A Pillar Inscription from Moragahawela

Moragahawela is a village in the Tammanakaduva District, in the North-Central Province. Here a Tamil inscription on a short 3 ft 6 in. pillar was discovered in 1891 by the then Archaeological Commissioner, the late Mr H. C. P. Bell, and recorded in the "Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon" for the year 1891.

The inscription is of 29 lines, running on to two sides of the pillar.

An estampage of this inscription was sent for examination to Sri H. Krishna Sastri Avl., the then Assistant Archaeological Superintendent for Epigraphy in South India. Sri Krishna Sastri made mention of this inscription in his Epigraphical Report for the year 1913, and later published the text of this inscription in the fourth volume of 'South Indian Inscriptions.'

This record is written in the Tamil script interspersed here and there with Grantha characters. No puli sign seems to have been used in this inscription. The following words have been inscribed in the Grantha characters:

1. Sri Jebahu Deva (ll. 1–2) 2. Buddha (l. 10) 3. Dharmu (l. 16) in the letter jivitam (l. 7) the letter ji is written in Grantha, and the rest in Tamil characters.

The inscription is dated in the twenty-eight year of King Jebahu Deva. This king is to be identified with Jayabahu III who ascended the throne in 1114 A.D. Palaeographically, the script agrees generally with the Tamil script of the period. The inscription begins with six figures—a lance and a conch-shell on either side and a crescent moon and sun in the middle—engraved in a line.

As regards the orthography, we may note that there is a confusion in the use of the two letters n (ⁿ) and n (نة). They are not used in accordance with the spelling in standard Tamil. For example, Ulakayakkittane ( tamil: உலக்கைக்கிட்டனே—ll. 5–6) should have been written Ulakayakkittane ( tamil: உலக்கைக்கிட்டனே). Other examples of the incorrect use of these two letters are:—inquilam ( tamil: கிண்ணுலம்—l. 12) for inquilam ( tamil: கிண்ணுலம்); epipitippu ( tamil: எப்பிபிடிப்பு—ll. 14–15) for epipitippu ( tamil: எப்பிபிடிப்பு); alittanoruva at ( tamil: ஆலித்தனோருவக்—ll. 16–18) for alittanoruva at ( tamil: ஆலித்தனோருவக்); and acaippatuval ( tamil: ஏசைப்பதுவன்—ll. 27–28) for acaippatuval ( tamil: ஏசைப்பதுவன்). The word tayku ( tamil: தாங்கு) is written as tākku ( tamil: தாங்கு—l. 27) without the consonant y (ே). In line 19, there is a peculiarity in the method of writing the word koyil ( tamil: கோயில்). For the letter ko ( tamil), the kompu is quite clear. Ka ( க) though a little mutilated, is fairly clear; but, after ka, instead of the sign for n (்), the scribe has put, evidently by mistake, the sign for the trilled ga ( த).

In this inscription occurs the phrase mūṇgu-kai ( tamil: முந்தூருகை—ll. 21–22) meaning "three hands." This phrase is also found in the Vēlankāra Inscription at Polonnaruva. Sri Krishna Sastri states in his Epigraphical Report for the year 1913 that mūṇgu-kai is referred to as the name by which a particular community was known. Their duty was the protection of certain charitable endowments to a temple or other similar institutions.

Professor S. Paranavitana mentions that this refers to the three divisions of the Vēlankāras, namely, the Mahātantrar, the Valanjiyar and the Nagarattar. The term Mahātantrar is found only in Ceylon, and its sense is not clear. The terms Valanjiyar and Nagarattar are frequently met with in South Indian inscriptions of this period. They are stated as a wealthy and influential body of merchants. The "three temples" ( mūṇgu-kōyil— tamil: முந்தூருகைகோயில்—ll. 18–19) occurring in this inscription are the three fraternities (nikāyas) of the Buddhists.

