

Maha Vihara Type Monasteries in Sri Lanka

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Abstract: Among the Buddhist monasteries in Sri Lanka, it can be said that the Maha Vihara type monastery was the first type of Buddhist monastic organization established by King Devanampiyatissa in the third century BC according to the instructions of *Arahath* Mahinda. According to the system and spatial organization of this first Sangharama established in Maha Meghawana Garden with Anuradhapura Maha Vihara as the center, Buddhist monastery of the Maha Vihara system were born in Tissamaharama's Magama Kingdom and then in Polonnaruwa, Padduvas Nuwara and Ramba Vihara. The expansion of monasteries of the Anuradhapura Maha Vihara system is notable from Abhayagiri Vihara and Jethavana Vihara, as well as sub-monasteries such as Thuparamaya and Lankaramaya. The main characteristic of this monastery type is that it is located in the plains outside of a major city. We have shown here how the Anuradhapura Maha Vihara monastery had first shaped the spatial organization according to the Theravada philosophy and how the buildings on the Maha Vihara site had been organized according to the plan called *Sinha Wickrantha* according to a Mahayana context from the 5th century AD.

Keywords: *Malaka, Mahameghevana, puraya, Panchavasa, Upa-Panchayatana, Sinha Vikrantha.*

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Research methodology

By comparing the architectural data identified from the archaeological excavations with the records contained in the written sources, the details related to the organization of the space and the utility of the buildings of the great monastery system have been identified. An attempt has been made here to compare the monasteries with the characteristics of the great monastery system in Sri Lanka with the monasteries with similar characteristics in India and to interpret the unique characteristics of Sri Lanka from a new point of view. Meanwhile, this research showed that building spaces are planned in the magazine area using the mathematical module as a main tool, and in doing so, religious and non-religious buildings are placed based on thermal utility characteristics. Here we have analyzed that the Maha Vihara monastery was developed in the space organization system of Sinha Wickrantha after the fifth century AD and based on the theory of time and space and the theory of drawing conclusions via comparison. Field research and investigation of written sources have become the main methods used here.

Introduction

origin

Bandaranayaka has introduced this monastic type as the incipient organization system of the Buddhist monastery in Sri Lanka (Bandaranayaka; 1974:33). Rolanda Silva introduces Buddhist monasteries in the Maha Vihara type with the word “**formal**” Viharas (Silva.R:2006.111). Concerned about the spatial organization, he also includes the two Monastery types of Panchavasa and Padhanaghara in this category (Ibid:111). This type of monastery in its primitive time was created according to the first Theravada Buddhist tradition in gardens, forests, huts with roofs of leaves, stones, open By associating ecosystems such as simple tree houses and soil mounds in the high and low scales of spaces.

In Sri Lanka, is the first monastery of its kind, the Maha Viharaya, built in the 3rd century BC in connection with the Great Meghavana Garden in Anuradhapura. The Maha meghavana Monastery or *Tissaramaya* built by King Devanampiyathissa in the Maha meghavahana Garden was the residential abod of Rev Mahinda (Mv:Xv.174-175, 185,214, note 8). Henceforth it is known as the

Great Temple of the Mahāvamsa. This type has also been introduced by Basnayake as garden monasteries (Gunawardena: 1998.9-1). According to the instructions of Rev Mahinda, King Devanampiyatissa marked the boundaries of the land with a golden plow and determined the boundaries of the Maha Vihara land with thirty-two Malakas (Precincts) and the boundaries of the Vihara extended around the city including Anuradhapura. (Mv:15.191). Therefore, this monastery, which is established not far from the city but not close to it, is also known as metropolitan-monasteries or royal monasteries.

Discussion

The name *Raja Vihara* is mentioned for the first time in a pillar inscription which refers to the innovations made by King Vasabha (65-110AC) regarding the Sandagiri Dagoba monastery built near the town of Magama in Ruhuna (Paranavitana: 1928.17-18; 1983:44-45; Gamalath:2016. [I].398). One of the distinguishing features of such Vihara type is that they are located close to the main city. It is also seen that it was established in association with a large plain in the space spread around the city. In the Tissamaharama monastery near the city of Magama, and in the Jetavanarama monastery built by King Parakramabahu near the city including Polonnaruwa (Cv:78.56-).¹ Close to the ancient *Manawulu Pura*² The Monastery of Manawulu Pura, known as *Ramba Vihara* or *Kadali Vihara*, and Anuradhapura Maha Vihara are the main Monasteries belonging to this Vihara type.

Similarly, the Monasteries of Abhayagiri Vihara (102-77 BC), Dakkhina Vihara (102-77 BC), Mirisavati Vihara (161-137 BC) created the spatial organizations belonging to the Maha Vihara type by demarcating the boundaries of the Great Meghavana Garden, with Thuparama Viharaya and Lankarama Viharaya can be introduced as two sub-Monasteries that have organized the space according

1. In this space with the Gopala Vihara, there was a monastery where monks worked from around the second century BC. Also, in the Gopala Pabbatha inscription belonging to the second century AC, the name of the Vihara is mentioned as Chulagalla. The inscriptions also testify that this Monastery belonged to the Dharmaruchi sect during the medieval phase of Anuradhapura period.

2. The area in which the ancient villages were located is uncertain. But archaeologists believe that the city with the ancient settlement may have been located not far from the current Ramba vihara monastery archaeological site in the valley of the Walawe River. Although some researchers have stated that the Ramba vihara monastery was the administrative center of the ancient Manawulu Pura (Sampath Prasanna, Sumanasiri Vavage, Alexander Kapakotua: 2022,256) it is extremely rare for the Puraya and the Buddhist monastery to be located in the same space. has happened. Its meaning is not far from the city but not far away (Dv., 197, 18; Mv:15,8-9 also Echa).

to this method. The Jetavana Monastery (276-303 AD) would be the last Monastery conceived in this type at Anuradhapura (Mv:37.33-34).

