

A Historical Study of the Matiyaganē Mayurāwathi Rajamahā Vihāraya

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Abstract

Matiyaganē Mayurawathi Raja Maha Viharaya is a temple in the Narammala Divisional Secretariat Division in the Kurunegala District of the North Western Province. This temple has a history of about two thousand years. However, the long history of this temple has not been examined in depth yet. Accordingly, the historical significance of this temple will be studied through this investigation. Both primary sources and secondary sources were used for this study. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with selected people living in the area who know the field. The field observation method also was used for this research. This temple started in the Anuradhapura era and has remained a monastery until today. This research examines how the temple was qualitatively associated with history and national history from the Anuradhapura period to the Kotte period. Accordingly, this research aims at investigating the history of the *Matiyaganē Mayurawathi Raja Maha Viharaya* and the adjacent area from a historical point of view. It was clear that the *Mayurawathi Rajamahā Viharaya in Matiyaganē* was associated with religious history and the political and social conditions in the area.

Keywords: Buddhism, Inscriptions, *Matiyaganē*, *Mayurawathi*, *Sannas*

INTRODUCTION

With the introduction of Buddhism to Sri Lanka in the 3rd century AD, it became the state religion of the country and began to spread rapidly throughout the island due to the support of the ancient rulers. Thousands of monks lived in major monasteries such as Mahavihara, Abhayagiriya, Tissamaharamaya, etc. in the 5th century. The norm that the king of Sri Lanka must be a Buddhist was fixed in the society of this country. This norm, which arose in the third century AD, continued until the demise of the local state in the 19th century AD. While the kings of this country supported Buddhism, the Buddhist monk and the temple had become the main force that decided every aspect of the society in this country. Buddhist monks were not only involved in teaching to the royal princes but in some cases, they were even involved in making decisions about the kingship of the country. Monks have even taken action to punish kings in cases where the king disobeyed the orders of the monks. The kings have arranged to perform every auspicious activity in life of the kings with the blessings of the monks. Not only the king but also the common people of this country did all the major activities of their lives in the temple and with the blessings of the Buddhist monk. Studying the history of Sri Lanka without focusing on Buddhism and its influences is impossible. The entire history of Sri Lanka was intertwined with Buddhism. Buddhist monks became the dominant force in determining the overall social, economic and political system of ancient Sri Lanka. The irreplaceable importance of Buddhism and Buddhist monks in Sri Lankan society started

to gradually decrease with the arrival of European nations in Sri Lanka. But even in those difficult stages, Buddhist monks and the Sinhala Buddhists worked with immense courage and protected Buddhism and Buddhist culture. For this reason, it is essential to examine the ancient temples where the monks lived and the historical significance associated with them.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Historians have been tempted to describe how Buddhist temples influenced the decision of the country's history. Anuradhapura Maha Vihara, which became the driving force in the religious field during the Anuradhapura kingdom period, has been the subject of a lot of research in the field of history and archaeology (Kulatunga, 2002). Also, several academic types of research have been done regarding prominent temples like Abhayagiriya, Rangiri Dambulla, Mihintalaya, and Tissamaharamaya which were most decisively affected during that period (Kulatunga, 1998; Ilangasinghe 1987; Mallavāracci 1993; Parker, 1884). The same is the case with the Polonnaruwa period. But research on the lesser-known religious centers that had a decisive impact on national history and local history, both in the early and modern periods, remains to be done. It is important in building national history as well as local history. Mayurawathi Raja Maha Viharaya is a religious center that has influenced the shaping of local history and national history for centuries. Few scholarly commentaries have