A village called Patalāya is mentioned in this inscription. Sri Krishna Sastri who read this word as Patālāya earlier, altered its reading when he published the text of this inscription in the fourth volume of 'South Indian Inscriptions,' where it appears as Pitāvai. The word Patālāya is indited very clearly, that there is no room to doubt this reading. It is difficult to
identify this village. There is a village named Pataliya in the Hewawisse Korale, in the Kurunagala electorate, and another named Pataya’a in the Dambadeniya electorate. The village Pataliya of this inscription may be either of this, or, most probably, different from this.

As has already been stated, the inscription is dated in the twenty-eighth year of Sri Jayabahu Devar, who is to be identified with Jayabahu I, the younger brother and successor of Vijayabahu I. According to Geiger’s chronological tables, 10 this monarch ascended the throne in 1114 A.D., at Polonnaruva. Therefore, the inscription in question was indited in 1142 A.D. According to the Sinhalese Chronicles, Jayabahu I ruled only for two years, after which he was deposed by Vikramabahu II. But this inscription is dated in his twenty-eighth regnal year, which is an anomaly. Professor S. Paranavitana offers a satisfactory explanation for this anomaly of dating from the coronation of a deposed, and perhaps deceased, king. He feels that one should assume that documents continued to be dated from the accession of Jayabahu I even in the reigns of his successors, Vikramabahu II and Gajabahu II, as these monarchs were not duly consecrated. 11

The object of the inscription is to record the donation of one veli of land to a temple of Buddha by Ulakayakkittan, who was born in the village of Pataliya. In the inscription he says that if anyone violates this gift, one will suffer the sin of destroying the three fraternities, and will also reap the sin of failing in the bounden duty of the three divisions of the Velaikkaras. The land measure veli, according to modern measures, is equal to 6.74 acres.
Tantric Influence on the Sculptures at Gal Vihara, Polonnaruva

The sculptures at Gal Vihara, Polonnaruva, which are undoubtedly the most impressive monuments in this ancient capital of Ceylon, have attracted the attention of both scholars and laymen alike not only because of their colossal proportions but also because of the peculiar iconographic features noticeable in them. Called the Uttarārāma in the *Gīlāvamsa*, the Gal Vihara was constructed about the middle of the twelfth century by King Parākramabāhu I (A.D. 1153-1186). These sculptures, which are four in number are carved on a rock boulder lying south-west to north-east. On the left hand side of the rock, as one approaches it, is carved a colossal statue of the Buddha seated on a *vajrāsana*, in the *dhvāna-mudrā*, and next to this on the right hand side in an excavated cave is another seated statue of the Buddha in the same *mudrā* and attended by two divinities on either side. To the right of this cave is a statue in the standing position popularly believed to be of Ananda, the chief attendant disciple of the Buddha. The identity of this statue has not yet been established. At the extreme right of the boulder is a gigantic recumbent statue of the Buddha.

Perhaps one of the most striking features of the sculptures at Gal Vihara is the presence of two distinctly marked facial types, neither of which can be traced to an earlier period in the history of Sinhalese sculpture. Of the four colossal statues here, the face of the recumbent statue, that of the larger seated Buddha, share similar features while the face of the seated statue in the excavated cave and that of the standing statue are invested with similar characteristics. It would appear that in the two larger statues, i.e., in the larger statue in the *dhvāna-mudrā* and in the recumbent statue the sculptor has employed a facial type appropriate to the larger dimensions of the statues while in the two smaller statues the heads which are well modelled and delicately chiselled impart to them a very attractive appearance. The facial type in the two smaller statues has some affinity with the type found in some of the statues of the Buddha made during the *Gupta* period in Bihar and Bengal and perhaps in a smaller measure to that found in some Buddha statues of the *Gupta* period. The significance of this affinity should be clear in the sequel.

The faces in the two larger statues, i.e., in the larger seated Buddha and the recumbent Buddha, are unusually round and the details are set in a somewhat flat surface, resulting in a dull and uninteresting expression. The nose is stiff and unnatural in both statues and the eyes are set rather high in the face. In the larger seated Buddha the latter circumstance has reduced the breadth of the forehead as well as the volume of hair falling over the forehead.

