CHAPTER V

The social role of Buddhism

The emergence of Buddhism along with many other non-
Brahmanical social doctrines was in part due to the new socio-
economic forces and the political order that had begun to change
the basis of the later Vedic society. Such major socio-economic
changes were: the new technological developments based on the
wider use of iron, commercial and craft specialization, an
expansion in the agrarian economy, a demographic expansion and the
rise of cities, a changing social stratification, and the
development of a currency system. These changes can be observed
in the nuclear areas i.e. Gangetic valley, north-west India and
in Malwa, during the post 6th Century B.C. period. It was not
only the socio-economic institutions that were restructured but also
the political institutions. With the disintegration of the clan
confederations controlled by the oligarchic land owning Ksatriyas
in the face of ascending power of the autocratic monarchies, the
state was to crystallize during the Nanda-Maurya period has its
origins in the political transformations of the 6th Century B.C.
Clearly this period represented an era of greater socio-economic
integration and political assimilation. This implies the
establishment of new division of labour and relations of production
which saw the unequal distribution of resources based upon
and
maintained by the ability to wield power within society (vide
Kosambi 1972; 1975; Sharma 1975; 1977; R. Thara 1978 passim;
Such new developments could not operate effectively within the ideological framework of the Vedic ideas and practices. The dynamism of the newly evolving pattern required a greater degree of fluidity and relative absence of restrictions in order for there to be smoother functioning of economic transactions, social mobility, physical movement and the adjustment to new occupations. The 'protestant ethic' in Buddhism and the 'movements of dissent', by other non-Brahmic sects clearly reflect a society attempting to search for alternate doctrines to justify ideas, actions and the changing situation. While some decided to sever ties with the existing network of socio-economic relationships which consequently gave rise to asceticism of various forms, a larger section especially in urban areas managed to adapt and readjust themselves to the new situation. It was this section that became greatly attracted to social ideologies that gave moral justifications to the new pattern of socio-economic relationships. These ideologies provided them with a functional ethical framework regularizing their actions and thus harmonized various thrusts and pulls in a society attempting to reconcile and adjust itself to a new material order.

The precise character of Buddhism, viz. an ideology of emancipation, a code of conduct/lay ethics, or a way of life, are some aspects that have become a matter of contention among scholars of modern age. This situation has come about because of the complex character which the known teachings of what is being identified as Buddhism have come to represent today. The roots of
this situation however goes back to the very period of its emergence where Buddhism had to increasingly strike a balance between the realization of Nibbāna by moving along the Vimukti magga (to be achieved within the frame work of the Caturārya satyaya followed by those who opted-out of the existing social order) and that of the ārya vinayā (followed by those who necessarily formed the elements of the stratified social order of 6th Century B.C. in northern India). As much as it was a direct product of the historical forces of 6th Century B.C. Nadhyadeśā, the establishment of the triratna (Buddha - Dhamma - Sangha) as an institution during the very life time of its founder, symbolises the demand for a creed capable of catering to the more mundane requirements of a society undergoing certain structural transformations during that period. It was precisely this reason that required Buddhism to thrust itself beyond the narrow conceptual confines of anitya - dukkha - anātma and undergo a phase of adaptation within the very womb of its inception so as to accommodate social forces that were in operation during its day.

When Gotama the Buddha originally expounded his ideas and views on life, the philosophical content of the earliest discourses i.e. chaturārya satyaya (elaborated in the Dhammachakkapavattna sutta) was introduced as a magga (path) for the breaking of illusions (māra) and fetters (tappā) of all forms viz. kāma, bhava, vibhava. All corporeal aggregates (nāma-rūpa) conditioning mental forms (chitta-chaitasika dhamma) according to him are illusory and are necessarily products of the reflections and perceptions of the mind in relation to matter as analysed in the formula on dependent-
Both mind and matter are transitory (viparītāma dhamma) by nature, hence not lasting (anītya), therefore unsatisfactory (dukkha). By viewing things in their true perspective (samaṇā sati), dukkha can be eliminated thus realizing dispassionateness (virāga) and complete mastery over mind and matter resulting in ultimate cessation of the mental process (nibbāna).

Yet, neither this philosophical content nor the establishment of the Order of the Bhikkus¹ implied that Gotama envisaged his teaching or the Order to exist by delinking itself organically from the existing society. Though some of his earliest disciples were those who had disciplined themselves on already existing rigorous schools of asceticism (sāmaṇa/paribbajaka) the Bhikkhu was also a person who moved "from house to a houseless state" (agārasma anāgāriyam pabbajito ...) (Maj. Nik. I:105), which was the 'ascetic ideal'. In fact the earliest prescriptions that monks should reside under trees (rukkhamūla senāsanaṁ) was soon subordinated by a concession granted to take shelter in mote halls of villages (āvāsathāgaras) (Barua 1969:9 ff.). The very utterance of the Buddha as (Charatha bhikkhave chārikam, bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya lokānakampāy atthāya hitāya sukhāya devamanussanam Ma ekena dve agamittha' (Mvg. I.ii.I), to the first sixty one monks delegated with the task of spreading the message, shows that such missionary work was expected to be performed for the

¹. The Bhikkhu, a wandering holy person living on alms. The counterpart/sāmaṇa/paribbajaka.
society and within that society. The सळ्यस-पुत्ता समाजस were expected to attain ultimate mental perfection by living and reflecting within that material environment. Thus they 'may dwell in a forest or quit it, or dwell anywhere in a village, a township or country, according as such dwelling is conducive to his spiritual cultivation or not' (Maj. Nik I, 104-108). This outlook transformed Buddhism into a religion with a highly assimilative and adaptive capacity resulting in its initial vigor, the dynamism of which remained as a far reaching force in India at least for the next 8-9 Centuries after the demise of its founder and for a much longer period in other parts of Asia.

The inauguration of the Order as the bhikku - samgha (the association of those who wander), represented an organization within a wider community that itself was a dispersed and unorganized one - a community describable only as a hoard (Dutt 1962:37). Yet the group consciousness inculcated within this 'hoard' is undeniable. The concept of the seasonal congregation developed due to the gatherings made during the rainy seasons (vassana). As Dutt points out, neither the Brāhmins nor the Jaina wanderers had regulations prescribing this gathering during the vassana (ibid. 53). It was also for this prescribed definite gathering that a congregational settlement (avāsa) demarcated with boundaries (sīma) came into vogue. However, the settlements came to develop a differentiation viz. those in the countryside or avāsa i.e. the retreat built and maintained by the monks and arāma i.e. those maintained by private donors. It was important that a habitation was located near the residence of the samgha, as the
latter had to sustain themselves through alms. Some, however, did prefer to dwell in a forest retreat (āranyagata bhikkhu).

Perhaps the earliest institutional division within the Order seems to be between the town and urban based arāma or vihāra-vāsins (monastic dwellers) and the āranyavarśi (forest-dwellers).

The brief outline given above indicates the organic link that prevailed between the society and the Order from the very inception of the latter. The ideal then was that while the Order was to define and indicate the path (magga) towards higher spirituality in this material world to people out of compassion it was taken for granted that some form of reciprocity was extended by society upon whom this community of non-producers could depend in order to sustain themselves. This became the basis for a working relationship between the Buddhist Order and its lay followers, a norm that has continued to this day.

I - ii

It is imperative that we familiarize ourselves with certain elements of the indigenous pre-Buddhist cults and beliefs in south-east India and Sri Lanka so as to understand two vital aspects of the society and its related ideology under study. Firstly, it provides an insight to the functioning and the social necessity of such cults and beliefs associated with a particular time in the development of a given society. Secondly, by judging their functions in quantitative and qualitative terms, we can ascertain the relative significance of such indigenous cults and beliefs vis a vis the ideologies of the urbanized northern Indo-Aryan
speakers. The latter aspect has to be essentially viewed within a process of assimilation, adaptation, amalgamation and the survival of existing cults and beliefs at the sub-stratum level in society in the post 3rd/2nd Century B.C. parallel to, or within the new and dominant social ideology of the contemporary period. In this connection, pre-Buddhist beliefs in Sri Lanka and Tamilalam are relatively well documented in the early Pali texts and in the Sangam texts. These sources indicate that a whole range of symbols associated with natural forces, natural objects, spirits, deities, demons were feared and worshipped in various forms of cult practices (Mv; Dv; Paranavitana 1929; Adikaram 1946; Rahula 1956; Ellawala 1969; Srinivas Iyengar 1929/1982; Hart 1975; Pillay 1975; Singaravelu 1966). Hence, our intention is not to present a stereotype list of the prevalent cults and beliefs, but to highlight certain aspects associated with the Proto Historic communities and some facets of such cults and beliefs that were directly linked to Buddhism in the post 3rd Century B.C. periods.

Perhaps the greatest success Buddhism scored in the initial phase was to synchronize its ideological outlook with societies in transition. It is perhaps best demonstrated in relation to questions 1. The term 'dominant social ideology' indicates the major one followed by a section of sections of the decision making groups and also its relative position as an integral part of the major cultural force over the existing ones. Dominant here is not used to indicate its position by the numerical strength of its followers.
of life and death, which are the most prominent in the substratum psychology of the existing religious ideologies.

Religious beliefs are the representations which express the nature of sacred things and the relations they sustain either with each other or with profane things, whereas rites are the rules of conduct which prescribe how a man would comfort himself in the presence of the sacred objects. Thus, even magic is actually an integral part of religion (Durkheim 1972:46). The sacred then is intrinsic to both belief and ritual. It is the beliefs, the system of religious ideas, which define the meaning of ritual. The ritual in turn, becomes the material symbol of what is embodies in the beliefs (Goods 1964:49). Therefore, every society adopts and imposes upon its members, towards certain objects, the attitude of mind and behaviour that may be called the 'ritual attitude' (Radcliffe-Brown 1976:123).

Matters beyond human control not only were treated with respect and fear, but the 'belief' in the powers that rule the universe was taken for granted by Pre and Proto Historic communities (Herskovits 1974:215-222). One way of establishing a relationship between themselves and the phenomena of nature was the personification of natural phenomena and natural species by such communities (Radcliff-Brown op. cit. 131). Such phenomena manifested themselves in the form of 'spirits' endowed with superhuman powers, and such spirits were worthy of veneration. The psychological impact of this form of belief in spirits was so strongly embedded within these communities that even in the post 2nd Century B.C. period they
continued well into the cosmopolitan urban culture and remained at the substratum level of the society.

Birth and death are perhaps the two most traumatic events experienced by the tribal societies. While birth represents procreation, the beginning, and the 'known'; death represents departure, termination, the 'unknown' and the mysterious — hence the phenomena beyond control. Yet, the 'spirit' of the dead was kept alive within the community which in turn gave rise to ancestor worship. It is stated that, belief in a surviving soul is not the cause but the effect of the rites associated with this cult (Radcliff-Brown op. cit. 155), which is a clear indication of taking 'beliefs' (about those powers governing the universe) for granted by primitive societies (Herskovits op. cit. 222).

Perhaps the most positive evidence for the Proto Historic cults and beliefs can be derived from the megalithic monuments. The megalithic burials primarily contain corporeal remains of the deceased beings in fragmentary or in secondary form. While most of the bones are uncalcined, instances of calcined bones are not unknown. Though most burials contain only a single internment, certain burials have multiple or repeated internments of skeletal remains and grave goods. The grave goods ranged from a variety

1. This is due to two reasons (i) these monuments represent certain cult practices and beliefs that prevailed from the earliest phase of the Iron Age in the southern Deccan and south India (c. 1000/800 B.C.). The antiquity of the urn burial practice could be easily pushed back to the Neolithic-Chalcolithic of the Deccan; (ii) such traditions are better preserved in burial monuments in their original form than in any other archaeological monuments of the Proto and Early Historic periods.
of pottery, iron implements, beads, food, conch, etc., which were either offered to the deceased or deposited for their use in the other world. It has been pointed out that ancestor worship is strongest among such groups because solidarity and the continuity of the lineage gives stability to such societies (Radcliffe Brown 1976:163-64; supra pp. 94-95).1

The practice of human sacrifices has been suggested as another cult associated with the erection of the megalithic monuments (Hunt 1942:148; Sarkar 1978:187). Kailasapathy in fact draws our attention to certain verses in the Sangam texts referring to human sacrifices made to the goddess Koravai after victorious battles (1968:242-43). Some consider sati and group suicide2 to be as yet another aspect related to these burial monuments (Sirinivasan 1946:13-14; Hart 1975:91; Puram 257:1-7).

How are we then to ascertain the dynamics of synchronization of the Proto Historic cult (of ancestor worship and the belief in a life after death) with the northern social ideology. In archaeological terms, the structural similarity is useful to our study on two counts, viz. firstly, at the physical level the relation between the Proto Historic indigenous funerary monuments and the Buddhist ritualistic monuments, and secondly, the

1. Child burials indicate that, all megalithic monuments cannot be associated with ancestor worship but certainly with the belief in a life after death.

2. Hart suggests the term vatakkiruttal to be related to group suicide along with the king (op. cit. 91-92); see also Pillay 1975:512-14).
similarity between beliefs associated at the psychological level i.e. the veneration of the dead and the belief in a life after death.

It is not an exaggeration to state the pre-Buddhist tumulus (cetiya) in northern India may have been the proto-type for the Buddhist/Jain stupa. Such pre-Buddhist monuments, as the literary texts indicate were venerated by every tribe and janapada and have been uncovered in the recent past during archaeological explorations (ASTAR 1906-07:111 ff; 1935-36:55-66). The regular veneration of such monuments was considered important during the Early Historic period (6th Century B.C.) and even the Buddha emphasized this aspect as a cause for the welfare of the Vajji confederation (Dig. Nik. II. 75; Ang. Nik. IV.16-17).

Incidentally, it should be noted that the confederation (sangha/gane) of the Vajjins was formed by a conglomeration of extended families (kula), and ancestor worship was crucial to such lineage groups. It is also interesting to note that in the Mahaparinibbana Sutta the Buddha lists categories of 'great men' or Mahapurusa (Buddha, Pratyeka Buddha, Arahants, Chakkavatti raja and Maharajan) who are worthy of having cetiyas constructed as commemorative monuments in their name, and these monuments were to contain the corporeal relics and the articles of use (saririka and paribhogika dhatu) of the deceased. Such stupas were to be located near highways and where roads met and they were also to be

1. In the north Indian context the term cetiya apparently had a wider meaning, and indicated a stupa, a vihara an assembly hall, a tree, a memorial stone, a holy relic or object or place or even an image considered for purposes of worship, honour, esteem and regard.
decorated with flowers, garlanded and perfumed (Dig. Nīk.II:106).

We do not consider the stūpa to be the linear successor of the megalithic burials in south east India though one cannot overlook the physical similarity and also the similarity between the very concepts associated with both types of monuments.

To begin with, both types enshrine the corporeal relics and the articles of use belonging to the deceased. It is suggested that the kūda kallu tombs of Malabar indicate a prototype of the Buddhist stūpa garbha (Longhurst 1936:fig. 8). The clockwise and anti-clockwise cist slabs taking the form of the revolving svastika ms more or less repeated in the relic chamber (dhātu garbha) of the Buddhist stūpa (ibid. 14). The passage between the low tumulus and the enclosure stone in certain burials is similar to pradaksināpatha (circumambulatory path) of the Buddhist stūpa (Sivaranamurti 1977:22). In terms of their shape, certain cist burials having rubble tumulus e.g. at Brahmagiri carry a striking resemblance to the rubble filled Buddhist stūpas of early south east India. Kearns, was misled by the shape of the cairns of Tirunelveli (where urns were covered by a chamber of unhewn stones) and even believed them to have had a Buddhist or Jaina origin, (Kearns 1859:27-30). Similarly Fergusson concluded that the origins of the Amaravati stūpa may be found in the numerous tumulus distributed in the adjacent area (Burgess 1887:23). It is indeed useful to re-investigate to what extent the urn burials recovered below the stūpas at Amaravati (Rea 1908-09:36, 90-91) influenced the Buddhist stūpa builders and whether the building of such monuments during the Early Historic period was the continuation of
a Proto Historic cult tradition, but within a different religious milieu.¹ In this sense one could speak of physical similarity between these two groups of monuments which in turn made the psychological incorporation easier and smoother devoid of any fundamental contradictions in the process of adaptation from the system of beliefs to another.

On the basis of archaeological evidence it may be inferred that certain 'special burials' existed in south east India (supra pp. 156-157), perhaps erected to the memory of chieftains who were considered to be the (greatmen) within their communities. Investigations also revealed that very often (with a few exceptions), habitation sites coincide with (ritualistic ?) burial grounds, where the former may have housed either tribal or clan groups. It is important to remember that in all probability the latter phase of the Proto Historic period may have coincided with the emergence of more advanced chiefdoms over petty chieftaincies. Archaeological investigations also indicate that in Andhra, south India and Sri Lanka the earliest Buddhist monuments are located in the vicinity of Megalithic/BRW sites. The earliest stūpas in Andhra of the early Brahmi inscriptions bearing cave sites in Sri Lanka often show a locational pattern coinciding with the Megalithic-BRW sites in the nuclear areas and also in the peripheral areas (Seneviratne 1984:251-253).