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been made on the history of the Matiyagane Temple and its associated history. In 2000, the Central Cultural Fund published a collection of articles entitled '*Vihara Vamsa Matiyagane Mayurawathi Rajamaha Viharaya*', which covered the Matiyagane Temple and the adjacent area in a documented form without conducting a comprehensive study based on historical perspectives. In 2006, Ven. *Habarakada Vajira* Thero has published a concise article entitled '*Vasara Dahas Gaṇanak Sri Vibhutiya Sangavagena Siṭi Matiyagane Mayuravati Raja Maha Vihara Parvata Lipiya Ha Sannas*'. It is primarily devoted to the study of the inscriptions of that temple. In addition to these documents, no extensive analysis of the *Mayurawathi Raja Maha Vihara* in *Matiyagane* or the adjacent area was found. Therefore, this research aims to examine the historical background of this *Rajamaha Vihara* and the impact of this temple on the formation of national and local history.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research mainly aims to critically evaluate the historical significance of *Mayurawathi Rajamaha Viharaya* in *Matiyagane*. As it is unable to find a broad evaluation regarding this historical event, this research would be a valuable attempt to drag out hidden historical details to the current society. This qualitative research incorporates two data collection methods: literature survey and field survey. According to the literature survey, both primary and secondary sources were used. Among that, primary sources were prominent. In the subject of that numbers of choronicals were observed. For secondary information, a certain number of books and research papers were used. Field investigations were conducted in *Mayurawathi Rajamaha Viharaya* in *Matiyagane*, *Dambadeniya*

Wijayasundaramaya, and *Asgiri Rajamaha Viharaya*. In-depth interviews were conducted with selected key informants. The researcher selected specific groups of people within the population, who had broad knowledge regarding particular research topics (data-rich cases). Twenty-one respondents participated in interviews. Collected historical data and oral communications were systematically analyzed based on the content analysis method. At the very outset, the available information was categorized in alignment with the main research questions of this study. Numerous details that were obtained during the interviews but which had no bearing on the research aims were omitted. Incomplete information was often received from interviews. When any information was incomplete and seemed less reliable, contemporary records and materials (primary sources) were used to cross-check and extract reliable information. In the end, it was possible to arrive at certain plausible conclusions, after comparing all related details with each other.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The geographical location of the Matiyagane Rajamaha Viharaya

This temple is located in the *Matiyagane East Grama Niladhari* Division of the *Narammala* Divisional Secretariat Division in the *Kurunegala* District of the North Western Province. This place is located about two miles east of the ancient kingdom of *Dambadeniya*. The temple is about 100 yards from the place called *Matiyagane Gurula* Junction on the *Kurunegala-Negombo* main road (*Vihara Vamsaya Matiyagane Mayurawathi Rajamaha Viharaya*, 2000: 01)



History of the Mayurawathi Rajamaha Viharaya

There are also various theories about how the village of *Matiyagane* got its name. Some believe that the word '*Mathi Vihara*' in the *Matiyagane* inscription '*Mathi*' later became '*Mathi*' and evolved into *Mati* (*Vihara Vamsaya Matiyagane Mayurawathi Rajamaha Viharaya*, 2000: 01). Various scholars have commented on the origin of the name of this temple based on the inscription in this temple. For example, *Senarath Paranavithana*, who read the inscription, mentions that the word '*Mathiraga*' here means '*Matthika*' in Sanskrit, which means 'clay', hence the name *Matiyagane* (*IC*, Vol. II, Part II, 2001: 284). According to *Senarath Paranavithana*, *Matiyagane* may have been used for this place thousands of years ago. However, Ven.

Habarakada Vajira Thero says that based on the inscription on the *Matiyagane* temple, this temple had not been called *Matiyagane* since pre-Christian times (*Vajirathero*, 2006: 338 - 339).

The villagers suggest that the area became the clay yard (*Mati Angane* in Sinhala) and later *Matiyagane*. The area was rich in clay which was used as a raw material for the pottery industry. 'There was plenty of clay in this village to make goods, as we have heard. That is why it was called *Matiyagane* in the sense of the area where the clay was found' (Key informant interviews: *Palitha Thero*, 2021.12.26). It is also said that this area was known as the '*Mathi Anganaya*' as ministers from ancient times inhabited it.

