

## KINSHIP AND LINEAGE IN THE BUDDHIST MONASTIC ORDER IN MEDIAEVAL SRI LANKA

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The period dealt with in this paper extends from the aftermath of the reign of Parākramabāhu I starting from c. 1200 A.C., to the end of the sixteenth century. The restoration of higher ordination (*upasampadā*) in the time of Vijayabāhu I (1055—1110), and the unification of the *Saṅgha* in the reign of Parākramabāhu I (1153—1186), represent a distinctive phase in the history of the Buddhist monastic order in Sri Lanka, which has been studied in some detail by various scholars. Nearly four hundred years later the higher ordination had again fallen into abeyance and had to be re-established by inviting monks from Rakkhaṅga in Lower Burma, at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The introduction of this new form of higher ordination into Sri Lanka and its consequential developments have been discussed by K. Wachissara in his doctoral thesis.<sup>1</sup> The period between these two historical markers, that is to say, roughly speaking, between 1200 and 1600 A.C., and the very specific development in the social character and conduct of the *Saṅgha* especially with regard to kinship, lineage and political patronage, deserve our attention. Not only are these developments a clear manifestation of tendencies which are merely vague trends or strands in the preceding epoch, but they foreshadow the close network of kinship, lineage, property relations and state-*Saṅgha* relations that are characteristic of the post-1600 period, especially in the Kandyan kingdom.\*

During the period under consideration, senior members of the *Saṅgha* saw fit, in many instances, to proclaim their family connections and their affiliations to certain religious institutions or lineages.<sup>2</sup> While the responsibility of a monk towards his parents is acknowledged even in the *vinaya*<sup>3</sup> it was not generally customary for members of the *Saṅgha* to continue to mention their caste or clan connections after their entry into the Order. In fact all such distinctions and relationships are abandoned once a person enters the Order, as the Buddha says in the *Pahārāda Sutta*:

1. K. Wachissara, *Sarnāṅkaru Saṅgharāja Samya*, Colombo, 1960

\* For a discussion of the antecedents of the developments examined here see: A. Liyanagamage, *Kalyāṇī*, Vol. I, Nos. 1 and 2, 1982 p. 481.

2. For an account of these institutions and lineages, see, H. B. M. Hingasinha, *A Survey of Buddhism in Ceylon in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, London, 1973.)

3. *Mahāvagga*, ed, H. Oldenberg, London, 1879, 147,8, 297-8