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Pilgrimage and the Structure of Sinhalese Buddhism

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Throughout the history of Buddhism in South and Southeast Asia, Buddhists have undertaken religious pilgrimages to sacred places where, according to tradition, bodily relics of the Buddha are enshrined. This "cult of traces"[1] has been so widespread and powerful that at least one scholar has suggested that in the formative period of Theravāda Buddhism in Sri Lanka, it provided the primary focal point of spiritual orientation for much of the lay tradition.[2] As the monastic community focused its cultic activities upon the study, recitation and interpretation of the Buddha's teachings (*dhammakāya*), the laity propitiated the Buddha through venerating the remains of his physical body (*rūpakāya*). These two orientations represent the means by which the monastic and lay segments of the early Buddhist community sustained the legacy of the Buddha's life and teachings. The origins of this division of spiritual labor may be found in texts that are as ancient as the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, articulated perhaps within one hundred years of the death of the Buddha.

However, pilgrimage to sacred places where relics of the Buddha are enshrined is more than a matter of commemorating the great master. The Buddha's relics were popularly believed to be latent manifestations of miraculous power. Pious political rulers assumed that possession of the Buddha's relics legitimated and strengthened their abilities to rule.[3] From the time of the Indian emperor Asoka in the third century B.C., relics were closely associated with temporal power.

In modern Sri Lanka, kingship is now a matter of past history. Yet pilgrimage to sacred places associated with the Bud-

dha's relics continues to be a widespread religious practice. One of the holiest shrines in Sri Lanka is the Daḷadā Māligāwa (Temple of the Tooth) in Kandy. At all times during the year, especially during the annual Äsaḷa Perahära festival in July–August, thousands of traditional-minded Buddhists make a pilgrimage in order to honor the Buddha's relic. This is a brief study of pilgrimage to Kandy and its wider significance within the structure of Sinhalese Buddhism.

I. The Symbolism of the Relic and its Ritual Importance

Of the several reasons for the *daḷadā*'s (tooth-relic's) continous charismatic appeal for traditional Buddhists, one of the most important is its past association with the power of Sinhalese Buddhist kings.

The Daṭhavaṃsa—written by Dhammakitti in the twelfth century A.D. and purportedly based upon an ancient Sinhalese poem, the *Daḷadāvaṃsa*—contains a mythic account[4] of how the relic remained in Dantapura[5] under the patronage of a long line of righteous kings. According to this account, in the fourth century A.D. an Indian king, Guhasīva, converted to Buddhism, thereby angering the brāhmaṇical priests of his court. War followed when the priests complained to the Pāṇḍu king at Pāṭalipūtra. To insure the continued safety of the relic, Guhasīva gave it to his daughter and son-in-law and told them to take it to Ceylon. When they arrived with the relic, the Sinhalese king paid it great homage and placed it in a shrine known as the *Dhammacakka*. From that time, Buddhist kings protected the tooth-relic as if its well-being constituted one of their primary responsibilities.

The *Daṭhavaṃsa*'s account contains a number of significant motifs familiar to the traditional chronicles of Sri Lanka. In the first instance, off-spring of a converted Indian Buddhist monarch are sent on a royal mission to take relics to Sri Lanka. This parallels the *Mahāvaṃsa*'s account of how the alms-bowl Relic and scion of the Bodhi Tree were brought to Sri Lanka by Mahinda and Saṅghamitta during Asoka's kingship.[6] Second, its placement by the Sinhalese king in the *Dhamma-cakka* shrine explicitly identifies the relic with the king's duty to "rule by

righteousness."[7] Third, the legend helps to sustain a national belief that the future well-being of the Buddha's religion is in the hands of the Sinhalese people.[8]

