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Cultural Relations Between Ayudhya and Sri Lanka

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Introduction

The cultural relations of Ayudhya with Sri Lanka go far back as the beginning of this Thai kingdom and, although there were long periods of non-interaction in between, continued almost until it collapsed under the Burmese invasion. The Theravada Buddhism inherited by Ayudhya from Sukhothai was the oldest form of Buddhism introduced to the latter by the Sri Lankan monks who had maintained its original from for centuries after it was brought from India in the third century B.C. Sri Lanka was considered the Mecca of Theravada Buddhism by the continental Southeast Asian countries after India lost its vigour as the home of Buddhism due to the revival of Hinduism and the Muslim expansion. Hence, Buddhist monks of Burma, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand turned to Sri Lanka for higher ordination, guidance in learning the scriptures and, performing the ecclesiastical ceremonies until Sri Lanka lost its position as the centre of Theravada Buddhism during the European occupation of the island in the 16th century A.D. (Sirisena, 1978). The Sinhalese sect of monks established in the countries of Southeast Asia, including Thailand, earned highest respect among different sects of Buddhist monks in the region, and there was a brisk movement of Buddhist monks, both Sri Lankan and Southeast Asian,
between the Two regions in quest of learning, teaching and preaching this original form of Buddhism (Ibid.). In this process Sri Lanka made a significant contribution to the spread of Theravada Buddhist culture in Continental Southeast Asia until the 16th century.

However, from then onwards, the trend turned the other direction when Sri Lanka had to borrow from the countries of Continental Southeast Asia the same old traditions of Theravada Buddhism, as she lost them under European occupation. When Kandy emerged as the only independent kingdom in Sri Lanka, and took to the task of reviving the Theravada traditions upon itself in the 17th century, the rulers of Kandy had to turn to Burma and Thailand for reorganization of the Order of monks or Sangha, obtaining the original Buddhist scriptures and guidance in performing prescribed ecclesiastical acts needed for strengthening the Order. It was the kingdom of Ayudhya which came to the rescue of the rulers of Kandy who were desperate in reviving the Buddhist Sangha in the country which once championed its purity in the Buddhist world.

The present paper will attempt to trace the cultural relations between Sri Lanka and the kingdom of Ayudhya in Thailand, during these two phases of interaction; the first phase from the establishment of Ayudhya kingdom to the end of 15th century, when the last mission of Thai monks arrived is Sri Lanka to receive higher ordination from the Sinhales monks, and the second phase from the 16th century until the establishment of the Siamese sect of Buddhist monks (Siyam nikaya) in the mid-18th century under the patronage of the rulers of Kandy. The complementary nature of the interaction is seen in the mutual exchange of religious traditions during both phases, each country is taking a turn in preserving them, and passing on to the other in times of dire necessity.

**Ayudhya and the Sinhala Order of Monks**

The Thais who learnt about Theravada Buddhism through Mons came under the influence of Sinhala sect of Buddhist monks which was active in Continental Southeast Asia, when Sukhothai, the first Thai kingdom was established after Thais migrated to their new homeland. The
Theravada Buddhist traditions were preserved by the Sinhalese monks after they were brought to Sri Lanka in the 3rd century B.C., during the reign of King Asoka of India, and the establishment of the Order of monks of the Mahavihara in Anuradhapura under the patronage of King Devanampiyatissa. Although there were periodical schisms in the Order, it was united again under King Parakramabahu (A.D. 1110-1153) of Polonnaruva, and it was this Mahavihara School of Sangha which was active in propagating the Theravada tradition throughout Continental Southeast Asia (Ishii, 1986: xv). The Thai monks who came under the influence of the Sinhala sect or "Lankawong" came to Sri Lanka in their quest for learning and receiving higher ordination from the Sinhalese monks, and on their return, established this sect firmly in Sukhothaya under the patronage of the Sukhodaya kings who took upon themselves the responsibility of upholding the Theravada religion. Within a short period this newly established sect spread far and wide throughout Thailand. With the royal patronage coming from both countries there were regular movement of Buddhist monks resulting unprecedented mutual cultural exchanges between Sri Lanka and Sukhothai (Sirisena, 1978).

When the kingdom of Ayudhya emerged at the expense of Sukhothai in the mid-14th century, the former inherited these religious traditions from the latter. From the days of Ramatibodi (A.D. 1350-69), the first king of Ayudhya, all the rulers extended the same traditional patronage to the "Lankawong" or the Sinhla sect of Buddhist monks. The cultural exchanges between Sri Lanka and Ayudhya continued with the same vigour and enthusiasm.

Ayudhyan Monks Visit Sri Lanka

Following Sukhothai monks, Ayudhyan monks too, visited Sri Lanka for learning and for higher ordination. The Pali work known as the Saddhamma Sangaha was written by a Thai monk named Dhammakittithi who was a pupil of a Sinhalese monk of the same name, and the latter was famous for his knowledge of the Buddhist scriptures and grammatical works. According to the colophon of the Saddhamma Sangaha, the Thai Dhammakittithi Thera, having received higher ordination in Sri Lanka,
returned to Ayudhya, and while residing in Lankarama built by King Paramaraja, composed Saddhamma Sangaha. The Sinhalese monk under whom the Thai monk studied has been identified as Dhammakitthi who held the office of Sangharaja or the chief of monks during the reign of Bhuvaneikabahu V (A.D. 1370-1408). Paramaraja mentioned in the colophon is identified as Boromaraja I (A.D.1370-88). This reference shows that even during Ayudhya period the Sukhothai practice of Thai monks visiting Sri Lanka for higher ordination and learning of Buddhist scriptures continued because Sri Lanka was still considered a great centre of learning. Furthermore, the name Lankarama given to the temple built by the Ayudhyan ruler reminds us the temple of the same name in Sri Lanka. This temple became the centre of Sinhalese fraternity of monks in Ayudhya. The royal patronage received by Thai Dhammakitthi is an indication of the approval of the activities of the monks belonged to the “Lankawong” by the Ayudhyan rulers.

Although there would have been movement of other monks between Sri Lanka and Ayudhya, we do not have any evidence until the 15th century, when a team of Thai monks visited Sri Lanka for higher ordination and learning. The Jinakalamali, a Pali work written by a Thai monk named Ratanapanna of Northern Thailand in A.D. 1516, gives a vivid account of this visit of Thai monks and their activities in Sri Lanka and Thailand.

The Jinakalamali says that twenty five monks from Chiangmai and eight monks from Cambodia came to Sri Lanka in A.D. 1423 for the study of Buddhist scriptures under the guidance of a Sinhalese monk named Vanarathana Thera. It further says that they made a special effort to acquire the correct manner of reciting and chanting of these texts. As they were keen to become the members of the Sinhalese fraternity they requested higher ordination from the Sinhalese monks, and received it at a ceremony performed on a raft which had been moored by the Sinhalese king on the Kalyani river. At this ceremony held in the year 1424 A.D., twenty five Thai, six Burmese and eight Cambodian monks received upasampada from a chapter of twenty Sinhalese monks headed by Vanarathana Mahathera. After the ceremony, all the Southeast Asian monks visited various sacred Buddhist places in Sri Lanka, and worshipped the Tooth Relic temple and
the Foot Print of the Buddha on the Sumanakuta. On their homeward journey they not only took with them sacred Buddhist relics, but also accompanied two senior Sinhalese monks, Theras Wickramabahu and Uttamapanna. They were to act as Upajjaya and Kammavacacariya when the Thai monks performed the ecclesiastical ceremonies of higher ordination on their return.