The full and round face is a characteristic of most Chinese statues of the Buddha, and considering the commercial and cultural relations that existed between Ceylon and China in the twelfth century, it is not altogether impossible that the sculptors who were responsible for the creation of these two statues had Chinese models for their guidance. Although it is not possible to point to a specific Chinese sculpture (or sculptures) as having inspired these two statues it will be remembered that Ceylon had from at least about the fifth century established relations with China. Even during the twelfth century these relations had remained uninterrupted.

A feature that is commonly shared by the sculptures at Gal Vihara as well as by some sculptures elsewhere at Polonnaruva is the technique of indicating the folds of the robe or other dress by ridges set off by the incision of two parallel grooves on the stone. This device has not been noticed in

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2. For a full description of these sculptures see Archaeological Survey of Ceylon Annual Report 1907, Colombo, 1911, pp. 7-17.
3. Plate I.
4. Plate II.
5. Plate III.
6. Plate IV.
7. R. D. Banerji, *Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculpture*, Delhi, 1933, Plates II(c), XXIV (a) and XXVI(b).
9. It is interesting to note that a king of Ceylon had sent to the Emperor of China a jade image of the Buddha in A.D. 404. Sculptures of the Buddha of the Anurādhapura period had also some influence on the sculptures of the period of the Southern Dynasties of China, see Leigh Ashton, An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Sculpture, London, 1924, pp. 6 and 95. Compare the faces of the Buddha figures under discussion with the face of the Bodhisattva figure in Plate XVII, of the Buddha Museum.
10. For Chinese relations with Ceylon see, Archaeological Survey of Ceylon Annual Report 1911-12, Colombo, 1915, p. 64. Also, *Gīlāvamsa*, 73, 84.
the sculptures of earlier periods in Ceylon and seems to have ceased to find favour with Sinhalese sculptors after the Polonnaruva period. In India, however, this device appears to have been in existence as early as the second or the third century A.D., when it appears for the first time in some of the sculptures from the Amaravati Stūpa. Though it is not possible to trace its use continuously in later periods in India, it appears to have come into vogue again in the eighth century when it can be noticed in some of the Pāla sculptures of Bihar and Bengal, particularly in the stelae of the Tantric schools, which were being produced in large numbers in this region from about the eighth century to the twelfth century. This device can also be noticed in some metal sculptures of South India assigned to the tenth century. Thus it would appear that this device was introduced to Ceylon as a result of contact with Pāla or with South Indian artistic traditions. Another feature that seems to have been introduced in the Gal Vihāra sculptures from the same quarter is the employment of two parallel lines of ridges to indicate the folds of the robe. This feature is not so extensively employed as the one mentioned earlier but can be noticed in certain parts of the recumbent statue at Gal Vihāra, for example, the right hand side of the trunk. As far as the writer is aware this technique does not occur in sculptures made before the Polonnaruva period nor in those made in subsequent periods. It can, however, be noticed in Pāla sculptures and also in some South Indian sculptures of about the tenth century.

11. Traces of this technique are noticeable in some early sculptures of Ceylon, e.g., in the Buddha statue from the Ruvanviliisaya, Anurādhapura, Benjamin Rowland, op. cit., Plate 137(A). This technique is found in various stages of development. Possibly the earliest stage of development is seen in sculptures where two grooves are made somewhat apart from each other leaving a flat ridge in between the grooves. In the more developed stages the flat ridge is subjected to further chiselling which reduces it to the form of a cord. The more developed stage is to be seen in the Polonnaruva sculptures. The earlier stage can be seen in an undated Buddha statue in the Bell Collection in the Colombo Museum, for an illustration of this statue see, D. T. Devendra, The Buddha Image and Ceylon, Kandy, 1929, Plate XXVIII.

12. For this technique in the Amaravati sculptures, see C. Sivaramanurthi, Amaravati Sculptures in the Madras Government Museum, Madras, 1943, Plates XXXII, 2, and LXII, 2.

13. For this technique in the Amaravati sculptures, see C. Sivaramanurthi, Amaravati Sculptures in the Madras Government Museum, Madras, 1943, Plates XXXII, 2, and LXII, 2.