¹. Urn burials were also recovered beneath the stūpas at Yelleswaram (Khan 1963:4-5). This site however cannot be investigated any further as it is submerged in the Nagarjunasagar.
Therefore the stūpas, the symbolic representation of the 'great being' the Mahāpuruṣa i.e. the Buddha, were located at such places housing semi-tribal/clan groups, where people could conveniently pay homage to their ancestors. It is significant that in the Śilappadikāram, the term perumakan is also used for the Buddhist/Jaina arahant. In the earliest phase specially in Andhra, the clan heads/chiefs (who apparently followed their metropolitan masters) or those in the other two Macro regions had no strong reason to perpetuate the megalithic burial practice perhaps because of three basic factors, that the northern religious (especially Buddhism and Jainism) gave no place to ancestor worship. The tumulus and other votive monuments commemorating the "Mahāpuruṣa" were identified more and more as a privilege and the symbolic representation of the Buddha/Mahāvīra and certain learned sages of the order and gradually included even the political elite and lastly, the disintegration of the tribal structure, at least in the nuclear areas, naturally reduced the functional value of ancestor worship as a crucial factor to sustaining and perpetuating its ideological basis. Given such a situation, physically and psychologically it was not difficult to transfer to the stūpa whatever form of veneration was offered to the megalithic monuments with the stūpa enshrining the saririka and paribhogika dhatu which also symbolized the Buddha and his creed.

For those who accepted/followed the Buddhist creed, this transfer apparently did not represent any conflict between beliefs or cults. The doctrine of kamma and punabhava in fact made this
transfer of belief/faith from one set of religious symbols to another extremely smooth. The phenomena of life after death which remained a mystery, and hence was feared, was now given a rationalized philosophical content and basis by these two aspects. The purya and papākamma were introduced as the mechanisms regulating the flow of life into the next birth (bhava) having various stages of pleasant or unpleasant existence. The total spectrum of organic elements of different plains of existence (bhava lōka) assigned with a respective functional position e.g. manugya lōka, dēva lōka, pēta lōka etc., where incorporated and given a hierarchical status within the Buddhist universal system and cosmogony. For those who embraced the creed, this ideological content provided an even closer and more cognate relationship between the present world and the next. By way of adhering to the prescribed acts of merit (kusāla or purya kamma) such as making donations and endowments (dāna) to the Buddhist establishment in the name of the family or the extended family for the living and the dead, it was now possible for them to perceive the world beyond in more concrete terms which in turn made the 'links' with the departed more real. It may not be a total coincidence that the chaityakas (the Buddhist sect that gave prominence to chaitya (worship) had their primary base at Dhānyakaṭaka. The Mahāstūpa at Amaravati in fact is called 'Cetikeyanam Mahācetiya'. (Sivaramamurti 1977:283–84:No.51).

Monumental structures commemorating great kings were not exclusively restricted to enshrining the relics of the Buddha.
Such monuments were also constructed in memory of senior members of the Order who were venerated by the local community and also in memory of higher chieftains or kings. Such monuments commemorating the Buddha's Aggasāvakas (Sāriputta and Moggallana) were built at Sanchi. The Mahāvamsa (xx. 45-46, 53) and the early Brahmi inscriptions of Sri Lanka (Paranavitana, 1970: No. 468) note the existence of the stūpas of Mahinda and Sanghamitta. Similarly, the Mahāvamsa also records the construction of monuments over the ashes of Elāra (xxv. 71-74).

It is interesting that the relics of the Queen mother and also those of the chief queen of king Kanittatissa (A.D. 164-192), were found in inscribed caskets from the southern sector of Abhayagiri stūpa (EN 1974: 13.1-2). The Sangam texts describe monumental shrines of various sizes built of burnt brick at Puhār built in memory of saints, kings and their wives (vide Sirinivasan 1946: 14).

The spread of the above mentioned transfer of veneration did not have an even pattern in the Primary Region. Though the megalithic practice was apparently discontinued at an early date in the lower Krishna valley (c. 3rd Century B.C.), Sangam sources confirm the existence of different types of megalithic burials in the lower Kaveri valley even during the 1st Century A.D. (Sirinivasan 1946: 9). Ethnographic studies establish that culturally backward communities in the peripheral areas continued such burial practice centuries after they were discontinued in the nuclear areas. Similarly, in Sri Lanka, megalithic practice may have persisted in the post 3rd Century B.C. period in the peripheral hills. We may therefore infer that in the nuclear areas at least
a gradual weaning away of the megalithic practice had already commenced in the post 2nd/1st Century B.C.

In our opinion, the weaning of the megalithic practice in the nuclear areas, cannot be exclusively attributed to the introduction of the northern religions. The decline of the megalithic practice does not witness a simultaneous disappearance of the veneration of the dead and the belief in a life after death. What really took place was that these concepts now came to be represented in a novel symbolic form. We are inclined to believe that there is an apparent coincidence between the decline of the megalithic monuments and the emergence of the cult of commemorative/memorial stones in south east India, more specifically in southern Andhra as well as in central and northern Tamilnadu. In this sense it may not be incorrect to assume that the disintegration of the tribal structure contributed to a considerable extent in establishing a change in the 'representative form' of the cult practices associated with the original tribal ideology.

In attempting to resolve this situation in archaeological as well as in socio-economic terms we have to emphasize that an expansion of the agrarian base in the nuclear areas resulted in the establishment of advance chiefdoms, in the decline of the lineage-based societies and in the structural change in the emergence of labour.

The earlier linear-based society not only found the veneration of the dead (represented in the form of megalithic burials) a convenient galvanizing factor but such societies also possessed the
capacity to mobilize necessary labour and surplus time to execute the building of such monuments. The form of labour required for such tasks was provided by the concerted action by the extended kin groups or even by the tribe. However, the demands made by the new economic situation i.e. full time specialization in agriculture and craft production and the circulation of a regular surplus, would have undermined the traditional division of labour as well as its sustaining institutional structure at least in the nuclear areas. However, this situation coincided with the emergence of advanced chiefdoms and a gradual regulation of labour, production and distribution by a ruling elite. It was precisely this elite which formed the initial or the immediate group followers of the northern religions at least in the lower Krishna valley and in Sri Lanka. Therefore, not only did the existing social fabric begin to disintegrate, even the form of labour prevalent in such societies began to change, which in turn made the raising of memorials (megaliths) for the purpose of ancestor worship increasingly difficult. In the absence of communal labour these societies possessed neither the time nor the labour to construct elaborate megalithic burials. Describing the creator of the urn (for the purpose of burial), it is interesting that the Sangam texts speak only of the potter i.e. the full time specialist/craftsman (Puram 228, 256). It may be noted that the urn burials continued in the nuclear areas of Tamilnadu until the early Christian era, probably due to the sheer convenience of their construction.

Those who decided to adhere to the north Indian religions, the solution for this was found in two ways. One was the
transferring of their centre of veneration to the Buddhist/Jaina chetiya/stūpa including a host of other minor votive monuments viz. vajrāsana, sacred tree, śripāda to name a few. The second was the building of stūpas, monasteries, minor votive objects, caves, steps, pillars, etc. These creations required specialized labour, more advanced skills and also full time labour. In the early phase only the ruling elite may have possessed the capacity to construct such monumental structures. If we consider the early inscriptions of south east India to be representative of the cross section of the social base of early Buddhism, then a majority of such donations came from the urbanized affluent sections of the Early Historic society. Therefore, only a section of this society at the upper level who possessed the capacity in terms of wealth and power to mobilize resources and labour to extend such material contributions to the new religion. At the lower level, especially a large section of the population in the rural and peripheral areas, those who were not followers to the new ideological stream, did not possess the means to erect elaborate monumental buildings for the dead, had to evolve alternate cult symbols requiring less time, labour and resources. The emergence of the memorial stones may be viewed within the above context.

The development of the nādukal, chhāyasthambhā (memorial stones), vīrakal (hero stones) and mastikkal (sati stones) was subsequent but essentially an extension and an integral part of the same process i.e. veneration of the dead and the belief in a life after death.¹

¹. Pillars associated with some form of cult prevailed in north India in the pre-Asokan period and were apparently integrated to the main stream by Asoka (Irvin 1975-76). The Vedic texts do speak of the yūpas which are represented in the early tribal coins of north India (Allen 1936/1975).
Epigraphical and literary evidence assign a maximum lower date of 2nd/1st Century B.C. for the emergence of such monuments (vide Nagaaswamy 1974). In archaeological terms it is possible to see the evolution of these monuments from the earlier menhir type belonging to the megalithic culture. Perhaps with the exception of some of these memorials in the lower Krishna valley, a larger number of these monuments belonging to the category of virakal erected in memory of heroes who died during cattle raids and other acts of warfare. However, Sangam texts show that masatikkal were not unknown in south India (Sirinivasan 1946; 1958-59).

Such memorial stones were located along the wayside decorated with peacock feather, garlands and flowers or at junctions and under mara (Ficus religiosa) trees (Aham 67:5-10; Puram 232, 264). People venerated these monuments by offering food (Puram 329) and by paying homage to them (Tel. Porul. 60). Often a cloth was set above the virakal as a hood (Puram 260:27-28) and the deceased persons weapons were placed against or around the stone (Aham 365).

1. A variety of memorial stones around Bombay (11th Century A.D.) were erected to the memory of those who lost their lives at sea (Chandra 1977:222-23).

2. A unique plaque representing a lady reclining against a ladder (or stretcher) surrounded by fire at the four corners, was uncovered at Nagarjunakonda (Sarkar et Misra 1972:25-26; 71-72). This may either represent sati or merely an event of cremation at the 'burning ghat'. The open ladder like coffin is described as kal kali kattil in the Sangam texts (Puram 286.4).

3. Spears driven to the ground around urn bruials were recovered from the Tambapanni valley and in Pudukottai area.
Therefore, the emergence of these monuments in the post 2nd Century B.C. period, as the representative form of a cult practice associated with the dead, seems to have been a functional adjustment for a popular expression at the mass level. In terms of labour and resources involved, it was certainly more convenient and a less expensive operation than the erecting of megalithic tombs or Buddhist/Jaina stūpas.¹

The ease with which this cult operated at the popular level is seen by the fact that at times the dolmans of the earlier megalithic culture were converted into hero shrines and were engraved with figures and inscriptions.² These were often dedicated to a local chief or hero who was often assimilated to the host of minor deities in the Hindu pantheon (ARADSC 1909-10:10; 1912-13:42-43; 57, 65-66; 1915:29 plate (i) b, (ii) a; also Whitehead 1921). Even the concept of divinity actually residing in the stone was gradually transferred to the nagukal (Hart op. cit. 26). This speaks for its simplicity and adaptability as a popular cult at the mass level.

At the more cosmopolitan urban centres e.g. Nagarjunakonda, such memorial stones were known as chhāyastambha, and were apparently devoid of any associated cult practice and seems to have been purely ceremonial in character. Twenty two such pillars were

¹ The six stages of the virkal: selection of the stone, ceremony associated with chiselling, the ceremonial bathing of the stone, the erection of the stone, engraving hero's name and deeds, homage to the stone (Tol. Porul. 60).

² The sanctum (tali) in the Pallava and Cola temples apparently evolved from the rock cut tombs and dolmens of the earlier Megalithic culture (Sirinivasan 1946:10-11; 1958-59:5-6; also Cornelius 1956-57:13-20).
recovered from Nagarjunakonda (Sarkar et Misra 1972:43).
The pillar erected to the memory of the kulahaka chief Chāmtapula, the hati-gahaka, has been dated to 275/285 A.D. (Sarkar 1974:96). In addition, considering the social groups associated with these pillars, some degree of prestige was also attached to these monuments. Such pillars were erected to the memory of the royalty, senāpati, Mahātalavara, a religious personage, a foreman of artisans (āvesanika) and a soldier from an upper class background (Sarkar op. cit. 1974:93-97; supra pp. 309-310). We have already noted the coincidence of some of the localities having ohbhāyasthaṁbe at Nagarjunakonda with the Proto Historic megalithic site in this valley (supra pp. 309-310).

Communities in south east India occupied different environmental zones and adhered to various subsistence patterns during the Proto Historic period. Such communities be it hunter-gathers, pastoralists, pastoral cum agriculturists, fisher folk - developed a link between themselves and the environment sustaining their livelihood. There was then a strong bond established between man and the natural order. The natural order not only accounted for the forces of nature but also the animal and plant life organically linked to the community, territory, environment and the subsistence pattern i.e. the ecology. The logical development of this situation was the personification of natural phenomena where the 'spirits' representing such aspects became objects of ritual attitude, which in turn made the 'ritual relationship.

1. The natural order enters into and becomes a part of the social order. The seasonal changes that control the rhythm of life,
hills, rocks, rivers, pools, lakes, trees, forests, the ocean, etc., as well as certain species of fauna came to be associated with 'spirits' as well as totem symbols by such Pre and Proto Historic communities. ¹ Elaborating upon the latter, Levi Strauss states that totemism covers only cases where there is an identification of human beings with plants/animals or the designation of groups based on kinship, done with the aid of animal or vegetable terms (1973:79). Therefore, these forces were vital to the existence and the perpetuation of a wider social structure which was cemented by the kinship system. Strauss however draws an implicit distinction between the totemic relationship and the guardian spirit (ibid. 88).

If totemism is essentially linked to a strong tribal structure, then it is not surprising that such traits have disintegrated at a relatively early date especially in the lower Krishna valley when this particular area moved out tribalism and then rapidly underwent a process of acculturation to the Indo-

Cont’d ... f.n. from p.548 the animals and plants that are used for food or other purposes, these enter into and become an essential part of the social life, the social order (Radcliff-Brown, op. cit. 130).

1. Radcliff-Brown enumerates this linkage in the following manner: (The Australian aborigines) carry out these rites at particular spots which are called 'totem centres'. While each centre is associated with one or more of the dawn beings, each centre has its own myth. The totem centre, myth and rites connected belong to the local group that owns the territory. Each totem centre is thought of as containing, in a rock or a tree or a pool of water what we may perhaps call the life spirit or life force of the totem species. The totem centre is therefore known as the 'home' or the dwelling place of the species. The rites performed here can be called a religious conception where the concept of man's place in the universe is indicated, as man is dependent upon what we call universe (ibid. 166-68; Jung 1971: 120-22; 263; Ferreira 1965).
Aryan culture. Though the sources are not too helpful in the
case of Andhra, considering the social matrix of the southern
Deccan and south India to be largely a homogenous one, aspects of
totemism that are somewhat better recorded in the Sangam texts
may have had their parallel forms among the Proto Historic
communities of the lower Krishna valley. Ethnographic studies
conducted in this region also indicate that, at present, several
backward tribes in the Krishna valley and in its periphery
venerate totem symbols (for a collected documentation see
Satyanarayan 1975: Chap. II; Ferreira 1965).1

The Sangam texts corroborated by other archaeological
evidence enables us to have a more clear idea about the floral and
faunal species that were associated with Proto Historic communities
south of the Krishna valley, or the traditional Tamilaham. The
sources indicate that such totem symbols were associated with
backward tribes and were also continued by certain advanced
communities as emblems of identity i.e. ensign. Scholars are of
the opinion that the identification of tribal groups with certain
species of flora and fauna, has a longer history extending before
the Sangam period (Kailasapathy 1968:189-190).

We have already referred to ritual cults associated with
cattle and the horse in Pre and Proto Historic communities in Macro
Zone I and II. These cults had a strong relationship to the
economy and the associated social structure of that time.

1. Anita Ray observes that in the narrative art of the lower
Krishna valley, flora and fauna are less represented in its
sculpture than those in northern and western India (1971:311).
Similarly, it is not possible that Eimalai (Sanskrit Mūgakaparvata) may have been associated with a community that had the rat as their totem (*vide* Narayanan 1977:58-65). An inscription from Bhattiprolu mentions a Shiha gothi (Simha gosthi) (Buhler 1894:328). We have already suggested that the lion probably represented prosperity. One cannot however rule out the totemistic affiliation of such a symbol as the puga or the gōthi organization in this region more often had its origins in a pre-existing clan or tribal group (for a study of the lion symbol and its identity with a community and subsequently the total geo-physical area covered by a people who shared a common culture, (*vide* Gunawardena 1984:1-53). Similarly, the representation of the fish by the Pāṇḍyas and the tiger by the Gōlas may have had some deeper significance extending to a pre-existing period than a mere royal ensign. In Sri Lanka, there is positive evidence for the use of the fish symbol (as the emblem) of an elite lineage group in the south east quarter of the island (supra pp. 431-3).

The conch shell may have been a significant symbol of veneration as well as a totem symbol. In Chapters I and II we have described the association between the conch shell/pearl with the Paratavar tribe, in an economic sense. We also find conch shells in association with certain neolithic-chalcolithic burials of the southern Deccan and Iron Age burials of south India. Today though the Paravars (Paravara) consider the conch shell as a significant token of luck, in all probability during the remote past
they may have used it as a totem symbol. To this day we find that septs of certain tribes in the southern and eastern Deccan venerating the chank as their totem symbol (Hornell 1914:149-50; Thurston 1909: vii.340).

The nāga is one of the most common and dominant figures featured in the sculptural representations (Buddhist or non-Buddhist) of the Indian sub-continent. It is depicted in its natural form or as a semi-human/divine being. In the Buddhist sculptural art, the nāga is invariably represented as a subordinate but a devotee of the creed.

