Were there Two Elders by the Name of Chappada?

CHAPPADA was a Burmese Elder who wrote several works in Pali, the well-known among which are the Saṅkhepaṅunanā on the Abhidhammatthasaṅgaṇa and the Suttanidassa on Kaccāyana's grammar. As he lived in Ceylon for some years he was known to both the communities of monks, in Ceylon and in Burma. Dr. Malalasekara, in his Pali Literature of Ceylon, has written about this Elder as follows: "It was about this time, somewhere about the beginning of Parākrama's regime in A.D. 1165, that the Elder Uttarājiva left Pagan to visit the celebrated Mahāvihāra, taking with him, as we saw, a copy of Aggavaṃsa's great work, the Pali Grammar, Saddanāṭi. Uttarājiva was accompanied by his pupil, the novice Chapaṭā, known in religion as Saddhammajotipala, whose fame surpassed, for a time, even that of Aggavaṃsa. He received the upasampadā from the Saṅgha in Ceylon, and lived with them several years, studiously learning the Dhamma as handed down in the Mahāvihāra, and perhaps mastering many texts which were as yet unknown in Burma. He was a man of great skill and ability, and his stay in the sacred island was of great importance to the literary history of Burma." He adds (page 197): "Chapaṭā was the author of several works, eight in all, according to the Gandha-vamsa, only one of which was written in Ceylon, the Saṅkhepaṅunanā, a commentary on the Abhidhammatthasaṅgaṇa . . . ."

The original statement about Chappada is found in the Kalyāṇī Inscriptions of Dhammaceti, 1476 A.D., where it is stated as follows: "One hundred and seven years after this event, or in the year 526, Sakkarāj, King Sirisaṅghabodhi-Parakkamabāhu purified the religion of Laṅkādīpa. Six years after the latter event, or in the year 532, Sakkarāj, Uttarājivamahāthera, the Preceptor of the King of Pugāma, with the object of worshipping at the shrines
in Lankaéípa, set out for Kusimanagara, saying to himself: "I shall embark in a ship with a great many priests." Who was this Uttarajivamahathera? He was a native of Ramahnaadesa, and was a pupil of Ariyavañasaíthera. . . On arrival at Kusimanagara, Uttarajivamahathera embarked in a ship, accompanied by many other priests and by a sámanera, whose age was fully 20 years. Who was this Sámanera? Why was he called Chappatasaímanaíera? His parents were natives of Kusimaraíthta, while he himself was a pupil of Uttarajivamahathera. He was called Chappatasaímanaíera, because his parents were natives of a village called Chappaíta, in Kusimaraíthta.

"Uttarajivamahathera embarked in a ship and set out for Lankaéípa. On his arrival there, the mahátheras, residing in Lankaéípa, came together in a body and accorded him a meet reception. As they were well disposed towards him they said: 'We are the spiritual successors of Mahamahinda-thera, who established the Religion in Lankaéípa, while you and the other priests in your company are the spiritual successors of the two mahátheras, called Sona and Uttar. Considering the importance of the event, they performed the jípasampadá ordination of Chappaíta, the twenty-year old sámanera'.

"After this, Uttarajivamahathera, having accomplished the object of his visit, namely, the worshipping, etc., at the shrines in Lankaéípa, made pre-parations to return to Pugama. Then the priest Chappaíta thought thus: 'If I were to return home with Uttarajivamahathera, owing to the impediments caused by my relatives, I should not be able to enjoy that peace and quiet which are conclusive to the study of the Tipitaka together with its commentaries. It is, perhaps advisable, therefore, that I should, with the permission of the maháthera, remain in Lankaéípa, and return home only after I have mastered the Tipitaka together with its commentaries'. Accordingly, Chappaíta asked permission from Uttarajivamahathera and remained behind in Lankaéípa. Uttarajivamahathera, accompanied by his large company of priests, embarked in a ship, and returned to Kusimanagara. Thence he proceeded to Pugama, and took up his residence there."