15. R. D. Bancerji, op. cit., Plate XVII (c) and (d). It occurs in Brahmanical sculptures of the period too; see Plates L(6) and LVI(b). Variations of this technique are employed in some Brahmanical bronzes discovered at Polonnaruwa, assigned to the 10-13th centuries, A. K. Coomaraswamy, Bronzes from Ceylon, chiefly in the Colombo Museum, Ceylon, 1914, Plates II, Fig. 3, XII and XIII. The bronzes may have been imported to Ceylon from South India.

16. An attempt is now made to examine each of the above features of detail with a view to ascertaining the factors that weighed in the minds of the sculptors when they designed this statue.
the varada mudrā and the bhūspaṣa mudrā are also met with. Finally, there is also the possibility that though the sculptors who executed these sculptures employed in their work motifs and symbols usually employed in sculptures meant for Tantric worship, they, nevertheless, refrained from giving a faithful rendering of the sādhanas in their work, lest the Theravāda Buddhists who also must have worshipped at this shrine feel scandalised at being obliged to pay homage to statues made according to the requirements of a cult which at least in public they would not have hesitated to frown upon. The Nikāyasāṅgaraḥaya, a Sinhalese work of the fourteenth century dealing with the history of the schools of Buddhism in Ceylon from the beginning, makes the statement that a cult called the Vājirīya-vāda which was practised by ignorant people as an esoteric doctrine prevailed in this country from the time of King Matvala-sen (A.D. 846-866) up to the time when the book was written.

6. There are altogether four representations of the stūpa in this sculpture, one on each of the outward sides of the two upper floors of the prāśāda formed of the vimūناس. Together with miniature figures of Buddhas, representations of stūpas are also employed in stelae used by followers of Tantrism in Bihar and Bengal for purposes of worship. The stūpas depicted in this sculpture, however, are quite different in shape from the stūpas found on the Tantric stelae mentioned above, but closely resemble some of the votive stūpas discovered at Nāgāpaṭṭinam. In some of these latter stūpas the garbha increases in diameter towards the top, a feature shared by brass pots used in South India as well as by the pūrṇaṃghatas found at the portals of the stūpas at Anurādhapura, Ceylon. It is also remarkable that the stūpas on this sculpture do not resemble in shape any of the stūpas already constructed at Anurādhapura and elsewhere at the time when this sculpture was executed. Why the sculptors who were responsible for this statue should seek inspiration in the votive stūpas used at Nāgāpaṭṭinam in South India in preference to the stūpas of Ceylon can be explained if it can be shown that religious connections existed between Ceylon and Nāgāpaṭṭinam during the period in question. Even as early as the eighth century when Tantrism began to flourish in India, a well-known master of Tantrism arrived in Ceylon from Nāgāpaṭṭinam on his way to China.

7. and 8. As is seen clearly in Plate II the whole sculpture terminates at the top in the base of a vimūna somewhat longer than the base of the vimūnas situated on the lower floors. This and the sockets above it accommodated the topmost vimūna of the prāśāda as was shown in 4 above. This vimūna, it may be remarked once again, should have contained the miniature figure of the dhyāni Buddha associated with Buddha Gautama.

The shape of the dressed back-slab on which the main figure and its appurtenances have been carved is also of great significance in that it has the same shape as some of the Indian Tantric stelae of the Pāla period. As it is, today, it is semi-circular in shape at the top. When the vimūna that is missing today was intact it should have had a shape similar to that of some of those Indian Tantric stelae in which the upper part tapers into a point somewhat in the manner of Ceylon guard-stones having the shape of a conventional cobra hood. To take a particular Indian stela, this sculpture resembles in respect of shape in a most remarkable manner a stele from Bihar now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, depicting Bodhisattva Lokeshvara. Like the sculpture at Gal Vihāra the iconography of this stele is unconventional in that it conforms to no sādhana so far discovered. The stele is undated but cannot belong to a period later than the twelfth century.