According to a legend, Princess *Mayuravathi*, the daughter of King *Devanampiyatissa*, was married to a prince named *Suriya* from *Dambadeniya*. While he was on his way to remote work, a sculptor made a statue of Princess *Mayuravathi* out of clay near the *Matiyagane* rock and informed the prince that the princess had arrived there. The prince who came there happy to see the princess pretended to be her call but did not receive an answer. The angry prince slapped the princess on the cheek. It is said that the prince, realizing that he had been deceived, shouted, *Mati Anganak, Mati Anganak* (a clay woman, a clay woman)

Prof. *Punchibandara Sannasgala* also states that the *Poojavalaya* was composed in this temple. The book was then taken to *Dambadeniya* along a clay road from this temple, and the area was based on that clay road (*Vihara Vamsaya Matiyagane Mayurawathi Rajamaha Viharaya*, 2000: 4). "We have heard that there was a clay road from the Matiyagane temple to the Dambadeniya Rajamaha Viharaya. I do not know more about that" (Key informant interviews: *SumanatissaThero*2021.12.26).

Another idea in folklore is that Princess *Mayuravathi*, the daughter of King *Devanampiyatissa*, started this temple and made a system of caves, made drips, and offered sacrifices. Therefore, the temple is named after Princess *Mayurawathi*. *Rajaratnakara* also mentions that Queen *Mayuravathi* lived in this area, confirming folklore (*Rajaratnakara*, 1990, p. 45).

According to the locals, the pool where Queen *Mayurawathi* bathed can still be seen in the village called *Hawuluwa*, which is close to this area. Although no remains have been found at present, the villagers speculate that the palace of Queen *Mayurawathi* may have been located in a village near *Detawa*.

However, at least from the *Kotte* period, the village was used as *Matiyagane* and the temple as *Mayuravathi*. Prominent historian *Tikiri Abhayasinghe* and father *Perera* also pointed out that *Matiyagane* was frequently used during Portuguese rule (*Abhayasinghe*, 1994, 47 : *Perera* 1920: 199).

Nine caves with dripstones in the temple. The largest of them is the cave with an ancient shrine room. To the south of the temple is a *devalaya* with ancient tools in the cave. According to the locals, it was built for the god *Yapa Bandara* (*Vihara Vamsaya Matiyagane Mayurawathi Rajamaha Viharaya*, 2000: 01). Two of the nine caves have been converted into a house of idols and a shrine. Almost all the remaining seven caves are half-covered or open with soil. The remains of several caves can still be seen today.

The old *Hawuluva Viharaya* was located in the cave below the *devalaya*. About a hundred years ago, a group of people demolished a new shrine that was supposed to be built. There was an old Bo tree near the place where the inscription is located northeast of the *Devalaya*. There is also a stone slab used for the flower seat of the Bo tree.



The stone slab used for the flower seat



The ancient shrine room

There is a mound of soil on the northeast side of the inscription. Archaeologists have identified the ruins of a stupa in the late twentieth century (*Vihara Vamsaya Matiyagane Mayurawathi Rajamaha Viharaya*, 2000: 01). However, there is a fence on private land in the middle of

that mound. Some time ago, the mound of stupas was dug by treasure thieves. Remains of various buildings can be found around the temple premises. We found several paving stones, slabs, tiles, building materials, and stair treads during our observation tour.



The Stupa



Building Materials

The origin of this temple seems to date back to the early *Anuradhapura* period. During the reign of King *Devanampiyatissa*, Buddhism came to Sri Lanka. King *Devanampiyatissa* played a significant role in spreading the influence of Buddhism in the *Anuradhapura* Kingdom and other parts of the country (*Mahavamsa*, 2004: 19, 63: *Rohanadeera*, 1998: 02). According to the *Mahavamsa*,

during this task, various temples were built in various parts of Sri Lanka under King *Devanapathisa* (*Mahavamsa*, 2004: 19, 63). Legend has it that the *Mayuravati* temple was one such temple. Based on the inscription in the lower courtyard of the *Mayurawathi* temple, Ven. *Habarakada Vajira Thero* and *Senarath Paranavithana* say that this temple belongs to the *Anuradhapura* era (IC, Vol. II, Part II, 2001: 284).