Having returned to Ayudhya, the Thai monks performed their first higher ordination ceremony there, admitting Mahathera Silavisuddhi, the Tutor of the chief queen of Boromoraja II (A.D.1424-48) of Audhya, and another monk named Saddhammakovida. Afterwards, they travelled to various other cities in Thailand and performed higher ordination ceremonies under the leadership of Mahadhammagambhira and Mahamedhankara Theras (Jinakalamali: 91-95). The Mahathera Vanarathana, the Sri Lankan monk mentioned, has been identified as the well-known scholar monk Vanarathana, the head of Keragala pirivena or temple school, and who held the position of Sangharaja during the reign of Sinhalese king Parakramabahu VI (A.D.1412-67) of the kingdom of Kotte (Paranavitana, 1932: 209; Sirisena, 1978:102-103). The two theras who led the group of monks are also mentioned in another chronicle, the Sasanavamsa, a Pali work written by a Burmese monk in A.D.1861 (Sasanavamsa, 56 and 170). This Medhankara is also mentioned in an inscription issued by Thammaraja IV (A.D. 1419-38) of Sukhothai who was under the suzerainty of Ayudhya at the time. According to this Thai inscription dated A.D. 1426 two Foot Prints of the Buddha were carved out on a stone at Sukhothai at the request of Medhankara Mahathera. It is interesting to note that two Foot Prints were, in both dimension and from, exactly resemble the Foot Print believed to be of the Buddha found on the summit of Sumanakuta in Sri Lanka (Coedes, 1924: 151-56).

It is said that King Boroatrailokanath or Trilok as he is known, who ruled Ayudhya from 1448 to 1488, was interested in reorganizing the Buddhist church, invited a senior monk from Sri Lanka. Among the ruins of Wat Phra Sri (Sri Sarvajna), the Chapel Royal of Ayudhya, which was built by King Trailok, a miniature stupa was found with number of small ones having one inside of the other. According to Luang Boribhand (1956), these models were brought from Sri Lanka by the Sinhalese monk who was invited
by the Ayudhyan ruler. It is interesting to note that the stupas in this Wat are of Sinhalese style (Sirisena, 1978: 114-18) with the typical features of the circular terraces, the dome, the square structure above the dome (hataraskotuwa) and the conical spire (kotkeralla). On the whole, the Ayudhyan art traditions, especially the stupa and the Buddhist sculpture, show the continuation of the Sinhalese characteristics which had been incorporated in the Sukhothai art.

The Ayudhyan rulers were great patrons of Buddhism who built monasteries, made royal donations to temples, and promoted Buddhist learning. For example, Songtam (A.D. 1610-28), who himself was a Buddhist monk before he became king remained a great patron of religion. It was during his reign that a large Foot Print of the Buddha was discovered in A.D. 1623 in Saraburi and having built a Mandhob or a tapering structure over it, inaugurated an annual pilgrimage with large scale celebrations, and the same tradition is maintained to the present day (Syamananda 1977: 66). According to the folklore, the discovery of this Foot Print was made under the guidance of the Sinhalese monks. When Thais came to worship the Foot Print of the Buddha in Sri Lanka, the Sinhalese monks informed them that the mount Sacchabadda on which Buddha impressed his Foot Print was in Thailand and, therefore, they should make an effort to search for it. This information was given to King Songtom with whose encouragement an hunter reported its discovery to the king. Another Ayudhyan king who made a great contribution to the upliftment Buddhism was King Narai the Great (A.D. 1658-88). Because of the royal patronage and the dedication of monks, Theravada Buddhism became well established and Ayudhya received the international recognition as a great Theravada centre in the 17th century.

When Sri Lanka was searching for a country which had pure Theravada Buddhism in order to invite Buddhist monks to reintroduce ecclesiastical ceremonies of higher ordination since it had lapsed in the country, the Dutch reported that Ayudhya was the best country for that purpose. When the king of Kandy requested the Dutch authorities for this information they sent Rondra Kauman, a Dutch envoy, to Ayudhya to report on the state of Buddhism in that country. Kauman, having visited Ayudhya in 1689, submitted a report on what he saw in Ayudhya to the court of Kandy and this report gives a vivid picture of the state of Buddhism prevailed in
Ayudhya at that time. Although his statement that Ayudhya was having 15000 monasteries and 14000 stupas in the city seems to be an exaggeration, his account clearly demonstrates the flourishing state of Buddhism in Ayudhya towards the end of 17th century. It was during the reign of Pra Petraja (1688-1703) that Kauman vistited the city and, according to the Dutch envoy, there was a cordial and close relationship between the state and the Sangha with several Buddhist monks being in the council of advisors to the king. He also draws attention to the conduct of the monks who were disciplined and learned and were highly respected by the laymen (Peiris, 1945). This report and other information that had reached the Kandyan court about the state of religion in Ayudhya, encouraged the ruler of Kandy to turn to Ayudhya for help in his effort to revive the Buddhist Sangha in Sri Lanka in the 18th century.

**Sri Lanka under Foreign Rule and the Decline of Buddhism**

After Parakramabahu VI of Kotte under whose patronage the team of monks received higher ordination in Sri Lanka, the political stability of the country was shattered, and Kotte was split into number of small kingdoms. The rivalries among these kingdoms paved the way for European powers to gain the control of the island. The Portuguese who came to Sri Lanka at the beginnning of 16th century captured the coastal areas making use of the internal rivalries of the local rulers. The kingdom of Kandy which was established after the decline of Kotte was able to maintain its independence and struggled against the Portuguese intrusion but, invited the Dutch against the Portuguese. The Dutch not only were able to expell the Portuguese from Sri Lanka but also made use of the opportunity to gain the control of all the areas held by them. Furthermore, they even expanded their possession by capturing the coastal areas held by the king of Kandy, making Kandy a landlocked kingdom. Thus, by 1658, the ruler of Kandy had to depend on the Dutch for any outside contact.

The political instability and the loss of royal patronage to the Sangha and the Buddhist monasteries led to a severe set back of Buddhism in Sri
Lanka after the 16th century. The foreign rulers who controlled a large part of the country were interested in spreading Christianity, and therefore, they gave their full support to the church. Many temples situated in the Portuguese and Dutch territories were abandoned and the Buddhist monks had to leave the area as they were unable to maintain them. Another calamity faced by the Buddhists towards the end of the 16th century was the threat came from a Sinhalese ruler. He was Rajasinghe II of Sitawaka (1581-93), and this kingdom emerged after the decline of Kotte. After he embraced Saivism, destroyed Buddhist temples, Buddhist scriptures, and even handed over the properties of Buddhist temples to those of the Hindus. All such activities contributed to the deterioration of Buddhism and the loss of royal patronage weakened the order of monks and the Theravada traditions in Sri Lanka. Although the rulers of Kandy were Buddhists, they were preoccupied with their struggle against foreign invaders for their own survival and therefore, they were unable to extent the necessary royal support for the revival of Buddhist order.

Hence, not only the number of monks in the country dwindled but also those few who remained as monks degenerated as a result of their deviation from the rules of \textit{vinaya} which was meticulously followed by the Sri Lankan \textit{Sangha} for nearly two thousand years. Hence, the Order of monks in Sri Lanka, which even guided the monks in other Theravada countries, became extinct within just one hundred years after Sinhalese monks gave the higher ordination and taught the Buddhist scriptures to the Southeast Asian monks during the reign of Parakramabahu of Kotte. Sri Lanka not only lost its position as the prime centre of Theravada Buddhism, but also had to seek assistance from foreign countries to obtain monks to reintroduce the proper higher ordination because, by the end of 16th century, the country did not have even five qualified monks to perform the necessary ecclesiastical ceremonies (Devarajas, 1994; Wijayawardena and Meegaskumbura, 1993: xxxii-xxxviii).
Unsuccessful Attempts of the Kandyan Kings in Reviving the Sangha

The rulers of the kingdom of Kandy who took upon themselves the task of reviving the Buddhist Order, following the aged old tradition of Sinhalese kings, made number of attempts with the help of foreign monks to reintroduce the higher ordination and restore the religion to its past glory. For example, Vimaladharmasuriya I (1591-1604) in 1596 and Vimaladharmasuriya II (1687-1707) in 1697 invited Buddhist monks from Arakan in Burma (Jayatilaka, D.B. 1935) but none of those attempts produced any permanent results. With the lapse of higher ordination degeneration of monks took place, and the temples were occupied by a set of monks called ganinnanse or ganas, and according to the Culavamsa, a Sri Lankan historical chronicle, “they cherished evil, were of bad moral living, followed false doctrine, took the pleasure in maintaining women and children and devoted themselves to unseemly professions such as astrology, medical activity and the like” (Culavamsa, 100 : 45). This is corroborated by the Kusalakriya Sandesaya, another Sinhalese work, when it says that these so called monks polluted Buddha Sasana by learning and practising astrology, medicine, occult, magic and esoterics in order to amass wealth instead of learning scriptures and living accordingly (Kusalakriya Sandesaya: 223-24). As there were no genuine monks to guide them, the layment too, drifted from the original teachings of Buddhism, started worshiping many Hindu gods and such practices led to creating many regional gods who were promoted by Buddhist monks themselves. Nevertheless, people remained Buddhist without abandoning it, incorporating these new beliefs into the Great Tradition of Buddhism by making such gods servants of the Buddha (Wijayawardene and Meegaskumbura: xxxiv-xxxv).

