

SCHOOLS OF BUDDHISM IN EARLY CEYLON

D. J. Kalupahana

The concensus of opinion, both ancient and modern, is that the Sthaviravāda (generally known as the Theriya-nikāya) is preserved in Ceylon in its pristine purity. The three nikāyas in Ceylon led by the three monasteries, Mahāvihāra, Abhayagiri and Jetavana, in spite of their differences are considered to belong to the Theriya group. The two groups associated with the monasteries, Abhayagiri and Jetavana, came to be known as Dhammaruci and Sāgaliya nikāyas respectively.

History of the Schisms

The accounts of the schisms that led to the founding of separate nikāyas agree fairly well.¹ Based on these accounts the history of the schisms may be stated as follows:

Soon after his restoration, Vaṭṭagāmaṇi Abhaya built the Abhayagiri Vihāra on the site of the Tittihārama, a monastery of the Nigaṇṭhas. This vihāra was given to his benefactor, the Thera Mahā-Tissa. It happened that the Thera Mahā-Tissa who had accepted the gift of the Abhayagiri Vihāra, but actually lived elsewhere, was credited by general repute with living in domestic intercourse. The monks of Mahā-Vihāra assembled together and interdicted him. One of the Thera's pupils, who was present, obstructed them, and the tribunal of monks, adjudging the obstructor guilty of misconduct, expelled him from the order. He, therefore, broke away from the Mahā-Vihāra fraternity and lived at Abhayagiri Vihāra. A group of monks belonging to the Vajjiputtaka Nikāya arrived in Ceylon during this time, headed by a teacher called Dhammaruci. Finding no favour with the Mahā-Vihāra, they joined the Abhayagiri fraternity which welcomed them and soon accepted also their teachings. Thenceforward, this group came to be known as Dhammaruci Nikāya.

During the time of Vohāraka Tissa, the monks of the Abhayagiri of the Dhammaruci sect adopted the Vaitulya-Piṭaka which

D. J. Kalupahana, M. A. (Ceylon), Ph. D. (Lond.) is a Lecturer in Pali and Buddhist Civilization at the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya.

¹ *The Nikāya Samgrahawa*, (abbr. *NS*), tr. C. M. Fernando, revised and edited by W. F. Gunawardhana, (Colombo, 1908), pp. 11 ff.; *Mahāvamsa*, (abbr. *Mv*), ed. W. Geiger, (London, 1908), ch. 33.

“certain infidel Brāhmins called Vaitulyas who had assumed the garb of monks for the purpose of destroying the religion, had composed in the time of Dharmāsoka Mahārāja, and proclaimed it as the preaching of the Buddha. Thereupon the priests of the Theriya Nikāya, having compared it with the authentic text, rejected the Vaitulya doctrines as being opposed to religion.”

The controversy between the two fraternities, Mahā-Vihāra and Abhayagiri, over the acceptance of the Vaitulya-vāda by the latter, produced such bitterness that it demanded a royal inquiry. The king appointed one of his ministers, named Kapila, who reported that the Vaitulya-vāda was opposed to the strict teaching of the Buddha. Thereupon the king burnt all the Vaitulyan books and disgraced the monks of the Abhayagiri.

During the reign of Goṭhābhaya the Vaitulyan heresy raised its head again and once more the scene of trouble was the Abhayagiri Vihāra. It was during this time that a Thera named Ussiliya-Tissa, recalling the disgrace which befell Abhayagiri monks during Vohāraka-Tissa's reign, refused to be associated with the new enterprise. Unable to dissuade the monks of Abhayagiri from accepting Vaitulya-vāda, he left Abhayagiri and with a few followers went over to the Dakkhiṇagiri vihāra. There they put themselves under the leadership of a Mahā-Thera named Sāgala and were thenceforth known as the Sāgaliyas.

Once again the reigning monarch assembled the monks of the five chief monasteries which constituted the orthodox Sangha in Ceylon—the Mahā-Vihāra, Thūparāma, Vessagiri Vihāra, Issarasa-manārāma and the Cetiya Vihāra—and they then accepted that the Vaitulyans were heretical in their views. Thus for the second time the books of the Vaitulya-vāda were collected and burnt.

This, in brief, is the account of the schisms which produced the three main nikāyas in Ceylon. One very important fact that emerges from the above description is that whatever differences there were between the Mahāvihāravāsins on the one hand, and the Dhammarucians and the Sāgaliyas on the other, the Mahāvihāravāsins tolerated the latter except when attempts were made to introduce Vaitulya-vāda which they immediately opposed.

The Theory of Four Principal Schools (Cātur-Mahā-Nikāya)

It is to be anticipated that the separate existence of the three nikāyas, until their unification under a common leadership

in the twelfth century would certainly have led to the emergence of differences of opinion. Unfortunately, no attempt has been made to find out these differences in their teachings, if there were any, and to determine the nature of their traditions in relation to the various schools of Buddhism in India. This lack of interest on the part of the scholars may be an outcome of the belief that, since all the works belonging to the Abhayagiri were destroyed by the kings on the instigation of the Mahāvihāravāsins, source material for such an inquiry is also wanting. Therefore, the attempts to study the teachings of the various schools prevalent in Ceylon during early and mediaeval times were primarily based on extremely thin and scanty evidence found in the Chronicles, epigraphical records as well as travel records of some of the Buddhist pilgrims. These refer to the existence of the Mahāsāṅghikas and the Mahīśāsakas, in addition to the Theriya Nikāya.¹ Apart from the Mahāsāṅghikas, and the Mahīśāsakas,

¹ There appears to be only one reference to the existence of Mahāsāṅghika bhikkhus in Ceylon, and as has been pointed out by Heinz Bechert (see, Wilhelm Geiger, *Culture of Ceylon in Mediaeval Times*, ed. Heinz Bechert, Wiesbaden, 1960, p. 208, n. 1) and as may be evident from the information provided in this article, the authenticity of this reference is rather doubtful. But a few references to the views of the Mahāsāṅghikas are to be found in the sub-commentaries (e. g. *Abhidhammatthavikāsinī* abbr. *AbhvT* by Sumaṅgala, ed. A. P. Buddhadatta, Colombo, 1961, p. 46). It is natural that the author-monks of Ceylon were aware of the doctrines of the different schools that existed in India, especially when there was close contact between Ceylon and India. But this need not be construed to mean that all such schools existed in Ceylon.

The *NS* (pp. 9-10) also mentions the fact that Vājiriya-vāda was introduced to Ceylon together with Vaitulya-vāda. Vājiriya-vāda is generally considered to be a reference to Vajrayāna (see Eliot, C., *Hinduism and Buddhism*. London, 1954, vol. iii, p. 40). But the texts associated with this school, according to the *NS*, are the *Ratnakūṭa Sūtras*. The *Ratnakūṭa Sūtras* do not belong to the Vajrayāna school. For example, the *Kāśyapa-parivarta*, included in the category of *Ratnakūṭa Sūtras*, represents an earlier phase of Mādhyamika thought. The *Ratnakūṭa Sūtras* are even older than the *Mādhyamikavṛtti* for we find Candrakīrti quoting passages from this class of literature (see pp. 45, 47, 156, 157, 248, 249, 336, 339, 358).

Even the *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā* represents Mādhyamika rather than Vajrayāna thought. Therefore, Vājiriya-vāda would most probably be a reference to the Mādhyamika school (*vajra* or 'diamond' symbolizing the 'logic' of the Mādhyamika school.) Later on this kind of logic is even attributed to the Buddha, see, for example, *Mahābodhivamsa*, p. 84, where the Buddha is considered as one endowed with the splendour of the great diamond-like knowledge (*mahāvajirāṇāṇādiguṇasamannāgato*). It is also interesting to note, that, according to the *NS*, they were the Andhaka heretics who composed the "Ratnakūṭa Sūtras" and other scientific works (p. 9), thus associating them with a region in India where Nāgārjuna, the great Mādhyamika logician, started his career.

there are no specific references to any of the other nikāyas, either Mahāyāna or Hīnayāna. In a recent paper, R. H. L. H. Gunawardhana has made an attempt to show that "the main nikāyas of Indian Buddhism were, in fact, represented in Ceylon in the ninth century".¹ His argument pivots round the reference to the "four principal nikāyas" (*cātur-mahā-nikāya*) in what he calls the Abhayagiri inscription. Here, unfortunately, the four nikāyas are not mentioned by their names. The lack of any historical evidence to determine what exactly these four nikāyas were, has led the author to look for similar groups elsewhere. He found valuable light thrown on this problem by a statement of I-tsing who visited India in the seventh century. The statement refers to the prevalence of the four nikāyas "throughout the five divisions of India, as well as of the Southern Seas" "In Magadha," I-tsing says, "the doctrines of the four nikāyas are generally in practice, yet the Sarvāstivāda nikāya flourishes most... In the eastern frontier countries, the four nikāyas are found side by side."² Then I-tsing goes on to enumerate the four nikāyas as the Āryamūla-sarvāstivāda, Āryamahāsāṅghika, Āryasthāvirānikāya and Āryasammitīyanikāya. Gunawardhana quotes several other sources which refer to groups of four nikāyas. But in these, the four nikāyas consist of Mahāsāṅghika, Sarvāstivāda, Sthāviravāda and Sammitīya. But these lists are slightly different from that given by I-tsing. I-tsing's reference is to the Mūlasarvāstivāda and not to the Sarvāstivāda. It is generally believed that Mūlasarvāstivāda is different from Sarvāstivāda.³ Therefore, one may not be justified in assuming that the four schools, Sarvāstivāda, Mahāsāṅghika, Sthāvira and Sammitīya nikāyas were accepted as the four principal nikāyas in all the regions where Buddhism flourished and at all times. For example, Fa-hsien knew of the list of eighteen sects⁴ but he mentions by name only three, Mahāsāṅghika, Sabbatthivāda and Mahīsāsaka. These together with the Sammitīyas and the Sthāviravādins were the most important in Asoka's time. Hodgson has

¹ "Buddhist Nikāyas in Mediaeval Ceylon", in *The Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies*, vol. ix, pp. 55-66.

