in 1706, a Ganinnanse who set out from Ukuwela with fifteen other Ganinnanses to go to Weligama, was stopped on the way and sent back. Further, in 1699, when the Stupa of the Kelani Vihara was repaired, a chief monk of the up-country went there accompanied by three hundred monks and made an offering of light with 1000 oil lamps. The gift of a land by a certain Lady named Illangakoon in 1707 to Ganinnanses who were engaged in religious work is an example the place they held in society at that time (Silva, 1994, pp. 23-49). This study has revealed specially the existence of sub leaning among members of the different lineage in low country and up country communities. (See appendix 1, 2, 3).

Caste and Lineage

The author of the *Hatthavanagalla Vihara Vamsa*, written during the reign of King Parakramabahu II says that Venerable Anomadassi who lived at that time was a descendant of the Brahmana Vamsa. The author of the *Pujavaliya* has referred to his teacher as belonging to the *Ganavāsi* Caste of the Great Pandi generation (Poojawaliya, 1930, pp. 145-146). In the *Saddharma Ratnavaliya* too, which was written in the 14th century, in a description of the generation of monks of the forest dwelling faction of the Palabatgala, says that Dharmakirti lineage descended from the Vaishya caste (*Saddarmarathnavaliya*, 1984). The author does not stop there, but continues to say that the entire generation of monks was descendants of the Vaishya clan. What is more interesting is this author, while mentioning the chronology of the members of this generation, giving detailed information on family and caste background of individual teachers. By doing this the author may have intended to show that those families were descendants of generations of respectable castes. In the *Hamsa Sandesha*, composed during the reign of King Parakramabahu VI, there is a long description of Venerable Vanaratana, the Principal of the Keragala Padmavati *Pirivena*. In this poetic description he is referred to as the nephew of the Great Sthavira Nagasena who lived in the forest monastery after developing the Vihara at Wattala, and further, he was closely related to the nobleman Alasangamu Hunannaru who was the Chief of the Bodhipalaka caste. This implies a royal alliance as well. The author of this text has tried not only to mention the caste, but also to highlight kinship relationships of the noble families of the laity. By the time of King Parakramabahu II, the caste of a 'Bhikkhu' - a monk - appears to become more important than in previous times. As the '*Dambadeniya Katikavata*' reveals, the caste factor had been among the qualifications of a person wishing to be admitted to the order of monks.

"yatatpiriseyin teratunnamak ātulu sesu upayukta
sanghayā madhyayehi jātigotra vicārā rogabalā
livimkiyavīm balā nāyaka tāndanvā siyalla sālakota

*kuladoshayan nātāyi dannā sanga kenekun
pratignākala” (Suraweera, 1971, p. 94).*

[“In the middle of the assembly of the *sangha* including at least three *Sthaviras* and other senior monks, having questioned on the caste and clan, checking on diseases and knowledge of reading and writing, informing the Chief monk, when a monk who knows there are no problems with caste etc. has given assurance...]

This means that the ‘purity’ of the caste of a candidate for admission to the ‘*sangha*’ had to be certified by a monk who was familiar with his family background. Therefore it is necessary to examine further why the former situation regarding the caste had developed to this level by the Dambadeniya period. It is surprising to note that even some well-known senior monks referring to themselves proudly as belonging either to the Brahmin or the *Vasishya* caste. One of the decisive factors influencing this change could have been the invasion of the island by Magha. During that time the monks had tried to refer their castes more often. By the mid-13th century, as a result of Magha’s invasion, the political stability of the country was weakened making it easy for external powers to interfere in the political affairs of the Island. At the same time, there was a tendency for senior monks to be related with prominent families in the state administration. As a result religious and political power was concentrating around the same network. By the 14th century, while some monks were able to claim ownership of property some aristocratic families tried to claim the right for the property of temples by getting their kin admitted to the order. With these new developments there arose a tendency to ordain persons of higher castes, preventing at the same time persons of lower castes entering the order.