Accordingly, it is possible that this temple started in the early period of *Anuradhapura* and existed as a monastery. Nine dripstones are found in this temple. They appear to have been inhabited by monks. Usually, the name of the person who sacrificed the cave is mentioned above the drip of the cave, but no such thing can be seen in this cave system. Another critical point to note here is that the *Sannasa Patra* presented by the *Asgiriya MahaViharaya* to the Thero, who is usually the Chief Incumbent of this temple, also mentions '*Matiyagane Mayurawathi Rajamaha Viharaya*, which belongs to the state name of *Devanampiyatissa*.

Contemporary sources attest to the great respect for Buddhism and Buddhist monks by the King and the people during the *Anuradhapura* Kingdom. However, the kingdom of *Anuradhapura*, which lasted for several centuries, gradually ended around the tenth century in the face of Tamil invasions. Although King *Vijayabahu I* re-established a Sinhala rule after the end of the Soli rule, the second *Rajarata* rule originated in *Polonnaruwa*. It is difficult to trace the source of the *Mayurawathi* temple during the *Polonnaruwa* Kingdom. However, interviews in the area confirmed that monks may have lived in this place even during the *Polonnaruwa* Kingdom.

Nevertheless, with the invasion of *Kalinga Magha* in 1215 AD, the kingdom of *Polonnaruwa* also declined. Due to the cruel anti-Buddhist rule implemented by *Kalinga Magha*, the Sinhala elite and the Buddhist elites began to leave the *Rajarata* Kingdom (*Mahavamsa* Chapter 80, *Poojvaliya*, 1951: 791; *Rajavali*, 1997: 212). It appears that many of them came to *Dambadeniya* and *Yapahuwa*. At this time, a general named *Subha*, who was in *Yapahuwa*, established a monastery for the monks in the *Walasgala* area (*Rohanadheera*, 1998: 13). After the decline of the *Rajarata* Kingdom due to the *Magha* Invasion, the *Yapahuwa* Kingdom became the third kingdom of Sri Lanka in the 13th century after the migration of its inhabitants to the southwest (*Mahavamsa*, 2004: 14,15).

King *Vijayabahu III*, who made *Dambadeniya* his kingdom, brought the Tooth Relic and the relics of the bowl to *Dambadeniya*. It is also mentioned in the *Poojvaliya* that the *Vijayasundararamayain* *Dambadeniya* was built, and the Buddhist monks were housed in the temples in the suburbs and entertained on all fours (*Poojvaliya*, 2007: 786). The King worked hard to re-publish the destroyed scriptures and restore the Sangha's unity. This temple is a short distance from the ancient kingdom of *Dambadeniya*. Interviews with the elderly in the *Matiyagane* area revealed that this temple was also a direct contributor to King *Vijayabahu's* modernization of the *Yapahuwa* Kingdom. It was revealed in the interviews that there was an old footprint on this temple from *Dambadeniya*. *Parakramabahu II* succeeded *Vijayabahu III* in the kingdom of *Dambadeniya*. Under him, more services were rendered to Buddhism and the *Sangha Sasanathan* ever before. *Upasampada* was performed, and a sangha consensus was reached (*Poojvaliya*, 2007: 791). New temples were built, and the monks settled in the cave temples of the forest nature and took steps to establish pure Buddhism. (*Siridhamma*, 1971: 12) Accordingly, the *Matiyagane* temple, where a class of caves is located, was also under the patronage of King *Parakramabahu II*. Prosperity may remain. Due to this, the *Poojvaliya* also was composed. According to Mr. *Sannasgala*, the *Matiyagane* Vihara was the residence of the author of the *Poojvali*. Although he did not provide any evidence to support this claim, *W. Gunathilaka* points out that the painting in France depicts

(*Vihara Vamsaya Matiyagane Mayurawathi Rajamaha Viharaya*, 2000: 12). Thus, it is possible that the monks lived in this temple from the *Anuradhapura* period to the *Dambadeniya* period.