Finally it may be stated that the fore-going analysis has shown that when the influence of Śaṅkarācārya became a dominant force in South India many Buddhists of this region trekked to Ceylon and other countries favourable to Buddhism. King Parākramabāhu I in whose reign these sculptures at Gal Vihāra were set up invited monks from South India to come over to Ceylon and some of these South Indian monks made a very substantial contribution towards the development of Buddhist thought in Ceylon. It is possibly through these contacts that the motif of the pot-shaped stūpa, ghaiṭakāra-stūpa, was introduced to Ceylon.
Sculptures in the Vijjādhāra-Guha

In its main aspects the chief sculptured figure in this excavated cave is the same as that of the sculpture discussed above. It is a figure of a Buddha posed in the dhyāna mudrā, seated on a throne of which the dado is decorated with alternating figures of the vajra and of the lion. At the back of the statue is a makara-torana with only one makara-head on each side flanked by figures of vyālas. Behind the head of the main figure is an oval shaped plain halo. Above the head is carved the underside of a chatra. On either side of the halo are the figures of two divine beings of whose bodies only the waist upwards is shown, the rest of the body being intended to be covered by the topmost crossbar and the imposts of the torana. On a recessed pediment on either side of the main figure are the standing figures of two cāmara-dhāris or fly-whisk bearers. The cāmara-dhāri on the right hand side proper of the main figure holds the fly whisk with the right hand and supports it with the left, while the cāmara-dhāri on the left proper holds the fly whisk with the left hand and supports it with the right. Once again the dressed back slab is semi-circular at the top and is neatly and clearly demarcated from the surface of the original rock, and the whole ensemble bears a remarkably close resemblance to the Tantric stelae of Bihar and Bengal, one significant difference being that the āsana projects forwards considerably in contrast to the āsanas in the Indian counterparts.

These features make it clear that this sculpture is an attempt to represent the Buddha Gautama at the moment of his enlightenment, who is then called in Tantric terminology the Vajrāsana Buddha. In the Sādhana-mālā, the characteristics of the vajrāsana Buddha are laid down as follows: “The worshipper should meditate himself as (Vajrāsana) who displays the bhūsparā mudrā in his right hand while the left rests on the lap. He is dressed in red garments and sits on the vajra-marked double lotus placed on the four Māras of blue, white, red and green colour. He is peaceful in appearance and his body is endowed with all the major and minor auspicious marks. To the right of the God is Maitreya Bodhisattva who is white and two armed, and wears the jāta-makuta (crown of matted hair) and carries the chowrie-jewel in the right hand and the nāgakeśari flower in the left. Similarly, to the left of the principal God is Lokesvara of white complexion, carrying in his right hand the chowrie and the lotus in the left.”

SCULPTURES AT GAL VIHARA, POLONNARUVA

It will be noticed at once that the sculpture in the Vijjādhāra-guha does not conform to this description in all its details. The most noteworthy defect in the sculpture in this respect is that the main figure is in the dhyāna-mudrā and not in the bhūsparā-mudrā as indicated in the Sādhana-mālā. In Ceylon, as was stated earlier, the commonest mudrā employed in seated statues of the Buddha is the dhyāna mudrā. Either because of this practice or because of the circumstances referred to above in the discussion of the other seated Buddha at Gal Vihāra, the sculptors who executed this have deviated from the requirements of the Sādhana-mālā. The double lotus seat has been provided but it is not marked by a representation of the vajra, which is however repeated in the dado of the āsana thrice. The four Māras mentioned in the Sādhana-mālā are the gods Brahmadeva, Viṣṇu, Śiva and Mātrikā. Of these it will be seen that the sculptor has provided only the figures of Brahmadeva and Viṣṇu.

The two attendant Bodhisattvas while otherwise conforming to the requirements of the Sādhana-mālā, do not seem to be carrying in their hands either the nāgakeśari flower or the lotus; instead each cāmara-dhāri employs both his hands to hold and support the cāmara. But these figures have been invested with characteristics associated with Bodhisattvas, characteristics such as the makara-kundala, the upavīṭa, a variety of neck ornaments and a rudimentary kirti-mukha on the drawers. It can, therefore, be taken that these two cāmara-dhāris were designed to represent Maitreya and Lokesvara even though their full iconographical paraphernalia have not been provided.