We can see this tendency more developed in the Kandyan period with compare with earlier period. In 1586 Rajasinha I gave the village of Gonadeniya, in the Atakalan Korale in Sabaragamuve to a Brahmin and his family. A few of these Brahmins and their dependents served in the Kandyan court. Morathota Dhammakandha, the chief monk of the Malwatta Vihare from 1787-1811, was of Brahmin caste. A grandson of Brahmin named Balakrishna, who immigrated to Sri Lanka from Madura in the region of Bhuvanakabahu of Kotte, served under Rajasimha I as a minister. Although a Bhuddhist, his Brahmin ancestry was remembered with pride (Dewaraja, 1972 .p. 40).

According to Lorna Devaraja the introduction of the Siamese *upasampada* tradition led to new social trends within the Sri Lankan society. One such trend was the caste qualification which was imposed on all entrants to the *sangha* who at this time came under a single *nikaya*. *¹It is significant that even the first six monks who were ordained at the hands of Upali thero not only belonged to the *govikula* but were also selected from aristocratic families, Kobbekaduwe, Kulatunga (Saranankara), Hulamgamuve, Bambaradeniya, Tibbotuwave and Navinne.

1. Kobbakaduwe Himi-He was the offspring of a Polyandrous union between Galagoda *Kumarihami*, daughter of Galagoda Disava of Uva.

2. Saranankara Himi- A descended of Kulatunga *Mudali*, Disave of Tumpane in the time of Wimaladharmasuriya.

3. Hulangamiwe Himi was the brother of the second Adigar of 1731.

4. Tibbotuwave was the brother in law of the second Adigar of Samarakkodi.

5. Nawinne was a close associate of the head of the Asgiri Vihare. (Ibid. p.103).

This illustrates the extent to which Upali thera’s Upasampada ceremony was manipulated to serve caste exclusives within the Kandyan *sangha* and the aristocracy. Sitanamaluve, a learned monk who was a close associate of Saranankara right throughout his career, was denied the Upasampada at the hands of Upali Thera, as he did not belong to the *govikula*. The infiltration of the aristocracy in to the *sangha* had begun at the very top. It is likely that these monks who were in authority at the time imposed rules restricting entrance to the Siam *Nikaya* to members of the *Govikula* in order to avoid the possibility of men of lower castes from gaining places of importance in the ecclesiastical hierarchy (Ibid. p. 43). The Mandarampuwatha, however, relates an incident which appears to give royal sanction to this restriction. The king, it is said, was informed that certain monks of the lower castes were in the habit of removing their upper garments and prostrating themselves before the noblemen, thus continuing with the customs and practices that they were used to as laymen. This perturbed the king and he summoned an assembly of all the prominent monks and noblemen where it was further disclosed that some monks practiced dancing and drumming and performed professional services which were their traditional obligations as laymen. In order to stop this it is said that the king requested the elders of the *sangha* to bestow the *Upasampada* only on men of noble birth, by which he meant the *govikula*. According to Mandarampuwata it was the king’s wish that this restriction should stand as long as two monasteries lasted. (Mandaram, 1958. PP.12-13). The king’s injunction was conveyed to the low-country *sangha* leading to regional and caste separatism among them.

Property, Kinship and Lineage

According to R.A.L.H. Gunawardhana, certain inscriptions of the ninth and tenth centuries contain grants of exemption from royal dues on land held by monasteries. The practice of endowing monasteries with property in land irrigation works can be traced back to a period as early as the latter part of the second century BC. The Duvegala and Nalupota inscriptions of Lanjatisa (119-109B.C) record a grant of tracts of land and of an irrigation reservoir to a monastery. It has also been suggested that the Nalupota and Galgamuva inscriptions, which mention donations of both agricultural and irrigation property to monasteries, date from the reign of Vattagamani (103-102, 89-77 B.C.) (Gunawardhana, 1979, P.56)