"Meanwhile, the priest Chappaíta, by dint of hard study, had acquired a knowledge of the Tipitaka together with its commentaries, and, as he has completed his tenth year in orders, he acquired the designation of thera. Being now desirous of returning to Pugama he reflected thus: 'If I were to return home alone, and if, in the event of the death of Uttarajivamahathera, I did not wish to associate with the priests of Pugama in the performance of ecclesiastical ceremonies, how could I, in the absence of a pañcavaggagama, perform such functions separately? It is, perhaps, proper, therefore, that I should return home in the company of four other priests, who are well-versed in the Tipitaka.' After reflecting thus, he appointed Sívalíthera, a native of Támalíti, Támaíintháthera, the son of the Kája of Kamboja, Ñanadáthera, a native of Kañciípura, and Ñáhuláthera, a native of Lankaéípa, to accompany him, and embarking in a ship, returned to his native country. These five mahátheras were well-versed in the Tipitaka, and were learned and able, and among them, Ráhuílahéra was the ablest and the most learned.

"On the arrival of these five mahátheras at Kusimanagara, the time for journeying on to Pugama was uneconomical, because of the approaching vassa, and they, accordingly, observed their vassa at Kusimanagara. The site and walls of the monastery, where they spent the vassa, may be seen to this day, on the south side of Kusimanagara. At the conclusion of the vassa, Chappaíta- maháthera celebrated the paváraná, and set out for Pugama, accompanied by the four-thers. Meanwhile, a few days before the arrival of Chappaíta-maháthera, Uttarajivamaháthera had died."

This inscription, although it gives a lengthy description about Chappada's activities, does not mention any work written by him. The Elder, who was the author of several works, has clearly stated that he lived not during the reign of Páракramabáhu the Great, but during the reign of Páракramabáhu VI, whose capital was Kotte. Now let us quote his own statement from the colophon of the Sánkhépavāmananám:—

1. "Punne dase navavutigúne ca vasse vasse sahassaganane jinibbutimháhá iddharámadanapúra vara- Tambahapúni nanopía no Siriparakkamabáhubhúpaní
2. Nissáya sásanamaíhá suvisodhayita bhikkháhíhí cinnavayehísusánnatehí bandhápayáhí puravare jayavatádhánahvé sámaíhí vipattírahitaitáhí vinyánavúpaní,
3. Síkkhápayáhí yatigane vinyávadídhamme páññávadáthahádaya sadayo jánámaini appíchatá-viriýava-síla-gúnapássathá no sadáhádhanosakalássá-jánánúmaíkámpí,
4. Sábatháyyutá-pítkattaí-sárádá sá Chappadávuyayáso yati rájákanto nánánoáhí paramasángahávavánam' emáthí saññáhepato viraçayáhí munísásanathánahí."

"The Elder who came from the prosperous city of Arimaddana to the noble island of Tambahapani, in the year 993 after the demise of the Buddha, purified the sásana with the help of the King Páarakramabáhu, and caused a sámá to be consecrated, according to the vinyáva rules and avoiding all unlawful
acts, in the city of Vijayavādhihāna, by the monks who had a thorough knowledge in vinaya-ceremonies and who had well subdued their senses.

That Elder, known by the name of Chappada, who was dear to the king, and well-versed in the three pītakas which have many-sided meanings, having a heart cleansed by wisdom, kind to the people, of few desires, laudable for his virtue and perseverance, having devotion as his own wealth, with compassion on the pupils, taught Vinaya and Abhidhamma to many monks.

The same Elder compiled this concise but descriptive commentary on the Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha, for the welfare of the religion of the Buddha.10

Here the author says that he taught dhamma and vinaya to the monks of Lanka, but does not state that he learnt anything from the Ceylonese monks.

There was no Jayavaḍḍhanapura other than that of Kotte in Ceylon. So it is very clear that this Chappada, the author of some works, visited Ceylon during the reign of Parākramabāhu VI of Kotte.

His personal name, Sadhhammajoṭipāla, is found in two places at the end of the Saṅkhāpapavāṇanā:—“Arimaddana-nagara-gocara-gāmakena . . . Lāṅkā-kādiṣa-pāradipavāsānaṁ sotojanānam paryayattāṁ paryāypanantena, Chappado ti visutena . . . tiṇṭakadhara-gāruhi gahita-Sadhhammajoṭipālo ti nāmaravaya therena kāta Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha-saṅkhepavāṇanāḥ niṭṭhitā.”

“The concise commentary on the Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha”, compiled by the Elder, who was named ‘Sadhhammajoṭipāla’ by the Great Elders who were erudite in the three pitakas, and who was well-known by the name of ‘Chappada’, whose subsisting sphere was the city of Arimaddana, and who has taught dhamma to many students of Ceylon and of other countries, has now come to an end.”