An earlier account of the relic's importance is given by the Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hien, who traveled in Ceylon during the 5th century. By the time of Fa-Hien's account, venerating the tooth-relic had become an auspicious means for the king and the laity to "amass merit for themselves."[9] Ten days before the king sponsored a grand procession of the relic from his palace to the Abhyagiri monastery in Anurādhapura, a royal announcement containing a description of the Buddha's career as a bodhisattva was issued. The description, reminiscent of the *Vessantara Jātaka*, emphasizes how the Buddha sacrificed his entire kingdom out of compassion for the well-being of the world and implies that the bodhisattva career of the Buddha had already become an ideal model for Buddhist kings to emulate. Thus, by the fifth century, the tooth relic seems already to have become the king's own personal talisman and "palladium of the Sinhalese people."[10]

Bardwell Smith writes that the tooth relic continued to be of immense symbolic importance to Buddhist kings during the early medieval Polonnaruva period: "The regalia needed by monarchs to authenticate their sovereignty included the Tooth Relic and the Alms-Bowl Relic. The suspicion or dubious lineage that their absence implied spelled the promise of dire consequences. When taken, they were to be retrieved at any cost."[11] The symbolic importance of the tooth relic for the legitimacy of Buddhist kingship was not lost upon the people of the kingdom. The king's close association with the relic underscored the popular belief that the king was actually a "Buddha-in-the-making," the most pious religious layman of the realm.[12] His possession of the relic gave him access to sacral power which, ideally, he would use for the general well-being and security of his people. In this way, "royal power was regarded as an instrument of cosmic power."[13]

The king's relationship to this cosmic power was graphically illustrated in the ritual life of the city, a ritual life in which the tooth relic played an important role. The capital seems to have functioned as a sacred center, an *axis mundi,* from which righteous power through ritual performance was thought to be

magically radiated to the outlying provinces to insure stability and order. The king, thus, occupied a mediating position between cosmic power and his people. Rituals and relics were magical conduits of power enabling the king to meet his prescribed royal duties.

During the Kandyan period, the king's relationships to cosmic power and to his people were brought into unparalleled high relief with the inauguration of the annual Äsaḷa Perahära procession. In the middle of the eighteenth century, King Kīrti Śri Rājāsiṃha initiated sweeping religious and political reforms that he hoped would legitimate his South Indian Nayakkar dynasty in the eyes of the Sinhalese people.[14] Early in his reign, he reestablished orthodox lines of monastic ordination for the Asgiriya and Malwatta *nikāyas* (monastic chapters) in Kandy. Since the saṅgha was also a traditional source of legitimation for Buddhist kings, the importation of Siamese monks to confer *upasaṃpadā* (ordination) upon aspiring Sinhalese aristocratic monks constituted a calculated move to strengthen his rule. But the move almost backfired. The Siamese became grievously offended when they witnessed the king promoting a *perahära* (procession) in which Hindu gods wre publically venerated and dignified to the exclusion of the Buddha.[15] Kīrti Śri reacted to the monks' condemnation with discretion: "A new *daḷadā* (tooth relic) *perahära* was introduced into the general ritual complex and was given primacy over all other *perahäras.* The *perahära* in this form reestablished the primacy of Buddhism within the Sinhalese religious system."[16]

In so doing, the king wittingly or unwittingly fused together two powerful and ancient ritual traditions. Before the inclusion of the tooth relic into the ritual proccedings of the Äsaḷa Perahära, the ceremony consisted chiefly in the propitiation of deities who were petitioned by Hindu priests to insure the fertility and prosperity of the realm. Although the inclusion of the *daḷadā* in the ritual proceedings may have reestablished the primacy of Buddhism, the gods were by no means banished from the annual rites. Today, one of the major events of the Äsaḷa festival is a ritual circumambulation of four wooden *kapa* (poles), which symbolizes the king's former petitions to the gods for the kingdom's fertility and prosperity.[17] This ritual tradition complements the second rite of circumambulation, which

was introduced to accommodate the importance of the *daḷadā*. In that second circumambulation, the king, with the *daḷadā* caparisoned on a royal elephant, led a procession around the boundaries of Kandy in a symbolic "capture" or "righteous conquest." Together, the two circumambulation rites represent a dramatic theatrical enactment of what numerous scholars refer to as "the doctrine of the exemplary center."[18] More specifically, these rites represent an ontogeny of the king's power, which was rooted in ritually currying favor with the gods and invoking the power of the Buddha. The former insured prosperity, the latter righteous political order.

