

The Role of Mahinda thēra as Dīpaprasādaka in Sri Lanka.

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Abstract- Thēra Mahinda is stipulated as Dīpaprasādaka in Sri Lanka. In the *Aśōkāvadāna*, there is no reference at all of the Mahinda. He was the son of Emperor Aśōka. At the age of twelve years a monk (age of 32) guided by his teacher Moggaliputtatissa, thēra Mahinda visited to Sri Lanka with six other fellows. He introduced the Buddhism to Sri Lanka.

Index Terms- introduce, Buddhism, culture, religion

I. INTRODUCTION

As depicts in the *Dīpavaṃsa* (*D.v.*, 1992, 1:27, 119) and the *Bōdhivaṃsa* (*Bodī.v.*, 1999:157) Buddha has foreseen and said about King Asoka's son Mahinda, convertor of Lankādīpa. The *Mahāvāṃsa* describes when the prince Aśōka, while ruling over the realm of Avanti, that his father had bestowed on him, halted in the town of Vedisa, before he came to Ujjenī, and where met there a lovely maiden named Devī, the daughter of a merchant, he made her his wife; and she was afterwards blessed with children by him, a son Mahinda, and when two years later born a daughter, Sanghamittā. (*M.v.*, 1950, 13:8-11, 88). As stipulated in the *Mahāvāṃsa* Devī's father didn't belong to the clan of kṣatriya. It is understood by the above fact that there is no any heir for kingship to Mahinda. Being the illegitimate son of Aśōka it is quite like that Mahinda preferred to join a religious order rather than be treated indifferently by the court at Pataliputra (Guruge Ananda W.P., 1993:45).

Mahinda was born two hundred and four years after the parinibbāna (*D.v.*, 1992, 6:19, 148). As stipulated in the *Dīpavaṃsa* when Mahinda was ten years old, Aśōka put his brothers to death (*D.v.*, 1992, 6:21, 148). Aśōka was anointed for the second time in Mahinda's fourteenth year (*D.v.*, 1992, 6:22, 148). *Mahāvāṃsa* describes, that since the time of the prince Tissa's pabbajjā, Mahinda looked forward to enter the order. King Aśōka wished to confer on Mahinda the dignity of prince regent (*M.v.*, 1950, 5:202, 43). Mahinda received the pabbajjā at the age of twenty (*M.v.*, 1950, 5:204, 43). He received upasampadā ordination on the very same day. Prince Mahinda's master was the thēra Moggali. His pabbajjā ordination was conferred on him by thēra Mahādeva (*M.v.*, 1950, 5:207, 44). The thēra majjhantika pronounced the upasampadā ordination. Mahinda reached the statues of an arahant in the very place where he received the upasampadā. He received the pabbajjā in the sixth regnal year of king Dhammāśōka (*M.v.*, 1950, 5:209, 44). The *Mahāvāṃsa* further says that Mahinda thēra learned, three piṭaka with his master, in three years (*M.v.*, 1950, 5:210, 44). The thēra

Moggaliputtatissa has taught all the Pitaksa, their whole meaning, and the doctrine to Mahinda thera. Ten years after Asoka's coronation, Mahinda had completed four years, and had become a teacher of the whole scriptures as handed down, and he had many pupils (*D.v.*, 1992, 7:27, 156). When thēra Moggaliputta dwelled, all alone on the Ahogaṅga Mountain, he committed his great company of bhikkhus to the direction of thēra Mahinda. It seemed that he was also not been able to control the heretics and their unruliness.

In the *Aśōkāvadāna*, on the other hand, there is no reference to this tradition, and no mention at all of the elder Mahinda either. Later in Sanskrit sources, there are references to an elder Mahendra who is perhaps identified with Mahinda and is variously portrayed as a disciple of Ānanda, a contemporary of the Buddha, or a younger brother of Aśōka (Watters, vol 2, 93 & Strong S. John, 1989:16). But in the *Aśōkāvadāna*, as we have seen, Aśōka's son is called Kunāla, and his story serves to point out the workings of karma in the lives of both the prince and the father (Strong S. John, 1989:25).