² I-tsing, *A Record of the Buddhist Religion*, tr. J. Takakusu, (Oxford, 1896), pp. 8-9.

³ Mūlasarvāstivāda is considered to be a sub-sect of Sarvāstivāda, see Geiger, *Mv.* (translation), p. 285.

⁴ See Rhys Davids, T. W., "The Sects of the Buddhists", in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, (abbr. *JRAS*), 1891, pp. 409 ff.

given us a somewhat extended summary of four later schools in Nepal, none of which are referred to in any list. These are

- (i) the Svābhāvikī,
- (ii) the Aiśvarikā
- (iii) the Karmikā and
- (iv) the Yātnikā¹

Rhys Davids opines that they are all probably Mahāyānist.² Lastly we come across a different list of four schools in Sāyana Mādharma's Sarvadarśanasamgraha.³ They are

- (i) the Vaibhāṣika,
- (ii) the Sautrāntika,
- (iii) the Mādhyamika and
- (iv) the Yogācāra.

Of these, the first two are considered to be Hīnayāna schools and last two Mahāyāna. Although the reference to these four schools are in a fourteenth century work, yet they were much older schools.

Our main purpose in referring to these different lists is to show that like the group of eighteen schools (which vary according to different lists⁴), the group of four nikāyas 'should not be taken as implying only four specific nikāyas. Due to the significance of the number four⁵, we find sometimes the eighteen schools reduced to four depending on the time and place. Sometimes where-five schools were found, one which may not be so significant as the others, may have been dropped to make the number four. Or else, where there were only three main nikāyas, another which was not very widely studied, may have been added to bring the total upto four. Of these two methods, the latter seems to be true in the case of the reference to the four principal nikāyas in the Abhayagiri inscription.

If so, how are we to determine which four schools were prevalent in the island during the period in which the Abhayagiri

¹ *Asiatic Researches*, vol. xvi (1828), pp. 424 ff. quoted by Rhys Davids, op. cit. *JRAS* (1891), pp. 241-2.

² loc. cit.

³ ed. V. S. Abhyankar, (Poona, 1924), ch. iii.

⁴ See *Points of Controversy*, (tr. of *Kathāvatthu*), by S.Z. Aung and C. A. F. Rhys Davids, (London, 1915), pp. xxxiv ff.; Geiger, *Mv.* (translation), p. 277.

⁵ Cp. categories in Buddhism such as cattāri ariyasaccāni, cattāro puggalā, cattāro sammappadhānā, cattāri mahābhūtāni, etc.

inscription came to be inscribed, that is to say, about the seventh century? To maintain that this is impossible because the Vaitulya-*Piṭaka* was burnt and destroyed several times is to beg the question. It may be true that the Vaitulya-*Piṭaka* introduced to Ceylon during the earlier period was destroyed and that extreme forms of Mahāyāna were not tolerated by the orthodoxy. This same fact should militate against including any Mahāyāna school under the category of "four principal nikāyas". But there certainly are schools which, though coming under the broad category of Hīnayāna, had greater leanings towards Mahāyāna. Such schools may have had the good fortune of escaping the wrath of orthodoxy.

The fact that the Vaitulya-vādins were always persecuted and that their literature was burnt shows that, as far as Ceylon was concerned, Mahāyāna was not one of the "four principal nikāyas" studied here during the early and medieaval period. Consequently, the burning of their literature should not be made an argument against the possibility of determining what the four principal nikāyas prevalent in Ceylon were. The more sensible method of finding out which of the schools were widely prevalent in Ceylon would be to examine the literary works and see whether they represent any particular school or schools of thought.

Referring to the situation in India, the Ceylon chronicles say that the first schism in the Buddhist Sangha took place after the Second Council held at Vesāli.¹ The two schools which arose as a result of this schism, namely, the Sthaviravāda and the Mahāsāṅghika, differed very little from each other with regard to the main teachings, except for the fact that the latter emphasised the docetic tendencies already dormant in the Sutta *Piṭaka* and attempted to popularize the teachings of the Buddha. While the Sthaviravādins insisted on the primacy of the historical Buddha, the Mahāsāṅghikas emphasised the conception of transcendental Buddha. These differences widened in the course of time, and the Mahāsāṅghika ideas gave rise to the belief in the eternal body of the Buddha, the Dharmakāya. Thus, when we come to the time of the *Kathāvatthu* we find the Mahāsāṅghikas and the Sthaviravādins interpreting the early sūtras differently, as for example, the statement of the Buddha in the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, that a Tathāgata is able by

¹ *Dīpavamsa*, (abbr. *Dpv*), ed. B. C. Law, in *The Ceylon Historical Journal*, (Colombo, 1958), 5.30 ff.; *Mv.* 5-3 ff.

the power of *iddhi* to prolong his life-span.¹ But during the earlier period there was not much difference between these two schools.

The major doctrinal differences among the various groups of the Saṅgha arose with the development of the Abhidharma. As pointed out elsewhere,² the Abhidharma analysis created many philosophical problems and divergent views came to be expressed by the Buddhist philosophers. The result was the emergence of many sects, traditionally believed to be eighteen in number and the Asokan era witnessed the diatribes among these different groups. The *Kathāvatthu* ("Points of Controversy") represents the Sthaviravāda presentation of the problems and their own refutation of other views. Some of the major schools whose doctrines were refuted in the *Kathāvatthu* were the Sarvāstivāda, Puggalavāda (=Sammitīya) and Mahāsāṅghika which, together with Sthaviravāda constituted the group of four principal nikāyas (cāturmahānikāya) referred to above.

Sthaviravāda Tradition in Ceylon

Some time after the Third Council, the Sthaviravāda tradition, together with the Pali Tipiṭaka, was introduced to Ceylon. This Sthaviravāda (Pali, Theravāda) tradition, enjoying generous royal patronage, continued to develop and take firm roots in the island. The Sthaviravāda so introduced was opposed not only to the schools such as the Mahāsāṅghika with definite bias towards Mahāyāna, but also to the Sarvāstivāda and the Sammitīya, as is evident from the *Kathāvatthu*. But unfortunately as a result of Buddhaghosa's literary activities and the subsequent disappearance of the earlier commentaries written in Sinhalese, we are not in a position to find out the lines on which the Sthaviravāda doctrines developed in Ceylon from the time they were introduced to the island by Mahinda until the time of Buddhaghosa.

The contribution of the Sinhalese to the enrichment of the Sthaviravāda tradition as embodied in the Pali Abhidhamma Piṭaka, including the famous *Kathāvatthu*, would certainly have

¹ Jaini, P. S., "Buddha's Prolongation of life", in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, (abbr. *BSOAS*), (London, 1958), vol. xxi, pp. 546 ff.

² Kalupahana, D. J., "Aspects of the Buddhist theory of the external world and the emergence of the philosophical schools in Buddhism", in *The Ceylon Journal of the Humanities*, (Peradeniya, 1970), vol. i, pp. 93 ff.

been represented in the Sinhalese commentaries which developed in Ceylon in relative isolation except for the occasional inroads of Vaitulya-vāda. Therefore, we may presume that the genuine Sthaviravāda was preserved in these Sinhalese commentaries. These Sinhalese commentaries which grew around the Pali Tipiṭaka and developed for nearly eight centuries are irretrievably lost. These were replaced by the more systematic commentaries of Buddhaghosa, generally believed to preserve in its pristine purity the Sthaviravāda introduced by Mahinda. But a careful analysis of the works of Buddhaghosa as well as some of the incidents connected with his stay in Ceylon would throw much doubt on the validity of this assumption.

The Syncretic Sthaviravāda - Buddhaghosa and Dhammapāla

The *Mahāvamsa* describes Buddhaghosa as a "Brahman youth, born in the neighbourhood of the Great Bodhi-tree, accomplished in arts and sciences, one who had mastered the Vedas, was well versed in knowledge, skilled in all disputes, himself a schismatic wanderer over Jambudīpa assuming the character of a disputant."¹ He is also credited with having written a text called the '*Ñānodaya*' and also a chapter called '*Atthasālinī*' on the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*. Such a person certainly would not have missed the opportunity of studying all the Buddhist traditions as well as their literature available during his time in India. By his time the teachings of many of the principal schools of Buddhism had come to be crystallized. Therefore, we are justified in assuming that when Buddhaghosa came to Ceylon he had a thorough knowledge of the teachings of the different schools of Buddhism prevalent in India.

We mentioned that the Sinhalese commentarial tradition was a product of at least eight centuries of development. But this commentarial literature is believed to have been systematised and translated into Pali by one individual, namely, Buddhaghosa. It is, therefore, difficult to believe that the Sthaviravāda tradition represented in his commentaries could escape the personal touch of the commentator. The vast knowledge he has already acquired before he came to Ceylon would certainly have influenced his thinking and coloured his interpretation of the Sthaviravāda doctrines.

¹ *Mv.* 37. 215-6.

In this connection, the statement of the *Mahāvamsa* that the Mahāvihāra monks decided to test his ability and credentials seems to be rather significant because it shows that there was an element of suspicion in the minds of the Mahāvihāravāsins about the way in which he would interpret the teachings of their school. One may therefore not be far wrong in assuming that the Theras who, according to Buddhaghosa, invited him to write the commentaries, were actually the monks who were keeping a vigilant eye over the manner in which he interpreted the teachings.