The early inscriptions of Andhra and Sri Lanka carry the term nāga or nāga as a personal name. It is not clear to what extent Naga or Naga were considered as personal names representing a pre-existing totem symbol or other economic activity (supra pp.444-45). In any event, the nāga worship one of the most widespread beliefs (in time and space) throughout the Indian sub-continent. The Sanskrit term nāga may be translated as snake as well as elephant and in the Vedic context its application was made in reference to both creatures (Macdonell et Keith 1958:1.440). The definite application of nāga to the snake occurs in the Sūtra and in the Epic period (ibid. 440; Vogel 1926:1-91). During each epoch, (Brahmin and Buddhist) texts take a different attitude towards the nāga. The Sūtra and the Epic literature represent the nāgas as powerful enemies and depict direct confrontations (ibid.). The early Buddhist texts, however, have a more sympathetic attitude towards the nāgas, though they are essentially placed as creatures subordinate
and as followers of the Buddha (ibid. 93-130). The Jātakas represent the nāgas as weak, backward creatures often mocked at by society (ibid. 132-154). In the same vein, the early Pali texts of Sri Lanka are definitely more biased towards the nāgas vis a vis the Yakkhas or the Rāgāsas (vide Perera 1974:132-33; Gunawardena 1976:53-62).

Recent research conducted on the nāgas (Maloney 1968:234-246, 253) confirm that coastal communities involved in oceanic activity and in commercial ventures probably adhered to the cult of the snake, which is associated with water as well as prosperity. It is possible that the process of acculturation to the Great Tradition may have integrated this group to the main cultural stream and subordinated their cult practice to the dominant ideology.

It is not out of context to take up the affiliation of floral symbols (with particular communities) which were treated a totem identity as well as a deity. For instance the kaḷāmbu tree (uvaria longifolia) was treated as the totem as well as the deity viz, its association with Murukan (Aham 138.11; 347.4; Pari 8.126). It was also the sacred tree of the kaḷāmba tribe and was once cut down by the Cēra (Aham 98.16; 127.4). Similarly, the Tontai tree (cocvinea indica) was the tutelary tree of the Tōndiyar/Tondaimān (Tiraiyar), who were located in Tōndainēdu and had their

1. The synthesis and the subordination of the nāga to the Buddhist pantheon is best represented in the Primary Region from the sculptural art of Andhra and Sri Lanka (vide Sivaramamurti 1976: 6, 13; 1977:70-73; Wijesekera 1962:163-64). Often the nāga slabs stand as protective stones associated with a stūpa. In Andhra, one of the best examples come from Goli (District Guntur) where a seven-headed nāga slab is still found there (Remachandran 1962). The worship of the snake still takes place in south India in the form of nāgakal, some of which contain a simple snake standing, in others, a pair of cobras intertwined, placed in groups under pipal or mīn trees (Dikshitar 1971:58).
sacred hill at Venkaṭam. It is suggested that they were called Tondiyar, either because they wore Audai leaves or because Tondainadu had a good number of Audai trees (Kailasapathy 1968: 128-129). Certain powerful elite families such as the Iksvākus and the Pugiyas seem to have derived their names from floral terms (supra pp. 183-84). It is interesting to note that the palmyrah tree (tālaka) was considered as the sacred tree of the hunters (vyāda) of Pre-Buddhist Sri Lanka (MV. x.89). The venerated kandu (a stump of wood) situated at the manram (common meeting place in the village) during the Sangam period (Paṭṭinar 249), probably embodied the pre-existing concept of divinity associated with a specific tree by the resident community. Cultural studies indicate that tree worship, especially the pipal tree (ficus religiosa) also carried two additional cults viz. fertility cult and the spirit of the dead (Chaudhuri 1943:318-329; Randhawa 1964; Gupta 1965; S.N. Gupta 1971).

In this context, the Sangam texts indicate the interrelationship between communities resident in particular ecological zones and certain flowers (vide Sivathamby 1974:20-35). What is interesting is the amalgamation and the integration of the flower (or the totem symbol) with the community, region, economic activity and finally with a deity. The significance of the flower was so great that each region was often identified after the specific flower assigned to the physical and psychological condition of that region.

It is interesting to take up another Proto Historic belief associated with fertility and flora. On the basis of the evidence from the burials at Nagarjunakonda, it is suggested that, the
### Table No. 27

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Flower for love</th>
<th>Flower for Warfare</th>
<th>Deity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hills</td>
<td>Kuriñchi (Strobilanthus)</td>
<td>Vetti (Iccova Loccinea)</td>
<td>Sëyön (Murukan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasture-land</td>
<td>Nullai (Jasminium Trichotomum)</td>
<td>Vëñchi (Calamus Rostang)</td>
<td>Neyön (Sål)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverine</td>
<td>Marutam (Terminalia Tomentosa)</td>
<td>Ulinäi (Cardiospermum Halicacambum)</td>
<td>Venan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Littoral</td>
<td>Neytal (Nymphae lotus Alpa)</td>
<td>Tumpai (Leucas Aspera)</td>
<td>Varunan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arid land</td>
<td>Pälai (Mismusops Kauki)</td>
<td>Väkai (Abizzia Lebek)</td>
<td>(Goddess) Korevai</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(After Sivathamby 1974:21-22)*

Seasonal movement of the sun was a factor determining the alignment of the cist burial (Subrahmanyam 1975:207). The pit line, according to this hypothesis, is situated in relation to the sun's diurnal motion, where it registers the corresponding inclination when the position of the sun alters between the summer and winter solstices. It is also suggested that the central positions of the pit lines are indicative of the equinoxial conjunctions of the sun, corresponding to autumn and spring seasons. Interestingly, while there was a corresponding profusion of pots of grain with pit lines having a southern inclination, the lines of the north have relatively few pots with grain (*ibid.*). This may also suggest a belief in celestial bodies and the movement of planets (*naksastra*) and its impact upon man and his fortunes. The earliest inscriptions of Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka indicate that the belief in *naksastra* was considered extremely important in the Early Historic
society (Mahadevan 1973:61; Paranavitana 1970:cxxiv). In any event the transition to primarily agricultural societies may have necessitated the use of nāgasthāra which was probably reinforced as a belief with the influence of Brahmanism in the Primary Region.

Aspects of life and the material world that were beyond the control of Pre and Proto Historic communities often manifested as forces attributed with super-human powers. Man communicated with such forces through the veneration of a 'spirit'. Perhaps, one of the most prominent among such spirits was the belief in all sustaining, all perpetuating and generating force. This force was also considered as a source of nourishment and fertility which manifested itself in the cult of the mother-goddess.

In his study on the cult of the mother goddess, Moti Chandra traces its origins to the Pre Aryan period and suggests that it was absorbed into the Aryan fold (1973:2-3). He also traces the gradual evolution of the mother goddess as Śrī or Lakṣmī, the goddess of prosperity and wealth and also her association with Kubēra, the lord of wealth (ibid. 4-30). It is significant that the representations of Lakṣmī or Śrī were not only associated with the Buddhist sites in the Primary Region, but was a symbol essentially identified with the mercantile community (vide Sivaramamurti 1977: 56, 158, 51, 82, 111; PPTI 433; Codrington 1924:26-31).

It is not altogether impossible that while certain representations of the indigenous mother-goddess was depicted in the form of Lakṣmī, the original attributes of the mother goddess
as a cult-being representing fertility may have persisted from the Proto to the Early Historic context. Perhaps the terracotta figurines found at Peddabankur in Period II-A (pre or early Sātavāhana) can be called representations of the modern goddess (IAR 1968-69:1-2). It is evident that the female status containing an Iksvāku inscription (at Nagarjunakonda) having grotesque facial features and displaying a prominent śūni, taken along with the contents of the inscription, is a representation of the mother-goddess and the associated fertility cult (Narasimhaswami 1952: 137-139). Similar figurines made of terracotta have been unearthed, both, at Yelleshwaram and at Nagarjunakonda (Khan 1963: 46 pl. xix; Sarkar et Misra 1972: 26). The location of the grotesque female statue of Nagarjunakonda in the vicinity of Brahmanical ritual sites may suggest that the indigenous fertility cult was absorbed to the Great Tradition where it coincided with the 'creator' i.e. the Brahma.¹ The occurrence of terracotta figurines (often displaying exaggerated features of the female anatomy) near irrigation tanks in the Dry Zone of Sri Lanka may point to the existence of a fertility cult associated with the village communities of the early Christian era.

¹ To this day, the worship of the mother goddess (amma) with different representative forms for different aspects, is one of the strongest beliefs among the rural and jungle tribal folk of Andhra (Whitehead 1921; Furer-Haimendorf 1943; 1948).
The remains of Buddhist sculptural art in the Krishna-Godavari valley may shed further light upon 'spirits' as a form of belief in this region. These spirits in the sculptures take the form of vanadevatas, nadidevatas and also as yakṣas, nāgas and other non-human beings. Such forms and symbols are very much present at sites such as Pauni (Deo et al. 1972:45-56), Amaravati (Sivaramamurti 1977:66-82, and Goli (Ramachandran 1962). What was the significance of such depictions and the link such symbolic representations have within the Early Historic cultural phase? As Amita Ray argues, to the early Buddhist establishment, narrative and representational art was not an instrument to elaborate doctrinal niceties but was an attempt to record myths and legends of early Buddhism, through which the sangha established a means of communication with the common folk. Such a situation was possible because, already the Buddhist themes had interwoven themselves with the existing traditionally popular pre and non-Buddhist themes, images and symbols (Ray 1971:306, 310).

The early Buddhist and Jain texts along with early Buddhist sculptural reliefs therefore indicate, '... the flourishing existence particularly in middle and eastern India, of a primitive religion.

3. Amita Ray points out that the sculpture of lower Krishna valley have less floral and floral representations (1976:311). She also suggests that in the later sculptures of Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda, the prominent representation of the multitudes that crowd the scenes hardly permits the representation of nature. The cosmopolitan urban character achieved by this region during the post 1st Century B.C. period did not require a continuation of the former cult in the representative art. The very fact that nature is relatively under-played and only the dramatic events of the themes are being depicted points to an educated population relatively familiar with the thematic representation (1965:35).
which indulged in the worship of symbols as the caitya (caitya) that was either a holy tree or groves of trees (rukhamaciya, vanacetiya, aramaetiya, etc.) and not unfrequently these trees were the abode of gods or spirits known as the yaksadavatas, yaksas, etc. (N. Ray 1975:2).

The veneration of such spirits was apparently a popular form of local belief even in the Deccan and also in south India.1 Coomaraswamy argues that, the earliest representations in sculpture of nadi-devatas come from Amaravati (Coomaraswamy 1931:11.70). Sivaramamurti, however, considers the yaksas on fish-tailed animals from the sculptures at Jagasyapetta to be earlier proto-types (Sivaramamurti op. cit. 1977:68).

Apparently there seems to have been particular spirits that were perhaps the deity of a local community. They are often being identified with a particular animal form or tree (clan/tribal totem ?). For instance we have a yaksha figure amongst the Amaravati sculpture associated an inscription engraved with as 'yakha cadamukha vaku nivāsi' (Sivaramamurti op. cit. 1977:82, pl. xvi, fig. 1). The tree depicted in the scene has been identified as the vakula tree (minusopas elongi), the abode (vakanivāsi) of yaksha Cadamukha.2 Similarly, at Pauni, there is the sculpture of a donkey faced (khamamukha) yaksha (Deo et Joshi 1972:47, pl.xxv:1;

1. Tree and water spirits are very much a part of the cult beliefs in Andhra to this day.

2. Bharhut apparently contains many instances where the names of the yaksas are incised in the pillers (Sivaramamurti op. cit. 81).
Fig. 11:3). In both cases, the yakṣas are associated, in some form or the other, to the stūpa depicted in the scene. It has also been suggested that the elephant headed yakṣa is featured earliest in the sculptures at Amaravati (Coomaraswamy op. cit., pl. 23, fig. 1). The association of a yakkhīṇī by the name Cetiya having magical power to take the form of a mare (CV. x. 53-63) points to the existence of such traditions in Sri Lanka. It is interesting that, in addition to trees, ponds, rocks and other types of natural habitat, the caitya or the abode of the yakṣa is also described as a tankita maṇḍapa, a stone cist, which was used as an altar to make offerings (Coomaraswamy 1928:1.17-20).

The evolution of the Buddhist religion with all these incorporated features may illustrate the success with which the Buddhist sāṅgha amalgamated — though in a subordinate position — the existing popular cult forms in the process of converting the resident community into the Buddhist fold.

II - i

Beginning from a simple overview, we may state that while there are only a few centres in the lower Krishna–Godavari that could definitely boast of a pre-Satavahana phase for their Buddhist antiquities, the Satavahana and Ikṣvāku periods by contrast, have a

1. It has been suggested that the earliest sculptural concept of a figure approximating Ganesa seems to come from Amaravati (ibid. 77. pl. xv. fig. 2). Similarly, in Sri Lanka friezes (that can be attributed to 1st Century B.C. date) are found at Kantaka cetiya (Nihintale) in the form of elephant-headed gana figures (vide Ellawala 1969:159).
larger number of Buddhist monuments to their credit. An approximate line of chronological demarcation therefore may be considered around 100 – 0 B.C. (which coincides with the greater expansion in the commercial and the agrarian base as well as a class society).

However, the above hypothesis requires a certain degree of caution until more extensive archaeological data is available. Firstly, the non-existence of many datable monuments does not rule out the existence of groups consisting of a sangha residing in their grāmadāvāci/armyavāci abodes and also local communities of followers (upāsaka/upāsika) sustaining such priests. Secondly, though a larger number of stūpas and monastic complexes definitely indicate a post 1st Century B.C. construction, more systematic archaeological work is needed at the core and foundations of many of the stūpas. It will then be known whether those attributed with an upper date actually were mere expansions of the already existing smaller monuments of the pre 1st Century B.C. Buddhist communities. Therefore, in assigning an early phase to certain monuments, we have taken into consideration only those Buddhist monuments possessing the maximum of corroborative and concrete evidence.

Archaeological, sculptural and epigraphical evidence positively establish a pre-Christian date for the monuments at Amaravati (Sircar 1963:43; Ghosh 1979; Sarma 1975; Siveramamurti 1977; Burgess 1882/1970), Jaggayapetta (ibid. 108), Kesanapalle (Khan 1969), Bhattiprolu (Buhler 1894:323–29; Rea 1969; Sircar ...

Judging by the evidence related to the above mentioned sites, Buddhist monks obviously came into contact with groups, that had achieved some form of socio-economic development, who had established some degree of commercial contact with the northern merchants and who also established political and economic links with metropolitan state of the Mauryas.1

A closer analysis of the location of some of the sites may provide us with clues as to the introduction of Buddhism and its relation to the existing settlements. While all these sites contain a stūpa, the invariable occurrence of a BRW site in its vicinity (some even fortified) and the location of almost all these sites on an important commercial route linking them with each other and with the extended regions, are predominant features. Amaravati-Dhanyakadaka, Pauni, Dhulikatta, indicate such features (supra Chap. I ). Dhulikatta (29-30 miles from Karimnagar) has its stūpa-vihāra complex at the junction of two perennial nullahs (Ramesan 1978:14). The fortified BRW habitation site of Peddabankur is located in the vicinity of Dhulikatta (IAR 1968-69:1-2; 1971-72:2-3) and its Period I is assigned to a pre-Mauryan

1. It may be difficult to exclusively credit only the Buddhist monks as the carriers of the northern social ideologies. Apart from Jaina Brahmin, Ājivika and other mendicants, merchants themselves may have been carriers of such ideas.
date. The earliest phase of the stūpa seems to have been during the latter half of the 3rd Century B.C. which was subsequently enlarged in the early 2nd Century B.C. An inscription from the second phase of the stūpa has been dated c. 175 B.C. (Ramesan op. cit.)

Excavations at Pauni (82 km. S.E. of Nagpur) revealed the stūpa which in its earliest phase has BRW-NBPW extending perhaps to a pre-Mauryan period (Deo et Joshi 1972:16, 21, 25, 60-62). The BRW habitation site at Hardolala Tekadi is located one mile east of Pauni.

The most recent excavations at the Mahāstūpa of Amaravati revealed BRW-NBPW including other corroborative evidence indicating at least a pre-Asokan date for the earliest phase of the stūpa (Sarma 1975:62, 65, pl. 1). This calls for a revision of the earlier view of the chronology of Mahāstūpa.

Dhulikatta (near Peddabankur), Pauni and Amaravati indicate that they were centred upon primary routes linking the lower Krishna valley with the Gangetic plain, western and southern India. Studies on trade routes of this region, highlight the significance of these sites (Dubreuil in Subramanian 1932:v-viii; Chatterjee 1976:109-118). While the northern and southern Deccan culture complexes were linked with each other even during the early Proto Historic period (vide Chapter II), at least from the 7th/6th Century B.C. northern Deccan had established some form of regular contact with the Indo-Gangetic plains (Srivastava 1968:82 ff.).

Most probably the pupils of Davari moved north to meet the Buddha along this route. It is possible that some of them who
were converted by the Buddha, returned to Asmaka to establish the first Buddhist nucleus in the Pratiṣṭhāna area (Gokhale 1976: 34). If the identification of Asmaka country is accepted viz. the area at present covered by Nanded - Nisamabad and Aurangabad (Sircar 1960:154-55), then it is not surprising that Dhulikatta located in this area should possess an early Buddhist establishment associated with a fortified BRW habitation site at Peddabankur, even during the pre-Mauryan period.