II. XUANZANG'S RECORDS

There is another piece of information which contributes historical facts about Mahendra thēra. Mahendra was the half-brother of Aśōka (mother's brother) (Rongxi Li 1996:92-93). In dress he arrogated the style of the king, he was extravagant, wasteful and cruel. The people were indignant, and the ministers and aged officers complained the king about him. When the king was about to punish Mahendra, he asked an extension of his life for seven days. On this the king placed him in a dark dungeon, and placed over him a strict guard. He was provided with every kind of exquisite mat and every necessary article. On Last day he mounted into the air and exhibited his miraculous powers. Late emperor Aśōka constructed a dwelling place for his brother. Here we are lucky enough to get biographical data of Mahendra thēra, which Vaṃsa tradition does not speak. It is presumably wise to critically analyze all these assertions. One may presumed that, writers of vaṃsa might have purposely, not mentioned the weaknesses of the Mahendra as he was called as the dīpaprasādaka within the tradition in Sri Lanka.

As in the text the king Aśōka's younger brother, Mahendra has introduced Buddhism to Sri Lanka. According to the vaṃsa tradition, Mahendra was the son of Aśōka. Mahendra had been highly exaggerated in the vaṃsa tradition. As in the Xuanzang's records the king Aśōka's younger brother Mahendra gave up the (worldly) passions, set (his) mind to the fruit of sainthood,

achieved the six supernatural powers and the eight liberations, walked through the air and travelled to this kingdom in order to propagate the true dharma and to spread the inherited teaching. He further says that, there are several hundred monasteries and more than twenty thousand monks who follow the *dharma* of the Sthavira-nikāya of the Mahāyāna.

Whether Mahinda was a son or a brother of Aśōka neither adds to nor detracts from the prestige of the royal missionary. But Zuanxang, records says that Mahinda was brother of Aśōka. This Chinese traveler is not always reliable recorder especially of places he did into visit. It is quite possible and this need not be disputed that one of Aśōka's brothers also carried the same name (Guruge Ananda W.P., 1993:55). Simhala *Bōdhivaṃsa* remarks, the stūpa in Vēdisagiri has been constructed by the Vēdhisa Mahā dēvi alias mother of thēra Mahinda. Having spent one month there thēra Mahinda decided to visit Sri Lanka on the full moon poya day of Poson (*Bodī.v.*, 1999:157). Bhaṇḍuka Upāsaka was the Vēdhisa Devi's sisiter's son (*Bodī.v.*, 1999:157). *Bōdhivaṃsa* illustrates that Mahinda thēra arrived Sri Lanka, when two hundred and thirty seventh year elapsed the passing away of the Buddha, when the 18th year elapsed Asoka's anointment, when the seventh months elapsed king Devanampiyatissa's anointment and when the twelfth years elapsed Mahinda thēra's Upasampada (*Bodī.v.*, 1999:157).

At the age of twelve years a monk (age of 32) guided by his teacher Moggaliputtatissa, thēra Mahinda visited to Sri Lanka with six other fellows. They are Itṭhiya, Uttiya, Sambala, Bhaddasāla, Sanghamittā's son, sāmaṇera Sumana and the son of a daughter of Devi's sister a youth named Bhaṇḍuka. Their inclusion in the party signified, perhaps, a particular intimacy and friendliness towards Sri Lanka. The Youth Bhaṇḍuka was named as Paṇḍupalasa in *Bōdhivaṃsa* (*Bodī.v.*, 1999:161).

The *Mahāvamsa* elaborates that Mahinda spent nearly six months in Dakkhṇāgiri to confer on his kinsfolk and he knew that the king in Sri Lanka was old, as such he waited there until his son became the king (*M.v.*, 1950, 13: 2, 88).