Thus, Buddhism was at a very low ebb and the Theravada traditions of learning Dhamma and practising it were gradually lost with the so-called monks becoming more involved in worldly affairs, who were concerned with making use of the temple properties for the benefit of their families (Ibid.: xxxvi). When Buddhism was in such a degenerated and dilapidated state that the new dynasty of kings established themselves in the kingdom
of Kandy in mid-18th century. This dynastic change was a contributing factor in the revival of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, and the establishment of the new sect of Buddhist monks called Siyam nikaya or the Siamese sect, with the introduction of upasamapada or higher ordination by the monks invited from Ayudhya.

**The Nayakkar Dynasty of Kandy and the Revival of Buddhism**

When Narendrasinghe (1707-1739) of Kandy died without an heir, a brother of his queen, a prince from Madurai in India, succeeded him as Sri Vijaya Rajasinghe in 1739, and ruled until 1747 as the first ruler of the Nayakkar dynasty of Kandy. Being a foreigner and a Hindu by religion, he embraced Buddhism with his queen, as a tactical move adopted to get the support of the subjects of his new kingdom who were Buddhists. In order to consolidate his position he took upon himself the traditional responsibility of the Sinhalese rulers of promoting and safeguarding Buddhism, and he made an attempt to revive it with the help of Valivita Saranankarta, a Buddhist monk who too, was keen to reorganize the Sangha as they were the guardians of the Faith. Saranakara made an untiring effort to teach his pupils the original scriptures that were available in the country at the time in order to train a group of monks who could uphold the Theravada traditions against the degenerated ganinanses. With the establishment of the new dynasty of rulers in Kandy Saranankara succeeded in reviving the traditional royal patronage to the Sangha. Although he made a request to King Narendrasinghe to make arrangements to invite qualified monks from abroad in order to reintroduce proper upasamapada in order to strengthen the Order of monks, the king was unable to comply with the request as he was preoccupied with other matters. It was the traditional practice to perform the higher ordination ceremonies for monks regularly under the patronage of the Sinhalese kings for the continuity of the Order of monks. However, the unsettled political conditions prevented holding such ceremonies, and therefore, it was not possible to find even five qualified monks in Sri Lanka to perform such ecclesiastical acts at the time. That was why Sri Lanka had to turn to outside help for reintroduction of such traditions in the 18th century.
The Dutch Intervention and the Sinhalese mission to Ayudhya

Although Burma and Thailand both had the same traditions of Theravada Buddhism the court of Kandy as well as Saranakara were attracted to Ayudhya for inviting monks because of the failure of two previous occasions to restore the Order with the monks coming from Arakan in Burma. Furthermore, the knowledge they had gained about the state of religion in Ayudhya from the report submitted by the Dutch envoy and the account given by the traders who visited that kingdom (Pieris, 1945; Sirisandesaka-tha), convinced them that Ayudhya was a more suitable place to invite monks (Sangharajavata: v 87-89). Since King Nareandrasinghe failed to get down monks, Saranankara made the same request to his successor Sri Vijaya Rajasinghe who had cordial relations with him, being one of his pupils and it was under his patronage and initiative that Sri Lanka was able to invite monks from Ayudhya in mid-18th century.

Since the kingdom of Kandy was landlocked due to Dutch occupation of all the coastal areas of the country with ports, and he had no ships of his own, the king had to request Dutch assistance in obtaining monks from outside. Therefore, Sri Vijaya Rajasinghe requested the Dutch governor in Colombo for necessary facilities in their ships and for making other arrangements for a mission to be sent abroad to a suitable country where authentic Buddhism was prevailing to fetch Buddhist monks for the revival of higher ordination in Sri Lanka. Similar to the interests of the newly established ruler of Kandy to make his position consolidated through his involvement in the revival of Buddhism, the Dutch too were keen to make use of this opportunity to go between the rulers of Kandy and Ayudhya in order to consolidate Dutch trade relations with both countries.

The First Sinhalese Mission to Ayudhya

According to Dutch records, a Sinhalese mission was sent to Ayudhya in order to fetch Buddhist monks on the 20th February, 1741, on board the Dutch ship Constantia, via Batavia. However, when the mission arrived in Batavia, it was directed to Pegu in Burma by the Dutch authorities.
in Batavia, as by then, Bataviya had received the news of estranged relationship between the Dutch and the Ayudhyan authorities (*Sri Lanka National Archives* (SLNA) 1/1157 and *Realia*, I: 217 ff. cited by Goonewardena, 1980 : 8). The Dutch ship wrecked on the way to Pegu, but Dorenegama, Vilbagedera, the leaders of the mission, and few others managed to survive; Dorenegama reached Pegu and Vilbagedera were drifted to Mergui in Thailand. The other members, the letters and presents taken with the mission were perished in the wreck. Although both leaders managed to contact the authorities of the respective countries, who were willing to send monks to Sri Lanka, since neither had proper documents from the ruler of Kandy, and the lack of transport to take the monks home, compelled the envoys to abandon the idea and, had to return somewhat disappointed (*SLNA* 1/1158 and 1/742 cited by Goonewardene, 1980 : 8). According to these documents, at Mergui Vilbagedera met the viceroy of Tennaserim, who on behalf of the ruler of Ayudhya, gave the assurance of making monks available, provided he had suitable transport arrangements for them (*Ibid.*). The only achievement of this mission was the gaining of first hand knowledge by Vibagedera, one of the envoys, about the state of Buddhism in the kingdom of Ayudhya, and a promise of learned monks from that country. Furthermore, it became clear that if necessary it was possible to arrange transport from Mergui to Sri Lanka direct, avoiding Batavia. As we will see later that this information helped susequent missions when the Dutch were trying to deceive the Sinhalese court on these voyages.

**The Second Unsuccessful attempt of Obtaining monks from Ayudhya**

Encouraged by the reports of Vilbagedera on the state of Buddhism in Ayudhya, and the promise of Buddhist monks, Sri Vijaya Rajasinghe, the king of Kandy, made a request again to the Dutch Governor in Colombo in February, 1942, to arrange for ships either direct to Mergui or via Malacca in order to despatch a Sinhalese mission to Ayudhya for the purpose of requesting for monks (*SLNA* 1/3261; Goonewardene, 1980: 9). The Dutch were reluctant and were delaying their response at first, but when the King of Kandy placed some restrictions on Dutch trade in his kingdom, and
indicated to them his intention of approaching the British who were in Madras at the time for help to send a mission to Pegu in Burma, if the Dutch were not responding positively, the Dutch became alarmed and agreed to comply with the request came from Kandy (SLNA 1/2227; Goonewardene, 1980: 12). It became clear to them that they should act swiftly in order to make this opportunity to mend their strained relations with Ayudhya, and also to get the restrictions placed by the King of Kandy on their trade relaxed. In their communications with the court of Kandy, the Dutch made an attempt to convince the Sinhalese court that Ayudhya was the best country to get Buddhist monks, because Buddhism was thriving in that kingdom and that it was easy for Van Imhoff, the Dutch Governor of Batavia to negotiate for monks with the King of Ayudhya as he had cordial relations with him through Dutch trade relations with that kingdom (SLNA 1/3335; Goonewardene, 1980: 12).

The Dutch Manipulation of the Mission

The Dutch records show that the Sinhalese mission with three ambassadors with letters and gifts to the king of Audhya from Sri Vijaya Rajasinghe of Kandy left Colombo on the 3rd of Februery, 1947, and reached Batavia on the 17th March. However, the plan of the mission was not implemented according to the original schedule, and therefore, the objective of the mission was not achieved. Having examined carefully the Dutch documents available about the mission, Goonewardene came to the conclusion that the Dutch “had not only manipulated the Siamese embassy to Ayuthya of 1747, for the furtherance of Dutch interests relating to the kingdom, but also that they had worked assiduously towards the complete failure of that mission” (Goonewardene, 1980: 25).

