

## **GOD SAMAN --- the earliest convert to Buddhism**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Buddhism was introduced to Sri Lanka when it was losing ground in India. The very first vision of Lord Buddha in Sri Lanka was at Mahiyanganaya. Saman Rala, the veddha chief accepted Buddhism and attained the mental upliftment to Sovan and became the Divine Guardian Protector of Sri Pada. The rest of the clan who could not understand and did not accept Buddhism was subdued and banished beyond the waters.

There had been unrest among the people who had faith in other established shrines. Two sub-kings had prepared for war but fortunately reconciled and had been averted by the intervention of God Dedimunda, who was the only god who stood with Prince Siddhartha when he was defeating the Mara, in his mental battle. Today along the Peace Line lie the devala of God Saman and Kuda-Katharagama devala of Murugan/Sanmukam or Skander. In the center lies a Buddhist Shrine interwoven into the rituals of the Uggal Aluth Nuwara Kuda-Katharagama Devalaya in Balangoda.

*Key words : Saman Rala, veddha, God Dedimunda, Skander, Kuda Katharagama devala*