Most probably these grants of immunity merely amounted to the transfer of revenue to the monasteries. Gunawardhana further mentions that another important development noticeable during the period was strengthening of the rights of individual monks over monastic property. The references in the *Chulawansa* to a category of monks, first referred to in the account of the reign of Mahinda¹⁴, mentions donation of wealth to *labhavasins* monks of all the three *nikayas*. (C.V: 54.27) (Ibid. p.80). The appearance of the practice of property by ownership by individual monks, in spite of the ideal they set for themselves, was in very close association with the lay society so that some of the salient economic features of lay life were introduced into the life of monks. This concept of ownership is made clearly obvious by the Mihintale tablets. According to this source the income accruing from the villages and the land belonging to the monastery should be enjoyed only by the regular residents of monastery. (E2 . vol. p. 91). Though ownership of property was at times vested in individual monks all such sources of income were considered to be the property of the respective

monasteries and ultimately of the *Nikayas*. Several inscriptions of this period refer to the “property of the three *nikayas*” (Ibid. p.348.). (E2. Vol. »¼ p. 42). The vow of rejection of individual property by which the monastic order was bound seems to have been violated in this manner. As kings and laymen dedicated so much of property for purposes of accumulating merit, that in the course of time paradoxical as it may sound the Bhikkhu *sangha* or the ‘fraternity of beggars’ became in Weberian phraseology, “monastic landlords (Dewaraja, 1972, p.136). During the Kandyan period certain monks even earned private incomes by accepting state employment. A monk could donate private property to a relative though not *Sanghika* property dedicated for the use of the monastery and its residents. But this difficulty was surmounted when the system of *gnati sisya parampara* became widespread and *sanghika* lands came to be handed down in the families of the incumbents. With this lineage system inheritance of monastic property from pupil within the same family, “monastic land-lordism” had come to stay (ibid.).

In addition to this Robert Knox observed the wealth and influence of the temples when he said;

“Unto each of these pagodas, there are great revenues of land belonging ; which have been allotted to them by former kings, according to the state of the kingdom; but they have much impaired the revenues of the crown, there being rather more towns belonging to the church, than up to the king (Knox, 1911, P.116).

The tenant cultivators of temple lands were exempt from many of the services that other villagers owed to the state. The relatively lighter tax burden, due partly perhaps to the spiritual association, made many cultivators prefer attachments to temple villages rather than to villages assigned to the royalty or the aristocracy. There were instances where cultivators themselves granted their lands to temple villages in order to avoid payment of certain taxes to the state (Bandarage, 1983, P.34). H.L Senevitatne pointed out that this condition due to the irrevocability of temples villages by the king, many aristocrats preferred to grant their lands to temples headed by blood relatives (Seneviratne, 1978, page 08). An important development that contributed to this process during the Kandyan period was the appointment of heads of temples (Viharadhipathis) and the selection of their successors according to the tradition of pupillary succession. (*Sisyanusisya paramparawa*).

This so-called papillary succession (*sisyanusisya parampara*) was widely used to retain the monasteries, in the hands of influential families... For a number of monasteries, another rule of succession termed (*gnathisisya parampara*)...because valid. Under this rule, only a relative of the deceased viharadipathi could be the successor to a deceased monk, provided he was ready to take up the robes.

Several instances may be cited where the Sinhalese kings in negotiations of some special service rendered to them or in consideration of loyalty and faithfulness shown to them by certain Buddhist priests have endowed such priests or their temples with lands. Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe granted to Wehalle Dhammadhinna not only the chief incumbency of the vihara at Sripadha but also land appertaining to that high office as can be seen from the Wehalle ‘*tamba sannasa*’ (copper plate) dated Ad 1751 (Nanavimala, p. 17). (Morathota Dhammakkhanda received a gift of lands from Rajadhi Rjasimha for instructing the king in the Dhamma as can be noticed from the Degaldoruwa sannasa (Lawrie, 1896, p.688). The Sinhalese kings were also accustomed to grant lands to

individual temples or priest with the yeJunctions that the income from such lands should be used to have the customary religious rites performed at the respective temples. By the ‘*Madagammana sannasa*’, Narendrasingha granted to Madagammana *Heranunnanse* the holy shrine Sripada no doubt with the benefices appertaining to this shrine so that the priest in question and his pupils shall perform without interruption the necessary religious rites (Nanavimala, p. 16). The Sinhalese kings it would appear granted lands to individual priests subject to the condition that the rules promulgated by the Buddha.