The other interesting feature of this sculpture, the figures of Brahmadeva and Viṣṇu placed on either side of the halo of the main figure, is best described in the words of H. C. P. Bell, who was one of the pioneers of the archaeological investigation in Ceylon. “Under the canopy,” says Bell, “and between the peaked finials of the torana and the Buddha’s haloed head, two Hindu devīyo, one on each side, are figured from the knee upwards in three-quarter length. Both gods—Vidyādhāras to the Sinhalese—are four armed. The lower pair of arms and hands are held forward of the body with palms joined in sign of adoration; the back arms, with elbows bent, grasp in the hands the insignia appropriate to each

35. Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, Indian Buddhist Iconography, Calcutta, 1958, p. 78.

SCULPTURES AT GAL VIHARA, POLONNARUVA

The Gal Vihara was constructed. The Mahāyāna form of Buddhism was introduced to Ceylon in the beginning of the third century and continued to be a potent force through the centuries in spite of the intermittent opposition of the orthodox Buddhists. When the Tantric form of Buddhism began to flourish in India in the eighth century its influence was immediately felt in Ceylon and according to the Nīkāyasāraṇīhāra it was formally introduced to Ceylon in the reign of King Matavā-sena, i.e., King Sena I whose reign lasted from A.D. 846-866. But there is evidence to show that Tantrism existed in Ceylon even before the reign of King Sena I. Chinese documents, for example, refer to two masters of Vajrayāna or Tantrism who visited Ceylon in the beginning of the eighth century. One of them a monk named Vajradhātu, on his visit to Ceylon, is said to have worshipped at the Holy Tooth of the Buddha which at the time must have been enshrined at Anurādhapura, the capital. His pupil Amoghavajra, a Vajrayāna teacher from northern India, who had already contributed towards the propagation of Tantrism in China, visited Ceylon about the year A.D. 740. In Ceylon he is said to have met a teacher called Samantabhadra by name, who probably was also an exponent of Tantrism. He also sought for the scriptures of the esoteric sect, i.e., Tantrism, and is said to have obtained more than five hundred sūtras and commentaries. Further he received instruction in the technique of the ritual, in the samaya, in the mudrās of the various deities, their forms and colours, in the methods of arranging alaras and banners, and in the literal and intrinsic meanings of the texts. That two Indian masters of Tantrism who were interested in propagating their doctrine in China should come to Ceylon for the purpose of receiving instruction in the theory and practice of Tantrism is ample evidence for the flourishing state of this particular doctrine in Ceylon in the eighth century. At the time when the Gal Vihāra sculptures were set up, Tantrism appears to have received a fresh impetus at the hands of King Parakramabahu I at whose direction several religious edifices for the benefit of the orthodox Buddhists were constructed. According to the Cilavatthu, in the course of building vihāras and other monastic edifices at Polonnaruwa, Parakramabahu built a beautiful dhāranīghāra for the recitation of magic incantations and another house called the mandala-mandira for listening to the birth stories of the Great Sage, which were related by a teacher appointed

37. For Bell's description, see Archaeological Survey of Ceylon Annual Report 1907, p. 12.
38. See note 29.
40. Cilavatthu, 73. 71.
for the purpose. There is no doubt that the dhāranī-ghara referred to in the Cūlavamsa was a house where the followers of Tantrism met to recite dhāranī. The term mandala-mandira also suggests a building required for Tantric worship, although the author of the Cūlavamsa explains the purpose, for which the building was set up in a different way. A mandala in Tantric terminology is a magic circle where the position of Buddhhas and related Bodhisattvas is indicated either through graphic representations or through symbols assigned to these divinities. According to the Hevajra Tantra, an important Tantric text, the ordering of the mandala and the initiation of the pupil should take place in a mandalāgāra. The mandala-mandira of the Cūlavamsa connotes the same thing, and if so, it may be taken that what Parākramabahu really built was a hall where Tantric rituals were performed and not a place where Jātaka-stories were related. Probably the author of the Cūlavamsa confused the representations of Bodhisattvas with Jātaka-stories, i.e., stories of Bodhisattvas.