III. MAHINDA THERA'S VISIT TO SRI LANKA

The *Mahāvamsa* remarks, the great Indra requested thēra Mahinda to visit Sri Lanka (*M.v.*, 1950, 13:15, 89). According to the *Dīpavaṃsa* god śakra, called Vāsava has invited Mahinda thēra to visit Sri Lanka (*D.v.*, 1992:12:30). When the seventh year had elapsed after the coronation of Aśōka, the king Mutasīva died (*D.v.*, 1992, 11:13, 165). Mahinda thēra and his six followers rose up in the air and alighted on the Missaka Mountain in Sri Lanka. The very first meeting of Mahinda and king Devanampiyatiss took place on the Missaka Pabbata, today known as Mihintalē about eight miles off Anurādhapura. The king was hunting a deer at this moment. *Dīpavaṃsa* remarks as follows, "King Devanampiyatissa was going a hunting, came to mount Missaka on that day. A god who had assumed the form of an elk appeared to the king. The king, seeing the elk, quickly rushed on him and running behind him came to a place enclosed by hills." (*D.v.*, 1992, 12:46, 171). The Pāli chronicles record that having asked few questions (*Pōjāvālī*, 1999:764). from the king thēra realized that the king is intelligent and having capacity of understanding the Buddhism. This can be regarded as the first recorded intelligence test in the history of Sri Lanka.

IV. PREACHING DHAMMA BY MAHINDA THERA

Thēra preached the monarch the Cūllahatthipadūpama sutra (*M.v.* 1950, 14:22, 93, *D.v.* 1956, 12: 53, 190). He bestowed the pabbajja on Bhaṇḍuka and upasampadā ordination was also administered on him (*M.v.*, 1950, 13: 32, 93). When Sumara Sāmanēra announced the time for preaching Dhamma or Kālagosā, many gods also gathered and the thēra preached the Samachitta sutra (Illangasinghe Mangala 1997:195). The cētiya that was built on the place where the thēras first alighted is called, the Paṭhamakacētiya (*M.v.* 1950, 14:45, 95). When queen Anulā had come with five hundred women and had bowed down and made offerings to the thēra, he preached them the Pētavattu, Vimānavattu and Saccasamyutta (*M.v.* 1950, 14:58, 64). It is reported in the *Bōdhivaṃsa* that, (*Bodī.v.*, 1999:164) thēra Mahinda had preached doctrine in the Sinhales language at two places in the island (*M.v.* 1950, 14:65,64, *Bodī.v.*, 1999:164). The question that would naturally arise is how thēra Mahinda, preached the doctrine in the native language of Sri Lanka. Mahinda might have learnt the Sinhalese language whilst he was pondering on his visit to Sri Lanka.

The *Mahāvamsa* illustrates that there was not enough space for all the men who gathered to listen dhamma. Thence, the king had to cleanse the hall of the state elephants. Due to the above fact, it can be presumed that there was not a proper organized assembly hall even for the king. The thēra preached the Dēvadūtha sūtra at the hall of the state elephants. The thēra has preached the Bālapaṇḍitha sūtra at the Nandana garden of the royal park (*M.v.*, 1950, 15:3-4, 97).

Thēra spent his second night at the Mahāmegha Park, donated by the king by pouring water which has been an ancient tradition, administered in offering (*M.v.* 1950, 15:24, 99). Following the above offering it is reported that whilst thēra was offering flowers at eight places, eight earth quicks had taken place (*Bodī.v.*, 1999:173). Mahinda thēra has preached Aggikaṇḍhōpama sūtra, Ashirshōpama sūtra and Anamathaggiya sūtra during the third at the Nandana Park. Thēra accepted Tissārāma on the third day (*M.v.* 1950, 15:174, 110). He preached the Aggikkhandhopama sūtra to the people which had paved the way for thousands of people in to the fruit of Nibbāna. The *Mahāvamsa* further says that thēra preached the Āsīvisūpamā sutra on the same day and led thousands people into conversion. As stipulated in the *Dīpavaṃsa*, thēra has preached the Āsīvisūpamā sutra, Anamtaggiya tura and Charyapitaka (*D.v.*, 1956, 14: 46, 205).