The Dutch records show that Batavian authorities decided to send only a third-ranking ambassador, Vilbagedera, to Ayudhya with a Dutch Commissiant (special envoy) named Gerrijt Fek, leaving behind the two senior ambassadors, Meedeniya and Doranegama, and the royal letters and the presents sent by the Sinhalese king to the ruler of Ayudhya (Koloniaal Archief of Algemeen Rajksarchief at the Hague (KA), 2061 (Bd.2), f. 348
and *KA* 2575 (Bd.1), f.63 cited by Goonewardene, 1980: 13). The correspondence between the Batavian Authorities and the Dutch officials in Colombo show that it was a deliberate plan of the Dutch authorities in Batavia (*SLNA* 1/3336; Goonewardene, 1980: 14-15). The Batavian authorities even opened a letter addressed by the Ayudhyan ruler to the king of Kandy with the pretext of finding out whether it was related to sending of monks to Kandy. However, the contents of the letter was not disclosed to the Sinhalese envoys (*Realia*: 13 cited by Goonewardene, 1980: 14-15). As rightly pointed out by Goonewardene, all this manipulation was to get a recognition for their contribution to the mission from both Sri Lankan and Ayudhyan rulers. Had the entire team of the mission with the royal letters and the gifts were sent to Ayudhya as originaly programmed, the Dutch would not have had a special role to play, and therefore, they would not have been able to push through their own interests with success (Goonewardene, 1980: 15). This is confirmed by the dealings of the *Commissiant* with the Thai officials, as revealed from the letters sent by Fek to the Batavian officials. According to these letters, the Sinhalese enmisaries and Fek together had a meeting with the Thai *Praklang* or the foreign minister, and buddhist monks were promised at the meeting. Fek later had another meeting with the same official alone with various gifts for obtaining trade facilities for the Dutch (*SLNA* 1/2221 cited by Goonewardene, 1980: 16-17). These evidences confirm that the Dutch were making use of the Sinhalese religious mission to reestablish their old trading position which they lost in 1741 (Goonewardene, 1980: 18) as a result of a clash between the Thais and the Dutch in Ayudhya. Having come to know the motives of the Dutch in their involvement with the Sinhalese mission to Ayudhya through information about the details of the mission from the Sinhalese envoys, who would have informed the change of the original plans of the mission by the Dutch in Batavia, the Ayudhyan authorities would have become cautious and only promised to send monks later. According to Dutch records, *Praklang* at the fairwell audience “assured the Sinhalese, on behalf of the king that if their king were to send a vassal directly from Ceylon [Sri Lanka], without any Europeans, but with a distinguished embassy and proper credentials, as had happened in former times, then they would refuse no monks” (*SLNA* 1/2227 cited by Goonewardene, 1980: 21). The documents also contain
evidence of disrespect encountered by Buddhist monks in the hands of Dutch in previous occasions and that was one reason why request was made for sending ships direct from Sri Lanka without foreigners.

The *Sasanopakara Sangaha Vastuwa*, a Sinhalese work written around 1770, provides some indication of further manipulation of the Sinhalese mission to Ayudhya by the Dutch in Batavia. It says that Vilbagedera and others returned to Batavia with the intention of going back to Ayudhya with the senior ambassadors and the royal letter and the gifts in order to invite monks, the Batavian authorities informed them of the demise of King Vijaya Rajasinghe, and told them that it was not proper to take Thai monks to Sri Lanka without the consent of the new king of Kandy. Thus, although the Dutch were trying to maintain that the idea of bringing a letter from the new king came from Ayudhyan authorities, the Dutch documents prove that it was their own plan invented in Batavia (Goonewardene, 1980: 23).

Thus, the second Sinhalese mission during the reign of King Sri Vijaya Rajasinghe in Kandy to obtain monks from Ayudhya, too, could not achieve its objectives as a result of Dutch intervention. While Meedeniya, the seniormost ambassador was to remain in Batavia and join the next mission to Ayudhya in Malacca, Doranegama and Vilbagedera were sent back to Sri Lanka. Since Doranegama died on the way home only Vilbagedera reached Kandy. Although the Dutch after this mission made an attempt to convince the Sinhalese ambassadors the poor prospects of obtaining monks even at a later date, due to the reluctance of Thai monks to take such a long and hazardous journey to Sri Lanka. However, Vilbagedera was confident that it could be achieved because the long sea journey could be avoided by making use of direct voyage from Mergui to Trincomalee, and that Ayudhyan authorities were genuine in their promise of monks through his experience gained by participating in two unsuccessful mission to Ayudhya. This is amply demonstrated in his keen interest in the third Sri Lankan mission to Ayudhya which finally brought a team of Ayudhyan monks who established a Siamese sect of Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka.
The Establishment of the Siamese Sect of Buddhist Monks in Sri Lanka

The most important religious event that took place after the end of 15th century in Sri Lanka was the establishment of the Siamese sect of Buddhist monks during the reign of King Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe (1741-81 of Kandy with the help of King Boromokot (1732-58) of Ayudhya in Thailand. It was a result of a high powered Sinhalese mission sent by the king of Kandy to the court of Ayudhya. The latter responded positively by sending three consecutive mission of Thai Buddhist monks to Kandy who instituted a new Order of monks in Sri Lanka reestablishing the aged-old tradition of Theravada Buddhism in the country.

The Sources

There are number of sources which give detailed accounts of the three missions as well as the higher ordination ceremonies and other ecclesiastical acts held in Kandy. The most complete account is the Symadutavarnanava or Vilbagedera Muhandiramge Gaman Vistaraya, a Sinhalese work written by one of the ambassadors who took part in the mission to Ayudhya (tr. Fernando, 1959). It is corroborated by a similar account, the Syama Varnanava, written either by Ellepola Muhandiram or Aiththaliyadde Muhandiram, another member of the same mission (tr. Pieris, 1903). Two other Sinhalese sources are Kusalakriya Sandesaya (Ed. Navulle Dhammananda, 1969), written by either a nephew or grandson of Vibagedera after 1760 and Syamopasampadavata written by Tibbotuwawe Siddhartha, a pupil of Valivita Saranankara, some time before 1773 (ed. Magallago Prajnatishya, 1948). There are number of Sinhalese works written later such as Sangharaja Sadhuchariyawa (ed. Sannasgala, 1947), Elu Vimanavastu Prakaranaya (ed. Ratanasara, 1965), Sangharjavata (ed. de Silva, 1955), Mandaram Puvata (ed.Lankananada, 1958) and Upali Kathikawata (ed. Koswinne Seelananda, 1935-36) in addition to minor references to the mission and activities of the Thai monks in Sri Lanka in other works (Wijayawardene and Meegaskumbura, 1993: x-xvii).

Although the Sri Lankan sources give an elaborate account of the involvement of the Ayudhyan ruler and his officials in making
arrangements for the despatch of monks to Sri Lanka, there are only few sources from Thailand which give any information about the Sri Lankan mission and its activities. The report of Thai Ambassadors who accompanied Buddhist monks that came to Sri Lanka in 1752, and an account of the second team of monks that came to Sri Lanka in 1955 by one of the monks of the team, are two contemporary accounts of the exchange of missions between the two countries (tr. Michael Wright (unpublished) cited by Wijayawardene and Meegakumbura, 1993: xii). A letter written by the Chief Minister of Siam to the Chief Minister of Lanka in 1756 (Ibid.), a letter from the court of Siam brought by the Thai envoys who accompanied the team of Thai monks who came in 1755 (Codrington, 1945) and some references found in Thai Chronicles (Frankfurter, 1907: 22-27; Wyatt, 1973: 49) are the Thai sources useful for the study of the exchange of religious missions in the mid-18th century.

Apart from the Sri Lankan and Thai sources the Dutch documents provide some information not found in either Sinhalese or Thai sources. Since the Dutch played the role of intermediaries between the court of Kandy and Ayudhya, there are number of references to these missions in their correspondence between Batavia and Colombo, Bolombo and the court of Kandy, and between Ayudhya and Batavia. Goonewardene has uncovered very valuable information from these documents (Goonewardene, 1980: 1-47).