Thus, it can be pointed out that the variety of monasteries belonging to the Maha Vihara tradition, which has been created in the area around the city including ancient Anuradhapura, is spread all over the island. The only difference is that the spread of these in space is small compared to the larger Monasteries.

Spatial Organization Pattern

The main feature of the spatial organization of this type of monastery is that the stupa is centered and other religious buildings are positioned around it in the space some distance from it. It can be believed that in Sri Lanka this genre of monastery was conceived by being inspired by the spatial organization system of Seveth Nuwara Jetavanarama. Because Lord Buddha's Gandhakuti was established in the central part of the Jetavanarama space in Seveth Nuwara, and the chambers of Sariputra and Moggallana were built on both sides of it, and the chambers of Eighty Great disciples (Asu Maha Srawakas) were positioned a little closer from that space. There is an empty space between the Prasada with the incense chamber of Lord Buddha and the chambers of the Eighty Great Disciples. At the time of offering the Jetavanarama in Srawasti to the Lord Buddha, the Buddha preached that this monastery is dedicated not only to Buddha but also to all the monks who have come from all over the world.

"Agata Anagata Chatu Disa Sagasa Dine"

In the same way, when King Devanampiyatissa offered the Maha Megha garden to Great Mahinda Thero, the king took the gold chain and gave it to the Maha Megha Vana garden, which brings Buddhist monks who come from four directions of the country. May they accept it! By giving the auspicious water pot to Rev Mahinda, it is mentioned in Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa (Dv. 198-199, 30-32; Mv: XV. 24-25). As shown in the Pabbata Vihara chapter from here to the first and second century AC. In the inscriptions with Brahmi characters, which are inscribed below the dripledge of the natural caves in the Pabbatha Viharas, the text "Agata Anagata Chatudisa Sagasa Dine" is included according to the Buddha's words made by Rev Mihinda.

Thus, the Mahavihara created in the Maha Meghavana space and the monastery created at the same time in Mihintale, was the first monastery of the Mahavihara faction in Sri Lanka, the latter monastery reflected a type of village monastic establishments named “*Giri*”. The main feature seen in these is that the natural ecological system and geophysical structure have been shaped for construction in a way that suits the needs of the religion at the beginning. It is Bandaranayake's opinion that we can introduce the native architectural forms that can formally fulfill the basic needs of religion as "organized design" (Bandaranayake: 1974.47). According to the Mahavamsa, it can be pointed out that Mihindu Thero himself established the Buddhist Bodhi Tree and Bodhigara, Stupa and Stupa Ghara, Uposathagara, Alms Hall as well as monks' residential quarters in relation to the Maha Vihara in the third century BC (Mv :15.191,205-214). The Mahavamsa mentions how the entire Maha Meghavana space was divided into thirty two Malakas. This is the first and oldest Buddhist monastery spatial organization in Sri Lanka. The Mahavamsa testifies that a building superimposed on each Malaka was named by Mihindu Thero himself and some of the main religious buildings were built by King Devanampiyatissa during his lifetime. Deepavamsa, Mahavamsa and Samanthapasadika state that Mihinda Thero determined the location of the Uposathagara in the wide space of the monastery grounds (Dv:201.57; Mv:15.37; S.Pa.[I],1975,79-80) It was introduced By the name of "the *Maha Mukala Malaka*" (Mv:xv.36-37).Next, attention should be paid to the Pirivena performed in the Maha Meghavana Garden and Nandana Garden during the season of Mihinda Thero.³ The Digha Sanda Senapati Pirivena (Mv:xv.204,207-213) seems to have done so in each Malaka space.

3. It is worth mentioning that in the third century BC, a Pirivena (Murugana pirivena) with offerings dedicated to the deity was also built in the Maha vihara monastic space where Reverend Mihinda lived. (Mv:xv.212) According to Sinhalese and Tamil linguistic etymology, the word Murugana may be later Murukana. This means Murukana in Tamil pronunciation. Murukana is a term that conveys the idea of the divine child. It would also imply perfect vision. These ideas represent Murukan or Kataragama, God of Sinhala Buddhists who are introduced by the names Skanda and Kumara (Gamalath, Kekulawala: 2020.215-218,429-436). Therefore, in the Murugana Pirivena, the sacrificial activities dedicated to Lord Skanda may have been performed. In the Mahavamsa description, it is said that offerings were made in the presence of those who bowed down at the feet of the Lord. It is based on the fact that in the third century BC, a house was set aside to practice Skanda or Murgan worship, which was among the pre-Buddhist deities, within the Maha vihara grounds. Thus, it can be thought that such pre-Buddhist beliefs may have been shaped as a part of Buddhism during the spread of Theravada Buddhism.

However, the Sinhala Buddhist scholar's interpretation of this Murugana Pirivena is that it was called the pirivena performed for the multitude of devas who came to worship to Arahant Maha Mahinda (Mv: 15.230, Sumangala Batuanthudava edition). There are two options that can be put forward as to the reason for applying the name Chethiyagiri to Mihintale, according to one opinion, it is said to be so named because Stupas were built on the hills here, and according to the other opinion, it is said to be named after the Chetiya giriya in Ujjaini, the birth place of Rev. Mahinda (Gunasekara:1987.164)

It has been mentioned in Sarattadipani Vinaya tika that these *pirivenas* that were built were surrounded by walls on all sides. It is mentioned in Vimati Vinodani Vinaya tika that the Mahavihara *Pirivena* are the houses used separately by the monks, surrounded by four walls. As the applied interpretation of the word *Pirivena* in Anuttanattadeipana Rolanda Silva quoting Kalukondayavena Panjasekara about this *Pirivena* which was built in the Mahavihara space, interprets as follows. The Mahavihara is interpreted as a private residence as well as it was only for the personal use of the teacher's *Kili Pirivena* and from there on the residence. According to Ummagga Jataka, listening to Buddha's discussions, meeting with monks and living in it (Silva.R. 2006.117) have been done.