In the absence of the Sinhalese commentaries, what reasonable criteria are we going to adopt in determining what the genuine Sthaviravāda was and what were the new ideas introduced by Buddhaghosa? The safest method would be to consider some of the major theories criticised in the *Kathāvatthu* and see to what extent these very same views are reflected in Buddhaghosa's works. This method has its own limitations in that some of the theories which we come across in Buddhaghosa's commentaries are those of later schools such as the Vijñānavāda which were not fully developed at the time the *Kathāvatthu* came to be written. But in the absence of the Sinhalese commentaries, there seems to be no other course open to us.

Reading through the commentaries of Buddhaghosa, it is possible to pick out some theories which a genuine Sthaviravādin may be reluctant to accept. There are two important theories not found in the Sthaviravāda Abhidharma tradition, but which appear for the first time in the commentaries of Buddhaghosa. One is the theory of atoms (*paramāṇu*) and the other, the theory of moments (*khaṇa*).

The analysing of man and his experience of the external world in terms of the aggregates (*khandha*), bases (*āyatana*) and elements (*dhātu*) was a common feature of early Buddhism as well as of all the schools of Abhidharma. But influenced by the Vaiśeṣikas, this was converted to a theory of atoms by the Sarvāstivādins and the Sautrāntikas. Along with the acceptance of the theory of atoms, there emerged several philosophical problems. How could the atoms, considered to be suprasensible and bereft of any magnitude and colour, form the perceptible world with its dimensions and colour? To solve this the Sarvāstivādins put forward the

theory of primary (*dravya*) and aggregate (*saṅghāta*) atoms (*paramāṇu*).¹ A theory bearing very close resemblance to this is seen to emerge from some of the comments made by Buddhaghosa. In a passage in the *Visuddhimagga*, Buddhaghosa points out that the bodily constituents such as head-hair, bodily-hair, etc. should be understood by way of groups (*kalāpa*). What in common parlance is called head-hair is only a collection of eight material elements (*aṭṭhadhammakalāpamatta*).² In another passage, the matter that enters into the composition of the body is explained by way of particles (*cunṇa*). "In this body the *paṭhavi-dhātu* taken as reduced to fine dust and pounded to the size of *paramāṇu* might amount to an average *donā*-measure full, and that is held together by the *āpo-dhātu* measuring half as much."³ Here the Sarvāstivāda conceptions of primary atoms (*dravya-paramāṇu*) and aggregate atoms (*saṅghāta paramāṇu*) are found in germinal form. As may be pointed out later, it was left to the later scholiasts to lay bare the full implications of these theories.

Further, the Sarvāstivādins, again under the influence of the Vaiśeṣika "dravyavāda", accepted two different aspects of phenomena: substance or 'own nature' (*svabhāva*) and 'characteristics' (*lakṣaṇa*)⁴. The former explains the continuity of phenomena, the latter perceptibility. 'Substance' or 'own nature' (*svabhāva*), which explains the continuity of phenomena, had to be considered as unchanging and eternal; thus their existence (*astitva*) during the three periods of time, past, present and future. This was the very same theory which came to be vehemently criticised in the *Kathāvatthu*.⁵ It was so prominent a Sarvāstivāda theory that Buddhaghosa possibly could not introduce it into the Sthaviravāda tradition. But certain ideas associated with this theory of 'substance' (*svabhāva*) are to be noticed in the writings of Buddhaghosa. For example, the definition of dhamma as that "which bears its own nature" (*attano sabhāvaṃ dhārentīti dhammā*)⁶

¹ *L'Abhidharmakosa de Vasubandhu*, (abbr. *Kosa*), tr. L. de la Vallée Poussin, (Paris, 1923), i. 144.

² *Visuddhimagga*, (abbr. *Vism*), ed. C. A. F. Rhys Davids, (London, 1920-1), p. 364.

³ *ibid.*, p. 365.

⁴ *Abhidharmakosa*, (abbr. *Ak*) ed. R. Samskrityāyana, (Benares, 1955), v. 26; *Abhidharmadīpa* with *Vibhāṣāprabhā-vṛtti*, (abbr. *Adv*) ed. P. S. Jaini, (Patna, 1959), pp. 259-60; *Tattvasamgraha* with *pañjikā*, ed. B. Krishnamacharya, (Baroda, 1926) (Gaekwad Oriental Series, 30), vol. i, pp. 504-5.

⁵ ed. Arnold C. Taylor, (abbr. *Kv*), (London, 1894-1897), i. 115 ff.

⁶ *Atthasālini*, (abbr. *DhsA*), ed. E. Muller, (London, 1897), p. 39.

represents an unconscious acceptance of the Sarvāstivāda theory and as may be pointed out later, a school opposed to the Sarvāstivāda tradition in Ceylon sounded a warning against the acceptance of such a theory of 'own nature' (*svabhāva*).

Moreover, as a result of the acceptance of the theory of 'substance' (*svabhāva*), the Sarvāstivādins had to modify the theory of causality which was presented in the early Buddhist texts. They admitted a distinction between 'cause' (*hetu*) and 'condition' (*pratyaya*), corresponding to the distinction between the primary cause and secondary condition as postulated in commonsense realism. This is because the 'cause' (*hetu*) and the 'effect' (*phala*) are invariably related or connected by their 'own nature' (*svabhāva*) and that other contributory conditions are not of such significance. Such a distinction was not made either in early Buddhism as embodied in the Nikāyas or in Sthaviravāda Buddhism as represented in the Pali Abhidhamma.¹ In fact, the *Sphuṭārthābhīdharmakosa-vyākhyā* refers to these different views.² But in the *Visuddhimagga*, Buddhaghosa seems to emphasise this distinction thereby almost accepting the Sarvāstivāda standpoint. He maintains: "When it (i. e., a being) is born thus, its causes (*hetu*) are the four things, namely, ignorance, craving, clinging and karma; since it is they that bring about its birth. Nutriment is its condition (*paccaya*), because it is this that consolidates it"³

With regard to the theory of moments (*ksaṇa*) too, Buddhaghosa's view seems to resemble the Sarvāstivāda conception. It is true that in his works we do not come across a fully developed theory of moments, as we find in the later Abhidhamma manuals.⁴ Yet he accepts three moments, nascent (*uppāda*), static (*thiti*) and cessant (*bhaṅga*)⁵. There was a rather long-drawn controversy

¹ See Kalupahana, D. J., *A critical analysis of the early Buddhist theory of causality as embodied in the Pali Nikāyas and the Chinese Agamas*, Ph. D. Thesis, University of London, 1967, pp. 120-142, (unpublished).

² (abbr. *Sakv*), ed. U. Wogihara, (Tokyo, 1932, 1936), pp. 18g, 703.

³ *Vism.* pp. 598-9 Tass' evaṃ nibbattamānassa avijjā, tanhā, upādānaṃ kamman ti ime cattāro dhammā nibbatakattā hetu; āhāro upatthambhakattā paccayo ti...

⁴ See Saratchandra, *Buddhist Psychology of Perception* (Colombo, 1958) : p. 44.

⁵ *Sammohavinodanī*, (abbr. *VbhA*), ed. A. P. Buddhadatta, (London, 1923), p. 7; *Vism.* pp. 292, 473.

among the different schools with regard to this problem. The controversy centred round the statement in the early Buddhist texts which runs thus: "Bhikkhus, there are these three characteristics of the conditioned: of conditioned things genesis (*uppāda*) is apparent, the passing away (*vaya*) is apparent, change in what exists (*ñhitassa aññathatta*) is apparent."¹ The phrase *ñhitassa aññathatta* in the above passage refers only to the nature of a conditioned thing from the time of its arising upto the time of its cessation; in other words, it only implies the process of decay (*jarā*), and does not imply anything static. Buddhaghosa, while paraphrasing it by decay (*jarā*),² goes on to accept a static moment. The Sarvāstivādins accepted four characteristics: nascence (*jāti*), decay (*jarā*), duration (*sthiti*) and impermanence (*anityatā*).³ *Thitassa aññathatta* which was only one of the three characteristics according to the suttas was given as two: *sthiti* and *anityatā*. The recognition of the static moment was one of the main features of the Sarvāstivāda theory and as may be pointed out later, the Sautrāntikas denied this static moment. The fact that the theory of moments was new to both the sūtra as well as the commentarial traditions preserved at the Mahā-Vihāra in Ceylon is amply illustrated by a statement of Buddhaghosa in the *Atthasālinī*. He says: "Herein the continued present (*santati-paccuppanna*) finds mention in the commentaries; the enduring present (*addhā-paccuppanna*) in the Sūtras. Here some say that 'The thought existing in the momentary present (*khana-paccuppannaṃ*) becomes the object of telepathic insight (*cetopariya-ñāṇa*)' ".⁴ Thus, those who upheld the theory of moments (*khana*) are referred to as "some" (*keci*), thereby implying that it did not belong to the commentarial tradition available at Mahāvihāra. Moreover, the examples quoted by Buddhaghosa to illustrate the rapidity with which the moments

¹ *Āṅguttara Nikāya*, (abbr. *A*) ed. R. Morris and E. Hardy, (London, 1885-), i. 152, Tīn' imāni bhikkhave saṅkhatassa saṅkhatalakkhanāni. Katamāni tīni? Uppādo pannāyati vayo pannyati ñhitassa annathattam pannāyati

² *Manorathapūraṇī*, (abbr' *AA*), ed. N. Welleser and H. Kopp, (London, 1924-56), ii. 252, Thitassa annathattam nāma jarā... Tesu uppādakkhane uppādo, ñhitakkhane jarā bhedakkhane vayo.