Although the *Matiyagane* temple was in excellent condition during the reign of *Dambadeniya*, it seems to have been in a dilapidated condition for about three centuries after that. Several lakes scattered throughout the area have fallen into disrepair since that period. It can be assumed that an epidemic may have caused it.

Again, information about the *Matiyagane* temple is revealed during the *Kotte* period. The *Sannasa* presented by King *Parakramabahu VI* gives information about the temple. The copper plate donated to this temple by King *Parakramabahu VI* of *Kotte* is one of the primary sources of that history. It is said that King *Parakramabahu VI* of *Kotte* renovated this temple and dedicated it to the *Devarakkitha* Thero who lived in this temple. Thus, it can be inferred that this place was in ruins after the *Dambadeniya* period. According to the Copper *Sannasa*, the renovation work of this temple was done at the invitation of Queen *Mayuravathi*.

According to the *Asgiri Thalpatha*, this temple was built by Queen *Mayurawathi* and is named assuring her services. According to the *Sannasa*, the temple was renovated by her and dedicated to *Devarakkhita* Thero in the 17th year of the reign of King *Parakramabahu VI* (*Vajira*Thero, 2006: p. 343). The King also donated about 500 acres of land to the temple through the *Sannasa*. Due to this, the area of *Matiyagane* may have belonged to the temple.

According to *Walter Wimala Chandra*, the *Mayuravathi* queen was the queen of King *Wickramabahu III* of *Gampola* (*Wimala Chandra*, 1970: 6). *Thundeniya*, *H.M.S.* also admits that she was married to *Vikramabahu III*. According to him, the father of Queen *Mayurawathi* was a viceroy named *Parakramabahu* who lived in *Senkadagala* (*Thundeniya*, 2002: 49). *Sunethra*, the queen of King *Parakramabahu VI*, is considered the daughter of Queen *Mayurawathi* and *Vikramabahu III*.

Accordingly, Queen *Mayurawathi* was the grandmother of King *Parakramabahu VI* of *Kotte*. In the seventeenth year of the reign of King *Parakramabahu*, Queen *Mayurawathi* informed the King to renovate the temple and offer it. Considering these facts, it can be concluded that Queen *Mayurawathi* was in her old age. According to the *Asgiri Upatha*, Queen *Mayuravathi* started the construction of this time around the year 1477 AD. That was about five years before King *Parakramabahu* came to power. According to the above description, this temple was in a very advanced stage during the *Kotte* period, but it gradually became extinct with the Portuguese invasion. Even when the Portuguese came to Ceylon, *Matiyagane* was still the capital of *Satkorala*.

The *Matiyagane* area is important not only for religious history but also for political history. *Matiyagane* was chosen by the Portuguese also as the capital of *Satkorale* (*Abeyasinghe*, 2006: 22). When King *Senarath* was the ruler of *Kandy*, *Matiyagane Senakotu wawatta* was the Portuguese center of Administration of *Sathkorale*. Father *S.G Perera*, who reports on the Portuguese period, refers to the area as '*Matiyagama*'. He reports that *Nikapitiya Bandara* in the area launched a revolt against the Portuguese. It is reported that *Nikapitiye Bandara* had set fire to the administrative center and the church at the *Matiyagane Senakotuwa Watta* while *Philip Oliveira*, who was the *Disawe* of *Satkorale*, was on his way to duty in

Sabaragamuwa from *Matiyagane*. It states that the revolt lasted for a week with the assistance of the King of Kandy (Perera 1920: 199 -200). In the end, the Portuguese claimed victory. *SenakotuwaWatta*, the center of the Portuguese, was close to the temple. It is not a secret that the *Matiyagane* temple may also have been affected by the Portuguese. Remains of stone structures found at various places on the temple land may be the ruins of the Portuguese ruin. However, *Rajasinghe II*, who succeeded King *Senarath*, was able to suppress the Portuguese rule at *Satkorale*. Accordingly, it appears that the *Mayuravathi* temple was modernized under the kings of the Kandyan kingdom. King *Rajasinghe II* renovated the *Mayurawathi* temple. This is explained by the silver *sannasa* offered to the temple in 1675AD.