The simple idea implied by these interpretations is that the space of the Monastery was divided and allocated to construct buildings for living and educational needs. Here *Pirivana* is sometimes also introduced with the word *Prasada* and it may mean the residential buildings of the monastery. It can be believed that these *Pirivenas* are small-sized chambers built in the third century BC with wood and clay media and roofed with leaves. By the 10th century A.C., the role played by the *Piriven* at the beginning of the appearance of the chambers in the Maha Viharaya and other monasteries of that style was an opportunity for the theoretical aspects of the religion to come into action. Organization and those monuments bear witness.

It is mentioned in the Mahavamsa how King Devanampiyatissa built the first stupa in Sri Lanka in the northern part of the Mahamegha Park along with the dedication of the right collar bone of the Buddha (Mv:xvii.62-64). As a result, boundary omens were also chanted for Thuparamaya and the mountain was chanted as a limited space within the Maha Vihara of Thuparamaya (Mv:ibid.210-213). It should also be noted that the stupa has been built on the surface of a Malaka (ibid:35-36) which was raised by piling soil from the monastery lake. It will also be mentioned in the Mahavamsa that King Devanampiyatissa built a Monastery here after the stupa was built. The Mahavamsa has further stated that this stupa was called **Thupa-aramaya**, which means Tupa with the monastery (ibid.64). Thus, it is possible to think that Thuparamaya was conceived in the third century BC in the position of a sub-monastery in the northern part of Meghavana Garden.

But it is possible that all the religious buildings that should be in a monastery were not included in it at the beginning. It is possible that only the Stupa and the monks' retinue buildings and related non-religious buildings were made of wood. It is only after this that the Uposathagara and the Bodhi Tree join it. Buddha statue and its house also joined in the second century AC. In this period, Thuparama Dagoba is introduced as Maha Saya (Mv:xx.43). Examining the contents of King Mahasen's Jetavanarama inscription also shows that Thuparama was considered as a separate Monastery. Among the five great monasteries were the Maha Vihara sect was active, the Mahavihara, Issarasamanarama, Chetiya Giri Vihara, Vessagiriya and Thuparama were included. (EZ: Vol. iv, 273-285)

In the Mahavamsa, it is clear that the Maha Thupa or Ruwanwelisaya is the location of the Malaka (Mv: xv.51-56) as it is mentioned here that the "Mahathupaya" Thuparama is here. Also, the Mahavamsa says that a stone pillar with inscriptions was erected to mark this Malaka (ibid. xv.166-167, 173, xx.18-19).

In the third century BC, beyond the south entrance of the Maha Meghavana Garden, the task of planting the Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi, which had made a pilgrimage to Lanka, took place under the leadership of Reverend Mahinda's sister Sanghamitta (ibid. xv.57-58). The place where the Bodhi tree was planted by King Devanampiyatissa is introduced by the Mahavamsa as "Maha Asana" (ibid.58). It can be said that this too was a Malaka space artificially raised from the ground level like the Thuparama Stupa. This is the land that Mahinda Thero had originally set aside for planting the Great Bodhi (ibid. xv. 205).

At this very early time, a part of the Maha vihara grounds was also reserved for the Chathus shala or alms hall (ibid.47). Geiger says that this is a building of rectangular shape (ibid. note 2). Likewise, at the beginning of the third century BC, a building for the Sri Maha Bodhi tree. The Mahavamsa also mentions that it was built by King Devanampiyatissa (ibid.205). If so, this building is accepted to represent an early stage of Bodhigara architecture.

Also, necessary arrangements were made to make ponds for the monks to bathe in, day and night rest rooms, and a Ruwan ration house where the rations needed to receive alms from the alms hall were issued (ibid.206). In this way,

Mahinda Thero marked the boundaries of the Maha Vihara with the golden plough, the boundary of the Thuparama as a *Khanda Sima* marked inside it and the boundaries of all the other Malakas were determined by building walls with granite and bricks. All these ramparts and walls identified by archaeological excavations have gates and gate pavilions for entry and exit at the required points. The overall layout of these boundary walls and the spaces surrounded by them seems to show a grid plan that runs from north to south and east to west in the Maha vihara Monastery space. Therefore, it can be further confirmed that the organization of this space created in the third century BC is a pre-planned and organized monastic creation.

Roland Silva includes the spatial organization of the monasteries at Mihintale and Rajagala in this formal monastic design (Silva.R:2006.116). However, we have shown in the next chapter that both of those archaeological sites belong to the Giri Vihara type, not the monastery built in the Mahavihara type. Polonnaruwa Jethawana Vihara space, Abhayagiri Vihara monastery embellishments spread in the vicinity of the Anuradhapura ancient citadel, Jethavana Vihara, Dakkhina Vihara and Maligawila in ancient Ruhuna archeological sites are included in to this monastery type. The Rambavihara complex in Ruhuna, Seruwawila and Nelugala in Batticaloa can be included in this list as a result of subsequent archaeological work. It can be pointed out that these are all monasteries organized in the Maha Vihara system consisting of many main *Maha Seema* and *Khanda Seema*.

We have named *Chetiya Pabbatha Viharaya* (Missaka Parvataya) or Mihintale as a very elaborate monastery which we included first in the list of Pabbatha or Giri Viharas. But in the third century BC, it is mentioned in the Mahavamsa how King Devanampiyatissa established an organized Monastery with thirty-two Malakas or spaces (Mv:xvi.15) as per the advice of Mihindu Thero. The Mahavamsa has also mentioned that the first Upasampada Karma was performed at the boundary of the segment called *Tumburu Malakaya* after binding the boundaries here (ibid.16).