The thēra Mahinda preached the Khajjanīyaka sutra, (*M.v.* 1950, 15:195, 111) Gōmayapaṇḍika sutra, (*M.v.* 1950, 15:198, 112) Dhammachakkapavatthana sutra on the fifth, sixth and seventh day respectively. As per *Dīpavaṃsa* Mahāsamaya sutra has been preached by him (*D.v.*, 1956, 14:54, 206). The Mahappamāda sutra was preached to the king on the thirteenth day of the bright half of the month Āsāḷha (*M.v.* 1950, 16:2, 114). Mahā Ariththa the king's nephew and the chief minister with fifty five of younger companions, had listened to the Vassupanaikkaṇḍha sutra and eventually were received the pabbajja (*M.v.* 1950, 16:202, 112). The *Mahāvamsa* further says that he had taken effort in converting eight thousand five hundred persons into Buddhism only within a short span of seven day (*M.v.*

1950, 15:198, 112). Mahinda thēra has preached fifteen sutras within 13 days of his visit. They go as follows Cūllahatthipadūpama sūtra (1st day), Samachitta sūtra (1st day), Pētavattu (2nd day), Vimānavattu (2nd day), Saccasamyutta (2nd day), Devaduta sūtra (2nd day), Bālapaṇḍitha sūtra (2nd day), Aggikandhopama sūtra (3rd day) (*Bodī.v.*, 1999:174), Āsīvisūpama sūtra (3rd day) (*Bodī.v.*, 1999:174), Anamthaggiya sūtra (4th day) (*Bodī.v.*, 1999:174), Khajjanīyaka sūtra (5th day) (*Bodī.v.*, 1999:179), Gōmayapiṇḍika sūtra (6th day) (*Bodī.v.*, 1999:179), Dhammachakkapavattana sūtra (7th day) (*Bodī.v.*, 1999:179), Mahāpramada sūtra (13th day) and Vassupanaikkandha sūtra (13th day). Most of these sermons dealt with the transition of life, the dreadful nature of the saṃsāra, and the noble life, needed to escape from the saṃsāra and to attain Nibbāna (Rahula Walpola 1956:56).

V. EPIGRAPHICAL EVIDENCES IN SUPPORT OF SRI LANKAN VAMSA TRADITION

The 2nd century, an inscription found in Rajagala, says “ye ima dipa paṭmaya idiya agatana idikateraha Mahidateraha tube.” (*I.C.*, 1970, no 468). The meaning of it, is “This is the sūpa of elder Idika and the elder Mahinda who came to this island by its foremost good fortune”. The stupa which, the relics were deposited has been destroyed. Only ruins can be seen today (Bandara Anuradha Vijevaradana, 2015:18). The Rock inscription of Mahintale mentions “Mahinda teraha ca bhadrāsāla teraha ca Iṭṭhika teraha ca Uti-teraha ca paṭhamaha [kara] pita.....asita-va (ṇa). The meaning is, “The elders Mahinda, Bahdrāsāla, Iṭṭhika and Uttiya-----“ (Guruge Ananda 1993:544). Above epigraphical evidences can be testified with the vamsa tradition. Senerat Paranavitana says, “As far as archaeological evidence in favour of it is concerned, and inscription engraved within a century of the event at Rajagala or Rassagala in Eastern Sri Lanka confirms Mahinda’s role and also mentions Iṭṭhiya, whom the Pāli sources have included as member of the missionary team.” (*I.C.*, 1970:35).