Although the rest of the sites listed above (supra pp.561-562) may have less evidence for a Mauryan date, they can certainly be dated to the pre 1st Century B.C. period. Therefore, the locational pattern even of such sites could be valuable to the study on the social base of early Buddhism.

Jaggayapetta, north of Amaravati on the opposite bank, connects with the route linking Maharashtra and the Krishna valley, moving in a north-west direction. Similarly, Gumivada, Chantasala and Bhattiprolu are located on the route extending along the Krishna valley linking it with the coast. This route cut across the Amaravati-Dhānyakaṭaka area and moved westward via Kesana palli towards the Raichur doab and Brahmagiri. Salihundam which is situated in north-east Andhra was proximate to the delta of the Mahanadi (primary nucleus of Kalinga), consequently linked also with the Gangetic delta. Guntupalli is located on the lower Godavari and it was connected with the routes of the lower Krishna along the eastern fringe from Salihundam and also the route extending southward from Vidharba.
The apparent linkage of these sites with each other and also with the extended areas through important land routes, indicates not only the areas through which Buddhist monks made their entry into these regions perhaps in the company of merchants (in their caravans or ships), but also the direction of their movement towards the communities in southern Deccan, and the introduction of a new social doctrine together with dynamic cultural elements.

II - ii

It is evident that in all three Macro Zones, the political elite may be called one of the earliest indigenous groups to follow Buddhism. However, each Macro Zone indicates characteristics peculiar to each region.

To take up Andhra first, from senagopa Mudukutala or Pakotaka senapati Dharaka down to Vijaya Sātskarni, patronage from this group, i.e. political elite, remained consistent, with the exception of the Ikavakus, where their menfolk are somehow not associated with endowments to the saṅgha. During the earliest phase it is clear that the indigenous political elite in the core area accepted Buddhism as an unavoidable situation related to their process of integration to the Great Tradition via the metropolitan state hegemony and through their economic interaction with aryанизed long distance traders. An interesting aspect about Andhra is, the earliest political elite who accepted Buddhism can be identified as proto-urban dwellers. The donations of Mudukutala and Dharaka are good examples. What is even more interesting is that they yet
maintained their clan identity e.g. Pakotaka (vide Table No. 3). Thus we may conclude that clan chieftains and their clan groups, who resided at the nīgama or at adjacent gāma or ur settlements, formed the original resident group of upāsaka – upāsika in Andhra (vide Table No. 3). This aspect is brought out best in the Bhattiprolu inscriptions, from a slightly later context. In this case, the pāja who headed the production-distribution centre was also the chief patron who initiated various endowments to the stūpa via the units of production, which had not lost their kin basis in absolute terms (vide Table No. 17).

It is within this context that the monumental structure came to have a special bearing on political authority. For instance, in Andhra, almost all Buddhist sites, with a pre-Christian date, have a stūpa in the vicinity of the BRW site. Such examples can be quoted from Amaravati Pauni, Dhulikatta (vide Sarma 1975; Ramesan 1978:14; IAR 1968-69:1-2; Deo et Joshi 1972:16, 21, 25, 60-62). We have already emphasised the ritual significance of the stūpa in terms of its symbolic representation, viz. as a method of communicating with the departed and as a monument for 'great men'.

It appears that this ritual symbolism had other functional aspects as well. The inscriptions of Amaravati and Bhattiprolu strongly hint at a clan situation. We may therefore infer that each site or several sites had a clan chieftain. With the introduction of the stūpa (funerary monument to be venerated) and the Bōdi tree i.e. pipal tree or ficus religiosa (the ritual tree), usually located next to each other, the community received two new symbolic places for their congregation. As the major patron
of the religious establishment, the chief automatically had his political authority shrouded with spiritual leadership. This situation is very clear in the case of Kubiraka who acted as chief patron of the stūpa and Asokasiri (at Salihundam) who took on the epithet Dharma rāja. The following Chart (No. 7) clearly indicates that parallel institutions gradually evolved to give a new meaning to pre-existing symbols. During the 1st Cent. B.C. this situation probably prevailed at micro centres having stūpa sites. The extension of authority along the settlement and production hierarchy provided an excellent path for power to percolate in a vertical direction to the primary producer in the urban and semi-urban areas.

Chart No. 7

'special burial' ← chief → stūpa/Bodhi tree

clan

burials ← community → place of congregation

hero/ancestor worship

political authority → territory ← chief patron/aryanization

primary producer → economy ← production-distribution
In a broader context, the *stūpa-bōdi* symbols, played a more complex role. The best example can be found at Amaravati. The *stūpa* at Amaravati probably had pre Aśokan origins and may have been the earliest Buddhist monument in the lower Krishna valley. There is every possibility that during the pre metropolitan state hegemony, the visiting long distance traders may have founded this place of worship opposite Dhānyakaṭaka. With the Mauryan occupation of this region, the *stūpa* situated near Dhānyakaṭaka (the administrative cum commercial centre), may have acquired greater significance. It not only became the primary ritual centre, but also represented a symbol of acculturation and integration. This is seen by the donations made by the agents of the metropolitan state, indigenous political elite followed by their clan groups, corporate bodies and village units. Thus the actual ritual status gained by this monument came to be reflected in the term *Mahāstūpa*.

The agents of the metropolitan state did not hesitate to derive advantages from this situation. We have already described the mechanism of control they extended down to the household units of production in the core area, via clan chieftains. In this total mechanism, the *stūpa* became the unifying element overlapping political authority, spiritual activity and cultural interaction between the metropolitan state and the local population in this region.
From the post 1st Cent. B.C. up to the Ikṣvāku period, new trends developed in relation to the political elite associated with Buddhism. The uniform pattern in the nuclear area breaks down. All members of the political and administrative elite were necessarily not followers of Buddhism. From royalty we come across only Aila Maḍavi and a rāja mentioned in the Alluru inscription (ARASIE 1923-24:71; Gopalachari 1976:93-95) and Vijaya Sātakarṇi from a Nagarjunakonda inscription (Sarkar 1965-66: 273-274; IAR 1961-62:72) making direct donations to the Buddhist establishments. Though we are uncertain about Buddhist affiliations of the later Sātavāhanas, they are known to have performed Vedic rituals. This period is also important for another reason. The Alluru inscription for the first time records endowments associated with the donation of land and labour to monastic establishments in eastern Andhra. This was not only a change from the earlier small scale donations, but was also to set the pattern for
the subsequent period.

In the case of the bureaucracy at the upper level, a similar pattern can be found during the Satavahana period. We come across one Mahātalavara, two amatyas and one uparaka associated with direct donations (ARASIE 1923-24:71; Sastri 1937-38:256-260; I925-26:216-319; Chanda 1919-20:269 No. 33). Inscriptions from the same period mention several other military and civil administrators viz. Mahātalavara (IAR 1974-75:5), rāstrapāla (Ramachandran 1949-50:133-137), bhūjaka (ARADSC 1910-II:13), Mahāsenāpati (Sukthankar 1917-18:153-155) and squāka (ibid.), who are not associated with Buddhist establishments.

The gradual shift of the upper political and administrative groups to non-Buddhist creeds is most evident during the Ikavāku period. Unlike their womenfolk (vide Table No. 27), the male members of the royal household were not involved in making direct donations to Buddhist establishments. On the contrary, they performed Vedic rituals, patronized Brahmans, worshipped Brahmin deities and other local deities assimilated to the Hindu pantheon (supra pp.33-45). Though Rama Rao attempted to see a Buddhist conversion of Vīrapurisadata on the basis of a sculpture at Nagarjunakonda representing an individual trampling a linga protected by a cobrahood (1971:67), there is no supplementary evidence to support this hypothesis.

All royal ladies were not supporters of the Buddhist establishments either. They extended their charity to non-Buddhist establishments as well. For example, royal ladies made donations and endowments to Puṣpabhadrāsvāmi (Sircar et Krishnan 1961-62:17-22). The queen of Ehvala Cāntāmūla made another dedication to the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mahātalavari Cāntasiri</td>
<td>Sister of Cāntamūla I. Paternal aunt and mother-in-law of Virapurisadata.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wife of Ms/Mr Vāsiṭhiputa Kamādasiri of the Pukiyas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mother of Ms/Mt Viṣṇusiri.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mahātalavari Adari Cātasiri</td>
<td>Daughter of Cāntamūla I. Sister of Vīrapurisadata.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wife of Ms/Mt/Mā Khamādasiva-khamānaka of the Dhanakas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mother of Ehvula Cāntamūla.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wife of Maharāja of Banavāsa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
mother goddess at the yakṣa temple (Narasimhaswami 1952:137-139). This lady, (Mahādevī kupaṇasåri), joined her son Mahāraṣjakumāra (Hāritiputa.Virāpurisadatta (son of Ehvula Gaṃṭamūla) in making this permanent endowment, which included the village of Puṇḍokedam.

The pattern was not different in the case of the upper administrative group, mainly consisting of the Mahātalavaras, who carried the highest administrative titles and often had matrimonial alliances with royalty. In this case too, the males do not feature in association with donations made to the Buddhist establishments. Their women folk (often members of the royal family) made donations to the Buddhist Sangha (Table No.18). Some of them (e.g. Gūlachātasaṁriñkā of the Kulahaka family), who were not related to the royal family, associated themselves with royalty in making donations (Vogel 1929-30:19, B 5). In making donations, the women of this group seems to associate their partners only by sharing the merit (puṇyānumādaṇā) with both houses, in this world as well as in the next. The following stanza "... apano ubhaya kulasa atichhitam anāgatam vaṭamānakānām parinametanam ubhaya loka hita sukha āvahathanāya ..." (ibid. 17) is more or less repeated in their inscriptions.

There are at least two instances where male members of this group made direct endowments to non-Buddhist religious establishments. The grandson of senāpati Anikki, the Mahātalavara Āliseri who is introduced as a devout worshipper of Kārtikeya, erected a pāsāda for Sarvadevādhivāsa (Śiva ?) at Nagarjunakonda during the reign of Ehvula Chāmātula (Chhabra 1959-60:147-148). During the so-called Abhira interregnum, Mahāsānika-Mahātalavara-Mahādaṃdanāyaśaka Śivaśēpa of the Pēribiṣēha clan joined with (Saka) royalty of Avanti and Vanvāsa in a series of donations to the temple of the Ashtabu-
This particular inscription was composed by an amāya named Tisya-śarma who identifies himself as a person of the Bhāradvaja gōtra. A closer look at the lineage of Mahādevi Kupāṇasiri who joined the royal family by marrying Ehvula Chāmtamūla, may indicate a Brahmin background (vide table No. 5). Her grandfather is called Sesabhamāguruka (i.e. Sesa-brahma-guruka) and Kupāṇasiri joined her son in a donation to the temple of Puṣhpabhadraswāmin, which is supposed to be another name for Śiva (Sircar et Krishnan I961-62:I7-I8).

It is indeed curious that the male members belonging to the political and administrative elite do not link themselves with the Buddhist establishments. The only plausible explanation we can put forward is the duality of 'social identity' that may have prevailed during this period.

We have earlier described that following the Mauryas, the Sātavāhanas themselves undermined the existence of local chieftaincies as independent entities. They were either eliminated or absorbed into the Sātavāhana state. The decline of clan-based groups is evident in the post Ist Cent. B.C. period as we do not come across common donations made by such groups. The society now had organized itself within a class hierarchy in relation to the dominant mode of production. In this society, not only did the Sātavāhana administration spread at all levels, this period also witnessed the integration of new regions and new communities within the state. Thus there was a smooth functioning of the downward movement of authority and an upward movement of surplus production (infra pp. 27&).
Under these new conditions the political elite had to acquire new symbols of authority and legitimation. The practices initiated at the centre by the royal court, was conveniently followed by his vassals, especially the Mahātalavāras particularly during the Ikṣvāku period. Under these circumstances by taking up a series of titles and epithets (more imposing than rāja), the political elite not only reassessed their social position vis-à-vis the primary producers, but also in relation to other sections immediately below them in the socio-political hierarchy. Therefore, to perpetuate this situation not only was 'power' required, but also 'sanction' to enforce and legitimize the use of that power became vital. The importance of the lineage (based on varṇa-dharma and the ritual birth) confirming the right to perpetuate hereditary succession became the elements of sanction utilized by the ruling class to cultivate exclusiveness. The assigning of social position to each status group through ritual jāti basis coincided with the class basis known to this society. In other words, class status was given ritual sanction and identity including cohesiveness.

The successors of the Sātavāhanas pushed this mechanism further and obtained divine sanction or lineage purity by ultimately linking themselves to the divine heroes of the north Indian tradition and by assimilating the local deities and cults of the nuclear area. By adhering to the Brahmanic cults and rituals side by side with the local deities assimilated into the Hindu pantheon, the power groups could link themselves or relate themselves at the psychological level to their subjects i.e. the primary producers. The expansion of agriculture under the Ikṣvākus with the blessings of the Brāhmaṇpriests settled in these areas was the 'spiritual'
mechanism by which the power structure at the upper level was linked to the power base at the lower level. By obtaining a 'second' (ritual) birth the ruling class could legitimize the differentiation within the power structure. While the Brahmanic ideology ritually recognized this process, other rituals and cults (sacrifices etc.) supplemented authority within the group and securing status vis-à-vis other local and neighbouring power groups. Buddhism could not effectively contribute in the same manner to the newly developing political situation. Even if it did provide some legitimization at the doctrinal level for the existence of the political elite (on the basis of past puṇya kamma) it could not relate this to the non-urban groups who according to our study were yet in a relatively backward cultural stage and probably never adhered to the norms of Buddhism.

Taking the above evidence into consideration we cannot completely overrule the fact that even those women belonging to the royal house who heavily patronized Buddhism, may not have had some form of affiliation with the non-Buddhist ideologies. For instance the suffix 'siri' (Sī) is linked to the Lakṣmī cult which seems to have made headway in the Deccan in the post 2nd Cent. B.C. The 'Siri' suffix is invariably linked to the upper social groups, which included the royalty, the upper bureaucracy and certain gahapatī and vapiya and also certain rich individuals who do not mention any rank status. Similarly, the names of the men often carry the suffix Kaṇḍā > Saṇḍa (or Kārtikeya). The cult of Kārtikeya or Saṇḍa (which seems to have assimilated the Murugan of the south) was associated with the Deccan during the same period.
At the upper level, where more mundane requirements such as wealth/prosperity=Lakṣaṇi and power/strength=Skaṇḍa, was needed, it had to be inspired through some cult ideology. The gradual evolution of the Mahāyānists elements in the Krishna valley may have been rather convenient in reconciling such cult practices with the popular Buddhist ideology. This is most explicit in the form of address to the Buddha and deities. Interestingly, we come across the term Ṣaṅkāya used to address the Buddha in a few inscriptions (Burgess 1887:110; Chhabra 1959-60:191) during the Ikṣvāku period. This is a common form of salutation used for Brahmānic deities which was also gradually followed by the Mahāyānists and later by the Tantrayānists. Similarly we find a common form of salutation used for the Buddha extended to the Puṣṭpabhadrāswāmi (Siva). The salutation runs as 'Siddham Namo Bhagavate Mahādevasya Puṇṇabha-draswāminah' (Sircar et Krishnan 1961-62:19). Therefore the Ikṣvāku political elite seems to have certainly maintained or cultivated popular aspects of religions suitable to their own context.

It is also interesting to note that certain Buddhist sects i.e. the sāliyas obtained more preferential treatment from royalty, though the significance of this is not too clear. However the very profusion of Buddhist sites at Nagarjunakonda, which is a situation different to Amaravati, necessarily indicates an attempt to amalgamate the centre of ideological/religious congregation with the centre of political power.

I. Another inscription from Gursala (Guntur district) mentions 'Bhagavate Halaṃpūra sāmi...' (Sastri 1941-42:123-I25). This inscription records the donation of a field (kheta) to the guardian deity of Halaṃpura, during the reign of Sīti Ruḷapurisadata by one Noduka Siri.
As for the lower administration, we come across very few references to them making any donations. An inscription from Amaravati records the donation of a paniyagharika (superintendent of the water houses) during the reign of rama Siri Sivamaka Sada, identified as Siva Siri Sattakarṇi (Sivaramamurti 1977:291 No. 72). If one may call a scribe a member of the lower administration, we then have a solitary instance of a scribe named Cūla Qōma making a donation of a mandapa at Guntupalli probably during the reign of Kharavela (Subrahmanyan 1968:7). The famous II apsidal temple inscription F of Upāsiṣa Bodhisiri (during the reign of Vīrapurisa-data) mentions Kōṭhāgarika (Kōṭhāgarika) Bhada, who was her maternal uncle (Vogel 1929–30:22–23). Though we cannot definitely confirm the religious affiliation of Bhada, considering the general affiliation of the gahapati and the vaniya group to Buddhism, by inference we may assign the same to Bhada. Even from a pre-Christian inscription at Kesana palli we do come across a Bhaṃḍakārika who made a donation to the stūpa there (Khan 1969:14, No. 15). There were however royal servants during the 2nd Cent. A.D. period, who adhered to non-Buddhist creeds, probably cults of indigenous origin. From Velpuru (Guntur District), a mandapa was offered to lord Bhūtāgrāhaka, by a female torch-bearer (disī-dhārika) of Mahārāja Haritiputa Aila Mānasada (Sircar 1957–58:82–90).

