INTRODUCTION

In all six chapters of the thesis we can now mention Ceylon as Sri Lanka. Ceylon is now known as Sri Lanka. The thesis entitled "State of Buddhism in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) as depicted in the Pāli Chronicles" is an attempt to trace the history of Buddhism in Sri Lanka as narrated in the Pāli Chronicles. In the fields of its Pali and Sinhalese literature the Pāli chronicles play an important role. They are valuable no doubt. Because they throw light not only on the political history of the island but also give us useful information on religious, cultural and literary history of the country. The aim of the thesis is to present the state of Buddhism in Sri Lanka from the various materials scattered in several Pāli chronicles of Sri Lanka.

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter I discusses the Vamsa literature in Ceylon (Sri Lanka). The word Vamsa or Vamśa signifies tanti (lineage) which can be mentioned as another word for anvaya.¹ These words indicate the idea of paramārtha or lineal succession.² The Pali word Vamsa (Sanskrit Vamśa) means "line of a

†. B. C. Law, On the Chronicles of Ceylon, p. 29.
². Ibid, p. 29.
pedigree or genealogy and also the "chronicle" or the "history" of a race, dynasty, line of teachers etc. There are several Vaïsa texts in Sri Lanka and they are known as the Dipavamsa, the Mahāvamsa, the Cūlavamsa, the Mahābodhivamsa or the Bodhivamsa, the Dāthavamsa, the Thūpavamsa and the Hatthavanagallavihāravamsa. This chapter deals with these texts.

Chapter II describes the history of the Pāli chronicles. The Dipavamsa "the history of the Island" was written in Sri Lanka on the basis of Pali commentaries or the Aṭṭhakathās and its author is not known. The Mahāvamsa "the Great Dynasty of the kings of Sri Lanka" was composed by Mahānāma who belonged to the last quarter of the fifth century A.D. or the early sixth century A.D. The Cūlavamsa "the lesser Dynasty of Sinhalese kings" is mentioned as a continuation of the Mahāvamsa. The Mahābodhivamsa or the Bodhivamsa, "the History of the Bodhi Tree" was written by Upatissa in the last quarter of the tenth century or at the beginning of the eleventh century A.D.

The Dāthavamsa or the Dantudhatuvamsa "the History of (Buddha's) Tooth" was written by Dhammakitti Thera in the beginning of the thirteenth century A.D. The Thūpavamsa, "the History of the Topes" was written by Vacissara in the thirteenth century A.D. The Hatthavamagallavihāravamsa was composed in the reign of Parākkamabāhu II in the middle of the thirteenth century A.D. The Rasavāhinī was written by Vedaha Thera in the first half of the fourteenth century A.D. Vedaha Thera also wrote the Samantakūṭavananā in the first half of the fourteenth century A.D. The Nalatadhātuvamsa or the Lalatadhātuvamsa or the Lalatavamsa gives a history of the frontal bone relic of the Buddha. The Sāsanavamsa-dīpa was written in Sri Lanka by Acariya Vimalasara Thera in A.D. 1880. Apart from the Pāli chronicles, there are the Pujañvaliya, the Nikāyasangraha, the

5. Ibid, p. 224.
7. Ibid, pp. 10 and 311.
Dhātuvaṃsa, the Rājāvaliya, the Rājaratnākaraya, the Daladā-Sirīta, the Daladā-pūjāvaliya, the Dambadeni Asha, the Kandavurusirīta and the Saddharma Ratnākaraya in Sinhalese language and they are very useful for the reconstruction of the island's history.

Chapter III discusses the history of the spread of Buddhism in Ceylon (Sri Lanka). The third century B.C. witnessed the introduction of Buddhism in Sri Lanka by Mahinda from India in the reign of Devanampiya Tissa¹. It became the religion of the country and it flourished there. The sacred relics and the alms-bowl of the Buddha, the Buddhist texts and the Bodhi Tree were brought from India and in the third century B.C. The Mahāvihāra, the Citadel of orthodoxy, was established in Anurādhapura in Sri Lanka.² It played an important part for the development of Buddhism in Sri Lanka up to the Tenth century A.D. From the chronicles of Sri Lanka and other religious texts it is known that several sects appeared in the religious world of Sri Lanka, but, even then, under royal patronage it remained pre-eminent as the great centre of Theravāda Buddhism in the island.