The First Successful Mission

When Vilbagedera returned to Sri Lanka after the unsuccessful second mission to Ayudhya, the court of Kandy received first hand information about the flourishing state of Buddhism in Ayudhya, and the willingness of the Ayudhyan authorities to help Sri Lanka to re-establish higher ordination of monks. The Kusalakriya Sandesaya says that having come to know from Vilbagedera the prosperous state of Buddhism in Ayudhya, and the availability of learned and disciplined monks who were performing the ecclesiastical ceremonies well under the patronage of ruler of Ayudhya, the Kandyan court became keen to invite monks from that kingdom in order to re-introduce higher ordination of Sri Lankan monks...
Therefore, no sooner Vilbagedera returned, the Kandyan court requested the Dutch in Colombo to provide necessary ships for a mission to be sent to Ayudhya via Mergui without going to Batavia. Although the Dutch favoured a journey via Batavia, they had to agree with the Kandyan court and arranged a ship in 1750 via Malacca, and promised to send Meedeniya who was left in Batavia during the last mission to Malacca (SLNA 1/2227; Goonewardene, 1980: 26-27).

The Sri Lankan sources provide much information to show how such royal missions in the 18th century were organized and executed with much protocol followed in Both Sri Lanka and Ayudhya. According to these sources, the Sinhalese mission was a very elaborate one including five envoys who were very high-ranking officials of the Kandyan kingdom, representing most of the military and semi-military divisions of the kingdom. Furthermore, it also included personnel for ceremonial as well as for administrative functions associated with a royal mission. Military officers, physicians, an astrologer, soldiers, musicians and drummers and a number of servants to attend on high officials were among them (Syamadutavarananava, tr.Fernando, 1959; 42 ff.). Although Pattipola Mohottala was the chief of mission, Vilbagedera who had previous experience in participating in number of similar missions has been attributed the success of this mission.

Two letters written in Pali were taken with the envoys, one a royal letter from Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe, the king of Kandy to the king of Ayudhya, written by Valivita Saranankara, and the other to the Sangharaja, the chief of monks in Ayudhya, written by another Sinhalese monk, in addition to numerous gifts to Sangharaja, the Ayudhyan ruler and other officials.

The envoys started their journey from Kandy on the 12th July, 1750 and having met by the Dutch officials in Trincomalee on their arrival on the 25th of the same month, embarked on the Dutch ship wiltrijk to set sail on the 1st of August. The ship reached Malacca on the 20th September but had to wait over seven months for monsoon in order to continue their journey to Ayudhya. According to the Sinhalese sources the Malaccan authorities provided all the necessities for living in Malacca until 26th of April when the ship started sailing again heading for Thailand. After they reached the
Thai port on the first of June, the team had to wait nearly a month until the Thai officials came to take them to Ayudhya. The envoys were given a warm welcome along the way, taking them to various temples in order to make offerings to the monks, who delivered sermons and transferred merit to the envoys. Vilbagedera mentioned with gratitude how the Thai officials took utmost care in looking after the envoys, providing for all their needs and how they paid attention even to the minute details to make their stay in Ayudhya as comfortable as possible. There are many references to exchange of presents, including money on numerous occasions (Fernando, 1959: 58-59). In Ayudhya the palace officials instructed the envoys how to present themselves to the Ayudhyan ruler and how the royal letter should be handed over. When the envoys met King Boromokot it was a brief meeting but, according to Vilbagedera,

*He inquired of them whether they were faring happily without suffering any discomfort either mental or physical. The King, then graciously announced that he, the lord of the noble city of Ayudhya would send representatives of the great Sangha to Ceylon [Sri Lanka] in response to the noble request made for the promotion of the teachings of the Buddha by [the King of Kandy] (Fernando, 1959: 60).*

While the envoys were in Ayudhya they were entertained to meals on several occasions under the patronage of the ruler of Ayudhya. They also visited number of monasteries in Ayudhya with Thai officials although the viharas mentioned in these sources cannot be identified. The Sri Lankan ambassadors met the Sangharaja at a monastery called Napthan Ratana Maha Dhatvarana, which has been identified as the Wat Mahathat of Ayudhya though no conclusive evidence has been found (Ibid.: 80). The Sangharaja too confirmed that Thai monks would be made available since the envoys had made a dangerous journey a long way (Symavarnanava).

The Syamavarnanava gives a vivid picture of kathinapuja or offering of robes to buddhist monks at the end of a rainy season (vas) in a monastery named Kuja yot Ratnarama which is translated by Michael Wright
as Ku jet yot or Sapta chetiya temple (Wijayawardene and Meegaskumbura: 145, note 130). The procession was elaborate with royal pomp and glory with many royal officials with their retinue and military units participating. It is said that this annual ceremony and the procession came down from the Sukhothai days and that the king offered three robes to the monks. It is believed that the procession was expected to demonstrate the military strength of the ruler (Wells, 1960: 27). The Sinhalese envoys were also were taken on a pilgrimage to Saraburi where, according to Thai beliefs the Foot Print of the Buddha was found. The account given by Vilbagedera about this temple and the Foot Print is corroborated by other sources (Low, 1835: 57 ff.; Fernando, 1959 : note 76).

On the 31st of October, 1751, the envoys were taken to meet King Boromokot and the royal officials and they were informed that they could now return to Sri Lanka with Thai Buddhist monks. The Symamavarnanava says that on the 4th of November 20 monks and 08 novices were invited to go to Sri Lanka under the leadership of Thera Upali and Thera Ariyamuni. The list of names and the number of monks who came to Sri Lanka vary according to different sources. The Symamavarnanava gives the names of 20 senior monks. According to some other sources only 18 monks and 07 samaneras came to Sri Lanka with Upali and Ariyamuni Theras. Due to the delay in arrival of Thai monks as a result of damage caused to the Thai ship, all the monks who were scheduled to arrive in Sri Lanka may not have come and some times mixing up of names may have taken place when using both Pali and Sinhalese names (Wijayawardene and Meegaskumbura, 1993: 149, note 172).

On the 7th of November 1751 the Sinhalese envoys, the Buddhist monks from Ayudhya and the Thai envoys who accompanied the mission to Sri Lanka, began their voyage from Ayudhya after elaborate farewell ceremonies with the participation of King Boromokot himself and other Thai high officials. The Thai envoys carried a royal letter from the king of Ayudhya to the king of Kandy. The official report of the Siamese ambassadors in 1752 includes names of 18 theras and five Thai envoys who came with the Sinhalese mission and mentions different categories of people who were included in the Thai team. Similar to the composition of the Sinhalese
mission there were soldiers, clerks, interpreters, an officer-in-charge of gifts, physicians, musicians including drummers and trumpeters, cooks and servants for the envoys included. Pra Sudanta Mistri, the Governor of Bangkok was the leader of the Thai envoys (Wijayawardene and Meegaskumbura, 1993: 45-46).

The Return of the Sinhalese Envoys with Thai Monks

For the return journey King Boromokot Provided a ship to convey the Buddhist monks and the Thai envoys and, Vilbagedera who was familiar with the Thai customs too, embarked on that ship. The other Sinhalese envoys and their team were to sail in the Dutch ship *Tulpenburg*. Having sailed along the river Menam, both ships reached the sea and the leader of the Sinhalese envoys, Pattipola Mohottala died, and had to be cremated in a nearby temple. The Dutch ship continued its journey but the Thai ship encountered difficulties when it started leaking water and sank in mud near the harbour of Ligor. The passengers had to be disembarked and they visited some temples ashore, and this episode was reported to Ayudhya. The Ayudhyan ruler ordered the ship to return to Ayudhya after attending to the necessary repairs. Although the Ayudhyan ruler promised to supply another ship soon, since some of his ships plying between India and Ayudhya involved in trade were lost in a storm and due to some other calamities he had to face, he was unable to make quick arrangements for a ship to transport the monks and the Thai envoys. However, Vilbagedera was able to hire a private ship owned by two Dutchmen to sail to Batavia and from there the Dutch authorities provided their ship *Oostkappel* to sail to Sri Lanka in March, 1753 (Fernando, 1959: 71-72; Goonewardene, 1980: 30). Finally, the Buddhist monks, the Thai envoys, and Vibagedera reached Trincomalee, a port in the eastern coast of the Island on the 14th May, 1753 (Syamadutavarnanava; “Embassy to Lanka in 1752-53 and Siamese Ambassador’s Official Report”).