However, looking at the spatial organization of other archaeological monuments including the main hills and the stupas found in the current Mihintalea archaeological site, it appears that they do not have the spatial organization

characteristics of the Maha vihara monastic pattern. The spatial characteristics of Pabbatha vihara are fully revealed in the rock spaces such as Rajagirilena Kanda, Etvehera Kanda, Missaka Parvataya, Ambastala Chetiya and Maha Kanda with Mihindu Saya. It is stated in the Mahavamsa that King Devanampiyatissa made 68 caves in Mihintale and offered them for the abode of monks including Maha Mahinda Thero (ibid.12-13). As small and medium sized stupas are built on each of the above-mentioned hills, it is a must to establish a separate Malaka or *Khanda Seema* for them. The two-storied building where the relics and image houses were found in the middle of the Mihintale archaeological site, the Sannipatha Hall or the Prasada house which was used as the Uposatha Gara, which was built in a separate Malaka, and the Dana Sala , which was placed in a lower Malaka, and the lion pond which was built in a separate Malaka on the same ground level. A Semi-Panchayatana Pirivena in a slightly lower Malaka and two special single buildings in two other large Malakas behind it are also placed in the middle Malaka. From here you can see the Naga Sondi pond at one end of the short plain where the end of a flight of stairs at the end of the hill meets the cliff and at the other end you can see an image house lying in a Malaka.

The hospital complex built during the reign of King Sena II (853-887 AD), which can be seen on one side of the lower courtyard or the space on both sides of the Mihintale archaeological site, and residential houses have been built in that complex and in the other Malakas on both sides. At one end of the same space, there is a complex with the Stupa known as Gal Seya or Katu Seya, and next to it, in a complex surrounded by a large stone retaining wall in the north, you can see the Panchakawasa building complex and a pond made for its water needs. The main features of the higher complex are the main complex, a Stupa at the other end, and a cave for monks in the middle and a large pond arranged in the style of a cold palace.

Thus, the *Kaludiya* pond space, the middle floor and the lower floor space were organized in a Malaka system, and all those Malakas were surrounded by walls mixed with granite and bricks, and in order to pass through them and to maintain the connection between the spaces, it is a fact that it has been confirmed by archeology. It is no secret that the spatial organization system of the lower

floors here is related to the monastery spatial organization of the Mahavihara system conceived based on the Anuradhapura Mahavihara.

However, due to the aforementioned features highlighted in the space usage of the thirty-two Malakas established during the reign of Mahinda Thero in Segiriya or Chethiya Pabbata Vihara, it cannot be interpreted that the entire Monastery site was organized according to the characteristics of Maha Vihara monastery. According to the variability of the location of the land, the hilltops, plains and pathan spaces, according to the formal or organized methods, and according to the unorganized or arranged to suit the anomalies of the land, the mixed spatial organization methods conceived according to the inherent characteristics of Pabbatha Vihara are evident in the Mihintale archaeological site. Although not as elaborate as Mihinthale, some mixed spatial organization features can also be seen in the Rajagala archaeological site, but it can be pointed out that this type of monastery complex cannot be included in the monastery category with the spatial organization of the Maha Vihara system. (Bandaranayake: 1974.33). This also means mixed spatial organizational characteristics as we mentioned above.

The main inconsistency to be noted here is that the Stupas of the Mihintale compound are always located on hilltops while none of the rest of the religious and non-religious houses are built on the hilltops around the Stupas. The buildings are built in the middle courtyard and the lower courtyard and none of them are directly related to the stupa in the space. Then this characteristic is always generated only in Pabbatha Vihara spaces. Monasteries of the Maha Vihara type always maintain a close but not close connection between the space of the stupa and the space of the rest of the sacred edifices. The process of taking the Stupa as the central point in the direction formation method and placing the rest of the buildings accordingly is a feature that is often not seen in the spatial organization of Pabbatha vihara. The reason for this difference is that monasteries of the Maha Vihara system are always centered on large areas.

A different interpretation of the spatial organization of the Maha vihara conceived in the third century BC has been done in Bodhivamsa belonging to the tenth century AC, Saddharmalankara and Saddharma Ratnakara belonging to the 14th century (Sad.Ratna:358). The pattern of organization of buildings in the

Anuradhapura Maha Vihara space is named the Sinha Vikranta plan in both works (Ma.Bo.Vam:1910.86; Sin.Bo.Vam:209-210).

According to the design of Sinha Vikrankara written in the 14th century, it is stated that an organization like a Lion King(Sinha Raja) with his arms stretched forward and looking back from the southern side has been followed in the placement of buildings (Saddharma. Lang. 448). In Saddharma Ratnakara. This building organization has been described as a beast turning to the right and looking back (Saddha. Ratna. 358). When thinking about this spatial organization, it should be remembered that the lion looking back is facing north.

This building organization described in Sinhala Bodhivansa is as follows. "At the end of Lion's tail Maha Bogeya Veda where the right foot is located Great Prasada in the shape of a snake Veda where the left leg is Sannipata hall Veda in the navel position Dhatu house Veda from the left canal Ransimalakaya Veda where the right side is located Bhojana hall Veda where the left hand place Ratna Mali Chaitya Veda where the Greeva is located Kantaka is called Puskarani, and those who look at it from the right, turn it upside down, and the big idol is called Sinha Vikranta Kota" (Sing. Bo. Wam. 209-210).

In the third century BC, according to Rev Mahinda's advice, King Devanampiyatissa set up thirty-two Khanda Seema or Malakas in the Maha Meghavana Garden and recommended a list of buildings to be built in them (Mv:xv.205-212). It is clear that the list of buildings included in the Sinha Vikranta plan mentioned in the above-mentioned source books written between the tenth century and the fourteenth century AC is the same list of buildings recommended by Mahinda Thero. However, there is one religious building that was not recommended by him, which is included in the Sinha Vikranta organization. It is the Great Buddha house located at the place where the lion is turned and viewed from the right. In the archaeological explorations and excavations carried out in the current Maha Vihara archeological site until 2017, no architectural structure related to an image house was found in the space matching the building organization mentioned above. Therefore, in the research work published by me in 2016 about the Buddha Image house, it has been mentioned that the Sinha Vikranth Organization Regarding the Maha vihara monastery, it cannot be

confirmed archaeologically (Gamalath:2016.I.304). Likewise, other researchers held the same opinion (Silva.R:2006.124).