VI. DEMARCATING THE BOUNDARIES

When king Dēvanampiyatissa asked “whether the doctrine of the conqueror stand sir? The thēra said “not yet and when the boundaries are established here for the uposata ceremony and the other acts of religion according to the command of the conqueror, shall the doctrine stand.” (*M.v.*, 1950, 15:180-181,110). Therefore the king established all the boundaries (*M.v.*, 1950, 15:194,111). The Simabhandana story of *Mahābōdivamsa* deserves our attention on the demarcation of the boundaries of Mahāvihāra, with the help of two royal elephants, called Mahapadumaya and Kunjaraya. These two elephants were tight in a plough made of gold. The Simabhandana story of Mahābōdivamsa helps us, to gain a better understanding of the boundaries of the Mahāvihāra. The place where the great men dwelled is called the Mahā Vihāra (*Bodī.v.*, 1999:180). The following places can be taken as the boundaries; (*Bodī.v.*, 1999:175). Kumbalwala near Kolomhoya Pahana, Kumbukkanpala, Maha Agunu ruka, Thōramaila, Pond of Muruta, North gate of the of the Vijayārāma Park, Atkumbhapahana, Tovitimedā, Baya Wewa Koggala, Mahason

Meda, Diggalvila, Cemetery of Chaṇḍala, Hima Nuga, Belahanaya, Diyavas Brahmana’s temple near Hiyagal
Thelumpela, Tala chatuskaya, Sepana, Port of Kalasa Kāla, Tīrta of Sinhasnana and Port of Pahanatota Kudavala Pahana.

VII. THE MONASTIC CONSTRUCTIONS

The Nandana grove, being the place where the holy one had made the true doctrine to shine forth is also called the Jōtivana (*M.v.*, 1950, 15:202,112). Devanampiya Tissa, who was the ruler of the Anuradhapura kingdom at that time, took many measures which contributed towards establishing its firm footing here (Dheerananda Hanguranketa 2016:145). The king commanded that a pāsāda to be built for the thēra in Tissārāma, and he had the bricks of clay dried speedily with fire. The dwelling house was dark coloured and therefore was named Kālapāsāda parivena (*M.v.*, 1950, 15:205-206,112). The King set up a building for the great Bōdhi tree, the Lōhapāsāda, a Salāka house, many parivenas, bathing tanks and buildings, sixty eight rock cells at the Kantaka cētiya, as guided by the Mahinda thēra. King Devanampiyatiss had built many parivenas under the guidance of thēra Mahinda. For example;

- The parivena on the bank of the bathing tank is called the Sunhata parivena.
- The paivena on the place, where the excellent, lighter of the island, used to walk up and down is called digha cankamana.
- The place where Mahinda thēra had meditated, bringing the highest bliss is called Phalaga parivena.
- The place where many hosts of gods had sought him out and sat at his feet is called the Marugana parivena.

King Dēvanampiyatissa built Mahāvihāra, Cētiya Vihāra and the Thūpārāma as well. He built vihāras, in a yojana distant from one another on the guidance of the thēra (*M.v.*, 1950, 20:8-12,136). Vihāra that was built in the place where the five hundred nobles dwelt when they were receiving the pabbajjā from the great thēra was named Issarasamaṇaka (*M.v.*, 1950, 20:14,137). The vihāra where five hundred vassas dwelt, when they were receiving the pabbajja from the great thēra was called Vessagiri. The place where thēra Mahinda inhabited was called Mahinda-grotto. The author of the *Mahāvamsa* has summarized the following services rendered by king Dēvanampiyatissa; (*M.v.*, 1950, 20:17-26,138). They are building the Mahāvihāra, building the monastery named Cetiya vihāra, building Thūpārāma, planting the great Bōdhi tree, setting up stone pillars on the place where the great Cētiya and enshrining of the Saṃbuddha’s collar-bone relic, building Issarasmaṇa vihāra, making the Tissa tank, building Paṭhama thūpa, building a nunnery called Upāsikā vihāra and the Hatthālhaka nunnery, building refectory called Mahāpāli, building the Jambukolavihāra in Nāgādīpa, building Tissamahā vihāraya and building Pācīnārāma. Sinhala *Bōdivamsa* depicts the location of historically important places by using a lion as a symbol. The Bodhi house was located at the edge of the lion’s tail. The Mahāprasada was located at the right leg of the lion. The Sannipāta hall was located at the left leg of the lion. The Relic house was located at the focal of the lion. The Rāshimālaka was located on the left of the lion. The Arms giving hall was located on the right of the lion. The Ratnamāli Stupa was located on the left of the lion.