The *Syamavarnanava* describes how the Sinhalese envoys who boarded the Dutch ship *Tulpenburg* sailed to Malacca and from there proceeded to Colombo and arrived in Sri Lanka on the 14th January, 1753, four months ahead of Thai monks reached Trincomalee. They reached Kandy on the 21st
of February and reported to the king that the Thai monks were on the way to Sri Lanka (Peiris, 1903: 35-37).

**The Sri Lankans Welcome Thai Monks and their Envoys.**

The Thai monks and envoys were met at Trincomalee by very high officials of the kingdom of Kandy, including Adigar Ahelepola, one of the Chief Ministers, and the whole team was conducted to the city of Kandy in a procession. Important Sinhalese monks including Valivita Saranankara who was instrumental in inviting Thai monks also came to receive them and met the team on their way to Kandy. The King, Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe, welcomed the monks and the envoys with great respect outside the city and they were taken to the newly built monastery, Pushparama or Malvatta Vihara and it became the headquarters of the Siamese Sect of monks established by this team under Thera Upali. The Thai envoys were housed in separate quarters in the city (Sangharaja Sadhuchariyawa: 15; “Embassy to Lanka in 1753-53; Wijayawardene and Meegaskumbura, 1993: 58 ff.).

**Performance of Upasamapada or Higher Ordination Ceremonies and the Establishment of the Siyam Nikaya.**

After the arrival of Thai monks the first upasampada or higher ordination was conferred by them on a Thai novice, who accompanied the team at Malvatta monastery on the 19th July, 1753. However, it was on the following day that elaborate ceremonies were held at the same place under the patronage of Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe, following the aged-old traditions of Sinhalese kings in the past. Among the Sinhalese monks to receive higher ordination at the hands of Thai monks were the senior novices such as (samaneras) Valivita Saranankara, Kobbekaduwa, Hulangamuwa, Bambaradeniya, Tibbotuwave and Navinne. Venerable Upali Thera was appointed upajjaya and the venerable Brahmajoti Thera and Mahapanna Thera were appointed achariyas. With this ecclesiastical act the Siyam nikaya was born in Sri Lanka which is the main sect of Buddhist monks in the island to the present day. With the establishment of proper chapter of monks many laymen were admitted to the Order and on many novices
higher ordination was conferred by the Thai monks (Sangharaja) Sadhuchariyawa: 16). The Upali Kathikawata gives a detailed account of the procedure followed at the upasamapada ceremony which was introduced by the Thai monks, and since then the same procedure is continued (Upali Katikawata: Wijawardene and Meegaskumbura, 1993: 66-72).

Thera Upali was mainly involved in instructing the local monks in the performance of ecclesiastical acts such as admission of laymen to the order of samaneras, conferring of upasampada on samamneras, kathina ceremony, vassa ceremony and the recitation of kammavaca. This was mainly to ensure the proper conduct of the members of the newly established Order of these traditional ecclesiastical acts prescribed in Buddhist scriptures.

After the establishment of the new order of monks under the patronage of Thai monks, Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe appointed Valivita Saranankara as the Sangharaja or the chief of monks in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, the head monks of monasteries of Malwatta and Asgiriya in Kandy were made two deputies to the Sangharaja. This institutionalization of Sangha was undoubtedly due to the advice of the Thai monks, especially Upali Thera, and the name given to the chief of monks may have been suggested by them because in Sri Lanka traditionally he was known as Mahasami (Devaraja, 1994: 15). Furthermore, the two main monasteries of Siyam Nikaya, Malvatta and Asgiriya in Kandy, were made in-charge of all the monasteries in the country, including those of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruva. These reforms had far reaching results because “the Sangha which had dwindled into nebulous, leaderless, and disorganized state was given form, shape and official status, emulating where necessary the Siamese model” (Devaraja, 1994: 15, 19 and 115).

The regular annual procession held in the capital of Kandy was in honour of Hindu gods, as there was much Hindu influence before the establishment of the Siyam Nikaya, but with the advice of Upali Thera and other Thai monks, the king added a special feature to the procession by ordering other religious processions to follow the procession in honour of the Buddha, and since then, the Tooth Relic of the Buddha became the focus of Asela Perehara in Kandy (Culavamsa, 99: 66; Devaraja, 1994: 14).
Thai Envoys were Received by King Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe of Kandy

According to the *Syama Varnanava*, the Thai envoys and the royal letter sent by King Boromokot of Ayudhya were received by the king of Kandy, Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe at a ceremony held at the Royal Audience Hall in Kandy with exchange of gifts. The king also arranged an exhibition of the Tooth Relic of the Buddha in honour of Thai monks and the envoys. All the religious scriptures brought from Thailand were deposited in a special building near the palace. Although it is mentioned in number of sources that many books and scriptures were brought with the mission, titles of these are not given. The royal letter, having read in front of the king and courtiers by Saranankara Thera and another monk, it was deposited in the treasury (*Kusalakriya Sandesaya*: 233; *Syamopasampadavata*: 38-39; *Syamavarnanava*: 39; Wijayawardene and Meegaskumbura, 1993: 73). It is mentioned in the “Embassy to Lanka” by the Thai Ambassador that at another exhibition of the Tooth Relic held on the 14th October, 1753, the king told the Thai envoys that no other foreigner got such a close look at the Tooth Relic, which may have been to emphasize the special honour the king bestowed on the Thai envoys (Wijayawardene and Meegaskumbura, 1993: 77-78).

The king also made arrangements for the Thai monks and the envoys to visit the ancient city of Anuradhapura and other sacred places on pilgrimage and it is said that when the envoys returned to Ayudhya they trasferred the merit they had acquired from this pilgrimage to the Ayudhyan king (*Syamopasampadavata*: 40).

After returning from the pilgrimage, the Thai envoys were taken to Colombo and were sent back to Thailand on the Dutch ship *Amstelveen* and they reached Ayudhya after about three months. According to the Dutch records, the envoys were presented with three elephants by the king of Kandy but the animals were sold to the Dutch, since Thais had elephants in their own country (*SLNA* 1/185 cited by Goonewardene, 1980: 31).

The first successful mission of Buddhist monks from Ayudhya revived the aged-old close cultural relations between Sri Lanka and
Thailand. The rulers of both countries and the Sinhalese envoys who had to undergo severe hardships in the process of arranging the visit of Thai monks contributed a great deal to its success.

The Second Team of Thai Monks Arriving in Sri Lanka

While the Thai monks were active in performing various ecclesiastical ceremonies in order to revitalize the Order of monks in Sri Lanka, some sources provide information on another two teams of Thai monks sending to Sri Lanka by the king of Audhya on two different occasions. The report submitted by the Thai envoys who accompanied the second team of Thai monks to Sri Lanka ("Second Siamese Mission..." tr. Wright), and the letter from the Chief Minister of Siam (Codrington, 1945: 97-99) brought by the Thai envoys who accompanied the Thai monks with the second mission, are the main sources which provide information about this second team of Thai monks.

According to the report submitted by the Thai envoys, when King Boromokot met the first team of Thai monks before they were sent to Sri Lanka, they were informed that his intention was to send two more teams of Thai monks to Sri Lanka at the interval of three years in order to continue the performance of necessary ecclesiastical ceremonies until the Sinhalese monks become qualified to perform these on their own. This was to avoid taxing the same group of monks for a long period so that each team of monks could return to Ayudhya at the end of three years in Sri Lanka ("Second Siamese Mission..."; Wijayawardene and Meegaskumbura, 1993: 82-83). Furthermore, it says that the King of Audhya invited two senior monks, Visuddhacari and Varagnanamuni to be in-charge of a team of monks consisting of 20 senior monks and 20 novices to be sent to Sri Lanka. The other personnel such as three ambassadors, some officers and physicians, interpreters and servants, too, were included in this mission (Ibid.). A royal letter and gifts to the king of Kandy and offerings to various temples were also handed over to them. This royal letter (Codrington, 1945) includes an account of the first Thai mission, and appreciation of the treatment received by the Thai ambassadors who accompanied the Thai
monks, suggestions to the king of Kandy to promote Buddhism, the purpose of sending the second team of monks, a list of books sent with the second mission and instructions connected to chanting scriptures.