At that time, the Chief Incumbent was Ven. *Gunadahe Dhammadassi* Thero. It is said that the King gifted him a set of robes, a gold ring, and many other things. It is said that a *Ganinnanse* also worked at the *Matiyagane* temple soon after. It is said that after the demise of that *Ganinnanse*, the temple was devoid of monks. The area's elite contributors gathered and travelled to Kandy. They asked the *Asgiriya Maha Nayaka* Thera to name a monk for their temple. As a result, the *Asgiriya MahaViharaya* named a monk after him, and from then on the *Matiyagane Mayurawathi Viharaya* joined the *Asgiriya MahaViharaya*.

After that period, written evidence of this temple is found during the English rule. J.M. Davis (Assistant Settlement Officer) describes the lands belonging to the temple in the document related to the land settlement dated 1910.09.12. That document is beneficial to look at the area's history at that time. These documents mention the area, population, etc., of the lands belonging to the temple at that time. One of the main points that can be deduced from the information contained therein is that the village was self-sufficient even at this time. According to it, the paintings of this cave temple have been repainted by artists in the *Matara* area. By 1891 there were only three hundred and twenty-two people living in the 1179-acre area of *Matiyagane*. Seventeen shares of temple land were given to those who played the drums for



Later, in 2001, the Department of Archaeology published the full text of this article and its meaning and transcripts under *Senarath Paranavithana*(IC, Vol. II, Part II, 2001: 284). According to it, *Paranavithana*, as the Acting Commissioner of Archaeology, had visited the site in 1928 and copied the letter. His research, including this one, had not been published for many years.

Habarakada Vajira Thero points out that *Senarath Paranavithana's* reading of the *Matiyagane* inscription is incomplete. He presents the text as follows.

1. Shidama! Kadawanaka VaviMatherahi tape
2. Salaviya Hiya Kethi Dopathi Bikusagaha

the temple. But those lands have now become private property. "In the past, all these villages were the property of this temple. That has changed over time." (Key informant interview: *Seneviratne*, 2021.12.27)

Epigraphic

There are three main inscriptions associated with the *Matiyagane* Temple. The three epigraphics are the *Matiyagane* rock inscription, the *Matiyagane Vihara Sannasa* presented King *Parakramabahu VI*, and the *Matiyagane Silver Sannasa* of King *Rajasinghe II*.

Matiyagane Inscription

The inscription is located about 60 meters to the left of the main entrance to the temple cave class. This inscription is on a rock about 12 feet long. There are three lines of letters found in the inscription. *Senarath Paranavithana* made a brief note of the *Matiyagane* rock inscription in the Ceylon Journal of science in 1933 (Ceylon Journal of Science II, Part III, 1933, 191). However, the full text of the inscription has not been published. Ven. *Siyambalapitiye Jinawara Dharmakeerthi Rathanapala* thero, who was the Chief Incumbent of the temple about a century ago, had sent a copy of the inscription to the then Commissioner of Archeology. The text is checked, and the text is in Sinhala. The text is as follows from its original version in the temple.

1. ShiddhamKada (Dora) VaviMathi (Vihara) rana pataya
2. Salaviya Hiya KethiDopathi `Bikusagaha
3. Asathi

1. ශිද්ධම්කඩ(දො)රවමිමති (විහ)රණපටය
2. සලවියහියකෙතිදොපතිබිකුසගහ
3. අසති

"Good luck! Kadadora Wewa Mathi Vihara [Given] The Bhikkhu Sangha owns two [parts] of the Salaviyahiya ".

What is inside the brackets is suspicious

The inscription has been in a state of disrepair for some time due to neglect and various explosions by treasure thieves in the vicinity of the inscription. However, no damage was done to its characters.



3. Asati
- According to the definition of Ven *HabarakadaVajira*, the income from the canals of the *Kadavanaka* tank and the two types of taxes in the *Salaviya* paddy field were sacrificed for the consumption of the Bhikku Sangha (Vajirathero, 2006: 336).