The Portuguese arrived in Sri Lanka in the early sixteenth century

¹. Dipavamsa, Ch.VIII, vv. 13; Mahāvamsa, Ch.XII, vv. 7-8.
². Walpola Rahula, History of Buddhism in Ceylon, p. 52.
A.D. Owing to internal trouble and foreign rule Buddhism in Sri Lanka had suffered very much in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries A.D. The Portuguese were very haughty, cruel and fanatics and they adopted a very unfriendly attitude towards Buddhism and its followers. Their rule can be mentioned as the dark period in Sri Lanka's history of Buddhism. During their rule Buddhism lost its glory, purity and prosperity. Then came the Dutch in the island and they ruled there up to A.D. 1796. At that time the Buddhists of the sea-coast were not disturbed and they performed their religious rites and ceremonies peacefully. During the Dutch rule Buddhism also flourished in the kingdom of Kandy. In A.D. 1796 the Dutch were defeated by the British. This chapter then discusses the British attitude towards Buddhism, the activities of the Christian missionaries and the Buddhist activities. Sri Lanka has obtained independence in A.D. 1948 after a period of British rule of 133 years. The leaders of Sri Lanka played their great role to establish Buddhism to its former unity, purity and glory. This chapter gives a detailed account of Sri Lanka's Buddhism from the early times up to the modern period.
Chapter IV is devoted to a story of Buddhism under royal patronage. No religion can flourish without the patronage of the rulers, nobles and clans of the time. This chapter is an attempt to bring out a clear picture of the significant role played by the rulers of Sri Lanka for the progress of Buddhism in their country. The spread of the religion was mainly due to efforts of several rulers who occupied prominent places in the religious world of Sri Lanka. Devānāmapiya Tissa, Duṭṭhagāmini Abhaya, vohārika Tissa, Mahāsena, Silameghavanga, Kassapa IV, Parākkamabāhu II, Parākkamabāhu VI, Sri Vijaya Rājasimha, Kirti Sri Rāja-Simha and others showed their keen interest in Buddhism and they contributed valuable services to the Buddhist world of Sri Lanka.

Chapter V presents monastic life of Ceylon (Sri Lanka). The value of learning was highly appreciated in the Buddhist monasteries and it had a great importance in the life of the Buddhist monks of Sri Lanka. All able and intelligent monks engaged themselves in grantha-dhura while elderly monks of weak intellect and feeble
physique and who joined the Buddhist Sangha in their old age applied themselves to Vipassana-dhura. The vocation of 'books' or Grantha-dhura signifies the learning and teaching of the dhamma, while the vocation of meditation or Vipassana-dhura indicates reflecting on life as impermanent, suffering and without permanent entity. A knowledge of dhamma as well as meditation had a great importance in monk's life. In Sri Lanka there were several gradations of rank and position in the Buddhist Sangha. These were - (1) the sāmanera or novices; (2) the bhikkhu or the full-fledged monk; (3) the therā (or sīnava or elder; (4) the Mahā-thera (or Mahāsthavira) or great elder; and the Upādhyaya or preceptor and the Ācariya or instructor. This chapter refers to the Buddhist monks' daily routine, food, various duties, evening duty, preaching, duty to look after their monasteries and social service. The Buddhist monks used to give proper instruction and advice to the lay people and always tried to show them the right path through preaching. Several halls were constructed for the purpose of preaching and sometimes the

1. Walpola Rahulā, History of Buddhism in Ceylon, p. 150.
preachings were held for a whole night. In the Buddhist Saṅgha of Sri Lanka these were Civara-patiggahaka (robe-receiver), Civara-nidahaka (robe-depositor), Civara-bhajaka (robe-distributor) etc. 2

Chapter VI traces Buddhist ceremonies and festivals in Ceylon (Sri Lanka). At first preaching was regarded as an exposition of the dhamma for the welfare and benefit of the listeners, but in later times it took the form of a festival. The Divākathika, the "day-preacher", the Pada-bhāṇaka, the "word reciter" and the Saṅgi-bana, or the Saṅgi-bhāṇaka, the "Sangi or Nikāya-reciter" took active part as preachers at different stages of a preaching ceremony. 3 This chapter gives an account of the preaching of the Ariyavamsa-Sutta, 4 the Vesak festival, 5 the Giribhanda pūja, the Gaṅgārohana ceremony, the spirit ceremony, 7 the Tooth Relic festival 8

3. Ibid, pp. 267-268; Anguṭṭara-nikāyathakathā (Panorathapūrṇa), pp. 23, 305.
5. DiPavamās, XXI, 26; Mahavamsa, Xliv, 46.
6. Mahāvamsa, xxxiv, 68-84.
the Mahinda festival, the abhiseka or the anointing of the Buddha images, the Dipa-pūjā or the festival relating to the offering of lamps and the funeral ceremony.

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S and h y a B'ha ttac h a r yya.

2. Ibid, XXXIX, 40.