In addition to this we see that the community of priests although it received large extents of lands, yet there was a system for the management of these lands in a way that was not detrimental to the well, being of the Buddhist priesthood. In this research clearly obvious that due to this trusted of property Parampara tradition maintain within the Buddhist society. This system underwent we notice the tendency on the part of certain priests to cause to be admitted to the order and thereby also to their live of pupils, their relations for the sole purpose of retaining temples and the temple lands in their own families. An instance of such manipulation may be noticed in a deed pertaining to the Aludeniya Vihare (Lawrie, 1896, p.688). Here is stated that the incumbent of the Vihara, Chandajothi Unnanse, on his deathbed caused one of his grandnephews to the ordained and to him was given the temple and its land. It is important fact is to note that in this case, the temple lands continued to the owned by the grand. Nephew of Chandajothi *Unnanse* even after, he had left the robes.

An examination of types of services rendered by the temple tenants would illustrate how the monasteries were maintained and also now the cast system entered the monastic organization. According to the act of 1870, No: 4 included that the temple tenants functions relating to their own mechanism. For instance the tenants who occupied the paddy cultivation, temple repairing. Another important matter was according the temple tenants of Kobbekaduwe vihara mention that washer men caste people have to wash the clothes of temple and arrange ‘*Uduviyan*’. we see through the act of 1870, how the monastic organization as it developed in Ceylon upheld the social and economic differences based on caste structure (Service Tenure, 1870, p. 46). As Pridham estimates 1/5 of the cultivable land in the Kandyan territory belonged to temples and devales (Jayasekera, 1970, p.70) In addition to this we can understand real situation through the statically analysis from the temple land reports of 1876 (Buddhist temporaries commission, Sessional paper, 1876, P. 41).

Temple Lands of 1876 in Ceylon.

Province	Amount
Central	239,232
Western	75,303
North-west	58,360
North	1,583
South	1,559
Total	376,037

Source: Report of the Buddhist Temporaries Commission, Ceylon Legislative Council, Sessional Paper, no. 18, led 1876, p. 41.

This state of affairs is well illustrates by the land transactions of one Kandy an chief, Parantala Ratamahatmaya, noted in the Buddhist temporalities commission report of 1876.

“Threw of the robes and ceased to be a priest in 1849, has held several incumbencies first Degaladoru vihare, then

selavihare... explains his conviction with the lease of the coffee land Dunuwilkana belonging to the Degaldoru vihare. He and his fellow priests after they had thrown off the robes, in order to protect the interest of the *vihare*. The waste land belonging to which was being encroached upon and the timber felled by natives leased the land to an European planter to be planted with coffee, first for a small rent, and afterwards under a fresh agreement for £ 300 a year” (Sessional Paper 1876, P: xxx.).

Baragalle vihare, Alagoda vihare and Rambukavela vihare were after the death of pinnapaye *unnanse*, in ruins. As there was no priest then living who had descended in a direct line from him, and as it is improper for layman to enjoy the benefits arising from vihare property, the matter was brought to the notice of the victorious and prosperous great. Gate by Dunuwila Ratemahatmaya of sarasiya pattuwa, the grand, Nephew of pinnapaye *unnanse*. And accordingly the same were presented to Molagoda Attadhassi *unnanse*, to be held by him and his papillary succession, maintaining the benefits arising there from (Lawrie, 1896, p.717).