The second place where his name appears is the last line of the colophon: “Iti Saddhammajoṭipālatherena racitā Saṅkhāpavāṇanā niṭṭhitā”. There is no evidence to prove that the former Chappada had this name.

There is no evidence to prove that the former Chappada had this name of Saddhammajoṭipāla. The author of the Simālāṅkārasaṅgaha was Mahāsāmi Vacissara, who was a pupil of Sariputta, Saṅgharāja, and who was the librarian of Parākramabāhu I. He himself wrote a commentary on his own work.

Afterwards, the Elder Chappada, the second, wrote a new commentary on the Simālāṅkārasaṅgaha, in which he states:

“Sabbathayutta-pitakatattaya-pāradassā so Chappadavayasuto yatirajaputto Simāyalankarasasanghahaavanamanicchāni saṅkhepato vinacayti munisānathanān.”

This Elder should have lived in a period considerably posterior to the time of Parākramabāhu I and Vacissara, to write a new tikā, while there was a tikā by the author of the text himself.

Were there Two Elders by the Name of Chappada?

The Saṅkhāpavāṇanā was compiled at the request of a person called Mahāvījaya-bāhu. This person, the author says, was well-known in this island like the full-moon in the spring:

“Agatāgamasattthena caṇḍo va saradambare pākaṭen’idha dipamhi Mahāvījaya-bāhunā Ukkatikām niṣiditvā sāsanattabhīṣikānāṁ yācit’o’ham karissāmi Saṅkhēpadāpa-vaṇṇanāṁ”.

“Being requested, seated in a respectful posture, by Mahāvījaya-bāhu, who is learned in religions and sciences, who is well-known in this island like the full-moon in the spring, who wishes the welfare of the Buddha’s religion, I will compile this Saṅkhēpadāpa-vaṇṇanā”.

Who was this well-known person Vijayabāhu? There was no such layman at the time of Parākramā VI. The only person whose learning could have gained such fame at that time was the Principal of Mahāvījaya-bāhu Parivena, i.e. the Elder Rācita, who afterwards became Saṅgharāja. It was then customary to call the principal of an institution by its very name.

I have already discussed Chappada’s date in my work entitled Theravadā-Buddhācāryayo published in Sinhalese. Since then I have come across an article, written by Mr. S. Z. Aung, B.A., on the “Abhidhamma Literature in Burma”, published in the Journal of the Pali Text Society 1910–1912 in which the matter had been discussed. There he says: “The Saṅkhāpavāṇanā, by Chappada, is the third tikā on the Compendium”. This author is believed to have visited Ceylon in Annu Buddha, 1714 (sakkarañ 532 or a.d. 1170). In his introductory verse, he describes himself as one who had been to Ceylon three times8. He says he wrote it at the request of Mahāvījaya-bāhu, who was conspicuous in the island, even as the moon in the sky of saradā or autumnal season, by the royal arms which had been and would be attained9. He refers to the existence of the earlier tikās on the Compendium, and compares the Tikāgavavo to the ‘moon which cannot shine within bamboo, etc. and his own work to the ‘fire-fly which can’. This pretty simile will give the reader an idea of the scope of the work in question. In the conclusion of the

7. That is Compendium of Philosophy or Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha.

8. This is not so. Mr. Aung has misunderstood the first two lines of the introductory gāthās. Tikkhatturn patta-Lamko yatho patīṭakapati sāsanaṁ does not refer to the author but to the Buddha whose name is mentioned in the (3rd) next line: vandiṭa Lokadhānah tam.

9. Here again he has mistranslated some lines. I do not see any passage there giving such a meaning. Perhaps, he has taken sāsana, in sāsanadhībhīṣikānāṁ, to mean governing.

10. The Burmese name for Abhidhammattha-vibhāvina tikā of Šamaṅgala Mahāsāmi.
work, the year a.d. 990 is mentioned. The author of the Sasanālakāra draws attention to the discrepancy between this date and that given in the Kalyāṇi Inscriptions.