King Parākramabahu is also credited with having built a house called the paṇiṣadasattati-mandira "for the reception of the magic water and the magic thread given him by the yellow robed ascetics." Here again the word paṇiṣadasattati is suggestive of Tantrism and may very well be the name of a Tantric text and the paṇiṣadasattati-mandira may have been a place where this particular text, was recited. A work by this name has not been found among the numerous texts on Tantrism, but a work called Saptasaptati, which is a commentary on the Tantric treatise Vajramaṇḍaka, is known to exist.

The dhānaṃgāra built by King Parākramabahu, according to the Cūlavamsa, was resplendent with a series of pictures of Buddhhas which were painted on silk. The description of the paintings would suggest Chinese paintings of Tantric mandalas and such paintings going as far back as the twelfth century are still to be found in China and elsewhere.

The name given in the Cūlavamsa to the excavated cave at Gal Vihāra also appears to be suggestive of Tantric worship and ritual. It is usually believed that the name Vījyadhara-guha had been given to this cave because there were figures of vījyadhāras among the sculptures in the cave. We have, however, seen that there are no such figures there, unless the two attendant Bodhisattvas and Brahmā and Viṣṇu can be regarded as belonging to the category of vījyadhāras. It is, nevertheless, not possible to class these well known Bodhisattvas and gods with nondescript godlings such as vījyadhāras. Even if these Bodhisattvas and gods were regarded as vījyadhāras, it would seem unlikely that such an unimportant aspect of this shrine as the figures of these deities would have been used as a basis for its name. Thus some other explanation has to be sought for the name of this cave as given in the Cūlavamsa. In Tantric terminology, the word vījyadhāra does not only mean a super-human being possessed of magical power, but also has the sense of one who possesses mantras, magical formulae employed in Tantric ritual. It has also the sense of a Lotus by the term dhāranī. For example one of the Tantric texts now in the original but extant in a Chinese version is given the names Vidyāraśi-pitāka and also Dhārani-pitāka. Thus the name Vījyadhara-guha may quite probably have been given to this cave by virtue of its being at a time a place where Tantric worship took place in the form of the repetition of mantras and dhāranis. It is also to be noted in the worship of the Vajrāsana-Buddha, which, it has been shown, is the theme of the scripture in the Vījyadhara-guha, the worshipper is enjoined upon to state several mantras specifically stated in the sādhanas.
The monuments at Tantri-malai are also of considerable interest as evidence in support of the existence of Tantrism in Ceylon in the twelfth century. The chief monuments here are a seated Buddha image in sunk relief and a recumbent Buddha image, both similar to those at Gal Vihara. The sedent Buddha, which does not appear to have been completed, is accommodated on a plain āsana behind which is a makara-torana similar to the one in the Vijjadhara-guha. The vajra symbol does not appear anywhere in the āsana. Two cāmara dhāris are placed alongside the halo of the Buddha on either side of it. On each side of the recess where these figures are sculptured arc incised four panels. Only one of these eight panels contains any sculpture. It is possible that these panels were intended to carry the figures of the last seven Buddhas and Maitreya, a theme sometimes found in Pāla sculpture. The whole sculpture, apparently, was intended to be a vajrāsana Buddha, when completed. The site where these monuments are situated has been called by a Tamil name, Tantri-malai, Tantric Hill, from the time it had been re-discovered in the last century. It is not possible to ascertain whether this name has been traditionally handed down from early times, and, if not, by what name this site had been known when the monuments were constructed there. The name Tantri-malai may possibly have preserved a suggestion of the Tantric associations of the site, and as these monuments are also assigned to a period not far removed from the time when the Gal Vihāra sculptures were set up, the name Tantri-malai provides some measure of testimony to the existence of Tantrism in Ceylon in the twelfth century. There is thus sufficient evidence to show that Tantrism was a living cult in Ceylon in the twelfth century, and that it was in order to meet the spiritual needs of the followers of this cult that the two seated Buddha figures at Gal Vihāra were constructed.

