

RARE

CULTURAL INTERACTION BETWEEN INDIA AND SRI
LANKA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BUDDHISM
(6th CENTURY CE TO THE 12th CENTURY CE)

Submitted by

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Abstract

In this research study an attempt is made to bring out the nature of Buddhist culture during the period from the sixth century CE to the twelfth century CE focusing on the development of a new form of Buddhism in the region and placing it within the larger context of Buddhist cultural interaction between India and Sri Lanka. This research study is not restricted to exploring new interpretations of the history of Buddhism but it also attempts at readdressing some of their implications while reevaluating previous research on the history of Buddhism, utilizing materials pertaining to monastic architecture. It is important to note that in the period under survey Buddhism evolved with new dimensions of thought, and affected to change the nature of Buddhism. It created a new epoch of Buddhism in ritualistic norms.

It has been generally argued that these new developments were the main contributory factor for the decay and decline of Buddhism in the land of its birth and also for its degeneration in Sri Lanka. However a critical inquiry into these developments focusing on most of these new movements of Buddhism gives a different impression to argue that they deeply impacted on the Buddhist societies playing a vital role in propagating Buddhism in the contemporary Buddhist world and contributed immensely for the longevity, vitality and continuity of Buddhist culture.

As a back drop to the main arguments of the monograph, a survey of the evolution of Buddhism has been undertaken with emphasis on its philosophical and ideological strands. The historiography in relation to the changes of the Buddhist culture of this particular period is examined in details. Subsequently, methodology and sources pertaining to the study is elaborated on. The chapters containing the core of the thesis revolve around three central issues. In this study the main areas that have attention on structural changes of the monastic plan, edifices and their significance for understanding and interpreting the dynamism of the monastic community has examined. It is also attempted to study the new developments and their impact on changes in ritual culture of the period. The evolutionary process of Buddhism and its ramification on Buddhist culture, shaping the interrelationship between the *sangha* community and laity has been undertaken.

Key words: Buddhism, ritual culture, evolution, monastery, architecture.