In the Ikṣvaku period we however see a differentiation even in relation to the lower administration. We hear of an antahpuramahattarika (a female officer in-charge of the harem) making a

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I. Subrahmanyan identifies Guntupalli with the negama of Pithuda overrun by Kharavela. He also believes that this particular site was originally a Jain centre which was taken over by the Buddhists after the fall of the Kalinga power (op.cit. 5–6).
permanent cash endowment of 100 dināri (deposited with four different guilds) to the temple of Lord Nāgīśvaraswāmī (Sircar 1963: 4-7). Similarly the engraver/scribe who completed the donative record of the Mahāgrāmika - Mahātalsvara - Mahādandānsyaka Śivalopa, the rulers of Avanti and Banavāsi, has very forcefully illustrated his Brahmanic leanings (Sircar 1961-62:204).

Archaeological evidence very clearly indicates this situation.

At Vijayapuri, non Buddhist religious establishments are located on the western site, near the river. The requirement of water for ritualistic purposes or a conscious effort to segregate these centres from the commercial and Buddhist sites may have determined this locational character.

What we have then is a changing pattern from 3rd Cent. B.C. to 3rd Cent. A.D. in relation to political and administrative elite groups in their interaction with the Buddhist establishment. It is possible to state that, in the post 1st Cent. A.D. period, Buddhism lost substantial ground with the decision making groups at the political level. It not only had to contend with other north Indian creeds, especially Brāhmaṇism, at the upper level but also face up to a host of indigenous cults integrated within the Great Tradition at the lower level.

In spite of this, even during the 3rd Cent. A.D. Buddhism sustained its vigour as the most widely patronized creed at urban centres. The continued support it attracted from the women folk of the royal household during the Ikṣvāku period is a case in point. The very concept of monasticism, personalized religious elements

I. "The engraver of the above is Vardhamānaka, of the Sembaka who would not spare even his life in the cause of the Brāhmaṇas ..." (Sircar 1961-62:204, lines 546).
associated with the Buddha statue, bōdhi-ghara, cetiya gharā and ceremonies attached to such places, may have been a strong motivating factor capable of attracting women folk of the royal household.

Archaeological evidence indicates that Buddhist sites dominated within the limits of Vijayapuri. There are over 30 Buddhist sites, which show an amazing growth during the Ikṣvākuc period. The non-existence of Buddhist sites in the citadel is significant. However, the most elaborate monastic and temple complex is situated outside the southern walls of the citadel, which may have been located for the convenience of royal ladies.

Further to this the Buddhist establishment also became a significant factor in the prestige economy. Though the male members of the royalty and the upper administration did not directly participate in the donations, those monuments certainly advertised the wealth in the possession of these groups. The magnificent stūpas, mandapas, cetiya gharās, pillars and other carvings did require a great deal of wealth. It is quite apparent that the existing economy brought in wealth to royalty and the local political elite. In making their donations these ladies made certain that their lineage connections were recorded and displayed rather prominently.

It appears that such endowments led to two factors in the prestige economy. One was the element of competition within such societies, where social groups having access to resources often used the religious establishments for advertising their munificence and philanthropy. Through such acts, they also necessarily displayed the amount of wealth that was concentrated with them, which by
itself is an essential criteria for status in such societies.

Secondly, such endowments and donations became a convenient avenue of redistribution of a part of the wealth. Though a larger portion of this was directed to erecting and building structures and also to maintaining them, a good amount also was channeled to sustain the non-producing monks who were supplied with 'all essential requirements' (Vogel I929-30:19, B 5; 23-24. G; I93I-32:6I-7I, G-2, G-3). To quote an example the Mahātalavari Čhāmīsisiri has been described as a Mahādaṇapatini who out of compassion bestowed a matchless and ceaseless flow of gifts on the Samana, Brāhmaṇa, and those who are miserable, poor and destitute —...

"Samana b hamstringa kavaga Vanijak dain ānugaha velāmika dana patibhaga vochima dhāra padāyini sava sādhu vachhalā mahādaṇapa-tini ..." (Vogel I929-30:17).

This was certainly a mark of conspicuous consumption in a prestige economy where the surplus was not ploughed back into the economy to be reinvested in production. Therefore at this stage, the Buddhist establishment which had evolved its structures in the form of different types of buildings and monasteries housing the monks, more than any other religious group, provided the elite with the opportunity for a form of redistribution of wealth as well as the opportunity to express their spirit of gift giving both of which were associated with prestige.

In addition, when a Mahātalavara, amātya or any other wealthy individual made donations at the political capital vis. Amaravati or Vijayapuri, it was another way of absorbing regional wealth to the centre. This became important especially when land, cash and other forms of endowments and donations in kind became common in the
post Ist Cent. B.C. period. It resulted in a flow of capital and material to the centre from regional and peripheral areas. Inscriptions do mention that monastic establishments had store houses (supra pp.31-32), which were probably used for the purpose of accumulating such (cash and material) donations.

II - iii

By the Ist Cent. B.C. we also find another significant development that became crucial to the Buddhist establishment in southeast India. This is the emergence of a sizable group of individuals who began to patronize the Buddhist establishments by making private or individual donations and through other links they maintained with the Order. During the Mauryan period and immediately after, such individuals are not associated with any rank status or socio-economic designations. However from the post-Ist Cent. B.C. they increase numerically and persons such as a gahapati, vāniya, sethi, heranika, are conspicuous by the very nature of their donations over other upāsaka, upāsikā mentioned in the inscriptions.

One of the most interesting aspects related to the above situation in the post Ist Cent. B.C. is, while there is a near absence of clan or semi tribal groups making donations there is a simultaneous intensification of donations made by individuals such as gahapati-heranika-vāniya-sethi and to a lesser extent by a few śilpin and craft/commercial guilds. This feature is dominant in the post Ist Cent. inscriptions, especially during the Sātavāhana and the Ikṣvāku periods.

Taking into account the above aspect, it may be stated that the gahapatis were neither peasant cultivators nor those who were
located in backward peripheral areas. They were essentially an agrarian elite who originated and were located within the very hinterland areas of the urban centres and partially owed their prosperity to the urban economy. The very fact that the gahapati donations are made at the primary urban centres viz. Dhānyakāṭaka (Amaravati), Chantasala, Nagarjunakonda, Salihundam and their strong kin and economic relations with the heranika/vaniya group adds credence to the above assumption. For example the chart on page 477 may indicate the following: the linkage between the hinterland sites (e.g. Govagama) and urban centres (e.g. Nagarjunakonda, Kantakasola); the vaniya, gahapati, kothakarika linkage; the accumulated wealth enabling such families to compete even with royalty in making donations.

Therefore the patronage extended to Buddhism by the gahapati group did not contradict the idea of Buddhism being identified as an urban phenomenon since the gahapatis themselves were part of the early urban situation of south east India.

The rest of the groups involved in the craft and commercial network viz. seṭhi, vaniya, heranika, Mahānāvika, negama, sespi avesanika and sālipi, reemphasise the urban character of Buddhism in Andhra. In establishing the linkages between these groups and Buddhism the following may be worth considering.

All the above mentioned groups had some social status that was associated with their professional and economic situation, and which was acceptable to the contemporary society. This is not surprising as we saw these groups emerging from earlier clan or semi tribal groups that transformed themselves to specialized professional groups. The earlier section of the present chapter
also saw the association of some of these groups with Buddhism even during its first phase. Though in the post Christian years we find the gradual appearance of a functional hierarchy in the field of production and distribution which operated vertically, this stratification had yet not developed as a rigid barrier curtailing upward mobility. Social stigma attached to certain professions in a practical sense appeared and were enforced in the south only at a slightly later period. In this sense a religious establishment with its various ritual and philosophical aspects had the potential to pose as an institution for egalitarian expressions from different groups which in turn enforced some form of social interaction among these groups.

Let us see these linkages in greater detail. The position of the śilpaṅa or artisan/craftsman was certainly socially acceptable; since these would be no other reason for the individual named Nanda to introduce himself as the uncle of a pasanika i.e. stone-cutter/mason (Sivaramamurti 1977:302 No. II9). In her famous donative record upāsikā Bodhisiri thought it fit to mention the name of the selavādhaṅkā i.e. stone mason who was involved in the work (Vogel 1929-30:22-23). Similarly, at Amaravati, we come across a donation made by a camakara > charmakāra i.e. leather worker named Vidhika, who was the son of a teacher named Nāga (Sivaramamurti 1977:281 No. 41). This is indeed interesting for we see the differentiated occupations followed by two generations. It is also clear that during this period no social stigma was attached to this particular profession which later came to be associated only with the untouchables. This in fact shows the degree of professional as well as social interaction amongst
groups that patronized the Buddhist establishment.

Similarly the term Ṛvesani (foreman) suggests the existence of the hierarchy within the guilds. They certainly enjoyed some form of economic standing and status in society. At Nagarjunakonda we notice a chhāyastambha erected to the memory of the Ṛvesanika named Mūlabhūta from Payayāta (Sarkar 1974:93). The erection of memorial pillars at Nagarjunakonda as we have seen is generally associated with the political-administrative-military elite and in one case with a member of the clergy. The society obviously did not object to the veneration of this particular foreman. In another case, at Jaggayapetta the inscriptions mention an Ṛvesani who had enough resources to donate five āyaka pillars to the Mahāchōtiya (Luders 1973:202).

Therefore, śilpīna as persons with specialized skills were valued in an urban context dependent upon consumer items and the circulation of these. A still more specialized skill was essential for the post-1st Cent. A.D. in Andhra where the upper socio-economic groups sponsored a series of ambitious building constructions donated to the Buddhist establishment. It is therefore interesting that certain individuals even after entering the Order of the Sangha continued their earlier professional skills related to constructions such as the Mahānavakamika, navakamika, vēdikānava-aka, atvidhikasa (Sivaramamurti 1977:275 No. II; 278 No. 33; 290 No. 69; Subrahmanyam 1964:88 No. 51; Vogel 1929-30:17, 22-23).

The fact that some of them did maintain their epithets even within the Order seems to indicate their high social status and the prestige associated with such professional groups during the period under discussion. Some of these very monks were also specialists.
on preaching (Dhammakadaka) and on the texts (Dīgh nikāya - Majhima nikāya dharena) (Sivaramamurti 1977:275 No. II; Vogel 1929-30:17). It suggests the educational qualifications of such groups even before they entered the Sangha.

Interestingly we do not hear urban unskilled labour or for that matter the peasant producer being associated with Buddhism. It is however difficult to rule out their complete non-affiliation. In fact if Buddhism had a vertical penetration during its early phase which incorporated the clan groups represented in residential sāni or the negamas, it is obvious that even the lower social groups may have identified themselves to a certain extent with the Buddhist establishments. Such persons may have had some difficulty in recording their donations in inscriptions that belonged to a prestige economy. Firstly such groups obviously did not have the resources to make donations and to record them. Whatever they may have offered to the sangha would have been restricted to simple and perishable items that could not carry inscriptions.

Secondly, it is often seen that such social groups tend to continue their earlier forms of tribal or clan worship. The discovery of terracotta figurines from Nagarjunakonda and Yelleshwar and also the revival of local deities given a new identity and assimilated within the Brāhmin pantheon at Nagarjunakonda, may indicate the existence of such popular cults as ideological undercurrents within this society.

During this period the link between urban groups involved in production, silpi, āvesanika and the urban groups controlling production, gahapatis (of the city) setti, vaniya, heranika, was affected through the negama and the sāni. The latter group was also
linked to the gahapatis of the agricultural hinterland through kinship ties (supra pp.463-4).

At this juncture we may recall that about three centuries prior to the period under discussion, the negama at Bhattiprolu was headed by the chieftain of that area i.e. rāja kubira. The sethi was merely a member of the negama. However, with the transformation of the political structure and the expansion of production and distribution in the post Christian century, we find a tremendous expansion in the economic power wielded by the agrarian and the commercial elites.

It is perhaps interesting to note that a large part of the groups involved in the production and distribution process (silpin to sethi) are identified with Buddhism. However, we cannot completely rule out the possible existence of individuals who may have sympathised with other sects. For instance, we come across a daughter of a sethi (sethi-bālika) who joined with the Antahpura-mahattarika in making permanent endowments to the Nodigisvarasvāmi at Vijayapurī (Sircar 1963:6-7). It could also be argued that there were obviously many other merchants, gahapatis and silpins who may have been Buddhists but yet did not make any donations or even if they did so, they need not necessarily have displayed their social status or their economic affiliation.

This aspect is interesting because we can observe a near vertical division within the royalty and administrative groups where the men by and large patronized non-Buddhist sects and the women, mostly Buddhism. But in the case of these other groups under discussion, we do not find such a division. The inscriptions clearly indicate that there were only a very few individual donations
related to the _rahapati_, _sethi_, _vagiya_, _heragika_, _Mahanavika_ group. Generally the donations include: husband and wife; husband, wife and children; grandparents, parents, children; parents, children, brothers and sisters; parents, extended family, friends and associates.

These two aspects namely, the concentration of _wealth_ from the areas and its hinterland in the hands of the rural and the urban _urban/elite_ and the involvement of these in the _production-distribution network_, as well as the participation of the nuclear-extended family, friends and associates in making a donation, are significant to the analysis of the situation.

An attempt to understand the links between the laity and the religious establishment may be useful in order to grasp the _institutional character_ of the second phase of Buddhism in this region.

The specific historical changes in the nuclear area in the apparent emergence of private property, which synchronized with the second phase of Buddhism, resulted in the socio-economic forces affecting the very basis of the Order. Internally this is reflected in what seems to be a differentiation within the clergy, perhaps based on social origins and wealth, a differentiation which prevailed in the Order parallel to the usual hierarchy based on seniority and merit.

Further, there seems to be an apparent coincidence between the attempt by the highly cosmopolitan and dynamic society at reconciling its mundane requirements in material life with the spiritual requirements i.e. the _ideological justification_ for their deeds and existence. This is perhaps best reflected in a proliferation of different sects in the post 1st Cent. A.D. period _vade_ Dutt 1970). Though most sects were sub groups of the _Mahāsaṅghikas_,
their ideological perspective in relation to this period of transition is relatively well reflected in the architectural remains as well as in the philosophical expositions (Sarkar 1966; Thomas 1963).

With regard to the first aspect, we cannot overlook the significance of nearly forty donative inscriptions which mention the members of the Buddhist clergy, i.e. the Bhikkhu, Bhikkhuni, who lived in the lower Krishna-Godavari valley between the 2nd Cent. B.C. and 3rd Cent. A.D.1 By the 2nd/1st Cent. B.C. the clergy had begun to include individuals recruited from the Krishna-Godavari region, and some of them possessed the means to make private donations to the Buddhist establishment. It is certainly not easy to distinguish between the local monks mentioned in the inscriptions and those who may have arrived from distant places such as northern and western India on missionary work.2 Although Buddhism may have reached this region during the Nanda-Maurya era, and certainly by the time of Ashoka, none of their donative records pre-date the 2nd-1st Cent. B.C. In this context the form of address used for the monks in the inscriptions is revealing. The earliest inscriptions carry only three terms viz. samaga, pavajita and bhikkhu. All these terms broadly mean the wandering ascetic or mendicant who


lives on the alms provided by the laity. From the 1st cent. B.C. and after we not only do come across a variety of terms denoting the monks but also indicating the hierarchical status within the Order and the field of 'institutional specialization.' We may also note here that the women (Bhikkuni) apparently enter the order on a large scale, at least in terms of making donations, only after the 1st cent. B.C.

Such developments pre-suppose local recruitment to the Order, permanent dwellings for the clergy within the Primary Region, a greater proliferation of residential establishments i.e. monasteries, an expansion of the lay followers who sustained the clergy and in return demanded ritual and religious services from them and the existence of some source of wealth within the nuclear area enabling certain members of the clergy to make private donations.

It is significant that Buddhist monks were associated with

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1. Aira, Aya, Ayira, Ayiraka, Bhadara, Bhadata, Bhadaraka, Bhavata, Bhayata, Bhayanta, Bajanta, Bhayiti, Bhikhu, Bhikkuni, Mahathera, Mahāya, Pavajita/Pavacita, Pavacita/Pavajitika, Samaṇa, Sāmaṇika.

2. Āchāriya, Bhadata/Bhadara/Bhadara/Bhavata/Bhayata/Bhayanta/Bhayiti/Mahāya/ other variations of Aya and Mahāthera could have referred to the venerated older monks, Antevāṇika/Anteva, Antevasini, Charanagata Antevasika, Uvājahayini could indicate the junior clergy and the understudy.

3. Arana/Āranyavāsi, Penḍapātika/Pendavatika, Samutaka bhāṇaka, Vinayadhara, Mahādhammakadhika, Dīgh bhāṇaka, majjhima, bhanaka, pañccha mātuka.