British Colonial Attitude towards Lineage System

Chief monks of various fraternities of the low country had come to play influential roles in society at the advent of British power in Sri Lanka. This situation developed from the last stages of Dutch rule. In recognition of the influence of Koratota Dharmarama the Dutch Governor Von de Graff (1785-94) appointed him as the Chief monk of their territory and paid him a monthly allowance of 35 pagodas as fare for his ‘palanquin.’ This was done for political reasons as a gesture to win over the *sangha* who had always kept close relations with the Kandyan court. The fact that this allowance was paid to Koratota even by the British Governor Brownrigg shows the political influence commanded by the Chief monks of that time. (Kamburupitiye, 1950, p. 162). Furthermore, some official flags have been assigned for the exclusive use of certain monks holding new positions were created by British rulers. These influential monks used their positions to resolve some legal disputes among the *sangha*. The Chief Monks, after passing judgment on the cases of monks and temples forwarded their decisions to the ‘*Mudali*’ for implementing them (Ilangasinghe, 1995, p.70). Governor Thomas Maitland, during his tenure, realized the strength of these Buddhist monks and therefore adopted a strategy of undermining their influence.. Maitland instructed Thomas Eden, Collector of revenue, Matara, ‘As the King of Kandy has won the support of the monks, you must now try to win them over to our side.’ For this Maitland adopted two methods: promulgating laws for the administration of affairs of the Buddhist *sangha* and obtaining their consent for those laws and winning the support of the Buddhist public (ibid.)

Maitland used these strategies of awarding positions to monks and creating conflicts between them and the laity for the purpose of strengthening British authority and breaking the existing close relationship between the king of Kandy and Buddhist monks. The authority for appointing monks to ‘*Nayaka*’ positions was so far exercised by the king. The statement in his letter is an example of Maitland’s attempt to practically disrupt the relationship of the laity with the monks. “Power of a Buddhist monk in the south is immense. It is greater than the power of a Mudliyar.” They were especially concerned with the importance of the Mulkirigala Vihara which had become the centre of activities of the monks in the south. Therefore, the British Governor instructed Eden to undermine the authority of the monks living in that temple (Ibid, p.68).

The most important point here is the attempt of the British rulers to create disruption among lineages of monks in the south. Especially, as the monk of Bovala was maintaining close relations with the Mudliyors of the low-country, Governor Maitland reported in his letter that the Monk of Bovala was passing information to the king of Kandy. He had tried to break the friendship between the monk of Bovala and Saram, the Mudliyar of the Low-country. Moreover, he attempted to create a contest for power between the monk of Karatota who belonged to the Vehella lineage with Bovala of the Mulkirigala lineage. This disrupted the traditional unity that existed among generations of the *sangha* and created new competitions among them for the position of the Nayaka of the South. Maitland continued to disrupt the unity of the *sangha* furthering regionalism among the monks. For this purpose he tried to establish an executive committee for each district with the power of resolving issues relating to the traditions/ritual of the monks and their temple lands. Although this proposal could not be implemented, Maitland was successful in creating competition among the Buddhist monks of the low country for state recognition and positions. A good example of this is the letter sent to Governor Maitland by Venerable Mahagoda Indasara requesting a post of chief incumbency (ibid). Although he was already holding the position of the chief monk for the ‘*upasampada* monks’ of the District of Galle he wanted another position of a ‘*Nayaka*’ – appointed by the British Government with provision for use of ‘*Hewisi*’ whenever he visited places, official security, facility for travelling in a palanquin and ordering officers in each region to support him. This shows the benefits the monks wished to enjoy along with the positions and also the fact that Maitland’s strategy had produced the expected results.

These developments in the low-country show the Buddhist affairs were undergoing an even more revolutionary change than in the up-country. We have mentioned earlier that there was an overall unity among the lineages of monks in the low-country. But processes of social change under the impact of colonialism from at least Dutch times stimulated a caste competition in lay society that was inevitably reflected in the *sangha* organization. Under the British this process was aggravated as a result of new sources of wealth and opportunities for education invariably leading to caste mobility. Based on those new social classes a new culture appeared around the Buddhist Viharas. The newly emergent wealthy Buddhists extended their philanthropy for building of temples and patronized the *sangha* of their own castes and localities as new social capital to enhance their relative social status in the caste hierarchy. As a result new communities of monks emerge sponsored by private funds further disrupting the process spearheaded by Walivita Saranakara. In other words, these developments eventually led to the creation of new sectarian divisions based on caste among the *sangha*. [The *goyigama* Buddhist benefactors included some who had made their initial fortunes from the graphite and later branched out in to plantation crop and arrack renting, as did the Senanayake, Kotalawala and Artugalle families. One such family was that of N F Fernando, of the *vahumpura* caste, an important local merchant in the export-import trade who generously subscribed to Buddhist charities: Fernando employed only Buddhists on his shop, and observed “Buddhist ceremonies and festivals”. In 1898, he financed a pilgrims rest house in Anuradhapura for the convenience of pilgrims. Many *Salagama* capitalists were keen supporters of Buddhist revival.