The pond of Kantha located, was located at the throat of the lion. The Great shrine room was located at the right of the lion. The Introduction of Buddhism to Sri Lanka and the arrival of Arahanta Mahinda may be regarded as the beginning of Sinhala Buddhist culture in Sri Lanka (Dheerananda Hanguranketa 2016:145).

VIII. THE ARRIVAL OF RELICS

Thēra Sumana was sent to Pushpapura to bring the relics of the sage and the alms bowl to build a stupa in Sri Lanka (*M.v.* 1950, 17:11-12,117). Having received the alms bowl full of relics, donated by King Aśōka, thēra Sumana left for the Himalayan height (*M.v.*, 1950, 17:18,117). The *Mahāvamsa* says that having kept those relics at Himalayan height, he had visited the king of the gods and delivered the Mahinda thēra's charge. Having taken the right collar bone of the Buddha, from the Cūlāmaṇi-cetiya, Sakka, the lord of the gods, had given the same to sāmaṇera. Thereupon, Sāmaṇera Sumana return to the Cētiya Mountain with relic and they were handed to Mahinda thēra. King Devanampiyatissa built the Thūparama depositing the relics of the Buddha.

IX. RECEIVING PABBAJĀ

The prince Mattābhaya, king Dēvanampiyatissa's younger brother, who had the faith in Mahinda thēra, received the pabbajja of the doctrine with thousands of his followers (*M.v.*, 1950, 17:58,121, *Bodī.v.*, 1999, 185). The five hundred young men from the villages of Cetāvīgāma, Dvāramaṇḍada, Vihārabija, Gallakapīta and Upatissagāma received pabbajja (*M.v.*, 1950, 17:59-60,121). The seventh chapter, *the arrival of the relics*, in *Mahāvamsa* further says that thirty thousand people received the pabbajjā (*M.v.* 1950, 17:61,121).

X. INVITING THĒRĪ SANGHAMITTĀ

Ariṭṭa, the king Dēvanampiyatiss's nephew was entrusted upon the task of according the great Bōdhi tree and together with thēri Sanghamittā. As mentioned in the *Mahāvamsa* Ariṭṭa had requested to receive the pabbajja, once his duty was fulfilled (*M.v.*, 1950, 18:5,122). It further says that having embarked from the Jambukōla port and having passed over the great ocean, he came by the power of the thēra, to the pleasant Pushpapura on the day of his departure itself (*M.v.*, 1950, 18:8,122). This is a quiet miraculous fact, mentioned in *Mahāvamsa*. Normally it takes 14 days to reach at Pushpapura. As stipulated in the *Mahāvamsa* a written message given by Mahinda thēra has been delivered to Dhammāśoka. Most probably it might have been written in Brahmī scripts.

Having received the pabbajjā together with her followers from the thēri Sanghamittā, princess Anula attained the status of Arhathood. Following the Pabbajja, administered by Mahinda thēra, Prince Ariṭṭa also with a retinue of five hundred men, attained the status of arahthood (*M.v.*, 1950, 19:66,133).