4. It is however interesting to enquire as to how the two monks from Pāṭaliputra and Sāṃgha could have financed their donations. Even if they did not possess wealth in the Krishna-Godavari valley, the intensive cash nexus that came into operation in the southern Deccan during the 1st cent. B.C. and after would have enabled those arriving from far off places to bring coined money for donations, transactions etc. Inscriptions from eastern and western Deccan mention such donations made by inhabitants coming from distant places.
the craft/commercial groups from the early period in eastern Andhra. From the inscriptions at Bhattiprolu we learn of the following connections: Sāmapa, a member of the Gōthi (Buhler 1894:327 No. II); Kuba, the Gōthi sāmapa makes a joint donation with Būba, the son of hiranakāraśāmapī (ibid. 328 No. V); two sāmapas, who were members of the negama (ibid. 328 No. VIII). The significance of this seems unmistakable. The sāmapas who were members of the craft/commercial guilds and the negama may have also been the spiritual teachers of such residential groups. As we have argued earlier, if these craft/commercial/residential groups were also kin groups (vide Chapter IV), then the monks may have even had kinship ties with such groups.

There is no reason why such persons could not have been released from the clan to join the clergy. The fact that such individuals possessed the capacity to make private donations, broadly places them within a social stratum of the residential group having greater access to economic resources than the rest. We may even speculate that such Sāmapas may have played a vital role in forging closer economic links between the local craft/commercial groups and the Indo-Aryan speaking Sīthi who conducted long distant trade from western and northern India. The significance of a Sīthi within the same negama as the two Sāmapas (Buhler 1894: 328 No. VIII) does have an economic and social importance. It is therefore not surprising to find nuns and monks making joint donations with individuals such as a kumāri (Sivaramamurti 1977: 290 No. 68) and with gahepati families (ibid. 289-90 No. 67, 304 No. 126) during the post Christian era.

The second phase of Buddhism may be better understood if we
study the internal differentiation within the clergy. To begin
with, we may find a clue in the term *arya* which is sometimes used as
a prefix to the personal names of certain monks mentioned mainly
in the post-Christian inscriptions of eastern Andhra. This term
(according to scholars who translated the inscriptions of Andhra)
derives from (Skt.) अर्या and (Pali) *ayya*. The etymological meaning
of the term *arya* is noble birth. However, the Buddhists gave this
term a different connotation where *arya/ayya* came to imply a person
with high spiritual attainment, having perfect moral qualities and
noble conduct. The Buddhist Order therefore came to be known as the
*arya Sangha* phana, the essence of the doctrine as 'chaturārya
satya*aya* and the path as the 'ārya asthāṅgika mārga'. Therefore
the Buddhist connotation of this term does not carry any social
status (i.e., rank and birth) attached to it as it may have done in
the Vedic texts. It would have been natural therefore for the
Buddhist clergy residing in the Krishna-Godavari valleys to have
taken this epithet as a prefix to their personal names. Hence the
translators naturally concluded that even the other terms viz.
92, 296 No. 94, 292 No. 74), araka (Sircar 1963:13; Sarkar 1974:
93), derived from *arya > ayya > aya*, which were taken to mean a
worthy being or person. Similarly we find the term *arya/a ila* been
taken by different sects in eastern Andhra to indicate their
'worthiness', as for instance the sect named *Ariya Sanga* at
Salihundam (Subrahmanyam 1964:85 No. 22). This inscription is on
a potsherd and can be dated to the 2nd-3rd Cent. A.D. Similarly
a 3rd Cent. inscription at Alluru calls the sect there the *Ayirā*
Pūrvaseliya (Gopalachari 1976:94).
We are however inclined to believe that the term aya had not only a broader meaning but also had a greater significance than a mere prefix indicating the spiritual status of a monk/nun; and that this term was apparently used by certain members of the clergy to differentiate themselves from the rest of the Order, and who may have found it a convenient way to continue to emphasise their status, based on birth and wealth, even within the Order.

The term aya and its variations seems to have come into vogue in c. Ist Cent. B.C. though its frequency increases only in the post Christian era inscriptions. Therefore, the origins of this term seems to coincide with the beginnings of the second phase of Buddhism in Andhra. The earlier monks in this region apparently did not take this epithet. There is no indication to show that even after this term came into vogue, all senior as well as all respected members of the Order necessarily used it as a prefix. Therefore, it seems to have been a prefix utilized by a restricted group of monks and nuns. It is also difficult to accept the translation given by scholars to this term aya signifying the high moral/spiritual standard of a monk or nun. We have recounted the normal terms that were used by monks to signify their status within the Order. Such terms were based on seniority, the level of spiritual attainment, the field of specialization (e.g. samukta bhānaka, vinayadhara) or the form of residence (āramyavāsī) etc. Of all the aya mentioned we come across only a solitary instance of any association of seniority i.e. Therā (Khan 1969:3 No. 1) and of

I. Mahāthera, Mahādharmakādhika, Samyutta-bhānaka, Bhadanta, are some of the epithets taken by certain monks who did not use the term aya.
specialization i.e. Mahāvinayadhara, of the Seliya sect (Sivaramamurti I977:289 No. 63). To clinch this argument we may quote the inscriptive evidence at hand:

(i) '... pilikā mahayāya sujātāmya mahāvisibhutaya bhikhuniya Rohāya athaloka dhamma vitivatēva da (na)'. (Sivaramamurti I977:292 No. 74).

In this case Sujata is introduced as a Mahā-ārya > Mahāyaya (supra pp. amahā ārya as an official) and as a person of great self-control (mahāvasibhūta). Roha on the other hand who had attained greater spiritual heights (athaloka dhamma vitivata) is known simply as a bhikhuni. The second case is an instance of how even some junior members of the clergy used this epithet.

(ii) 'aya Retiya atevāśiniyā ayadhamaya dānam' (Sivaramamurti I977:295-96 No. 93).

(iii) 'therasa Ayapusa Dévasa cha aṃtevāśikasa Aya Badhakasa cha dānaḥ' (Khan I969:3 No. I)

Inscriptions ii and iii clearly establish that the understudy (aṃtevāśini/aṃtevāśika is called aya apparently) any acceptable spiritual attainment of seniority within the Order.

Perhaps a higher point in the social usage of this term is seen in relation to a member of the clergy itself. A 3rd Cent. A.D. Chhāyastāmbha at Nagarjunakonda (site 56) erected to the memory of Koḍaṛaka records his titles/epithets as araka bhagāraka and Yati Śamang Khamdhikata (Sircar I963:13; Sarkar) I974:93). Sircar has considered araka bhagāraka > āryaka bhattāraka to signify that koḍaṛaka was the head of a monastery. The term araka āryaka is used along with bhagāraka or bhattāraka. The latter derives from the Sanskrit term bhaṭr which means 'Lord'.
Even Usavadata (I20 A.D.) uses the term Bhataraka to address his overlord Mahapâna in the Nasik inscription (Senart I905–06:78). I

A queen of Virapurisadata who originally came from Ujjain, is known as Mahâdevâ Rudrabhara Bhatarika in the inscriptions (Vogel I929–30:I9). During the subsequent period, the epithet Bhataraka was commonly used in the north e.g. by the Guptaś (vide Dhamodarpur Copper plate inscription of Kumaragupta yr. I28; Basak I9I9–20: I34). We may also note that at Nagarjunakonda the erection of Chhaya-stambhas seems to have been associated with affluent social groups which included persons such as the royalty, Mahâtalavara, senapati, âvesanika etc (supra pp.541–8).

We have further evidence to show that the social background of the aya-bhadara group was linked to certain lucrative economic activities. The only other instance of a bhadara we have is from a 3rd Cent. A.D. potsherd engraving from Salihundam (Subrahmanyam I964:88 No. 5I). Interestingly the term atvidhikaśa is associated with this name. This means a person specializing in architecture/building-construction. This vital field of specialization most certainly may have enabled them to be placed amongst the upper echelons of the society and they also would have possessed much wealth due to the tremendous constructional works (secular and religious) that were launched in the eastern Andhra region during the post 1st Cent. B.C. period. Even if we cannot definitely establish the identity of the bhadara from Salihundam (whether he was a monk or a layman), more evidence from Amaravati certainly

I. The terms Bhavata, Bhayanita, Bhadata, Bhavata, Bhayiti seems to derive from the Pâli terms Bhante and Bhadanta which mean reverend or venerable sir.
does point to a close association between the aya group and those who specialized in the prestigious profession of building and construction. This clearly illustrates certain economic affiliations related to the aya group. In fact if aya Reti associated with ayira Adita is the same person (aya Reti) mentioned in inscription (i) in our text who had an aya as her understudy (amtevasini), then aya Reti seems to have maintained a rather exclusive circle of associates within the Order and outside it. We also note that a

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(I) Name  Epithet  Affiliation  Associated with

(1) Parapota  aya  navakamika

(2) Adita  ayira  Mahānavakamakṣa  Budharaksita, the Mahānavakamakṣa Dhamaraksita, the navakamaka + aya Reti and three others

I  Budharakita  Bhayata  Vedikanavaka

II  Ananda  bhajamta  navakamika

III  i Chamdamukha  2 Dhammanandi Theras  Navakammikas  3 Naga

bhavata (bhadanta) has also acted as a supervisor in repairing the railing. According to Taranatha the railing of the Yagantiya was renovated during the time of Nagrajuna, (quoted in Sivarama- murti 1977:290). Also another Narakasara was a bhavata. It is significant that they are addressed in these terms which mean reverend or venerable.

Considering the above evidence we are inclined to believe that the termarya in all probability identifies those who originally had some social status (by birth or by rank) as lay persons continued their separate identity even within the Order. This means that the society in the Deccan had come to accept the termarya not in the Buddhist sense, but more in its original (Vedic) context which implied noble birth or socio-economic standing. We have to keep in mind that the Ist Cent. B.C. was an era of greater acculturation resulting in the assimilation of local ruling groups and other elite groups of the Deccan to the mainstream of the northern Indo-Aryan culture subsequent to the decline of the Mauryan state. Within that context the termarya may have easily been taken on as an epithet to identify the upper social groups signifying noble birth, the venerated, overlord-ship i.e. superior status. In fact this exclusiveness at the level of the religious establishment is seen when an inscription from Nagrajuna records the term 'jama karma kulaputa' (IAR 1954-1955:23). In all probability

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I.: The Satavahana rulers not only followed the Brahmanical rite of conducting great sacrifices (e.g. Asvamedhayana), and even took titles such as Akabarhana and prided themselves on their ability 'to stop the contamination of the four castes' ('Vidvatita chhatu vasa saHarasa'), vide 'Nagiya inscription of Gautami Balasiri' (Senart 1905-06:60 ff.).
even as laymen they may have belonged to social groups which
differentiated themselves from the rest of the society by virtue of
superior economic standing and perhaps by birth. By the Ikṣvaku
period not only official titles, Mahātalavara for instance, but
also positions such as gahapati seems to have had a tendency to
become hereditary (supra p.476).

To quote a few instances: the Mauryan viceroy in the southern
extremity of the empire at Suvarnagiri is called āyaputa aryaputra-
Suvarnapirite ayaputasa ...'(Brahmagiri and Siddapura in Hultzsch
I922/I969:175, 178). This term has been identified with kinsmen
of the imperial family (ibid. I77) which indicates their superior
rank status by birth which differentiated them from the rest of the
imperial officials. It is also noteworthy that the term ayaputa
as a title used by the Mauryan viceroy occurs only at their south-
ern capital of Suvarnagiri. Khārvēla is called '... Airena
Mahārājena ...' in the Hatigumpha inscription (Sircar I965:2I3).I

We come to know of the Mahāaryaka from the inscriptions at Nasik,
which seems to be a title given to an officer in-charge of an
administrative unit in the western Deccan during the Sātavāhana
period (Gopalachari I976:92-93 F.N. 67-69). In her grandsons
inscription (Vasisthiputra Pulamavi), Gautami Balasiri is addressed
as ayaka (Senart I905-06:60). In post 2nd Cent. A.D. Andhra,
certain noble ladies used the prefix as e.g. aya koṭusiri and aya
Siri (Vogel E.I. I929-30:63-64, ins. L). In early Sri Lanka too
from the post 2nd Cent. B.C., the term aya/ayya was assigned to
the ruling groups and certain members of the Buddhist clergy
(Paranavitana I970).

In Andhra, we cannot completely

I. Aira/Aila could also mean Lunar - the descendent of the Lunar
dynasty.
rule out the Dravidian origins of the term *ayā*. Kinship terms having Dravidian origins such as *ayaka* and *ayika* have been used for grandfather and grandmother respectively in the inscriptions of Nagarjunakonda during the Ikṣvāku period (cf. Vogel 1929–30: 22–23).

The location of the Buddhist sites at Vijayapuri is an interesting feature. While there are no Buddhist monuments within the citadel, only a limited number can be found near the citadel area. The most centralized sites are to be found along the routes leading out of the valley, to the east and the north west.

In his study, Sarkar has classified the Buddhist establishments in the following manner; units of *stūpa* and monastery, *stūpa*-monastery and *caityagṛha*, *stūpa*-monastery and *caityagṛha* with Buddha statue, monastery with *caityagṛha*, votive *stūpas* (I966:79–84). Sarkar is probably correct when he suggest that the ideological differences of different resident sects at Vijayapuri (viz. Bahuṣrutīya, Apara mahāvinaseliya, Mahīśāsaka etc.) manifested themselves in monastic architecture (ibid. 78). For instance, originally the Aparamahāvinaseliya sect resisted the cult of the Buddha image and *caityagṛha*. However, later, they adopted these symbols of worship.

In one sense, the Buddha image and *caityagṛha* may represent symbols indicating a 'personal religion'. The votive *stūpas* were introduced during the early years of Ehuvala Cāṭamūla’s reign. This period coincides with a series of monumental construction, and

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I. The early inscriptions of Andhra also contain a series of Dravidian or at least non-Indo-Aryan sounding personal and clan names including titles and also residential terms.
economic prosperity. A major number of non-Buddhist temples also were established during this period. The gradual association of Buddha shrines in monasteries, the construction of many Buddhist votive sites in the urban centre indicates the following. The ever increasing interaction between the sangha and the laity and the need for symbols associated with popular forms of worship. Buddhism had to give these concessions to counter non-Buddhist Brahmanic and indigenous cult religions from attracting its urban patrons. It is perhaps this ever increasing material prosperity and the parallel evolution of popular religions that may have created a dialectical contradiction leading to the development of Sunyatavāda (doctrine of the Void), expounded by Nāgarjuna, which subsequently developed as the Mādhyamika doctrine.

III - i

In a sense, Macro Zone II (Tamilnadu) poses a study of contrast. On the one hand, compared to Andhra and Sri Lanka there is relatively less evidence on Buddhism in Tamilnadu, on the other hand it is evident that many northern religious ideologies i.e. Brāhmanism, Buddhism, Ajivikism and Jainism as well as the associated Indo-Aryan culture made significant contributions to the institutions of a society undergoing transformation.

A series of studies confirm that the religio-cultural elements of the north had begun to penetrate the south as early as the 4th Cent. B.C. What is missing is a systematic analysis of at least one of these aspects in relation to the local society in order to

I. Pillay 1966:271-278; Desai 1957; Champakalakshmi 1974:92-103
understand the intensity of the horizontal and the vertical
closest of such intrusive religio-cultural elements in the south.
We must however caution against exaggerating the impact of these
intrusive elements from the earliest period of their arrival. For,
as we have outlined earlier on in this study, the evolving of
institutions in this society was a gradual process spread out in
time and space. The Megalithic-BRV complex in the nuclear areas
i.e. the coastal and inland alluvial areas, no doubt show a
differentiated level of development as compared to the areas
peripheral to the core region. Secondly, though Macro Zone II was
not under the political control of the Mauryas, we have indicated
that the Maurya occupation of the southern Deccan may have had some
degree of influence over the far south. This is in addition to
economic and cultural forces that penetrated the south from the
north during the same period.

To initiate a discussion on the social base of Buddhism in
Macro Zone II we have to be aware of a basic factor; this is the
significance of the social base of Jainism in this region which
enables us to establish certain common features related to these
two non-Brahmin social ideologies.

In the literary evidence recording the earliest phase of
Buddhism in this region; Hiuen-Tsiang attempted to push it back
to the 3rd Cent. B.C. and credit Asoka for having erected stupas
in the Cola country, Kanchipuram and at Malakuta (Beal 1884/1969:
227-234). In fact Hiuen-Tsiang often associates the Buddha with

Cont'd ... f.n. from p., s97 Sastri I967; Maloney I968; Raman
I974:13-I7; Hart I975; Ghurye I777; Pillai (not dated );
Narayanan I777; Vasudeva Rao I779.
having converted these regions after performing miracles (ibid.).

It is however significant to note that the Chinese pilgrim's account reveals the following. The main centres of Buddhism during the 6th-7th Cent. A.D. were located in the eastern coast or the lower deltaic plains of Tamilnadu and in certain inland areas, e.g. Kāncipuram, Kāveripaṭṭinam. Secondly, it also points out the existence of Buddhist and Jain Sanghārāmas including the centres of other creeds.

It is interesting to note that the Mahāvamsa maintains complete silence on the Buddhist centres in Tamilaham for the early period. Though it records the arrival of monks from the Vanvāsa region for the consecration of the Mahāstūpa at Anurādhapura during the reign of Duṇḍhagāmāṇi (xxix:42-43), no mention of Tamilaham is made in this connection. However, reading between the lines we may be able to glean some dispersed evidence. It is recorded that one of the seven Damila chiefs who invaded Lanka during the reign of Vaṭṭagāmāṇi (grand nephew of Duṇḍhagāmāṇi), having got hold of the pātra dhātu (alms bowl) of the Buddha was content to return to the other shore (Mv. xxiii:55). This individual probably had leanings towards Buddhism, for, no one else would attach any value to objects associated with the Buddha. It is however only in its later accounts that the Mahāvamsa records the close connections maintained by the dissident monks at Abhayagiri vihāra (Anuradhapura) with the Buddhist vihāras at Kāveripaṭṭinam. This dates to the reign of Mahāsena i.e. c. 4th Cent. A.D. (Mv. xxxvi:112-II3; xxxvii:

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I. Hiuen-Tsiang attributes the founding of the Sanghārāma at Malakūṭa to Mahendra, the younger brother of Asoka. This Sanghārāma, according to him, was located adjacent to the stūpa constructed by Asoka at this site.
I-2) and coincides with the period when the Mahāvihāra and Sīhalavihāra are mentioned in the inscriptions of Andhra.

