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**SOME FACETS OF URBANISM AND MULTI CULTURALISM
AS REFLECTED IN ICONOGRAPHIC ART:
THE BRONZES IN THE JETAVANARAMA MUSEUM
OF THE CULTURAL TRIANGLE, ANURADHAPURA**

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The miniature bronzes unearthed at the Jetavanarama site of the Cultural Triangle in 1981, are an assortment of miscellaneous items representative of the Hindu and Buddhist traditions. There are still others, which are of a unique character in iconographic art, representing a syncretization of Buddhist and Hindu concepts. The iconographic details of two images are peculiar and have no exact parallels in South and South-East Asian Art. They seem to represent the convergence of Hindu and Mahayana Buddhist conceptions as found in some parts of South and South-East Asia. Such an impression presupposes that the Jetavanarama had interactions with Buddhist centres in foreign lands during the Polonnaruva period to which these images could be assigned.

The merchant community called Nanadesis seem to have played a key role in facilitating contacts with Buddhist monastic centres in foreign countries. One of the bronzes in this collection, which could be identified as a representation of Virabhadra has the label nanateciyan inscribed on its pedestal. The image was obviously a gift made by the Nanadesis to a religious institution, and the discovery of this particular item suggests that this mercantile community was settled in the vicinity of Jetavanarama. They had probably supplied the rare commodities required for the vast monastic establishments and the temples attached to them and served as agencies facilitating international contacts. Probably, the monks who undertook sea voyages traveled in merchant ships and some of them had come under the influence the Tantrayana. The discovery of Hindu bronzes presupposes the existence of a place of Hindu worship in the vicinity of the Jetavanarama and this may be explained in the light of the presence of the Nanadesis in the area. On the whole these bronzes are significant as they provide some fresh insights on some aspects of the history of religion which are obscure.