In his Pali Literature and Language, Professor Geiger states: "Saddhammajotipāla or Chapada belongs to the circle of Sāriputta's disciples. He was a native of Burma, but he received his education in Ceylon, where he stayed from 1170 to 1180 according to tradition. Of his works the following belong to the sphere of Vinaya: (a) Vinyasamitiṣṭhānādīpani, (b) Pushṭhānagāaganānaya, (c) Vinyagāhāthādīpani, in which the difficult passages of the Vinaya have been discussed, as well as (d) Simālakāraśangha-ṭikkā. To the Abhidhamma belong: (e) Māṭhāṭhādīpani, (f) Pariṇāmasaṃgahaṇa, (g) Ṛṣṇacāradīpana, as well as his best-known work (h) Abhidhammatthasaṃgaha-sakhkheṭṭhā, a commentary on the work of Anuruddha mentioned in 26.7. Finally there is to mention (i) Gandhāsāra, apparently an anthology of sacred texts."

Neither Professor Geiger nor Dr. Malalasekara seems to have read any works of this later Chappada. If they had done so, they would have been surprised to find the name of Jayavaddhanapura mentioned in his works. There was no 'Jayavaddhanapura' in Ceylon before the reign of Parākrama VI. This author never mentions the name of Uttarājīva as his preceptor, who was an eminent person and the tutor of the King of Arimaddana; and he does not say that he has learnt anything from the Elders of Ceylon. So this second Chappada must be a different person from the one mentioned in the Kalyāṇi Inscriptions. Perhaps, the statement in the inscription might have erred by taking Parākrama VI to be Parākrama I. It has appended the title 'Sirisāṅghabodhi' to this monarch, which, I believe, was never attached to the name of Parākrama I, but to that of Parākrama VI. Anyhow, Geiger's statement that "Saddhammajotipāla or Chapada belongs to the Sāriputta's disciples" becomes untenable.

There is no evidence to show that Uttarājīva's pupil, Chappada, had the name of Saddhammajotipāla, or that he had written any work in Pali.

The Kalyāṇi Inscription has given the name of the Burmese king who was ruling when the former Chappada, with his companions, arrived at Ariranadavāha. He conceived a feeling of great esteem and reverence for the five mahātheras, are words that occur there. Again, it carefully records the date of the demise of Ānandathera, who had survived all other companions of Chappada: "Two of these mahātheras, namely, Sivalimahāthera and Tāmalindamahāthera, passed away according to their deeds after maintaining the Religion in splendour to the end of their lives; and Ānandathera, after spending fifty-four rainy seasons in maintaining the Religion in splendour in Pugāma, also passed away according to his deeds in the year 607 Sakkaraj 16."

If these statements are taken as true, we cannot say that this Chappada who was Uttarājīva's pupil, and the Elder Chappada, who was known by the name "Saddhammajotipāla, are one and the same person.

Another noteworthy work by Saddhammajotipāla is the Visuddhimagga-gaṇṭhi. Neither Professor Geiger nor Dr. Malalasekara has noticed the existence of this work. But the Piṭkat-saṃānī and S. Z. Aung have mentioned it. I myself was not aware of this work. When Professor Bapat of Poona recently visited Ceylon, he told me about this work and with my help he obtained a MS. of it written in Burmese characters. Even our museum library does not possess a copy. This MS. is now with me and I am copying it in Sinhalese characters. The opening verses or the colophon of this work do not mention the name of Chappada or anyone else. But it is evident that it was written by a Burmese Elder who had a good knowledge of the Sinhalese tradition. Many stories that were not explained in the Visuddhimagga are explained here. For instance at one place the Visuddhimagga merely says: "Kutumbiya-putta-Tissatherras silvn viya 17. The Gaṇthi relates the story and explains why robbers were inclined to break his legs. Similarly Ambakādaka-Mahātiṣā, whose name appears on p. 47, Visuddhimagga, is related in the Gaṇthi. These facts indicate the great value to be attached to this work.

The Nāmačāradīpana is a poem of 299 verses, which is not yet printed in Ceylon. It was written when Chappada was residing in an arāma, situated near the shrine named Tilokanayana-sabhaśāradhā-ubhisacitiyā, to the east of Arimaddana or Pugāma. It contains a colophon similar, in many ways, to that of the Saṅkhopavāṇā. It is surprising to note that this Elder has never mentioned any name of a contemporary Burmese Ruler in his works. If he has done so, we could easily solve the question of his date.

A. P. BUDDHADATTA