Among them: William de Abrew Rajapaksa and his son Peter the Abrew who gave land and money for the Meusaeus college, a Buddhist girls' school. Tudor Rajapaksa founded the Rajapaksa boys' school in Balapitiya. The Duvava caste also produced a strong Buddhist lobby including Mallika Hewavitarana and her father Don Andris Perera Dhammagunawardhana who gave land and money for the Vidyodaya Pirivena. (Wimalaratne K.D.G. Personalities of Sri Lanka, A Biographical study, Colombo, Ceylon Buddhist Publications, 1999) Influential members of the caste, specially Simon Alwis and members of the Tudawe Panditha - Gunawardhana, de Soysa and Gomes families funded the Vajiraramaya temple in Colombo, founded in 1901. The temple, accounted with the famed bhikkhu Palane Vajiragnana Mahanayaka (1878-1955) a prolific writer on Buddhism, became an important focal point for the Durava Buddhists.

Karawa caste: Ponnehennedige Domingo Dis, another member of the Dias family of panadura, who also a great Buddhist benefactor. He was the trustee and a contributor towards the movement for the acquisition by the Buddhists of Buddha Gaya in India. Jeremias, Dias, a successful arrack renter and capitalist who also sponsored the Panaduravada. He gave large sums of money for temples and Buddhist schools and was the chief lay benefactor of the Rankoth vihara in Panadura [Jayawardhana, 2000, P.167, 264-266], (Wright, 1907, pp. 291-292).

The initial move in this direction came from the Salagama caste forming the Amarapura Nikaya in the early 19th century and soon it spread to Karawa and Durava castes etc. splitting the monks into over two dozen fraternities within the Amarapura sect (ibid). Within these new sects regionalism raises its head as another fast growing trend while at the same time maintaining the up-country - low country distinction. A dispute that occurred in 1836 the Siamese sect split into three sects as Malwatta, Asgiriya and Kelaniya in 1856. In 1864, a new sect named Kotte Chapter branched off from the Siamese sect. All these groups admitted only persons of the *Govigama* caste into their communities as monks. The Ramañña Nikaya was started in 1864 as an attempt to arrest the division of the *sangha* on caste basis but it too eventually succumbed to the strength of caste. According to P.V.J Jayasekera the new sectarianism was possible not only because of caste mobility in society but also because the colonial state was prepared to promote such divisions and competition through legal recognition (Jayasekara, 1970). [Lay patronage was however crucial in these developments. In the Kalutara where the Siam Nikaya was dominant, the families of Don Philip Wijewardhana, Helena Wijewardhana and D.R. Wijewardhana extended their patronage extensively to Buddhist temples. Wealthy members of the Salagama caste, such as Salamon Soyza Appuhami, Norman de Silva and Dona Christina Jayasuriya of the Karava caste sponsored the temples of the Amarapura Nikaya. Mallika Hewavitarana, Don Andris Perera and Dharma Gunawardhana etc., too rendered religious and social services in association with temples related to their castes].

Thus with the association of the new wealthy Buddhists with the *Nikayas* founded on caste and regional identities created a trend which started with the temples related to sects in the areas such as Matara, Galle, Hakmana and Beli Atta, where the population was predominantly of the *Govigama* caste moves gradually to urban areas such as Colombo. The Amarapura sect was active mainly in the Balapitiya and Ambalangoda areas where the majority of the residents

belonged to the *Salagama* caste. The Amarapura which was connected with the *Karava* caste became popular in Alutgama, Beruvala, Payagala and Ambalangoda. Although these diverse sects operated keeping some towns as the centre, their influence reached out to rural areas as well. It was the new rich comprador class which was the dynamic force that pushed the Buddhist society towards regionalism.

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