XI. THE DEMISE OF THE MAHINDA THĒRA

Faxina doesn't speak even a single word on Mahēndra. Faxian noted us a cremation of a particular Arahata. At the time of Faxian's arrival, this particular arahata had passed away and he could only observe the cremation ceremony. Max Deeg in his book of Studies in Oriental Religions, says that, the cremation ceremony, mentioned by Faxian was that of Mahēndra. It could be assumed that this particular cremation ceremony could have been a chief incumbent who had lived at the time. This cannot be taken as the cremation of Mahendra, as Faxian had visited Sri Lanka during the reign of king Mahānāma (410-432 C.E). As appeared in the vamsa tradition, Mahēndra's cremation had been patronized by the king Uttiya, brother of king Dēvanampiyatissa (210-200 B.C.E) (Geiger Wilhelm 1950, 20:31-32). That arises a question as to why Faxian had not made a mention on Mahēndra thera. Perhaps, Faxian seemed to have associated with the monastery of Abhayagiriya, where he had stayed for two year. It is quite questionable why Faxian doesn't mention about Mahinda or Mahēndra. By embedding the Xuanzang's description, we are lucky enough to hear about Mahēndra thēra.

The twentieth chapter of the *Mahāvamsa* has been named as the Nibbāna of the thēra. King Dēvanampiyatissa passed away on his fortieth regnal year (*M.v.*, 1950, 20:28,138). After his death, since he did not have a son, a prince known by the name of Uttiya, the younger brother of king Devanampiyatissa had been made the king of island. Thera Mahinda, aged sixty passed away in the eighth year of during the reign of king Uttiya, while spending rainy season, on the Cētiya Mountain, on the eighth day of the bright half of the month Assayuja (*M.v.*, 1950, 20:33,139). King Uttiya had made arrangements to lay dead body of the thēra in a golden chest sprinkled with fragrant oil, and the well closed chest was laid upon a golden, adorned bier (*M.v.*, 1950, 20:35,139). He commanded solemn ceremonies. The chest was brought to the Mahāvihāra. The chest was kept at a place called Panhambamālaka. As *Mahāvamsa* says king commanded diverse offerings throughout the week. Finally the pyre was kept at the Baddhamālaka, made of sweet smelling wood. According to the *Mahāvamsa* the above place had been situated on the right of the great stupa.

Having deposited the relics of the late Mahinda, King Uttiya built a Cētiya. Half of the relics had been deposited in the Cētiya Mountain as well as in all the Vihāras. In honouring the place where the burial of this sage's body had taken place is called, Isibhūmaṅgaṇa (*M.v.*, 1950, 20:46,140). The *Mahāvamsa* further says that from that time onwards, the dead bodies of the holy men were used to bring from three yojanas around this particular place and where they were burnt. *Dīpavamsa* says, "When the twelfth year after his Upasampada had been completed, Mahinda came hither; at the end of his sixtieth year he attained Nibbana on the Cetiya Mountain. When the enlightener of the island has attained Nibbāna, king Uttiya, having ordered full vases, triumphal arches, garlands, and burning lamps to be prepared, erected the most excellent hearse which was worth seeing. He paid reverence to the enlightener of the island. Both gods and men, Nagas, Gandhabba grieved and paid reverence to the enlightener of the Island." They performed great ceremonies for seven days in the Mahāvihāra. They erected the most excellent Thupa which contained his relics, and monasteries at a distance of one yojana from each other. After the funeral ceremony for Mahinda, the enlightener of the island,

had been performed, this particular got the name of *Isibbūmi* (D.v, 1992, 17:109).

XII. CONCLUSION

The holy city of Anurādhapura was originally planned and laid out by Mahinda. As stipulated in the vamsa Mahinda thēra introduced Buddhism, art and architecture into the island. He can be regarded as the father of the Sinhalese literature. Strong S. Jhon remarks that story of Mahinda, which is given in more details than the others, is clearly governed, once again, by the desire of the author of the Mahāvamsa to enhance the prestige of the Theravādins of Sri Lanka and emphasize the intimate family connection between their founding father Mahinda and the great emperor Aśoka (Strong S. John, 1989:25).

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