However, in the year 2017, the remains of a image house dedicated to Buddha and Bodhisattva statues with a mature grounded plan, which was built in an adjoining Malaka to the north-east side of the Maha Vihara archeological site, were discovered (Gamalath, Kekulawala: 2019.196). The discovery will be decisive because the issue of the building organization of Sinha Vikrantha, which has been unresolved for a long time, has been resolved with this discovery. As determined in the plan, this image house has been positioned at the place where the two eyes of the lion (turning from the right and looking back) are directed. Therefore, the organization of Sinha Vikranta buildings in the Maha vihara site described in all the above source works written from the 10th century AC to the fourteenth century AC can be confirmed archaeologically.

The next problem to be solved is the period when this statue (the Great Buddha) was added to the building design of the Maha vihara. According to the architectural design and the artifacts found in its garbhagara(sanctum), it is relatively possible to date the building to the period between 7-10 centuries AC (Gamalath , Kekulawala:2019.198). A part of a *Padma Peetha* with a standing Buddha statue found inside the garbhagara and a portion of a Mahayana Bodhisattva statue can be considered extremely important antiquities. This is strong evidence that the Mahavihara monks were inclined towards Mahayana Bodhisattva worship. This is the first Bodhisattva statue found in Maha Vihara archaeological premises except the Thuparama archaeological precinct.

During the reign of King Mahasen (276-303AC), when Vitalism or Mahayana was introduced to Sri Lanka, despite the strong opposition of the monks of the Theravada Maha Viharaya sect, the kings restored the Mahayana by building the Jetavana Vihara in Nandana Garden. Confirmed (Gamalath, Kekulawala:2020.67-89) It is mentioned in the Mahavamsa that King Jettatissa II (331-340 AC), the youngest son of King Mahasen, created a Bodhisattva statue from ivory. This is the best evidence that the Mahayana religion in Sri Lanka and Bodhisattva worship were receiving state patronage at this time. The plan of organizing the buildings of the Maha Vihara site, which is presented in the written

literary sources mentioned above, which is introduced as Sinha Vikrantya, has been theoretically analyzed in the Manju Sri Bhasita Vastu Vidya Shastraya, that Shilpa Shastra source (Marasinghe.E.W:1989.7,196-209,13-51- 529,21,15-160). This work dedicated to the Manjushri Bodhisattva is a work based on the Mahayana religion. Although the date of the oldest ola leaf manuscripts is the eleventh century AC, in the analysis we have done elsewhere about the organization of the Panchavasa Vihara, the practice of the theory of Manju Sri Vastu Vidyasastra has been used in Buddhist monasteries in Sri Lanka since around the 5th century AC. It has been shown that it was active in (Gamalath:2016.i.474,481) Also, due to the iconography that was added during the modernization of the Mahayana Panchavasa Vihara system by King Kasyapa I (477-495 AC) of Issara Samanarama, known as the present Vessagiriya, the Mahavihara faction was initially It is mentioned in the Mahavamsa that the monks were reluctant to accept the Monastery, but after offering the Vihara to the statue of Buddha, the monks accepted the second time (Cv:39.13-14; Gamalath:2016.I.484;Gamalath, Kekulavala:2020.108-127). This proves that at the end of the fifth century AC, Maha Vihara monks were accepting the practical matters of Mahayana religion such as independent image house architecture and the worship of Bodhisattva statues along with idolatry. The Mahavamsa, written around the middle age of the fifth century AC, states that even during the existence of other sects such as Dharma Ruchika, the monks themselves used twelve of the palaces belonging to the *Hatthalahaka Mehenavara* (Mv:19.70). The Mahavamsa Tika written according to the Mahavamsa explains that other sects are sects that are interested in Dharma (Mv. T:), so it is implied that the Mahayana religion and its activities had already entered the Mahavihara at the time when the Mahavamsa was written. Since then, by the end of the 8th-9th century AC, two image houses have been built in the Maha Vihara premises and we have analyzed the Mahayana contexts in these (Gamalath:2016.I.301-305,575-579). Therefore, it is possible that the construction of the third image house mentioned above, which was confirmed by the Sinha Vikranta Building Organization, belongs to this period as well.

Development of Mahavihara type monasteries and their essential building components

Thissarama at Anuradhapura or several other monasteries with spatial organizations of the Maha vihara type spread to the north, south and east of the city, including the entire Anuradhapura, in another 600 years. From now on, that monastic organization will be expanded as Chulagalla Vihara in Polonnaruwa and later in 12th century as the Jetawana Vihara itself, and the Tissa Maha Vihara will be formed centering on Magama in Rohana, Rambava Vihara on the river of Walawe and Panduwasnuwara monastery in *Maya Desha*. A large number of medium and small sized monasteries have been identified so far. These were conceived in the early years of BC and gradually developed and reached their climax by the end of the 13th century AC.

Within the space of the Great Meghavana Garden in Anuradhapura, the formation of *Khanda sima* and other Viharas due to various religious issues is noticeable from the end of the second century BC. The first *Khanda sima* was done by King Devanampiyatissa himself for the Thuparama of Mihindu Thera. Explained above. Between 161-137 BC reign King Dutugemunu built the Mirisavati Stupa and Vihara on the right side of the sanctuary in the south-west part of the Maha Meghavana garden (Mv:xxvi.12-13) and all the development activities carried out there were organized in a manner suitable for a monastery of the Great Vihara system. It is mentioned in the Mahavamsa that the monastery was built in such a way that the Stupa was surrounded around the Mirisavatiya Chaitya. Also, King Dutugemunu next built *Lovamahapaya* or Maha Vihara Uposathagara, and it is evident from the references in the Mahavamsa that the same Uposathagara built by King Devanampiyatissa before him had new floors and metal tile roofs (ibid:xxvii.4-45). In the 3rd century BC, according to the instructions of Arhath Mahinda Thero, a inscribed stone pillar was set up in specified Malaka, which had been reserved, and later the stone tomb was removed and Maha Thupaya or Swarnamali Stupa was erected by King Dutthagamini (ibid: xxix-xxx). This was the largest Malaka set in the Maha Meghavana Park and the first large stupa has been built in Sri Lanka. Also, all the major religious buildings of Thissarama were completed after the Maha Thupa work was completed.