³ *Kosa*. ii. 222; Sumangala (*AbhvT* pp. 304-5) says that the ācariyas, Jotipāla and Dhammapāla, while disagreeing with Ānanda, accept both *thiti* and *jarā*.

⁴ *DhsA*. p. 421, Santati-paccuppannaṃ c'ettha aṭṭhakathāsu āgatam, addhā-paccuppannaṃ sutte. Tattha keci khana-paccuppannaṃ cittam cetopariyanāssa ārammanaṃ hotīti vadanti.

succeed one another are examples rather popular in the texts belonging to the Sarvāstivāda school.¹

Thus we see that a number of the Sarvāstivāda theories are to be found, some of them implicitly, in the works of Buddhaghosa. On the whole, the realism that is characteristic of Sarvāstivāda is a dominant feature of Buddhaghosa's writings.

But we do not propose that Buddhaghosa was a full-fledged Sarvāstivādin. In fact, there are many instances where Buddhaghosa seems to have favoured, or even accepted some of the theories put forward by schools such as Mādhyamika and Yogācāra. The *Visuddhimagga* as well as the Abhidhamma commentaries make use of the theory of "subliminal consciousness" (*bhavaṅga-viññāna* or *bhavaṅga-citta*).² Whether this theory was part and parcel of the Sthaviravāda tradition in Ceylon before Buddhaghosa is a question which may not be satisfactorily answered, because, as we have pointed out earlier, the source material necessary for deciding this question is irretrievably lost. But we know that a similar theory, namely, the theory of *ālaya-viññāna* was very popular with the Yogācārins from a very early date.

Apart from this, a very specific example of Buddhaghosa's knowledge of the Yogācāra texts and the influence this exerted on his interpretation of the Sthaviravāda tradition is to be found in the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*. A careful examination of the *Paṭṭhāna* of the Theravāda Abhidhamma Piṭaka would reveal the fact that their conception of a causal relation is rather narrow or limited. Among the list of twenty four causal relations enumerated here, not one represents a positively obstructing cause. The *vigata-paccaya* and the *natthi-paccaya* are obstructing causes only in a negative sense. This is because the Theravādins defined a cause (*pratyaya*) as a 'supporting phenomenon' (*upakāraḥ dhammo*), not as one that obstructs the arising of another phenomenon. In his own definition of 'cause' (*pratyaya*), Buddhaghosa remains faithful to the Theravāda tradition. But his knowledge of the non-Theravāda literature was so extensive that without any provocation he introduces a type of causal relation which was not contemplated in the Theravāda tradition. In the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, Buddhaghosa

¹ See *Vism.* pp. 458 ff.

² Cp. *Sāratthappakāsinī*, ed. F. L. Woodward, (London, 1929-37), ii. 99 and *Sakv.* p. 33.

refers to nine ways in which ignorance (*avijjā*) is causally related to the dispositions (*saṅkhārā*), one of which is by way of obstruction (*paḷibodha*).¹ We have not been able to trace such a definition in the Theravāda Abhidhamma. But in the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, Asanga refers to various ways in which the "root-cause" (*hetu-pratyaya*) could be recognised and one of them is by way of "opposition" or "obstruction" (*paripantha*).² The example given is that of the acquisition of defiling tendencies (*klesa*) which leads to the perpetuation of the flow of defilements and the resulting "obstruction" to the attainment of emancipation. Here the defilements function as obstructing causes and the function of the 'cause' (*pratyaya*) is identical with that referred to by Buddhaghosa in the *Sumaṅgalavilāsini* as *paḷibodha*. Moreover, an 'obstructing cause' (*virodhi-kāraṇa*) is frequently referred to in the Yogācāra texts.³

Before we conclude the examination of Buddhaghosa's works, we may mention another school which seems to have exerted much influence on his interpretation of the Sthaviravāda texts. This is the Mādhyamika school. It is true that the Mādhyamika conception of *sūnyatā* had its origin in the early sūtras. In fact, the Mādhyamikas themselves quote many sūtras in support of their theory of *sūnyatā*.⁴ But really it is Nāgārjuna who, while criticising the Ābhidharmika tradition, *emphasised* the use of *sūnyatā* as an equivalent for 'dependent origination' (*pratītya-samutpāda*) and also as an equivalent not only of the nature of the phenomenal world but also for Nibbāna and the Absolute. This emphasis emerges very clearly from the works of Buddhaghosa.⁵

¹ *Sumaṅgalavilāsini*, (abbr. *DA*), ed. T. W. Rhys Davids, J. E. Carpenter and W. Stede, (London, 1876-1932), i. 101.

² *Abhidharmasamuccaya* ed. Pralhad Pradhan, (Sāntiniketan, 1950), p. 28.

³ *Ibid.* p. 29; *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, La Siddhi de Hiuan-Tsang. tr. L. de la Vallee Poussin. (Paris, 1921), p. 459.

⁴ Cp. for example, *Mādhyamakavṛttih*, ed. L. de la Vallee Poussin, (St. Petersburg, 1903), p. 41 and *Samyutta Nikāya*, ed. M. Leon Feer, (London, 1890). iii. 142. Also *s. v.* *Mādhyamakavṛttih*, pp. 525-629.

⁵ See Karunaratna, W.S., "Sūnyatā in Theravāda Buddhism", in *The Adyar Library Bulletin*, (Adyar, 1959), vol. xxiii, pp. 1 ff. Here the author attempts to show that *śūnyatā* was not an innovation of Nāgārjuna but part and parcel of Theravāda Buddhism. Yet most of the sources considered by the author as representing the Theravāda tradition are from the commentaries of Buddhaghosa, a fact which, on the other hand, proves our contention that Buddhaghosa was also influenced by the Mādhyamika school of thought.

The conclusion to which all this would lead us is that Buddhaghosa's commentaries hardly depict the pure Sthaviravāda tradition. On the contrary, while preserving a good part of the Sthavira tradition, Buddhaghosa has incorporated into his works the central tenets of many of the divergent schools of Buddhism, yet with a strong bias towards Sarvāstivāda realism. Thus it is a more complex form of Sthaviravāda that we find in Buddhaghosa's works and this was the school which had its centre at Mahavihāra in Anurādhapura for many years afterwards.

Of Buddhaghosa's successors, Dhammapāla seems to have been rather faithful to the views put forward by the great exegetist. Since most of Dhammapāla's commentaries were on texts which dealt with predominantly religious ideas rather than philosophical concepts, his works throw very little light on the problems referred to earlier. On the whole he seems to have advocated a kind of realism which Buddhaghosa himself favoured. In his commentary on the *Netti*, Dhammapāla, like Buddhaghosa, directly associates himself with the theory of causality which recognised a distinction between a 'primary cause' and a 'secondary condition'.¹

The Sarvāstivāda Tradition in Ceylon

Buddhadatta who wrote the *Abhidhammāvatāra* and who was a senior contemporary of Buddhaghosa seems to have favoured the kind of realism advocated by the Sarvāstivādins, more than Buddhaghosa did. While Buddhaghosa followed the more traditional way of expounding reality in terms of the *skandha-āyatana-dhātu* classification, Buddhadatta's analysis appears to be rather unorthodox in that he adopts the fourfold division of mind (*citta*), mental properties (*cetasika*), matter (*rūpa*) and *nibbāna*.² Realism is more pronounced in his works than in the works of Buddhaghosa. The consideration of mind (*citta*) and matter (*rūpa*) as separate realities (*paramattha*) points to this.³ This method of expounding reality in terms of the four categories was not much popular in the North Indian Abhidharma tradition. Since Buddhadatta came

¹ *Nettipparāṇa*, ed. F. Hardy, (London, 1902), p. 78.

² *Abhidhammāvatāra*, ed. A. P. Buddhadatta, (Colombo, 1954), p. 1.

³ See *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, (abbr. *Abhs*) ed. T. W. Rhys Davids, (in *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, London, 1884), p. 1.

from Urugapura in South India, this probably may have been a tradition prevalent in that part of India. The realist trend is also clearly set out in Buddhadatta's *Rūpārūpavibhāga* ("Analysis of material and immaterial phenomena").¹

The next author of repute who appears to have continued the realist tradition in Ceylon was Anuruddha who lived at the beginning of the twelfth century. A careful study of his works would show that he was more faithful to the system of exposition adopted by Buddhadatta, as for example, in emphasising the fourfold division of reality introduced by Buddhadatta. In his *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, considered as the manual *par excellence* both in Ceylon and Burma, he spells out very clearly some of the theories which were found in a rather unsystematic form in the works of Buddhaghosa. The Sarvāstivāda theory of paramāṇu, which was found in implicit form in the *Visuddhimagga*, is presented very explicitly here. The term *kalāpa* came to be used in a technical sense, corresponding to the *saṅghāta-paramāṇu* of the Vaibhāṣikas, to mean the smallest unit of matter, which is a collection (*pinḍa*) of material elements (= *paramāṇu* or *dravya-paramāṇu*).² As for the theory of moments (*khana*), he accepts the threefold division into nascent (*uppāda*) static (*ṭhiti*) and cessant (*bhaṅga*) moments and goes on to describe in detail how the attunement of mental vibrations with the vibrations of matter gives rise to perception.³ The *Nāmarūpa-pariccheda*⁴ is still another example of his adherence to the philosophy of realism.