It may also be pointed out that even before the time of King Parākrama-bāhu I attempts had been made to adopt Tantric forms of sculpture in Ceylon. A stone stele of the same shape and with the same iconographic

54. For a sculpture of this subject see, R. D. Banerji, op. cit., Plate XXXI (b).
56. Plate V.
SCULPTURES AT GAL VIHARA, POLONNARUVA

characteristics as are found in the stelae of the Pāla period is found incorpo-
rated into one of the walls of the so-called Gedīgē at Nālandā, which was
evidently an image-house where Tantric worship had been performed
when it was in use. The stele contains the figure of a deity with two
attendants on either side, the one on the deity’s proper right being in an
attitude of worship, while the one on his proper left stands holding some
unidentifiable object in his hands. The main figure most probably re-
presents Bodhisattva Lokēśvara, one of the many forms of Bodhisattva
Avalokiteśvara who has been entrusted with the salvation of the world in
the present age.

As regards Ceylon’s connections with the north eastern part of India
during the Pāla regime there is hardly any evidence either in the Chronicles
or in the other historical documents of Ceylon, though there is a consider-
able body of evidence to show King Parākramabāhu’s relations with other
parts of India. It is very likely that Buddhist scholars and savants who
ved in Ceylon at the time as well as others who lived in the preceding
centuries had cultural ties with centres of learning in north eastern India
such as Nālandā which flourished as an international university for over
eight centuries almost up to the beginning of the thirteenth century, exerting
influence over the whole of South East Asia. Scholars from Nālandā
visited countries such as Ceylon, China, Korea and even Japan. There
is, however, definite archaeological evidence to show that Ceylon had
direct or indirect contact with this part of India when Tantrism was
a flourishing state there. A few stone stelae in the Pāla style have been
found in Ceylon and some stone inscriptions containing Tantric dhāraṇīs
written in the Nāgārī script used in north eastern India about the ninth
century have also been discovered in the vicinity of the Abhayagiri Stūpa
Anurādhapura. Thus there is reason to believe that some of the
tantric conventions and the stylistic peculiarities of Pāla sculpture noticed in
the two statues at Gal Vihāra examined above were introduced from the
region of Bihar and Bengal at some stage before the commencement of the
reign of Parākramabāhu I. Even in the reign of this ruler contact between
Ceylon and this region may have remained uninterrupted.

7. For an account of the Gedīgē at Nālandā, see Archaeological Survey of Ceylon Annual Report 1914, Colombo, 1914, pp. 43-50. This building is assigned to about the 8th century, and very likely the stele referred to in the text belongs to this period. For the date of the Gedīgē, see H. D. Sankalia, The University of Nālandā, Madras, 1934, p. 201.
Finally there is the question whether the standing figure popularly believed to be of Ānanda and the recumbent Buddha at Gal Vihāra were also meant to be objects of worship and meditation to the followers of Tantrism. There are no special iconographic features in these two statues that would enable one to identify them as Tantric images but they certainly appear to have formed an integral part of the ensemble of sculptures at Gal Vihāra. In the absence, therefore, of any evidence to the contrary, it can be taken that these two statues together with the two seated Buddha statues formed one whole Tantric temple, the Uttarārāma, which, then, would have been a special contribution made by King Parākramabāhu I to serve the needs of the followers of Tantrism of whom there must have been considerable numbers among his subjects.

P. E. E. FERNANDO

61 According to the Cūlavamsa, King Parākramabāhu had three grottoes made, namely, the Vijjādhara-guhā, the cave with the image in sitting posture and the grotto with the recumbent image, Cūlavamsa, Vol. II, 78. 73-75. The standing figure is not mentioned here and may have formed one shrine together with the recumbent statue. It is invested with characteristics usually associated with figures of the Buddha, the exception being the position of the hands. The ground plan of the brick structures at this site shows that there were four separate shrines including one constructed over the standing figure, demonstrating perhaps that the figure represents the Buddha. Paranavitana thinks that the figure represents the Buddha as para-dukkha-dukkhita, 'he who is sorrowing for the sorrows of others,' History of Ceylon, Vol. I, University of Ceylon Press Board, Colombo, 1959, p. 605. For the plan of Gal Vihāra, see Archaeological Survey of Ceylon Annual Report 1907.