Apart from the Tisarama Vihara, the formation of the main and sub monasteries of the Maha Vihara system occurs when Uposathagaras are built separately for each vihara. It is not seen in any source that an Uposathagara was built at that time for Thuparama Monastery built in that century. There is no evidence that an Uposathagara was built for the Mirisawetiya monastery built by King Dutugemunu at that origin. In the monastery space of the Maha Vihara system, the Abhayagiri Vihara built during the reign of King Vattagamini Abhaya (102-77 BC), after the Lohaprasada with an Uposathagara (Mv:33.82) emerges as a large monastery. This fact we have revealed from forgone research done (Gamalath: 2016.1.72-73). It is mentioned in the sources that King Kuta Kannatissa, who reigned during 44-22 BC, built an Uposathagara in Mihintale monastery (Dv:249.31-32;Mv:34.30-31). We have pointed out above that one part of this monastery space has the spatial organization of the Maha Vihara system. However, Thuparamaya, Mirisavati Vihara, and Dakkhina Vihara became limited sub-viharas in the Maha Vihara territory in the days of King Bhatikabhaya (22 BC - 7 AC) along with the creation of Uposathagara in those viharas.(Dv:254.28; Mv:34.40). Lankaramaya was created as a sub-monastery within the great boundary of Abhayagiri Vihara precinct and the time when the Uposathagara was built is uncertain.

It is mentioned in the Samantapasadika that five great Monasteries were built around the city of Anuradhapura during the Bhatikabhaya period between 22 BC and 7 AD (S. Pa.[i].1975.286). Monasteries with spatial organization will have five monasteries built on a single axis in the Tissamaharama monastery archaeological area near Magama. These started during the reign of King Mahanaga in 3rd century B.C, and reached maximum development during the reign of King Kavantissa. Menik Vehera, Yatalavehera, Tissa, Sandagiriya and Vehera Godella are the five great viharas and these have five large stupas located on a single axis. These five monasteries have been made with the spatial organization of the Maha Vihara type, centering on stupas.

In these five Great Monasteries built around the city of Anuradhapura, the Polonnaru Jetavana Vihara and the Tissa Maharama monastery, it is noticeable how the stupa is built on a large scale as the metropolitan main center point. The

Mahavamsa says that it was created by King Mahasen (Mv:xxxvii.32-33), built with the Jetavana Stupa as the central point; this Monastery is also an elaborate monastery with a space organization of the Maha Vihara system.

Bandaranayake interprets this characteristic of Monasteries from the Mahavihara type as the symbolic meaning expressed by the cosmic mountains in the center of the universe. It will cause universalization of Buddha's preeminence and standing. As factors for this, he presents the Great Meru depicted in the Stupa Dhatu Garbha as a symbol of the universe and the architectural design of *Satara Wahalkada* representing the four directions of the universe (Bandaranayake:1974.48).

According to the facts presented so far, it appears that the 1st century BC and the 3rd century AC is a remarkable period in the development of Monasteries with great stupas in Sri Lanka. However, we have shown elsewhere that the current historical architectural reflection of the three great stupas of Anuradhapura, namely Jetavana, Abhayagiri and Ruwanweli, is after the masonry industries, including the architectural components of the super structure such as *Hatares Kotuwa*, *Dewatha Kotuwa* and spiral or *Kot kerella* of these Stupas

1, which was made by King Mahanaga, who reigned in the 6th century AC (Gamalath: 2016.2.11). Thus, the Maha vihara design or the organized Monastery organization was conceived in the third century BC and developed since then, always centering on the stupa in the space around it. It can also be pointed out that as a result of the development of architectural ideas experienced in the use of space. Bandaranaike is of the opinion that this organized monastic design was never transmitted to this country from abroad (ibid:33). We find that it is a combination of foreign and domestic architectural experiences.

It can be said that the use of the centric design of stupas such as Lankaramaya, Thuparamaya and Dakkhina Viharaya, which are recognized as sub-monasteries created in limited spaces, is an architectural spatial organization unique to Sri Lanka. ' Especially in Lankarama and Thuparama, the Vatadage built with the stupa in a short high terrace is the characteristic of these sub-monasteries that the rest of the religious and non-religious edifices are placed in small spaces around it. These will often differ from the spatial organizations found in the great

Indian Buddhist Monastery plans of the 1st century BCE to the 5th century AC. Bandaranaike has analyzed the indigenous architectural forms that can fulfill the basic needs of Buddhism as "organized planning" (ibid:47).

The most beautiful religious building of monasteries belonging to the Mahavihara type in this country is the Buddha image house. It is the architectural design at the end of the hierarchy of religious buildings. According to the archaeological evidence that has been received so far, some of the oldest image houses of monasteries with monastic organizations of the Maha Vihara type are found in the Jetavana and Abhayagiri vihara complexes. The original construction of these belongs to the 3rd century AC based on historical data and comparative architectural data (Gamalath: 2016.1.251-255, 376-389,411-418,479-481). An Image house architecture and Uposathagara architecture are used with high progress during the period from the 5th century to the 12th century AC, in the monastery organizations of the Mahavihara type. Image house of Gedige tradition and multi-storied Uposathagaras of Prasada style as well as Prasada Kuti tradition and Panchakavasa monastic organization are the most prominent architectural styles of Maha Vihara type monasteries in this period. Abhayagiri Vihara, Jethavana Vihara, Alahana Pirivena Complex, Royal monastery at Maligavila, Panduwasnuwara and Rambha Vihara monastery complexes are examples for this.