Sāriputta who lived during the reign of Parākramabāhu the Great (1165 A. D.) turns out to be a very important figure in our attempt to determine the schools of thought connected with the three main Vihāras in Ceylon. Although Sāriputta belonged to the Polonnaruwa period, yet he represents a tradition which was started by Buddhadatta during the Anurādhapura period.

Sāriputta's *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha-sannaya*, while conforming to the realist tradition embodied in Anuruddha's manual, also gives the different views held by some other teachers regarding certain

¹ ed. A. P. Buddhadatta, in *Buddhadatta's Manuals*, I, 1915 (pp. 149-159).

² See Karunadasa, Y., *Buddhist Analysis of Matter*, (Colombo, 1967), pp. 144-5.

³ *Abhs.* pp. 16-7.

⁴ ed. A. P. Buddhadatta, (Colombo, 1954.)

philosophical problems connected with the theory of moments (*khaṇa*). Accepting the traditional view that a phenomenon has three moments, i.e. nascent (*uppāda*), static (*thiti*) and cessant (*bhaṅga*), which resembles the Sarvāstivāda standpoint, Sāriputta refers to another theory which denies the static moment (*thitikkhaṇa*) and later goes on to reject it.¹ He does not refer to the name of the author or of the school advocating this theory, but merely says that it was held by some teacher (*samahara ācariya kenek*).

What is of historical significance is that Sāriputta became the head of a large school at Jetavana in Polonnaruva. He is one of the most illustrious teachers who lived during this time and came to be known as Sāgaramati, "like unto the ocean in wisdom".² He was also one of the prominent members of Parākramabhāhu's convocation and we are told that the king built for him "a mansion of great splendour containing many halls and chambers", attached to the Great Jetavana Vihāra at Polonnaruva.³ The connection between the Jetavana in Anurādhapura and the Jetavana at Polonnaruva, though not established historically, seems to be rather significant when we consider the continuity of the tradition started by Buddhaddatta.

Of the authors who owed allegiance to the realist tradition, the last and by far the most important for our study, is Sumangala who was one of the pupils of the great teacher Sāriputta, referred to above. The most outstanding among his works are the *Abhidhammatthavikāsinī*, a sub-commentary (*ṭīkā*) on Buddhaddatta's *Abhidhammāvatāra* and the *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī*,⁴ a sub-commentary on Anuruddha's *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*. In these two texts, the Sarvāstivāda realism is spelled out in no unmistakable terms.

One of the most important problems connected with the theory of moments (*ksaṇa*) on which the Sarvāstivādins and the Sautrāntikas disputed with each other is the recognition of the

¹ *Abhidhammāvatāra-purāṇa-sannaya*, ed. W. Somaloka Tissa, (Colombo, 1960), pp. 101-2.

² *Saddhammasaṅgaha*, p. 62; Malalasekera, G. P., *Pali Literature of Ceylon*, (Colombo, 1958 reprint), p. 197.

³ *Mv.* 78.31 ff.

⁴ (abbr. *AbhsT*), ed. D. Pannāsara and P. Wimaladhamma (Colombo, 1933) (Vidyodaya Tika Publication, vol. i).

static moment (*sthiti-ksana*, P. *ṭhitikkhaṇa*).¹ In both works mentioned above, Sumangala makes a persistent attempt to justify the acceptance of the static moment. Every now and then, he refers to the opponent's view which denies the static moment and devotes much space to its refutation. It is of immense significance to note that in one place in the *Abhidhammatthavikāsinī*, Sumangala openly states that it was Ānanda (who wrote the *Mūla-ṭīkā*) who denied the theory of a static moment (*ṭhitikkhaṇa*).²

We pointed out earlier that Buddhaghosa's definition of dhamma as "that which bears its own nature" (*attano sabhāvaṃ dhārentīti dhammā*) brought him very much closer to the Sarvāstivāda teachings. It was pointed out that the Sarvāstivāda was, on the other hand, influenced by the dravya-vāda of the Vaiśeṣikas. The Vaiśeṣika categories of *dravya* and *sāmānya* seems to have moulded the Sarvāstivāda conception of dharma to such an extent that the latter defined dharma in terms of 'individual' (or one's own) and 'general' characteristics (*svasāmānyalakṣaṇadhāranāt dharmah*).³ Sumangala goes further than his predecessors in adopting the Sarvāstivāda standpoint when he defines dhamma in identical terms—*sabhāvasāmāññalakkhaṇaṃ dhāretīti dhammā*.⁴

Thus the Sarvāstivāda tradition in Ceylon, initiated by Buddhadatta and favoured by Buddhaghosa, reaches its climax with the works of Sumangala. The fact that Sumangala was following the footsteps of his predecessors in the matter of presenting the Sarvāstivāda tradition is attested by his frequent calls to adopt the interpretations of the commentators.⁵

The Sautrāntika Tradition in Ceylon

Apart from these two traditions—the syncretic Sthaviravāda represented by Buddhaghosa and Dhammapāla, and the Sarvāstivāda

¹ For the Sarvāstivāda view, see *Adv.* pp. 104-5; Sautrāntika views are found at *Abhidharmakosa-bhāṣya* (abbr. *Akb*), ed. Pralhad Pradhan, ii. 46 ed. (quoted by Jaini, *Adv.* p. 105 n.)

² p. 304; cp. *AbhsT.* pp. 77, 117-8.

³ *Sakv.* p. 12.

⁴ *AbhvT.* p. 11.

⁵ *AbhsT.* p. 78, where Sumangala agrees with the view expressed in the *atthakathā* regarding the problem of *ṭhitikkhaṇa*. See also pp. 81, 87, 98-100.

tradition represented by Buddhadatta, Anuruddha, Sāriputta and Sumangala—we come across another very important tradition of which the sole representative seems to be Ānanda of *Abhidhamma-mūlaṭīkā* fame. The *Abhidhamma-mūlaṭīkā* (a sub-commentary on Buddhaghosa's commentaries on the Abhidhamma Piṭaka)¹ composed by Ānanda, a native of South India, presents us with a tradition completely different from the two traditions discussed above. This is borne out very clearly by the fact that on the one hand, while commenting on the commentaries of Buddhaghosa, Ānanda occasionally disagrees with the commentator,² and on the other hand, Sumangala, the representative of the Sarvāstivāda tradition in Ceylon, while agreeing with the commentarial tradition,³ openly disagrees with the views expressed by Ānanda.⁴ In the *Vikāsinī* as well as in the *Vibhāvinī*, Sumangala several times refers to Ānanda by name⁵ and sometimes as the Tīkākāra.⁶

Leaving out many of the minor problems on which these traditions differed from one another, we propose to consider two of the main issues on which they expressed divergent views. In fact, these were two of the main issues on which the two traditions, Sarvāstivāda and Sautrāntika, came to be divided. The first is the conception of dhamma and the other, the theory of moments (*khana*).

We have already pointed out how because of Buddhaghosa's leanings towards Sarvāstivāda, he used the term *sabhāva* (own nature) in his definition of dhamma. Then we found that Sumangala went a step further when he defined dhamma as "that which bears 'individual' (*sabhāva*) and 'general' (*sāmañña*) characteristics", thereby adopting the dichotomy which the Sarvāstivādins themselves upheld. But Ānanda who wrote the sub-commentary on Buddhaghosa's *Atthasālinī* and who even preceded Anuruddha, while adopting Buddhaghosa's definition of dhamma as "that which bears

¹ Part I, (*Dhammasaṅgani-ṭīkā*) (abbr. *DhsT*), ed. D. Pannāsara and P. Wimaladhamma, (Colombo, 1938), (Vidyodaya Tīkā Publication, vol. ii). The complete text is being edited for the Pali Text Society (London) by the present author.

² *DhsT* pp. 98-99; also pp. 140 ff.

³ See note 5, p. 176.

⁴ *AbhvT* pp. 153, 197, 301 304-5; *AbhsT* pp. 81, 104, 118.

⁵ *AbhvT* pp. 153, 207, 216, 237, 254, 278, 289, 301, 302, 304, 306, 388; *AbhvT* pp. 81, 108, 118.

⁶ *AbhvT* p. 197; *AbhsT* p. 104.

its own nature", immediately sounded a warning against any wrong implications that this definition may carry. Having raised a question regarding this definition of dhamma, he says: "There is no dhamma over and above the nature of bearing" (*na ca dhāriyamānasabhāvā añño dhammo nāma atthi*).¹ Taking the example of 'forming (*rūppana*) as a characteristic or nature (*sabhāva*) of 'form' (*rūpa*), Ānanda maintains that there is no 'form' (*rūpa*) etc., apart from 'forming', etc. or earth (*paṭhavi*), etc., apart from 'hardness' (*kakkhalatā*), etc.² Here is a definite denial of a 'substance' (*svabhāva*) over and above the perceptible characteristics. Ānanda's determination to sound this warning seems to have sprung from the fear that the generally accepted definition of dhamma as "that which bears its own nature", may be misconstrued to mean that there is a 'substance'.³ Furthermore, the Sarvāstivāda theory that substance (*svabhāva*) exists during the three periods of time: past, present and future, appears to have been rejected by Ānanda.⁴ This represents the standpoint of the Sautrāntikas, who adopted a phenomenalistic view of reality.

The other issue involves the conception of time, divided into three moments (*khāṇa*): nascent (*uppāda*) static (*ṭhiti*) and cessant (*bhaṅga*). As pointed out earlier, Sāriputta, in his *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha-sannaya* refers to a dissentient view which holds that there is no static moment (*ṭhitikkhāṇa*). But Sumaṅgala, while giving the same description and details as given by Sāriputta pointedly refers to the theory as being held by Ānanda.⁵ He even quotes a passage from Ananda's *Mūla-ṭīkā* wherein Ānanda refers to the Aṅguttara discourse⁶ describing the three characteristics of

¹ *DhsT* p. 21, The printed text seems to be wrong when it gives *na ca dhāriyamānasabhāvā añño dhammo nāma n' atthi*, because the double negation *na...n'atthi* is not found in the example quoted in illustration and also because all the manuscripts so far consulted, as also the Burmese edition, read *atthi* instead of *n' atthi*.