Perhaps the most descriptive and detailed accounts of Buddhism in Tamilnadu could be obtained from the indigenous Sangam texts, very specially the Sangam Epics viz. Silappadikaram and the Nāyimekalai (vide Pillay 1975:506-521; Vasudeva Rao 1979:1-67). The more accurately datable sections of the Sangam texts however provide us with details indicating the coastal urban centres had traits of Buddhism and the situation which prevailed in the post 1st Cent. B.C. period in Tamilnadu.

As regards the archaeological and the epigraphical sources, there are certain problems related to them. Firstly, there is the practical problem of recognizing Buddhist and even Jain archaeological sites. The Hindu revival in the post 7th/8th Cent. A.D. based on the Bhakti cult, resulted in the occupation and conversion of Buddhist and Jain centre. This has completely obliterated the features of the north Indian sects and therefore the task of recognizing such monuments has in itself become a difficult one. Secondly, even at the known Jain and Buddhist centres sufficient archaeological work has not been carried out to give a clearer picture of the monumental structures and their material dimensions.

There is a problem in drawing distinction between Jainism and Buddhism. Their respective movements apparently seem to have followed similar paths into Tamilnadu. The evidence from Kalinga, Andhra, coastal Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka clearly point to a coastal

I. According to the Mahāyānasa (xxxviii:92) during reign of Mahāsena's son, the tooth relic (Danta dhātu) of the Buddha was despatched from Dantapura, Kalinga for protection in Sri Lanka.
location for Jainism which also intruded into these regions via commercial sea routes just as much as was the case in Buddhism. Both groups had a foothold in southern Mysore or the ancient Vanavāsa-Mahiṣamandala region. The evidence at hand indicates that Jainism penetrated further south from Karnataka along the central hill range of south India and apparently moved further south to the Madurai-Tirunelveli area (vide Desai 1957:25 ff; Champakalakshmi 1958:85; 1974:92-103). Similarly, the account of Hiuen-tsiang and the studies on Buddhism in Kerala indicate that Buddhism apparently had some base along the central hills of Tamilnadu, especially in the areas through which trade linked Kerala and Tamilnadu (Beal 1884/1969:230-234; Vasudeva Rao 1979:197-206; Alexander 1949).

Apart from the routes of migration or movement of the Jaina and Buddhist missionaries which tend to coincide, the earliest monuments also pose a problem. This is very true in the case of the early cave monasteries and the Tamil Brahmi inscriptions (i.e. donative records) that are associated with these residential caves. The earliest inscriptions associated with these caves occur in the extreme south (Nadurai-Tirunelveli-Tamnad districts) and are datable to the 2nd/1st Century B.C. (Mahadevan 1966). In fact, the Tamil term palli as the inscriptions show is used as a place

1. It is believed that the Kalabhras who over-ran the south in the 5th-6th Century A.D. were supposed to be a composite group consisting of Jains and Buddhists and may have arrived from southern Mysore (Pillay 1975:510).
of retirement/study hall/rest by the Jaina, Buddhist and even Ājivaka monks (PPTI 539).

Secondly, even from the inscriptions it is not that easy to distinguish between the Buddhist and the Jain Theras and Theris. In certain cases we do have direct reference to the Jaina monks as amappan or āśirikar (Mahadevan op. cit., 9 No. 56, 12 No. 76, 4 Nos. 1-3; 1970:14). Yet, in others, the task is not that simple. For instance, in one case, Mahadevan identifies a mā tavirai (great-nun) as a person belonging to the Buddhist establishment (Mahadevan 1970:14; 1966:7 No. 33). We are aware that the Jaina sangha also uses the term theri for their nuns. In this context, it may be noted that a greater number of the above mentioned cave establishments certainly retain archaeological evidence for their continued use by the Jain monks at least until the medieval period (Champakalakshmi 1974; also Sewell 1882).

It is therefore not an easy task to differentiate between these two religions in Tamilnadu purely on archaeological evidence alone. In fact considering their significance, not only do they have a near contemporary chronology for their origin, but have great similarities in terms of their content i.e. lay ethics and the social base. Therefore, the study cannot be restricted to the limited evidence available for Buddhism alone. We necessarily have to take into account the evidence related to the social base of Jainism whereby we may be able to establish certain common features
associated with these two sects even in the south.¹

The Veḷīr chieftains who had some control over the agricultural areas and probably had links with the long distance exchange network may have become familiar with the northern religions. The inscriptions provide us with evidence ranging from c. 2nd Century B.C. to 1st/2nd Century A.D. Two of the earliest inscriptions (2nd/1st Century B.C.) from the ancient Pāṇḍya country record the donations of two Veḷīrs (Mahadevan 1966: No. 25, 29). Their names Kuviar Antai (Netupatti, Madurai) and Kaśipan (Marukotalai, Tirunelveli) obviously derive from Sanskrit Kuveṇa and Kaśyapa. A third inscription at Tirupparakunram (Madurai) dated to 1st/2nd Century A.D. brings out an interesting connection between these chieftains and other groups. Here we find Āy Cayan associating himself with a kutumbika said to have arrived from Ceylon i.e. Ilakujumpika (ibid. No. 51). It is well known that the Āy's were an important Veḷīr group with a pastoral background who had initiated agriculture in the

¹ There is a problem related to the main primary source i.e. the Brahmi inscriptions. The re-readings of these by Mahadevan (1966) no doubt gave a more accurate dimension than hitherto assigned to these valuable records. However, his effort to date these inscriptions purely on palaeographical grounds is rather unsatisfactory. For instance, he divides them into the archaic and early period (2nd/1st Century B.C.), middle period (1st/2nd Century A.D.), late and transitional periods (3rd-6th Century A.D.). The inscriptions at Mangulam (1966:4, Nos. 3-6) have been categorized by him as archaic. The Pāṇḍyan ruler mentioned in these inscriptions is Neṭunjaḷiyaṇ. The two Neṭunjaḷiyaṇ rulers known to the Sangam texts have been assigned dates of A.D. 50-75 (Neṭunjaḷiyaṇ I) and A.D. 90-128 (Neṭunjaḷiyaṇ II) (Kanakasabhai 1956:80). In another case Mahadevan assigns c. 3rd/4th Century A.D. (late) for the Brahmi inscriptions in the Tiruchirapalli district. Considering the route of migration of Jaina ṣamāpas from Karnataka to southern Tamilnadu through Tiruchirapalli, it can be argued
Agastiyamalai - Palani hills (Vēnādu and Āy kudi of the Sangam texts) during the Early Historic period (Subrahmanian 1966: 85-86).  

The next group of the ruling class belongs to those who have the suffix Kōn. While some donations are direct, some are made by the kinsmen of these individuals. From Mangulam two inscriptions mention the Pāṇḍya ruler Neṉūncāliyan (Mahadevan 1966: Nos. 1-2). Though these have been dated by Mahadevan as pre 1st Century B.C. we feel the earliest at which these inscriptions could be placed is around c. 50 - 0 B.C. Inscription I of this group is a dedication made by an officer of the king and the second is made by Čatikan, the brother-in-law of Neṉūncāliyan. The second group from Pugalur in the Coimbatore area (which was the fluctuating border of the Cōḷas and the Čēras) records the donations Iḷaṅkaṭunkō, the Čēra heir-apparent, the son of Parunkaṭunkō and the grandson of king (kō) Ātān Cel-l-irumporai (ibid. Nos. 56-57). Again though Mahadevan ascribes a very late date post 3rd Century A.D. and after for these inscriptions, these could be placed within the 1st/2nd Century A.D. the latest. A third inscription from Mamandur (north Arcot) dated to c. 3rd Century A.D. introduces to the Chieftain who took Tēnūr '... tēnūr tanta kōn').

Cont'd ... f.n. from p. 605 that the palaeographical evidence alone is not sufficient for the dating of these inscriptions (Champakalakshmi 1974:101-102).

1. This inscription also mentions a place named Ērukāṭtur. The word Ēru is associated with the buffalo and pastoral activities. Considering the pastoral background of the Āy group, it is possible that this particular Ēru may have been located in the western hills of Tamilnadu, the territory of the Āys.
who made a donation to the Jain śāmāṇa named kaṇīmaṇī (ibid. No. 71). According to the Sangam texts, Tēnūr was a town located in the Pāṇḍya country (Aṅgāra 54:3; 55:2). It is possible the Chieftain may have been a Cōla ruler who raided the Pāṇḍya country, and subdued a valuable settlement, hence the epithet. The final inscription which is dated to the late Brahmi phase (post 3rd Century A.D.) and located at Pileyarpatti (Ramanatapuram) north west of Madurai, records the name of Peru-Paranaṇ who identified himself as the chieftain (kōṭ) of Erukāṭṭur (ibid. No. 75).

The term kōṭ may have derived from a pastoral background. It is interesting to note that this title was taken up not only by the petty chieftains especially those in the peripheral areas, but was gradually utilized even by the Ṇūvēntar. Apparently, sections of the ruling elite belonging to the Ṇūvēntar patronized the north Indian religious establishments. Therefore, with regard to the political groups it would be seen that sections of the old political elite i.e. Vēlir and the later Ṇūvēntar extended their patronage to the northern religions.

In this context, evolutionary situation may be suggested. Apparently, the Vēlir donations belong to the earliest inscriptions. All those groups belonging to the Vēlir such as Āy and Āvi continue their donations to the early Christian era. In the post 1st Century A.D. period we do not come across these groups. This is significant.

1. The inscription of Āy Cayan from Tirupparakkāttram (Madurai) also mentions the habitation Erukāṭṭur (ibid. No. 51). The cave temple excavated here seems to belong to the Saiva creed and holds little evidence for any affiliation to the early Jain sects (Champakalakshmi 1974:79-100).
In Chapter III we saw how the Muventar initiated a policy of political integration where the ancient chieftains (Vēlir/ perumakam) were subordinated. They were physically annihilated or incorporated through matrimony and often assigned with high administrative posts. It is interesting that an officer of Netuncaiyyan made a donation at Mankulam (1966, No. 1) The Sangam texts also testify to the fact that certain Cōla rulers did patronize Buddhist institutions. The Napimekalai records the meritorious act of the Cōla king Kēllivalavam who converted a prison house into a pālli and gifted it to Buddhist monks. Similarly Ilangō Adigal the author of Silappadikāram was the younger brother of Cēra king Cenkuttuvan and the son of king Čeralātan, obviously was a Buddhist. We may conclude that in the first three Centuries, the political elite did extend some degree of patronage to the northern social ideologies.

The second major group that patronized the Buddhist establishment were the merchants/guilds/craftsmen. The significance of the above tables relates to the locational character of these groups in terms of their proximity to urban centres and the southern portion of Tamilnadu; and the extent to which merchants and crafts were tend to overlap on the one hand while on the other local chieftains tend to form horizontal links with these groups; and further their homogenous ideological affiliation towards the northern religions.
One of the most interesting aspects here is the link between the chieftains, the community and the production network. Two of the earliest inscriptions in Madurai area introduce us to the Vel-ara nekama (negama) and to the community at Titil-il. In Table I we notice that there was a merchant prince who headed this nekama, that may have been composed of Velirs. This obviously was a town controlled by the Velirs who were involved in commercial activities. Therefore, as in Andhra we see the earliest situation as the chieftain and the community making donations. This is further confirmed by the 1st Century B.C. inscription at Mettupatti (Madurai) where the residential group makes a donation.

Slightly later we find individuals especially merchants making private donations. Interestingly, the symbols in Table No. 19 show that these merchants obviously belonged to one guild or negama. However, during this period we do not find negamas or communities making donations but merchants involved in the trade in luxury goods making private donations. It is precisely during this period that the Nakutumbikan who had established a contact with an Ax in the Madurai area made joint donations. Some of the earliest Brahmi inscriptions of Sri Lanka also refer to Dameda gahapatis, Vanijhas and navikas. The Silappadikaram calls Kannaki's father who resided at Pukar a Manaiyan (great maritime merchant) and Kovalan as Machattuvan (Mahasertma - the great merchant who conducted long distant inland trade). It is interesting to note that while Kovalan's parents were Buddhists, Kannagi's parents embraced the Ajivika religion.
Similarly the author of *Maṇimekalai*, the Kūlavanikan Chattanar was a Buddhist himself. The name *Stan* has been a useful clue to connect quite a few individuals who do not display their social or economic status. Here again, what we find is the emergence of individuals from the agrarian and the commercial centres capable of making private donations.

If we attempt to equate the archaeological evidence with the above situation, especially that related to Buddhist, we find definite Buddhist remains belonging to the pre 2nd/3rd Century B.C. period in Tamilnadu only at a few centres. A 1st Century A.D. potsherd from Arkamedu yielded a Buddhist Prākrit votive text which is in southern Brahmi characters (Mahadevan 1973:63-64). It is evident that this commercial centre would have had a Buddhist centre which in all probability would have been linked to Andhra Pradesh. To this day the main area around Arikamedu is called Ariyankuppan (The village of the Ariyar). On the path leading to the ancient Roman factory site at Arikamedu adjoining the lagoon is a statue of Buddha (meditating) at the Brahmankoil temple,¹ which belongs to the 7th–8th Century A.D. period.

Pukār or Kāveripūmpattinam the famed port capital of the Cōlas, so vividly described in the Sangam texts, is in archaeological terms one of the least explored sites. The Sangam texts, especially the *Silappadikaram* and the *Maṇimekalai*, laud this

¹. The local priest at the Koil and the community around this area worship this statue as Isvara.
as an important centre of the Buddhists which also had many Jain and Brahmanic centres. The Buddhist centres in the city have been described even in the Mahāvamsa. The excavation reports indicate that at Pallavanesvaram in Kaveripattinam, a Buddhist monastic complex with residential apartments (kuṭi). The apsidal chaitya remains here have been dated to the 4th-5th Century A.D. (Rao 1962-63:163-165; IAR 1964-65:42; 1965-66:35). From the evidence available according to the present level of archaeological work, even at Nagapattinam, the pre 3rd Century A.D. period does not yield anything positive for traits on Buddhism for our period. The post 5th-6th Century A.D. period seems to have had a more conducive environment for Buddhism at Nagapattinam (Ramachandran 1968).

Kanchipuram, the city of Buddhist temples so elaborately described by Hieun-Tsang, did not however yield any impressive remains from the excavations at Kamaksi and the Ekamreshvaran temples. Though the pre-Pallava cultural layer did yield items of Buddhist character belonging to 1st/2nd Century A.D. (IAR 1969-70: 34), the so-called Buddhist structures actually emerged during the Pallava period (4th-9th Century A.D.) and not earlier (IAR 1970-71: 50). However, certain scholars are doubtful about the 'Buddhist character' of these structures (Champakalakshmi 1975-76:116).

In the extreme south at Kayalpattinam, Maloney reports that there are early Buddhist antiquities there (1976:32). However, we have no other positive evidence to supplement the above statement.
The significance of the archaeological evidence therefore is that there is positive evidence for Buddhism from 3rd Cent. B.C. and that the continued occurrence of Buddhist sites at coastal sites during the subsequent period (post 5th Cent. A.D.) does establish that this religion survived where commerce thrived and to a lesser extent in the interior, where temples controlled by Brahmins dominated.

IV - i

The narrations in the *Dīpavamsa* and the *Mahāvamsa* very clearly gives credit to the Third Council for having initiated the introduction of Buddhism to west of Zone III or Sri Lanka. The same sources closely associate Asoka, his son and daughter i.e. Mahinda and Sangamitta, as the prime movers in bringing the Dhamma to Sri Lanka. Some however hold the view that Buddhist monks may have resided in Sri Lanka prior to the advent of Mahinda (Adikaram I953:47). This view is largely based on the events recorded in the *Dīpavamsa*, *Mahāvamsa* and the *Samantapāsādika* on the visits of the Buddha and not on positive archaeological or inscriptiveal evidence.

On the basis of certain other evidence, it can be suggested that Buddhism was not unknown before the arrival of Mahinda. Taking into account the developing long distance exchange mechanism, such a situation was not an impossibility, where the monks moved along these trade routes and probably in the company of merchants moving south. In fact, both, Mahinda and Sanghamitta left for Tambapanni from Vedisa and Tamralipti respectively, which were important commercial centres and points of departure to the south. In this connection, one cannot totally reject the view that the Brahmi script may have been introduced to Sri Lanka by merchants
arriving from the north (Paranavitana 1959:84; 132, 137; Maloney 1976:24). I

It is also interesting that in its description of the intrusive north Indian religious groups during the reign of Pandukabhaya, the Mahāvamsa mentions the existence of Brahmana, Jaina, Paribrajaka, Ājivaka groups at Anuradhapura (vide Ny. xx). Several scholars have indicated the existence of these creeds during the pre Mahinda period and also the continued survival of some of these groups e.g. the Brahmana and Jaina groups, during the Early Historic period. In fact, the early inscriptions confirm the strong social position held by the Brahmāṇas in the Early Historic society.