Among the architectural buildings of the middle and late Anuradhapura period, which reflect the most developmental features, Bhikkhu living abods (Prasada) and Panchayatana Pirivenas with its related Prasadas and multi storied Prasada like Uposatha halls are prominent. In this Prasada system, the Panchayatana and Upa Panchayatana complex is placed in the monastic space around the Stupa, following a vertical and horizontal linear organization pattern. Accordingly, the monasteries are often located parallel to each other. The Panchayatana Pirivena Complexes, which belong to the multi-centric planning category built in the medieval period, were first created as Arama Prasadas or individual architectural units and then developed into Panchayatana group status. A careful observation of the building distribution pattern is evident.

All the monasteries exemplified here belonged to the Dharmaruci and Sagala sects of the Mahayana religion. During the long period mentioned above, the development conditions of the monasteries of the Mahavihara category will be confirmed by the antiquities and architectural monuments found in those archaeological sites.

The central building of the Panchayatana Piriven is set in such a way that the entrance is directed towards the Stupa, and the way that the Panchayatana Prasada Piriven complex is connected with the Stupa by making a path leading to the empty space that extends to a certain distance outside the Stupa wall is a remarkable feature of this organizational system. The Panchayatana Piriven complex is connected to the residential blocks and religious and non-religious buildings around it by paths and it is a notable feature that each of these building complexes are connected by walls, gates and gate pavilions. Archaeologists have divided and analyzed the spatial organization pattern in each *Mula* (Faculty) of Abhayagiri monastery according to their ancient operational pattern for the convenience of their study. This implies that the simple monastic organization plan that was originally conceived gradually developed into a more widespread and complex plan.

Bandaranaike has interpreted this spatial organization as a polycentric plan. This can be identified as the most mature monastic design developed over time. The Jetavana monastery of Polonnaruwa built by King Parakramabahu the Great (1153-1186 AC) in the 12th century has organized the space from south to north on one side of the Gopala Pabbatha rock surface. Although Menik Vehera Sub-monastery established on the high ground near the southern entrance is defined as a step forward in Bandaranaike's neo centric design or polycentric-plan (ibid: 189), it was designed in the last two centuries of the Anuradhapura era to match the shape of the high ground where the monastery was located. It must be said that it will be a similar design as well as⁴ Thuparamaya, Mirisawetiya and Lankaramaya can be pointed out as sub-monasteries created in the Anuradhapura period with similar spatial organization.

4. Adjacent to Menik Vehera Stupa Malaka are two image houses. Based on its architectural features and inscriptions, we have dated one of the image houses to the eleventh century (Gamalath: 2016.1.437-440) but the Buddha statue there belongs to the eighth century AC (Schroeder: 1990.156,35f,663). Therefore, according to the characteristics of the stupa in the space of Menik Vehera monastery and some related carvings, it can be inferred that the monastery with this stupa was built in the late Anuradhapura period in the 9th-10th centuries. Pabalu Vehera Stupa and Polonnaruwa Watada's Stupa have been confirmed to be built in the 8th-10th century AC (Paranavitana: 1995).

In Anuradhapura, Jetavana Vihara, Mirisavati Vihara, Maha Vihara, the monastic organizations in the lower Malakas and Middle Malakas of Mihintala, and Maligawila, this organized monastic design is evident, and in the Mirisavati archaeological complex, the monastic design with three dwellings is almost completely seen. So far, there has been no evidence that the Panchakavas system of organization was in use there. Mihinthala can also see such organizations with three residences on the middle and lower floors. It can be observed how this Panchakavasa monastic organization is organized in a very comfortable manner in the area of the Thissarama area and in the region up to the Thuparama temple complex in its northern part. The number of Panchayatana Piriven Complexes found in Jetavana and Mihintala is only one and two respectively. All other monastic organizations belong to the three-building Prasada type. Senaka Bandaranayake introduces this as Upa Panchayatana Pirivena (Bandaranayake: 1974).

The organizational pattern here is to establish two sub-buildings facing each other on either side of the front space with the entrance to the main building. When the main building was used as the chief monk's residence, the two sub-buildings may have been used for the living quarters, storage of other monks or offerings and Dharma books. In some cases, the cellular base of the wooden rampart, which was prepared for landing on the upper floor, can be seen at one end of the main building. It seems that these were in most cases high storeyed like the main centre building of the *Panchaka ayatana* Piriven.

It is also special that this Semi-Panchayatana building organization has been reserved for the religious sanctus of some monasteries. The archeological site known as the second image house site of the Jetavana monastery, the Malaka with the image house trinity of the Velgam Vehera or Raja Raja Perumpalli Monastery, the Malaka with the Patimaghara Trinita of the Jetavana monastery and the Malaka with the Patimagara Trinita at the Viharahinna archaeological site are some examples of this (Gamalath:20 16.1.388-396,619 -626,617-619,425-427; Kekulawala:2021.1606-1615). While the main building is the larger main Image house, the other two houses are two small statues facing each other. However, there has been evidence that the two sub-houses of the Semi-Panchayatana with Jetavana's main Image house were not used as two Patimagara but as two subordinate cells.

The utility of the above-mentioned Prasada buildings in the monasteries of the Mahavihara type, as well as the way they maintained the relationship with the Stupa in the placement of the monastery space, i.e. not far from the Stupa, but arranged closely, as well as the hierarchy of the buildings, as well as their interrelationships, have been determined. Therefore, the religious and inherent stratification, grouping and their interrelationships between the architectural constructions in the organized monastery plans, i.e. Monasteries of the Maha Vihara system, Padanagara monasteries of the Panchaka Avasa organization can be identified through the placement pattern of those buildings. When usability is considered as a creation, it is also possible to recognize the working form of the economic and political concept system associated with the old monastic society in these architectural units.