² *ibid.* pp. 21-22, *Na hi rūppanādīhi anne rūpādayo kakkhalādīhi ca anne paṭhavi-ādayo dhammā vijjanti*,

³ For according to the *Sakv* p. 362, *svabhāva* is equivalent to *ātman* (*svabhāvata ity ātmatah*).

⁴ *DhsT* p. 46.

⁵ *AbhvT* p. 304, *Ānandācariyo pana cittassa ṭhitikkhanam eva n' atthi bhaṅgakkhane rūp'uppādo n'atthīti catusamuṭṭhānikāni pi rūpāni cittassa uppādakkhane yeva hontīti āha*.

⁶ *A* i. 152.

phenomena, to wit, arising (*uppāda*), ceasing (*vaya*) and change (*ḥitassa aññathatta*) and argues that this sūtra passage does not imply a static moment. This too was one of the central tenets of the Sautrāntikas, for they held that a dharma disappears as soon as it appears without any spatial movement.¹ This theory attributed to Ānanda by Sumangala, is in turn attributed by Ānanda to the Abhayagirivāsins, Ānanda himself accepting it.² This statement of Ānanda is of great historical importance in that it helps us to connect the Sautrāntika tradition with the Abhayagiri.

On the basis of the foregoing discussion it may be possible to delineate the three main traditions prevalent in Ceylon during the Anurādhapura and Polonnaruva periods in the following manner:

School	Representatives
(1) Syncretic Sthaviravāda	- (i) Buddhaghosa (ii) Dhammapāla.
(2) Sarvāstivāda	- (i) Buddhadatta (ii) Anuruddha (iii) Sāriputta (iv) Sumaṅgala.
(3) Sautrāntika	- (i) Ānanda.

The Three Main Centres of Buddhism

Having demarcated the three main traditions which seem to have dominated the Buddhist movement in Ceylon from the time of Buddhaghosa upto the end of the twelfth century, it would be necessary to attempt to place these traditions in relation to the three main centres of Buddhism in Ceylon, namely, Mahā-Vihāra, Abhayagiri and Jetavana. One important fact that we have to keep in mind at this stage is that some of the Buddhist luminaries mentioned above, namely, Anuruddha, Sāriputta and Sumaṅgala lived at a time when the political capital and along with it, the centres of Buddhist learning, had shifted from Anurādhapura to Polonnaruva. But this problem need not deter us from going

¹ *Sakv* p. 33, Ksanikānāṃ nāsti desāntaragamanam
yatraivotpattiḥ tatraiva vināsaḥ.

See also *Akb* ii. 46 ab (*Adv* p. 105, n. 2).

² *DhsT* p. 140, Kecīti Abhayagirivāsino ti vadanti. Te pana cittassa ḥitikkhanam na icchanti,...

ahead with the proposed investigation because the school of thought represented by these three teachers is only a continuation of the tradition initiated during the earlier period.

Mahāvihāra

There is no great problem in placing the school represented by Buddhaghosa and Dhammapāla. As mentioned earlier, they were connected with the Mahā-Vihāra which is generally accredited as having preserved the genuine form of Sthaviravāda. Our analysis showed that, although the Mahā-Vihāra would have preserved the original Sthaviravāda tradition, yet after Buddhaghosa's literary activities and the subsequent disappearance of the original Sinhalese commentaries, the pure Sthaviravāda tradition came to be mixed up with various other schools of thought such as Sarvāstivāda, Mādhyamika and Yogācāra to such an extent that it has become extremely difficult to sift and sort out the main teachings of Sthaviravāda. Many new concepts came to be introduced by Buddhaghosa and we are not in a position to lay bare the tradition that would have been preserved in the Sinhalese commentaries which Buddhaghosa consulted in compiling his commentaries.

Abhayagiri

The nikāya which had to endure a great deal of persecution and attack from the Mahā-Vihāra was the Abhayagiri. It was here that the Vaitulya-vāda appeared on several occasions. Vaitulya-vāda is no doubt another term for Mahāyāna, rather a derogatory term used by the Hīnayānists to designate Mahāyāna, in the same way as the Mahāyānists used the term Hīnayāna. It is rather doubtful whether this school was allowed to thrive on Ceylonese soil. The conservatism with which the newly found doctrine, namely, the Sthaviravāda introduced to the island by Mahinda, was protected and cherished, stood in the way of extreme forms of the religion such as the Mahāyāna developing and flourishing here. A school such as the Mahāsāṅghika was said to have existed in Ceylon.¹ It is also argued that the Mahāsāṅghika teachings as represented in the works like Mahāvastu are not very much different from the ideas embodied in Pali canon. In fact, the Mahāsāṅghikas were

¹ See *AbhvT.* p. 46.

once included in the list of Hīnayāna schools.¹ But it may be pointed out that the Mahāsāṅghika school of the Christian era or even after the Third Council was far more developed than the Mahāsāṅghika school which ceded from the main Sthaviravāda after the Second Council held at Vesāli. While the latter may have contained the seeds of Mahāyāna, the former was certainly a more developed tradition that turned out to be the great rival of Sthaviravāda. The persistent attempt to introduce the Vaitulyavāda and along with it, the Vaitulya Piṭaka, failed and we hear of the Vaitulya books being 'sacrificed to the god of fire' every time it came to be introduced.

What then was it that survived at Abhayagiri? It has been observed that although Abhayagiri was an individual force in the history of the Ceylon Sangha, little information is available as to the doctrinal differences, if any, on which Abhayagiri seems to have deviated from the Mahā-Vihāra tradition.² Gunawardhana referring to the Abhayagiri inscription observes that "Most probably, it was the monks of the Abhayagiri monastery who represented the Sthaviravādins in this context."³ But a careful study of the *Abhidhamma-mūlaṭīkā* of Ānanda would, as pointed out earlier, change this situation. Our analysis revealed the fact that the *Abhidhamma-mūlaṭīkā* represents the doctrinal standpoint of the Sautrāntika school of Buddhism. We have pointed out that two important passages, one in the *Abhidhammatthavikāsinī* of Sumangala and the other in the *Abhidhamma-mūlaṭīkā* of Ānanda, set out very clearly the connection between the Sautrāntika school and Abhayagiri. In the former, the Sautrāntika theory of moments (*khaṇa*) is attributed to Ānanda, the author of the *Mūlaṭīkā*, while in the latter Ānanda himself attributes it to the Abhayagirivāsins. In the literary circles of medieaval Ceylon, Ānanda seems to have been well respected. In the later medieaval Buddhist texts, Ānanda is very often referred to as holding different views on problems under discussion.⁴ Even though they were not inclined to agree with Ānanda's views, he was always addressed to respectfully as ācariya (the teacher).⁵

¹ Rhys Davids, op. cit. p. 411, Table I.

² Devendra, D. T., "Abhayagiri", in *Encyclopaedia, of Buddhism*. Volume of Specimen Articles, ed. G. P. Malalasekera, (Colombo, 1957), p. 2.

³ op. cit. p. 63.

⁴ See note², p. 177.

⁵ *ibid.*

It is also of interest to note that occasionally Ānanda disagreed with Buddhaghosa on whose commentaries he was writing the sub-commentary.¹

If we are to hold that it was the Sautrāntika tradition which was dominant at Abhayagiri, then we have to solve three important problems. Firstly, what is the connection between the Sautrāntika school and that which came to be known as Vaitulya-vāda, which, according to the Chronicles, was favoured by the Abhayagiri fraternity? Secondly, why did the Mahā-Vihāra tolerate the Sautrāntika and allowed it to thrive, but not Vaitulya-vāda? Thirdly, what is the relationship between the Sautrāntikas and Dhammaruci?

The *Abhidharmadīpa*, a Sanskrit work expounding the genuine Vaibhāṣika (Sarvāstivāda) standpoint, comes to our rescue in answering the first question. The *Abhidharmakosa*, written by Vasubandhu, was considered to be a work embodying the doctrines of the Sarvāstivāda school. But author himself belonged to the Sautrāntika school. This being so, the Sarvāstivādins found that the Sarvāstivāda standpoint was not well represented in the *Abhidharmakosa* and that it had a bias towards the Sautrāntika ideas. Thus came to be written the *Abhidharmadīpa* setting out the more orthodox Sarvāstivāda doctrines. The *Abhidharmadīpa* and its commentary, the *Vibhāsāprabhāvṛtti* are supposed to have been written in imitation of the *Abhidharmakosa* and its *Bhāṣya*.²

In the *Vibhāsāprabhāvṛtti*, there are many hostile references to the Kośakāra (without mentioning the name of Vasubandhu) criticizing his Sautrāntika views and at times accusing him of entering the portals of Mahāyāna Buddhism.³ The editor of the text, Dr. P. S. Jaini, has convincingly pointed out the significance of these statements.⁴ Of these several statements, one that is of great relevance to our problem is the statement of the Sautrāntika view regarding the

¹ See *Vibhaṅga-nūlatikā*, (Burmese ed. 1960), p. 6, where Ānanda avoids discussing the reference to the three moments at *VbhA* (p. 7). See also p. 191, where commenting on *thitikkhana* he actually denies it.

² Jaini, P. S., "On the theory of two Vasubandhus", *BSOAS* vol. xxi, 1958, p.50

³ Jaini has noted seventeen references.