This second Thai mission left Ayudhya at the end of October, 1755 on board the Dutch ship Elswut. According to Dutch records, the Praklang of Audhya had requested the Dutch, on behalf of his king, to arrange passage to this mission to the kingdom of Kandy in this ship. In return, the king sent valuable gifts to the Dutch Governor in Colombo and the Dutch officials in Trincomalee to be received at the court of Kandy (Goonewardene, 1980: 32). In fact, the royal letter, referred to above, mentions about these gifts in addition to gifts sent to the Dutch Governor-General in Batavia (Condrington, 1945: 98-99).

The ship sailed via Malacca and Mergui to Sri Lanka but before reaching Sri Lankan port it was wrecked on the 9th January 1756 within the sight of the Sri Lankan shore off Arunagama (modern Arugam). However, most of the monks, the Thai envoys and the crew of the ship were able to save their lives with the help of the people of the kingdom of Kandy. When the news of arrival of the Thai monks reached Kandy, the king entrusted his officials to make arrangements to conduct them to the capital. They were eventually taken to Kandy who were received by the king and other officials warmly and they were provided with all the necessary facilities. The King Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe met the Thai envoys and received the royal letter sent by the Ayudhyan ruler. Later an exhibition of the Tooth Relic was held in their honour by the Sri Lankan ruler.

The Thai monks who arrived with the second mission continued the religious work started by the first group. By then some of the Thai monks arrived with Thera Upali had died and some were desperate to return to Thailand as the climate of Kandy and the Sri Lankan food did not agree with them. Although some wanted to return earlier the king pursuaded them to stay for three years. Some monks were even making arrangements to return just before the second team arrived but, temporarily postponed when the news of their arrival in Kandy. It appears that Thera Upali died after the second team of monks arrived in the capital and the king entrusted the
training of Sinhalese monks to the two Theras, Visuddhacari and Varananamuni, who headed the second team (Kusalakriya Sandesaya: 251-52; Wijayawardene and Meegaskumbura, 1993: 96).

When the envoys who accompanied the second team of Thai monks sent by the Ayudhyan ruler returned to their country, about 12 Thai monks who arrived with the first team also joined them having worked in Sri Lanka for three years. There were also three Sri Lankan envoys who accompanied them and the letter from the Chief Minister of Siam to the Chief Minister of Kandy which provide very valuable information about this second mission was brought by them when they returned. The Sinhalese envoys took with them a royal letter from Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe to the Ayudhyan ruler, a replica of the Tooth Relic, and a valuable image of the Buddha as presents to the Ayudhyan ruler. A letter and presents to the Chief Minister of Ayudhya from his counterpart in Kandy, a letter and offerings to the Sangharaja and presents to other Ayudhyan officials were taken by the Sinhalese envoys (“A Letter from the Chief Minister...”, Kusalakriya Sandesaya: 252; Wijayawardene and Meegaskumbura, 1993: 97). The team was sent to Colombo and the Dutch governor Loten made available the Dutch ship Akerendam which left Colombo on the 25th March, 1756 and reached Ayudhya via Batavia on the 12th July, 1756 (SLNA 1/2067; Goonewardene, 1980: 33).

The Dutch documents show that King Boromokot met the Sinhalese ambassadors on the 1st of August, 1756, and then the Ayudhyan officials conducted them to the Dutch factory to stay there until their departure (Ibid.). The Chief Minister’s letter says that the Ayudhyan ruler was mentioned in the letter sent by the king of Kandy and ordered the Chief Minister to write a reply. Since the Sinhalese envoys had brought offerings to the Buddha’s Foot Print in Saraburi, the king instructed his officials to take them to worship the Foot Print. Furthermore, when it was brought to his notice that in the letter sent to Sangharaja a request has been made for books that were not available in Sri Lanka, King Boromokot arranged 97 Dhamma volumes to be sent to Sri Lanka. Among the list mentioned in the letter there were original Pitaka books, commentaries, and books on grammar. The list shows that most of the books mentioned were available in Sri Lanka.
before Buddhism declined, and may have been the scriptures that were taken to Thailand when there were close religious contacts between Sri Lanka and Thailand during Sukhothai and even early Ayudhyan period. Most of these would have been lost when Sri Lanka was going through political unrest. Such books as *Sotabbamalinipakarana, Lokadipaka, Lokavinasa, Jambupativatthu,* and *Buddhasihinganidana,* which were not traditionally available in Sri Lanka would have been the ones composed in Thailand. Thus, most of the scriptures taken from Sri Lanka on previous occasions were returned, but Thailand had to borrow them again after Ayudhya was destroyed by the Burmese in 1768 (Wijayawardena and Meegaskubura, 1993: xlv-xlvi).

After completing their mission in Ayudhya the Sinhalese envoys returned to Sri Lanka with their retinue on board the Dutch ship Akeredam in mid February, 1757 and Chief Minister’s letter found in the Malwatta monastery confirm their arrival in Kandy (*SLNA* 1/2068; Goonewardena, 1980: 35).

**Experience of Thai monks in their effort in reviving Buddhism**

The prime minister’s letter throw some light on the difficulties the Thai monks encountered in recognizing the Buddhist order in Kandy after neglecting regious rites and practices for a long time. It says that the team of Thai monks headed by Thera Upali advised the laymen when they saw that they were not adhering to the proper religious practices in order to cultivate proper religious behaviour. However, people of high positions and castes like ministers some times ignored such advice thinking that it was a come down or lowering their status to behave in a manner they were advised to do so. For example, they did not remove their shoes and headdresses when they entered temples and when they were before the statues of Buddha. In the letter advice was given that all the people should observe these rules without disgracing the Faith since such manners are prescribed in Buddhist scriptures. The letter says that the Chief Minister was disturbed about this unsatisfactory situation and therefore, requested the Chief Minister of Kandy
to bring it to the notice of the ruler of Kandy to take remedial measures. These comments clearly highlight the feudalistic and the caste consciousness of the Kandyan aristocracy at the time, but eventually the Buddhist monks were successful in changing their attitudes regarding such behaviour even among the Kandyan aristocracy (Wijayawardene and Meegaskumbura, 1993: 102-104).

The *Sangharaja Saducariyawa* gives a detailed account of the activities of the Thai monks. The work started by the first team of monks under Thera Upali were continued by the second team headed by Visuddhacariya and Varananamuni. By teaching *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* to the Sinhalese monks and training them on *Vidassana* meditation, these Thai monks made a lasting impact on the Buddhist *Sangha* in Sri Lanka. The learned and well disciplined group of monks produced by the Thai monks were able to continue the Theravada Buddhist traditions to the present day.

**The Third Buddhist Mission from Ayudhya to Kandy**

The available sources on Ayudhyan-Sri Lankan relations have vague references to a third mission of Buddhist monks to Kandy in the 18th century. But these scanty references leave many unanswered questions related to this mission. The *Kusalakriya Sandesaya*, a contemporary Sinhalese work mentions three Buddhist missions of Thai monks and that they were able to confer higher ordination on about 1000 Sinhalese monks and admitted more than 4000 novices to the Order (*Kusalakriya Sandesaya*: 252). Another Sinhalese work, the *Sasanavathirna Varnanava*, written in the 19th century, also has an account of this mission Since there are some indications of a connection between this third mission and a palace conspiracy to assassinate Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe, the king of Kandy who was instrumental in reviving the Sangha. Some contemporary literary works which contain elaborate accounts of previous missions such as the *Sangharaja Saducariyawa*, the *Sangharajavata*, the *Syamopasampadavata* and the *Culavamsa* are silent about this third mission. It is suspected that the monk authors of these works were party to an unsuccessful conspiracy, and therefore, they were deliberately maintaining silence about the arrival of
the third group of Ayudhyan monks during the reign of Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe (Wijayawardene and Meegaskumbura, 1993: 111).