Bandaranayake points out that the technical methods of the spatial organization of the monasteries of the Maha Vihara system mentioned above are clearly based on a mathematical module (Bandaranayake: 2012.178). (square modular grid) indicates that it has been used there (ibid:178). Nakagawa also pointed out this hypothesis, based on the popular monastic plans in Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa while mostly these spatial organization plans reflected on the square grid module. Bandaranaike points out that monasteries with all formal plans belong to the category of spatial planning, and from our analysis, the space organization that we have presented above has been shaped to the state of maximum developmental plans in the last two centuries of the Anuradhapura period, which began in the 3rd century BC and developed during the Middle Anuradhapura period. All the illustrations will prove his point.

Also, not only the Manik Vehera premises in the Polonnaruwa archaeological site but also the Pothgul Vihara space exhibit the spatial organization mentioned above and it can be pointed out that these are micro-viharas of sub-monastery status. However, we can agree with Bandaranaike's idea that the multi-centric plan and the neo centric plan are parallel plans that happen at the same time.

Gunawardena mentioned (Gunawardena: 1998.10) quoting Bandaranaike, *Aindriya* and Panchayatana (Panchayatana), which are included in the classification

of monasteries in the Anuradhapura era, will be architectural units that belong to the organized monastic type that we are analyzing here. It is better to consider the *Gilanagara* type mentioned there (ibid:10) as a non-religious architectural structure in a Buddhist monastery rather than analyzing it under a separate vihara category. The sanatorium, which belongs to the sanitary service category of the monks, is called *Gilanagara*, and the architectural elements such as Bodhi, Stupa, Uposathagara, Council hall(Sabha Sala) and Image house, which should be in a monk's monastery, have not been built. However, it has been identified that a small image house was built in the middle courtyard of the Mihintale hospital of Sena ii, and so-called *Mapa Maliga* premises, which belongs to the medieval period of the Anuradhapura era (Gamalath: 2016.1.291-292), but its need is only for worshipping the Buddha for sick monks, and because of that Image house, *Gilanagara* It cannot be introduced as a separate type of monastery.

Buddhist Monastery designs similar to the monastic organization of the Maha Vihara system in Sri Lanka are mainly seen in India in the monastery at Takshila that the Dharmarajika Stupa is the hub and the Sanchi Great Monastery, which were developed in the 1st and 2nd centuries AC. Although the spatial organization of the monastic buildings around the Dharmarajika Maha Stupa in Taxila is similar to the organized monastic design in Sri Lanka, it is clear that the monastic designs of Sri Lanka are not imitated from India. The number of booths, sacrificial Stupas and Image houses built around the great stupa in its courtyard is more than fifty (Marshall:1951.pp230ff and 274ff).

There is a certain amount of empty space around the stupa and the arrangement of the hermitage and religious edifices outside is akin to the organized plan. But when the whole monastery plan is taken, there are few parallel spaces between the buildings. A kind of strictness can be seen in this monastic organization. But the condition of the monastic organizations in Sri Lanka has been made according to a more comfortable and simple linear parallel building placement pattern. Organizational patterns with square and rectangular building designs are prominent in both countries.

The Sanchi also have characteristics very similar to the monastic organization of the Taxila Monastery (Marshall.J; Foucher.A:1947.15-17, Pl.ii).

Here the main central space is occupied by its great stupa and next to it is another sanctus. From here in the south and west directions one can see the spaces with residential cabins at a considerable distance.

Similarly, in the monasteries at Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda Great Stupa, which have existed since the 2nd century BC, the spatial organization of the Maha Vihara system has been established (Mitra.D:1980.30-35). In India, a more similar monastic spatial organization appears in Nalanda Archaeological Site Nos. 1, 1A and 1B (ibid: 40, 41, 87).

Many of these similarities that are evident in India and Sri Lankan Buddhist monasteries are due to the design of Monasteries with the stupa as the main religious sanctus. Another reason for this is the fluctuating technological development that occurs from time to time and the formation of monastic organization patterns by associating similar concepts and modes. Another aspect of this can be pointed out is the combination of Indian ideas on Buddhist architectural styles that spread in Sri Lanka after the 3rd century BC through cross-cultural relations. However, Bandaranayake thinks that the central design of the Sinhala Buddhist Monastery is the result of an independent development (Bandaranayake,1974.57).

Conclusion

The conclusion reached from the whole discussion is that a type of Buddhist monastery, which can be introduced as the Maha Vihara system, emerged in Sri Lanka in the third century BC. Because the Anuradhapura Maha Vihara was created as the center, those systems All the monasteries under it are called by the same name. Another conclusion that can be drawn from this is that it is possible to classify Buddhist monasteries in Sri Lanka based on spatial organization. Comparatively, it can be pointed out that the Sangharama design of the Maha Vihara system was conceived in Sri Lanka, using the Savath Nuwara Jetavanarama plan as a prototype. The plan of Anuradhapura Maha Vihara monastery is called *Sinha Wickrantha* and the way it is set up in its own unique building space organization and it is contained in written sources from the 13th century AD, but its active design and the inauguration of the buildings begin in the fifth and seventh centuries AD. It has been concluded here with archeological evidence how scientific constants have

affected it. As the main monastery of the Great Vihara system in Anuradhapura as the Mahavihara, the Abhayagiri Vihara and the Jetavana Vihara will be designed in the same Mahavihara style by dividing the northern and eastern boundaries of the Maha Meghavana land, and the Thuparamaya, Dakkhina Vihara and Mirisawatiya as the Sub-Monasteries belonging to the same system which have been created within the main Mahavihara monastery space. Lankaramaya will be recognized here as a sub-monastery located within the boundaries of Abhayagiri Vihara.

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