⁴ *ibid.* See also "Buddha's prolongation of life", by the same author, *BSOAS* vol. xxi, pp. 546 ff.

Budha's ability to prolong his life-span. It runs thus: 'For surely, if the Lord, by the powers of meditation could, at will, produce a new living personality or could cast a new life-span independent of karma, then indeed, the Buddha would be turned into a Nārāyana. Moreover, he would never attain parinirvāna, such is his compassion for worldly beings. Therefore, this view deserves no consideration, as the Kośakāra (that is, Vasubandhu who was a Sautrāntika when he wrote the *Abhidharmakosa*) is here following the *Vaitulika-sāstra*.'¹ This statement, as pointed out by Jaini,² anticipates the development of the *avatāravāda* in Mahāyāna Buddhism and reasserts the orthodox theory of the human Buddha accepted by the Pali commentators as well as the Sarvāstivādins. The *Kathāvatthu* attributes this belief to the Mahāsāṅghikas, the representatives of Mahāyāna.³ Moreover, the *Vaitulika-sāstra* clearly refers to the Mahāyāna scriptures. Asaṅga, in his *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, identifies *vaitulya* with *vaipulya* and explains the latter as a reference to the *Bodhisattva-Piṭaka*.⁴ Thus, *Vaitulika-sāstra* is no other than the *Bodhisattva-Piṭaka*, i. e. the Mahāyāna scriptures. *Vaitulika-sāstra* is no doubt the *Vaitulya-Piṭaka* referred to in the Pali chronicles. Moreover, since the Sautrāntikas had greater leanings towards Mahāyāna, they would have shared many common views with the Mahāyāna schools such as the Mahāsāṅghikas. Thus we find the Abhayagirivāsins (who were Sautrāntikas) agreeing with the Mahāsāṅghikas on some minor problems such as what constitutes the *dasapuñṇakiriyavatthu*.⁵

The next problem that has to be solved is: Why did the Mahāvihāravāsins tolerate the Sautrāntikas but not the Vaitulya-vādins? According to the *Vibhāsāprabhāvrtti*, a Vaitulya represents the extreme form of Mahāyāna. The Vaitulika not only emphasised

¹ *Adv* p. 101, *Yadi Bhagavān samādhībalena svecchayāpūrvam sattvaṃ... utpādayet svātmano vā jīvitam ankāsiptam prak-karmabhir yogabalen'kāsiptet, tato Buddho Bhagavān Nārāyaṇī-krtah syāt, āpūrvasattvanirmānāt. Sa ca kārunikatvān naiva parinirvāyāt... tasmād Vaitullaka-sāstra-pravesa-dvāram ārabdham tena bhadantenty adhyupektyam etat.*

² *BSOAS* vol. xxi, p. 551.

³ *Kathāvatthupparakaraṇa-Atthakathā*, printed in *The Journal of the Pali Text Society*, 1889, p. 131, on *Kathāvatthu*, ed. Arnold C. Taylor, (London, 1894-7), pp. 456 f.

⁴ p. 79.

⁵ *AbhvT* p. 46, Mahāsāṅghikā pana Abhayagirivāsino ca diṭṭhujjukammaṃ visuṃ punnakiriyabhāvena na ganhanti.

the transcendence of Buddha to the neglect of the historical personality, but also presented a theory of *ayoga-sūnyatā* according to which nothing exists. This latter view was condemned as annihilationism (*vaināsika*) by those who upheld a realist standpoint.¹ It was identical with the *nihsvabhāvavāda* propounded by the Mādhyamikas as well as by the Yogācārins,² the two main schools of Mahāyāna which were opposed to the Hīnayāna tradition. This seems to be the reason why the Mahāvihāravāsins, with the assistance of the royalty, suppressed the Vaitulya-vāda which found favour with the Abhayagirivāsins.

But the Sautrāntika school was only a door-way (*Vaitulika-sāstra-pravesa-dvāra*), not in itself a form of Mahāyāna. This is amply illustrated by the fact that Vasubandhu started as a Sautrāntika and ended as a Mahāyānist.³ It is also important to note that although the Sautrāntika school was considered as a door-way to Mahāyāna or Vaitulya-vāda, yet it was generally considered a Hīnayāna school. Thus the Sautrāntika school had the double advantage of being acceptable to those who had leanings towards Mahāyāna (as for example, the Abhayagirivāsins) as well as those who belonged to the Hīnayāna tradition (like the Mahāvihāravāsins). Such a school may not have been considered as dangerous as Vaitulya-vāda by the Mahāvihāra-vāsins or by any other group with a bias for realism. This explains the attitude of teachers like, Anuruddha, Sāriputta and Sumangala towards the most important representative of Sautrāntika thought in Ceylon, namely, Ānanda. These teachers, while referring to Ānanda in a rather respectful manner as *ācariya*, yet disagreed with most of the views put forward by him.

If, on the basis of the foregoing evidence, we propose the thesis that Abhayagiri was the Sautrāntika school of Buddhism in Ceylon, then it is necessary to find out whether the earliest school founded

¹ *Adv* p. 258, *Yah khalv esa prathamo vādī Sarvāstivādākyāh, esa khalu ... sadvādī, tad anye vādino Dārṣṭāntika-Vaitulika-Paudgalikāh na yuktyāgamābhidhāyinaḥ tarkābhīmāninaḥ te, mithyāvāditvād ete Lokāyatika-Vaināsika - Nagnāṭa-pakse prakseptavyāh.*

² *ibid.* p. 276, *Vaitulikāh kalpayanti;*

*Yat pratītyasmutpannaṃ
tat svabhāvān na vidyate.*

See also *Abhidharmasamuccaya* (p. 84), *Yad uktaṃ Vaitulye nihsvabhāvāh sarvadharmā iti ...*

³ See Jaini, *BSOAS* vol. xxi, pp. 48 ff.

at Abhayagiri, namely, the Dhammaruci, had any connection with the Sautrāntikas. According to the chronicles, the Thera Dhammaruci who came and settled down at Abhayagiri, once Abhayagiri came to be separated from Mahā-Vihāra belonged to the group of monks called the Vajjiputtaka. The Vajjiputtakas seem to be the same as the Vātsiputriyas,¹ who in many ways were related to the Sautrāntikas². The name Dhammaruci itself is already open to different interpretations: one deriving the name from the supposed founder (i. e. in the chronicles), another indicating the nature of the ideas held by the seceders, i. e., those who delight in the Dhamma or who cause the Dhamma to shine.³ We know that the Sautrāntikas were so-called because they considered the sūtras as the most authoritative texts (sūtrapramāṇika), as opposed to those who accepted the authority on the later śāstras (*sāstrapramāṇikā*).⁴ This implies that at that time in India a distinction was made between the sūtras and the śāstras. But in Ceylon, the Sthaviravādins were generally reputed to be emphasising the vinaya (discipline).⁵ The Sthaviravāda Buddhism in Ceylon claimed its descent from Upāli⁶, the greatest *vinayadhara* among the disciples of the Buddha.⁷ Mahinda too, the founder of this school in Ceylon, insisted on the reciting of the vinaya by a Ceylonese bhikkhu as it was only then, he maintained, that the sāsana would take root in Ceylon.⁸ "Mahinda's Buddhism was a religion predominantly of practice."⁹ But just before the first schism resulting in the establishment of the Abhayagiri as a separate fraternity, we find a controversy among the monks in Ceylon as to whether 'learning' (*pariyatti*) was the root of the sāsana or whether it was 'practice' (*paṭipatti*).¹⁰ After arguments had been adduced on both sides the 'preachers of the doctrine' (*dhammakathikas*) gained victory over those who

¹ See *Points of Controversy*, p. xlii.

² Vasumitra, *Origin and Doctrines of Early Indian Buddhist Schools*, tr. J. Mazuda (in *Asia Major*, vol. ii, 1925), pp. 53 ff. 66 ff.

³ Bareaux, A., *Les sectes bouddhiques du petit véhicule*, (Saigon, 1955), p. 242.

⁴ *Sakv.* p. 11, Kah Sauntrātīkārthah. Ye sūtrapramāṇikā na sāstrapramāṇikāh te Sautrāntikāh.

⁵ *Samantapāsādikā*, (abbr. *VinA*), ed. J. Takakusu and M. Nagai, (London, 1924), i. 13.

⁶ *ibid.* i. 62:

⁷ *A* i. 25.

⁸ *VinA.* i, 102; See Adikāram, E. W., *Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon* (Colombo, 1953 Second Impression), p. 56.

⁹ Adikāram, *op. cit.* p. 78.

¹⁰ *AA* i, 92-3, Pariyatti nu kho sāsanaṃ mūlaṃ udāhu, paṭipatti.

advocated the observance of the ascetic practices (*paṃsukūlikas*). In short, the Sutta defeated the Vinaya.¹ The victory of Suttanta over Vinaya would have been to the advantage of the Sautrāntikas who found favour with the Abhayagirivāsins—themselves not much interested in following the vinaya rules as is evident from the accusations levelled against Mahā-Tissa by the monks of the Mahāvihāra. In this context, it is of great interest to note that the Dhammaruciāns, established at Abhayagiri, rejected the Parivāra section of the Vinaya which according to the orthodox tradition, had been recited by the Buddha.² “The Abhayagiri monks seem to have kept up contact with various Buddhist sects and new movements in India, from which they derived inspiration and strength. They were liberal in their views and always welcomed new ideas from abroad and tried to be progressive.”³ This was the Sthavira school of Mahāyānists which was known to Hsuan Tsang.⁴ Thus locating the Sautrāntika school at Abhayagiri seems to provide a more plausible explanation of the separation of the two communities without either of them becoming heretical in the doctrine. The teachings of the Abhayagiri fraternity was considered to be heretical by the Mahāvihāravāsins only when the former accepted the extreme form of Mahāyāna, i.e. Vaitulya-vāda. It was because of the close connection between the Sautrāntika school and Mahāyāna that the Vaitulya-vāda was welcomed by the sangha living at Abhayagiri.