Although the Dutch records do not clearly mention about a third Buddhist mission from Ayudhya to Sri Lanka, there are some vague references to indicate that there was such a mission during the last days of King Boromokot. A letter written by Nicholas Bang, the Dutch Chief of Ayudhya to Schreuder, the Governor of the Dutch establishments in Sri Lanka, has a reference to King Boromokot ordering his *Praklang* to request Bang to send a letter to the Dutch Governor in Sri Lanka requesting facilities to send the Ayudhyan mission to Kandy from Dutch territory as speedily as possible. Bang despatched a letter as requested by *Praklang* when the Dutch ship *Lapienenburg* left for Sri Lanka, which may have been the ship that trasported the mission to Sri Lanka (SLNA 1/2068; Goonewardene, 1980: 35). There is also a vague reference to the involvement of some Thai monks in a consperacy against the king of Kandy in Dutch Political Council Minues of 30th July and 20th August, 1760. (SLNA 1/133; Wijayawardene and Meegaskumbura, 1993: 111). These references indicate that a team of Thai monks had arrived in Kandy in 1759.

A Sinhalese work the *Sangharajavata* has an indirect refrence to a palace conspiracy against the king, which says that through his kindness the king pardoned those who were involved in this conspiracy (*Sangharajavata*: 226-227). Although Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe was behind the revival of Buddhist *Sangha*, he continued with his Hindu religious practices, and therefore, the Kandyan aristocracy and the Sinhalese monks who had strong connections with them wanted a true Buddhist as their ruler. Therefore, a conspiracy was hatched under the leadership of Samanakkodi, one of the Chief Ministers of Kandy and Thera Saranankara. Some senior monks too were involved in it. According to the *Sasanavathirna Varnanava*, another Sinhalese work, they all agreed to invite a prince from Thailand with the help of Thai monks who were in Kandy at the time (*Sasanavathirna Varnanava*: 22-23; Devaraja, 1980: 108-18). These monks sent a letter to the king of Ayudhya requesting to send a Thai prince to Kandy. The sources agree on the arrival of a Thai prince in Kandy, according to some, disguised as a Buddhist monk bringing Buddhist scriptures (*Ibid*).
The Dutch records mention the name of this prince as Kramte Fifth and the Thai sources mention him as Krom Pipit, Krom Muwan Pipit or as Krom Muwan Deva Vivid (Frankfurter, 1907: 23; Syamananda, 1977: 90). According to the Thai chronicles, the ruler of Ayudhya invited Visuddhacariya and Vartananamuni to go to Sri Lanka with two other senior monks and two novices in order to take the place of Thai monks in Sri Lanka who were to return soon. Furthermore, they say that the king ordered to take Krom Muwan also in the sam ship that the monks were to be sent and that the prince should be disembarked only in Sri Lanka (Frankfurter, 1907: 23). The torn of the last statement is such that it appears that this prince was expelled to Sri Lanka for some reason or other. According to Thai traditions, Teppipit was a half-brother of King Ekatat (1758-67). He, with some other Thai princes, hatched a conspiracy against Ekarat after the latter became the king of Ayudhya. When the conspiracy failed Teppipit was banished to Sri Lanka as a punishment (Syamananda, 1990: 90). According to Frankfurter, Prince Devavivid (Teppipit) was a son of Boromokot and was banished to Sri Lanka by King Ekatat on the suspicion of his ambition to become king of Ayudhya (Frankfurter, 1907: 23). When the account in the Sasanavathirna Varnanava and the information given in the Thai sources are compared, there is a contradiction as to whether Teppipit was sent to Kandy at the request of Thai monks or whether he was banished from Ayudhya as he became a threat to King Ekatat. As these sources give only vague information, we are somewhat puzzled as to whether it was a coincidence that request coming from Kandy for a Thai prince and the banishing of Tepippit.

The Sasanavathirna Varnanava says that the king of Siam sent a prince in the guise of a monk with Buddhist scriptures. And after the arrival of the prince some aristocrats and Buddhist monks planned to eliminate Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe and his family at the Malvatta temple but the conspiracy was uncovered by the king who executed all the laymen but imprisoned the monks involved in the incident (Sasanavathirna Varnanava: 23-28; Devaraja, 1980: 108-116). The Dutch documents indicate that the Thai monks were expelled from Kandy and they went back to Thailand.

According to the Syamopasampadavata, the Thai monks who came with the second mission were sent back to Ayudhya by the king of Kandy
with much respect after they spent about four years engaged in religions activities (Syamopasampadavata: 42). However, it is not clear as to whether they like the first batch of Thai monks, returned to Ayudhya after the arrival of the third batch of monks from Ayudhya. It may be that the second team of monks waited until the arrival of the third team to leave Sri Lanka. It is also possible that Prince Pipit, too, arrived with them after he was banished by his brother King Ekatat. And after his arrival in Kandy he may have joined the conspirators against Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe with the ambition of becoming the king of Kandy (Devaraja, 1980: 114; Wijayawardene and Meegaskumbura, 1993: 119). The Dutch records show that after the conspiracy was uncovered, the Thai prince was despatched to Trincomalee and from there the Dutch sent him back to Ayudhya on board the Dutch ship Tutikoria (Devaraja, 1980: 114; SLNA 1/133). According to Frankfurter, he turned to Thailand during the Burmese war and as he was claiming suzerainty over Khorat region was brought to Bangkok and executed in 1782 (Frankfurter, 1907: 23). This incident would have led to slow down the relationship between Ayudhya and Sri Lanka, but it was the political instability in both kingdoms; in Ayudhya due to Burmese invasions and the Dutch invasions in Kandy, that brought to a temporary halt, the close cultural relations between the two countries, until the end of 18th century.

Twelve years after the introduction of higher ordination by the first team of Thai monks who came from Ayudhya, the Siamese monks performed the higher ordination ceremony by themselves in November, 1764 under the patronage of Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe which lasted for three consecutive days in Asgirigy and Malvatta, the two main monasteries of Siyam mikaya in Kandy (Syamopasampadavata: 42, Mandaram Puvata: verses 814-22; Elu Vimanavastu Prakaranaya: 278; Wijayawardene and Meegaskumbura, 1993: 120). From then onwards this sect became firmly establis and spread throughout the Island bringing all the temples belonging to Siyam nikaya under a single Order of monks with its headquarters in Kandy where the Sangharaja was based.
Conclusion

The foregoing discussion would show that throughout Ayudhyan period there were cultural relations between Ayudhya and Sri Lanka. It was the Theravada Buddhism which brought these two countries together and it was the media through which such cultural relations fostered. Both countries gained positively through such contacts, first Sri Lanka contributing to the establishment of the Order of monks called "Lankawong" in Ayudhya and in the mid-18th century Ayudhyan monks establishing the Siyam nikaya or the Siamese sect of Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka when the Order of monks in Sri Lanka had almost extinguished due to the foreign rule in the country.

The movement of Buddhist monks, Buddhist scriptures and royal envoys had been recurrent throughout this period although there were lull periods, without much interactions. The close relationship between the state and the Sangha in Ayudhya as well as in Sri Lanka made the rulers becoming the patrons who took the initiative in cultural relations between the two countries. The Buddhist monks had taken the lead in such relations who had the knowledge of Pali which was the language of communication among the Theravada Buddhist countries at that time. It was used in exchange of letters by rulers as well as officials. Through exchange of Buddhist literature between Ayudhya and Sri Lanka both countries were able to preserve their rich Buddhist literature to the present day taking turns by each country when there was political unrest which destroyed such valuable literature. As a result, Theravada, the oldest form of Buddhist traditions have been saved.

The Dutch involvement in exchange of Buddhist missions between Ayudhya and Sri Lanka by way of providing ships for transport and other facilities in their ports was motivated by their interest in promoting their trade activities with both countries. As we have already seen the Dutch even went to the extent of deliberately manipulating the programmes of such missions in order to get the maximum benefit for them. Since Kandy, the only independent kingdom in Sri Lanka became landlocked due to the Dutch occupation of the rest of the country, the Sinhalese ruler had to depend on them for any link with the outside world. This situation forced the ruler of Kandy to get the support of the Dutch in his dealings with the ruler of Ayudhya.
Finally, the mutual understanding developed between Thais and the Sinhalese as a result of close cultural relations between the two countries became so strong that the Kandyan aristocracy and the Sinhalese Buddhist monks were even willing to accept a Buddhist prince from Thailand as their ruler replacing Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe who was the main force behind the Buddhist revival in Kandy.

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