Matiyagane Copperplate of Parakramabahu VI

The history of the Copper *Sannasa* (Letters patent) temple from 1412 to 1467, which dates back to the reign of *Parakramabahu VI*, is important for study. The copper plate also bears the signature of King *Parakramabahu VI*; the sun and the moon. The authorship and legitimacy of the *Beligala Sannasa* belonging to King *Parakramabahu VI* confirmed

that the sun, moon marks, and signature are also found in the *Sannasa*. It was issued in the seventeenth year of the reign of King *Parakramabahu VI*.

King *Parakramabahu's* copper plate is beneficial to identify the connection of Queen *Mayuravathi* with this temple. *Sannasa* is also useful for understanding how the temple was renovated during the *Kotte* period, the Sangha who lived there at the time, and the contemporary temple properties.

Matiyagane Silverplate of King Rajasinghe II

This *Sannasa* is very useful to understand the present situation of *Matiyagane* Temple. King *Rajasinghe II* dedicated the *Sannasa* to Ven. *Gunadahe*. The *Sannasa* mentions that the frescoes of the temple were painted and the offerings and lands offered to the temple. Thus, *Matiyagane* was a temple village even during the Kandyan period. According to it, the temple was built by King *Rajasinghe II* using 3,000 bricks. It also houses four seven cubits Buddha statues and statues of *Vishnu* and *Saman*. It also describes how *Jataka* stories and events in the character of the Buddha were depicted.

This *Sannasa* helps us understand the patronage of King *Rajasinghe II* for the advancement of the declining Buddhist Sasana and the Sangha in the face of foreign invasions and the reckless actions of the local rulers. It also seems that the security of the property offered to the temples had to be taken care of. Some contemporary sannas as show curses are also found in the *Matiyagane Sannasa*. This emphasizes that if someone misuses or steals this property, they will suffer.

CONCLUSION

Although the *Mayurawathi Raja MahaViharayais* are located in the North-Western Province of Sri Lanka, it has been closely associated with the *Rajarata* civilization since the *Anuradhapura* Kingdom. Although archaeological evidence of a history of about two thousand years is clear, no long-term history is revealed from literary sources. Inspired by the flourishing conditions of the *Rajarata* civilization during its peaceful and prosperous period, this temple served as a shelter for the forest monks even during the declining civilizations. When the kingdoms moved southwest after the collapse of the *Rajarata* civilization, this temple was located in the vicinity of those kingdoms and may have received royal patronage in many cases.

The *Matiyagane* temple may have been important as a center of academic study, as it is widely believed that the temple provided accommodation for Ven. *Buddhaputra*, who wrote the *Poojavalīya*, and Ven. This temple which gained such importance during the *Dambadeniya* and *Kotte* kingdoms also had relations with the *Asgiriya Maha Viharaya*. Under the patronage of *Parakramabahu VI* of *Kotte*, this temple may have an increase in the service rendered for the religious upliftment of the area. The *Matiyagane* area also became the capital of *Satara Korale*. Accordingly, during Portuguese rule, *Matiyagane* functioned as the Portuguese center of *Satkorale*. Accordingly, an anti-Portuguese revolt broke out in the vicinity of *Matiyagane*. The rebellion successfully suppressed the Portuguese and sought to establish their dominance. Against this background, the *Matiyagane* temple may also have been threatened by the Portuguese. Under the patronage of King *Rajasinghe II*, the temple was revived but became a place of no monks in the face of subsequent political and Sasana crises. At the request of the *Asgiriya Viharaya*, the aristocracy of the area re-joined the

Asgiriya Maha Viharaya. It is also clear temples owned the majority of the land in the area in 1909 from the land report compiled by JM Davis (Assistant Settlement Officer) on behalf of the English Government. Therefore, archaeological evidence and literary sources confirm that the *Matiyagane Mayurawathi* temple influenced not only the religious history but also the socio-political life of the area from the *Anuradhapura* period.

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