As is evident from the *Abhidhamma-mūlaṭīkā*, the Sautrāntika school was one of the principal schools studied in Ceylon. There is also sufficient evidence to show that the Sautrāntika school was a power to reckon with in South India.⁵ Ānanda, the author of the *Abhidhamma-mūlaṭīkā* was himself a South Indian⁶ and probably this South Indian tradition continued to revitalize the Sautrāntika tradition introduced to Ceylon earlier.

¹ *ibid.*

² *Vamsatthappakāsinī*, ed. G. P. Malalasekera, (London, 1935), pp. 175-6.

³ Rahula, W., *History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, (Colombo, 1956), p. 85.

⁴ Hiuen Tsiang, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, tr. Samuel Beal, London, ii. p. 247.

⁵ For Sautrāntika views as presented in *Sivajñānasiddhiyār*, a polemical treatise in Tamil on Saiva philosophy composed by Arunandi Sivacaryor, see *Journal of Vekantesvara Oriental Institute*, Tirupathi, vol. i, part 2, pp. 176-191.

⁶ See Malalasekera, *op. cit.* p. 112.

Jetavana

We are now left with the other important centre of Buddhism during the Anurādhapura period, namely, Jetavana. The founding of the Vihāra as well as the manner in which the Sāgaliyas came to be established at this centre was mentioned earlier. Sāgala (Sialkot) is a city in North-Western India close to Kashmir, where the Sarvastivāda school flourished during the time of King Kanishka. According to the chronicles, it was a monk named Sāgala who came and established the Sāgaliya sect at Jetavana. It is usual for a monk hailing from a certain locality to be called by the name of that locality. This connection is significant. If the monk received his name from the locality from which he came, then the Sāgaliyas could possibly have been Sarvastivādins.

One important statement in Buddhaghosa's *Atthasālinī* may afford a clue to the problem of identifying the Sarvastivādins with the Jetavaniyas. This statement, referred to earlier, implies that the 'continued present' (*santati-paccuppanna*) finds mention in the Commentaries; that the 'enduring present' (*addhā-paccuppanna*) finds mention in the Sūtras; but that the 'momentary present' (*khāṇa-paccuppanna*) was held by some not associated with either sūtra tradition or the commentarial tradition associated with the Mahā-Vihāra. Two of the most important schools which accepted the theory of moments (*khāṇa*) were the Sautrāntikas and the Sarvātivādins. As has been pointed out earlier, the Sautrāntika theory differed from that of the Sarvastivādins in that the former denied the static (*sthiti*) moment. Now, Buddhaghosa's reference is to the Sautrāntika theory: denying the static moment, and Ānanda, while commenting on the statement of Buddhaghosa, identifies this theory with that of the Abhayagirivāsins (see p. 181 note ¹). Was there, then, any school in Ceylon which accepted the Sarvastivāda theory which recognised the static moment (*sthiti-ksaṇa* or *thitikkhāṇa*)? This, as pointed out earlier, was one of the major controversies that dominated speculation during the Polonnaruwa period. The greatest literary figures of the Polonnaruwa period, Anuruddha, Sāriputta and Sumaṅgala, all made attempts to justify the Sarvastivāda standpoint and all of them were associated with Jetavana in Polonnaruwa. Was this Sarvastivāda doctrine introduced to Ceylon for the first time during the Polonnaruwa period or was it a continuation of a tradition which existed in Ceylon during the Anurādhapura period? As is evident from Buddhaghosa's statement,

the original Mahā-Vihāra tradition did not subscribe to this doctrine; neither did the Abhayagirivāsins. Thus there is a strong possibility that it was accepted by the Jetavaniyas of the Anuradhapura period.

It was pointed that the pre-Buddhaghosa Mahā-Vihāra tradition may have preserved the pure Sthaviravāda doctrines. The Mahāvihāravāsins, being rather conservative, were reluctant to accept most of the new doctrines which came to be introduced into Ceylon, and these were generally welcomed by the Abhayagirivāsins who constituted the first major opposition to Mahā-Vihāra. The monks who settled down at Jetavana (in Anuradhapura) and subsequently formed the Sāgaliya sect were part of a group occupying Abhayagiri. When the Abhayagirivāsins favouring Sautrāntika ideas welcomed Vaitulya-vāda for the second time, a group of monks left Abhayagiri and settled down at Jetavana. It was only after the arrival of the monk named Sāgala that the Jetavaniyas come to be recognised as a distinct sect — i. e. the Sāgaliyas. This, therefore, seems to be the point at which the Sarvāstivāda came to be introduced into Ceylon.

We have pointed out that the Sarvāstivāda teaching dominated philosophical speculation during the Polonnaruwa period. Why was it that the centre of Buddhism during this period came to be called Jetavana, not Mahā-Vihāra or Abhayagiri? The most plausible explanation of this would be that the Sarvāstivāda tradition which was accepted by the Jetavaniyas of the Anuradhapura period came to be established with greater vigour and enthusiasm at the Jetavana in Polonnaruwa.

Last of the “Four Principal Nikāyas”

If we accept the tentative position that the three schools, the syncretic Sthaviravāda, the Sautrāntika and the Sarvāstivāda, were associated with the three centres of Buddhist learning, the Mahā-Vihāra, the Abhayagiri and the Jetavana respectively, what is the other important nikāya which makes up the four principal nikāyas (*cātur-mahā-nikāya*) referred to in the Abhayagiri inscription?

Gunawardhana considers the Mahāsāṅghikas as one of the “four principal nikāyas” in Ceylon.¹ He refers to a statement in

¹ op. cit. p. 66.

the *Cullavaṃsa* which says that King Sena I donated a monastery called *Vīraṅkurārāma* to the Mahāsāṅghika monks and those of the Theriya school.¹ We have pointed out that the Mahāsāṅghika teachings were not much different from Vaitulya-vāda and were therefore, not much tolerated in Ceylon. There certainly are references to the different views put forward by the Mahāsāṅghikas, but that does not imply that they should be considered as one of the “four principal nikāyas” as far as Ceylon was concerned. It is interesting to note that Heinz Bechert who brought out a posthumous edition of Geiger’s *Culture of Ceylon in Mediaeval Times* has proposed an emendation to the verse in the *Cullavaṃsa*.² The emendation he proposes is that the phrase *mahāsāṅghika-bhikkhūnaṃ* should be read as *mahīśāsaka-bhikkhūnaṃ*. Gunawardhana argues against this, but his argument is based only on the fact that none of the manuscripts consulted for three different editions of the *Cullavaṃsa* give this reading. It is not very difficult for a scribe to mistake *mahāsāṅghika* for *mahīśāsakā*, especially when the Pali version was found as *mahimsāsaka*.³ Once such a mistake is committed, it tends to be perpetuated.⁴ Bechert seems to be correct when he suggested this reading, for not only does Fa-hsien refer to the prevalence of the Mahīśāsakas in Ceylon, but even the *Jātakatṭhakathā* is believed to be a version of the Mahīśāsaka sect. Moreover, as Gunawardhana himself points out, the *Nikāya-saṃgraha* makes no mention of the Mahāsāṅghikas and their corporate existence with the Theravādins.⁵ Furthermore, according to Vasumitra’s treatise, of the two groups of Mahīśāsakas, there was one which had very close affinities with the Sarvāstivādins.⁶ Thus this group of Mahīśāsakas may not have had much difficulty in living with the Sthaviravādins, both being Hīnayāna schools. But it is doubtful whether the monks of Ceylon who violently opposed the introduction of the Vaitulya-vāda would have tolerated the Mahāsāṅghikas. Therefore, in determining what the four principal nikāyas prevalent in Ceylon were, it seems better to consider the Mahīśāsakas rather than the Mahāsāṅghikas.

¹ *ibid.* p. 55.

² Geiger, *Culture of Ceylon in Mediaeval Times*, p. 208, n. 1:

³ *Mv* 5. 6, 8.

⁴ See, for example, *DhsT* where *yugandhara* is defined as *sita-* (some manuscripts, *sida-*) *pabbatesv eko* (printed text p. 6, corrects to *kulupabbatesv eko*) in all the manuscripts so far collated, when the correct form should read *sattapabbatesv eko*.

⁵ *op. cit.* p. 57.

⁶ Vasumitra, *op. cit.* pp. 62-3.

Another school suggested by Gunawardhana as one of the four principal nikāyas in Ceylon is the Sammitīyas.¹ Although the Sammitīyas were a prominent nikāya in India, there are no references whatsoever which point to the existence of the Sammitīyas as a principal school in Ceylon.

Considering all these facts, it may be safe to assume that the four principal nikāyas referred to in the Abhayagiri inscription are the Sthaviravādins, the Sautrāntikas, the Sarvāstivādins and the Mahīśāsakas, all of these schools coming under the broad category of Hīnayāna. This may explain why Parākramabāhu did not have much difficulty in unifying the divergent groups and uniting them under one leadership. Of these four, the Sthaviravadins (or more correctly, the Syncretic Sthaviravāda) were associated with the Mahā-Vihāra, the Sautrāntikas with the Abhayagiri and the Sarvāstivādins and the Mahīśāsakas with Jetavana.

¹ *op. cit.* p. 66.