Similarly, as we have pointed out in the case of south India, both Jaina and Buddhist monks used a common form of address and there is no reason to accept that all cave donations in Sri Lanka were

I. The period during which the Brahmi script was introduced to Sri Lanka is yet to be established with greater precision. The fact that inscriptions on stone initially appeared soon after the introduction of Buddhism to Ceylon and their content being Buddhistic, Paranavitana considers the script to have arrived with the earliest missionaries from India, though he indicates the possibility that the Indo-Aryan merchant-settlers who lived in Sri Lanka prior to the arrival of Mahinda, possessed some knowledge of the art of writing (1959). Maloney also considers the merchants who arrived in the south in search of precious items during the pre-Mauryan period, responsible for the introduction of the Brahmi script to these areas (1976).
exclusively donated to Buddhist monks. In any event, if the other major religious groups of north India were present in the island before Mahinda, there is always the logical possibility that Buddhist monks may have arrived during the same period. We are equally unaware as to how many coastal or agrarian settlements or forest caves had resident monks before Mahinda's arrival.

It is clear that the development of Buddhism in Sri Lanka follows a pattern similar to the other two macro Zones. The initial penetration and the proper institutionalization spread out within a period of two to three centuries. Superficially, Sri Lanka shares a common feature with the other macro Zones of having two phases in the development of Buddhism in the island. However, the very nature of the institutional development in Sri Lanka, gave the religious symbolism associated with Buddhism an identity specific to its geo-physical region housing an island society.

Several scholars have touched upon the relationship between the Early Historic Buddhist establishments in Sri Lanka and the political elite (vide Rahula I956; Adikaram I953; Ellawala I969; Hettiarachchi I972; Gunawardana I980). All these studies have brought out in detail different aspects related to the Mauryan influence, Mahinda's mission, the popularization of Buddhism and its institutionalization and also the development of different sectarian schools.

In Sri Lanka too, the pre-state indigenous political elite represented by clan chieftains formed one of the earliest groups to embrace Buddhism. In Chapter III we have suggested that the pre-state political elite in Sri Lanka consisted of intrusive
elements (original clan chieftains from the Megalithic-BRW complex), clan chieftains of the Mesolithic complex (who were absorbed to the early Iron Age culture) and probably intrusive aryанизed elements from the east coast of India (who were involved in long distance trade). They were known as parumaka (Fem. parumakala/parumakali), raja.aya and gamapi. We have also suggested that the parumakas can be called the earliest group among the political elite.

The distribution pattern of the early Brahmi inscriptions of Sri Lanka reveals certain features useful to our study (vide Map no. 3): These inscriptions coincide closely with regions having Megalithic-BRW sites. In fact Brahmi inscription-bearing drip-ledge cave sites, donated either by parumakas or rajhas, are located adjoining Megalithic BRW sites. In certain cases, these Brahmi inscriptions carry non-Brahmi symbols which are also found as post-firing graffiti marks on Megalithic pottery. These inscriptions are also distributed in various eco-zones located in coastal, hinterland, lower montane regions. Interestingly, political elite coincided with these inscription bearing sites. It is therefore apparent that, unlike in Andhra, a larger segment of the political elite of the pre state period in Sri Lanka made their endowments to resident monks associated with their non urban habitation sites or village units. In any event, when Buddhism was introduced to Sri Lanka, it did not have a developed urban complex, but a proto-urban situation. In this sense the early Brahmi inscriptions may indicate that during the earliest phase, Buddhism in Sri Lanka was mainly represented by Brahmavasi monks, where as Brahmavasi monks became important at a subsequent date. This clan-
based, non-urban, pre-state social base developed particular features in the course of its relationship with Buddhism. One must however bear in mind that the engraving of these inscriptions spread over a period of 2-3 centuries and the physical distribution must be viewed within this time span and not as a rapid diffusion in time and space.

The attraction of these clan-based chieftains to Buddhism may have rested largely on its ability to act as a force giving social legitimacy and as an agency of acculturation. We have already indicated that the pre 3rd Cent. B.C. techno-cultural matrix in Sri Lanka consisted mainly of the Megalithic-BRWN culture and the Neolithic culture. Archaeological evidence indicates that these groups had integrated within the pre 3rd Cent. B.C. Early Iron Age culture, and that they existed as a backward village community. During the end-phase of the Proto Historic period and the beginning of the Early Historic period they came into contact with long distance traders of their intermediaries through the exchange mechanism. This same mechanism may have brought in the Buddhist monks to these clan chieftains who controlled resources. It is evident that the resident community may have developed some form of communication with the clergy. However, it is interesting to note that some inscriptions have letters engraved upside down. Most probably the engraver had to copy a script (and language) unfamiliar to him. The Buddhist monks may have drafted such inscriptions.

While a fair number of the parumaka title holders used Indo-Aryan personal names on certain occasions, they even used Indo-Aryan kinship terms in place of Dravidian ones (e.g. bhāgineya/
They also took up Indo-Aryan terms denoting their economic position or economic activity e.g. (tamba) Tabā Tisa, bōjika, vanijha etc. This became more apparent especially when the parumakas turned to trade and commerce in post 2nd Cent. B.C. Another important aspect of this process of acculturation was the ability for the peaceful mendicants to thrust inland and break into hostile Mesolithic areas and convert such communities as followers of the Indo-Aryan culture and religion. This may have opened up mineral rich areas to the Iron Age people in the lower areas. An overlap between the Early Historic BRW and Mesolithic tools at Rawana-ella, Karandupona and Kitulgala and also the existence of caves for monks in the vicinity of these sites may prove this point.

The mechanism of acculturation quite naturally provided an ideological and cultural basis for social differentiation on the one hand and social legitimacy on the other. We have already indicated the significance of absorbing the monuments venerating the dead and the cult tree to popular Buddhism. As patron of the resident monks in the caves and the associated series of Buddhist rituals, the chief may have acquired greater status in the eyes of

1. In addition to the Bō-sapling brought by Sanghamitta, it is recorded that 32 Bō-saplings emerged from it. These were planted at various centres in the island (MV, xix, 6).

2. It is evident that Buddhism was introduced (according to the texts) as a religion and not as a philosophy. According to the Mahāvamsa (xiv) the sermons preached by Mahinda were: Cūlahatthi-paddapāma-sutta (an introduction to the Tripiṭaka), Pūtavatthu (on hells and spirits), Vimāṇavatthu (on heavenly abodes), and the Bālapandita-sutta (on the fool and the wise man). All these suttas stress on lay ethics.
the resident community. It is therefore not surprising that some chieftains even took up the title Dama-rajha (Dharma raja i.e., king of righteousness). The chieftain as the leader of the community could derive a portion of the surplus production of the resident community to sustain these non producing monks. This acquisition may have been explained off as an act of merit (kus'ala kamma) done in the spirit of gift giving with detachment i.e. dana. Perhaps this explanation suited the political elite who not only required greater resources, but also needed to subordinate the primary producer more effectively in post 2nd/1st Cent. B.C.

For the first time, the political elite obtained a lasting method of carefully recording lineage members belonging to the genealogy. Often these inscriptions carried clan (?) ensigns as non-Brahmi symbols. The very act of recording an endowment, was, in another sense, competing with equals to acquire differentiation through prestige. Differentiated access to resources may have led to rank distinction among the parumakas. It is not impossible that some of them may have acquired the imposing Indo Aryan titles such as rajha and Aya in an effort to differentiate themselves from the rest. We have brought out several cases of rajhas and ayes who listed their genealogy going back to several generations in order to establish legitimacy. If the Kavantissa legend associated with Sāruraththa (vide Dhātuvamsa) can be given credence, resident monks at particular localities may have given some form of support to regional chieftains. There is strong evidence to show that members from elite families joined the sangha (vide Paranavitana 1970:No. II34) and this may have resulted in a strong interaction between the political elite and the sangha at particular

It is possible to suggest that the integration of the pre-state clan chieftains (and their communities) to the Great Tradition may have contributed in a major way to the subsequent political integration initiated by a particular elite family. In this connection at least the two earliest generations of the Gamani clan may have been non-Buddhists. With the expansion of the lineage group to different geo-physical areas, they may have patronized this religion for political expediency. The Kavantissa episode at Serurattha is a case in point.

It is significant that in the post 1st Cent. B.C. period, parumakas and members of the bureaucracy, along with royalty formed a major segment of the upāsaka group and in the post 1st/2nd Cent. A.D. period, a greater proportion of donations were made by royalty. These donations were different to the pre-Christian cave donations and other materials donated to the saṅgha. The post Christian donations were primarily endowments of land, coins, villages, tanks, channels and labour (vide Paranavitana 1983) which was to set the pattern for monastic landlordism in the subsequent epoch (vide Gunawardana 1979).

Perhaps the logical culmination of using religion for political integration and the final integration of the primary religious centre with the political capital of the early state in Sri Lanka took place at Anuradhapura during the period of Duṭṭhagāmāṇī. The Mahāstūpa (i.e. Suvarṇamāli cetiya) constructed by Duṭṭhagāmāṇī not only stood as the symbol of this synthesis between Buddhism and the state, but this epoch also gave an impetus to urban based monastic Buddhism over rural-based āraṇyaka Buddhism. This synthesis
Chart No. 3

- Buddha's visit
- Buddha's genealogy
- Councils - To maintain purest form of Buddhism
- Mauryas (Asoka)
- Coming of Vijaya
- Pandukabhaya
- Tissa and Mahinda
- Dhthagamani

Buddha's vision of holy land
Ouster of yakkas
King of Anuradhapura linked with Sakya vamsa thus given kṣatriya status.

Purest form of Buddhism introduced during Tissa, who has Sakya blood.
- It was brought by the son of the great emperor.
- Establishment of Mahāvihāra to be the guardian of the purest form of Buddhism.

Plays the role of the great protector of the legitimacy of the House of Anuradhapura and the (Mahāvihāra) church.
was recorded in the Mahāvamsa as a charter legitimizing the supremacy of the Anuradhapura ruling house over the island as the protector and defender of Buddhism.

IV - ii

In Sri Lanka, the role of Buddhism in society did not differ very much from what it was in Andhra. The upward mobility of primary producers involved in crafts and agriculture, enabled them to share trade and commerce and even political power with the old elite. The latter we described in Chapter III in relation to the new parumaka appointments given to the agrarian and commercial elite. In fact their material affluence rested on the new transformations in the Early Historic society (vide Chapter IV).

It is relatively clear that sections of the parumakas, gahapatis/kutumbikas, vanijas, aśā, Baratas/Batas and gamikas did not belong to the old elite. They were essentially products of a class society. It is clearly the economic factor and connections to decision making groups that determined social status. Jāti status did not assign social status at this stage. In this situation the Buddhist establishments provided the best opening for sanctions giving social status.

In Chapter IV we have described social units related to production. For instance, we find several craft specialists calling themselves gahapati. Similarly, in certain cases agriculturists also call themselves gahapati. In their donative records these gahapatīs often mention their kula, composed by the nuclear and the extended family. Therefore what we have at the lowest level is
the upward mobility of primary producers who operate in a house-
holding economy (based on the kula). When they embraced Buddhism
and patronized the Buddhist establishments, they became members
of the prescribed society with an identity. In addition, the
theory of kamma and rebirth provided them with hope to strive
towards better material conditions in the future by performing
good acts towards fellow beings and the religious establishments.

Secondly, the more affluent sections of the agrarian elite
along with the vanija made use of the Buddhist establishments to
display their wealth. In this, they were at par with the old
elite and with royalty. Inscriptions of this period clearly
indicate their munificence and affiliation to the dominant religi-
ous ideology. In fact when sections of the agrarian and commercial
elite entered the saṅgha as Bhikkhus, it naturally resulted in a
closer affiliation between the clergy and the new elite. In one
case a saṁāna joined a group of gahapati and a navika as a member
of their council (Paranavitana 1970:No. 94), a case similar to
gota saṁāna at Battiprolu.

Thirdly, the Buddhist establishments provided an opportunity
for the new elite to interact with the other elite groups in
society. This was made possible by making joint donations.
Brāhmaṇa, parumaka, asa, gamika, rajha, vanija, gahapati groups
interacted on certain occasions to make such donations. Perhaps,
another interesting feature related to this interaction is the
service provided by the Buddhist establishments for local and
foreign elite groups to interact. This is best represented by the
Dameja and Barata groups mentioned in the inscriptions. They were
mostly visiting south Indian merchants who patronized the Buddhist
establishments, often with local elite groups. In this connection one may recall the visit made by a kutumbika from Ḫam (Sri Lanka) to south India, who made a joint donation with an Ay chieftain to a monk (Buddhist or Jain) at Tirupparakunram in Madurai (Mahadevan 1966: No. 51).

Fourthly, in addition to its ability to integrate individuals to the Great Tradition, the Buddhist establishments acted as an agency of acculturation-assimilation and integration. It is fairly clear that the Indo-Aryan culture made its impact felt in the post 4th Cent. B.C. Thus household units of the preexisting cultures were assimilated to the Indo-Aryan fold primarily through the Buddhist establishments. Subsequently, it also acted as a useful avenue strengthening group consciousness. For instance the involvement of the nuclear or the extended family in donations or in ritual ceremonies of the temple, was a useful exercise in this direction. Alternatively, economic units such as guild or corporate bodies made common donations, which may have cemented their group consciousness even at the spiritual level.

The success of Buddhism as an agency of acculturation is best demonstrated in relation to external groups. We have already pointed out that certain Dameda (gahapati and vanija) groups took up Indo-Aryan names and patronised Buddhist establishments. In this context, the Baratas present a remarkable case study. The Baratas, who are known to the south Indian texts as Paratavar, arrived in Sri Lanka for commercial purposes. They had already Sanskritized their name to Barata and went on to take Indo Aryan personal names vis. Uttara, Jyoti, Tissa etc. One Barata, even took up the term gahapati (Paranavitana 1970: No. 643). Then they went on to patronise
the Buddhist establishments. In fact they followed up this process when some of their members entered the Order and even specialized in particular sectors of the doctrine e.g. majhima-banaka (ibid. No. 330). Though the Baratas continued some of the social practices of the Dravidian culture such as cross cousin marriage and the use of kinship terms such as marumakana (ibid. No. 643), they had clearly entered the island society through the opening provided by the Buddhist establishments. If we can consider the Batas as a section of the Baratas, then it is clear that this community not only integrated themselves in total terms with the culture, economy and society of Early Historic Sri Lanka, but they acquired for themselves a permanent niche as a powerful section within the elite (supra pp.514-6; also Table No. 26).

It is evident that, this internal and external interaction, the very location of Buddhist establishments in the rural tracts, at internal production-distribution centres and at coastal points (vide Nicholas 1963) became an integral part in the process of resource movement within the island. Though there is little evidence of the Buddhist establishments in Sri Lanka playing the role of the banker, some of these establishments had come to acquire a large amount of wealth. The roots of this situation developed internally with the structural evolution of the sangha in Sri Lanka during the Early Historic period (for a complete analysis of the clergy, epithets and specialization vide Paranavitana 1970 - Introduction). Community and social integration becomes most successful through a common culture and religion.

It may be suggested that from the very beginning, the clergy in Early Historic Sri Lanka may have consisted of members drawn in
from elite families. The early inscriptions either mention their social origins or affiliations while making joint donations with such elite groups. For instance, we come across a son of Parumaka who became a monk (Paranavitana 1970:No. II34), while some individuals used the terms Barata and Bata and even āda after they entered the Order of monks. In this connection the Mahāvamsa corroborates the above assumption when it mentions the issaras and vassas were ordained by Mahinda (xx, I4-I5). We have indicated that the Issaras and Vessas belonged to the same group and are known as āda in the inscriptions (supra P. 444-500). In another interesting case, the son of a Brāhmaṇa entered the fold and he mentions his father's social status (Paranavitana 1970:No. II94). This is more evident if we take up the cases of joint donations made by certain monks: These cases range from Parumakas and Kumāras to Batas, Gamikas, Gahapatig and even a goldsmith (Paranavitana 1970:Nos. II96, 593, 1062, 535, 529, 173, 215). It is also interesting to note that certain monks did maintain close links with their kula. For instance, we come across inscriptions where donations were made by a particular kula to one of its members who became a monk (ibid. No. 276, II96).

All this obviously implies that certain monks enjoyed economic benefits, which points to some degree of internal differentiation. Though donations were made in general to the 'sangha of the four quarters, present and absent', the early Brahmi inscriptions mention donations made to individual monks. In one case, a monk (a Bata) is mentioned as a vihāra samika (Paranavitana 1970:No. 896c; also No. 489). In another case a monk donated a cave, a stūpa and a mansion at Cittanakara (ibid. No. 815).
The above clearly indicate the nature of the Buddhist establishments in Early Historic Sri Lanka, where it had a much closer overlap with the society and economy and also the political structure than Macro Zone I and II. Perhaps this situation may indicate the development of monastic Buddhism in Sri Lanka in association with the Land Grant economy, which gave sustaining power to these establishments. In the other Macro Regions, on the contrary, it had to give way to the Land Grant economy dominated by the Brāhmans at the grass roots level.