

දර්ශන

A STUDY OF BUDDHISM IN CEYLON IN THE FIFTEENTH  
AND SIXTEENTH CENTURIES (circa 1400-1600).

By

Hematilaka Bandara Mangala Ilangasinha

පිටුව අංකය	20
පිටුව අංකය	

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

School of Oriental and African Studies

University of London

London

1972

Abstract

In this study an attempt is made to examine the condition of Buddhism in Ceylon in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. As a necessary introduction, the first chapter examines the sources pertaining to the period. Apart from the Pali and Sinhalese chronicles, other literary works, especially the sandesa poems, have been examined in detail with a view to estimating their historical value. For a correct understanding of the religious history of the period a brief survey of the political situation of the country is given on the basis of the earlier studies and publications. After the examination of the political background, chapter III goes on to discuss the organizational matters of the Sangha. This covers the two Fraternities, i. e. Vanavāsa and Gāmvāsa, Āyatanas, Gapas and the lineages of the Sangha. In this discussion we have also dealt with the tendency of the Sangha of this period to mention the family connexions of monks, in addition to their affiliations to certain religious institutions. The next chapter is devoted to a discussion of the relationship between the State and the Sangha. In this chapter, the decline of Sangha

Acknowledgments

has been examined on the basis of an analysis of the various causes that led to it. The fifth chapter consists of a detailed survey of the monastic education of the period. Apart from the history and development of the Pirivenas of the period, general function and the outlook of these institutions have been discussed in this chapter in detail. The next chapter deals with Ceylon's relations with other Theravāda countries in the medieval period in general and during the proposed two centuries in particular. The main issues discussed in the last chapter are the religious cults, festivals and deities of this period. Besides the cult of Tooth Relic and that of the Samantakūṣa, the bodhisattva cult and that of the four guardian deities have been discussed.

My thanks are due to the staff of the  
Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies and the  
British Museum for their helpful and courteous services.

I would like to thank Professor  
T. Finlayson of the University of Oxford, Vice-Chancellor of the  
University, who took an early personal interest in my research work.

My final word of thanks goes to  
Mr. I. A. Stevenson of the British Museum for sending me some manuscripts  
from Ceylon.