When the British seized the relic during their takeover of Kandy in 1815, some Buddhists openly worried about the future of Buddhism, while others (including the British)[19] believed that possession of the *daḷadā* would guarantee colonial hegemony. But since 1847 (when the British, under severe pressure from Christian groups in Britain as well as in Ceylon, turned over custody of the relic to the Asgiriya and Malwatta monasteries), the *daḷadā* has *officially* been regarded as a religious object only. Thus, Wilhelm Geiger has written:

> At the present the Daḷadā is no longer a symbol of political power, but is the revered centre of worship for all pious Buddhists living in Ceylon and for many thousands of pilgrims who come from abroad each year to profess their veneration and devotion for that holy relic of the Great Master of the World.[20]

Although Geiger's statement is formally correct, it cannot be denied that the relic's continued popularity is due in part to a resurgence in "civil religion" among Sinhalese Buddhists in the 19th and 20th centuries.[21] That is, the relic continues to symbolize the traditional cultural and social values of Sinhalese culture. Government tourism officials actively promote the Äsaḷa Perahāra at home and abroad as a national holiday celebrating indigenous customs and cultural identity. The relic's continued political symbolism is recognized by modern-day Sinhalese politicians, who find it expedient to participate in the *daḷadā*'s ritual procession or conspicuously to visit the Daḷadā Māligāva.[22] It is also evident that the Äsaḷa Perahāra procession continues to depict symbolically the social structure of Kandyan

society.[23] What these social and political facts reflect is that the *daḷadā* is a public symbol which expresses the continuing close association between religion and politics in this contemporary Asian society.[24]

Therefore, pilgrimage to Kandy constitutes both a religious and political act, especially in these times when Tamil separatism appears to be regaining some momentum in Sri Lanka. While it is clear that many traditional Buddhists undertake the pilgrimage to Kandy for purely religious reasons, and that their religious behavior exhibits a personal devotion to the Buddha resembling that of Hindu bhakti, the entire pilgrimage complex retains something of its medieval ethos. From its participants, it commands a reverential "civitas." Even the three daily prayers offered by officiating bhikkhus at the Daḷadā Māligāva repesent petitions to the Buddha for the continued moral order and prosperity of the realm.[25] H. L. Seneviratne, whose studies of ritual life in Kandy are especially definitive, has referred to the public Äsaḷa Perahära performances and ritual life in the temple as part of a "creative and selective process" by which a traditional culture is asserting its indigenous systems of value and power in response to changes brought about by modernity.[26] That is, while significant numbers of traditional Sinhalese have remained separated from new forms of culture and social, economic and political power, pilgrimage to Kandy remains a means to assert and maintain beliefs in indigenous concepts of power and cultural legitimation. Or, pilgrimage to Kandy is a religious act affirming traditional modes of power used to maintain order and prosperity.

II. Pilgrimage to Kandy and the Structure of Sinhalese Buddhism

The comparative study of pilgrimage has much in common with the comparative study of religion in general. Pilgrimage patterns are cross-cultural, historically archaic, and persistently popular. Within these patterns both cognitive and affective formulations of spiritual piety may be significant for both the personal and social orientations of existence. Also, while pilgrimage, like religion, can be defined in relatively simplistic terms, there is no single body of critical theory that can serve as a

wholly adequate framework for its definitive interpretation. Like religion in general, pilgrimage seems to resist facile reductions. It is no doubt true that the pilgrimage process in general, especially from an existential perspective, manifests a uniform structure. Turner is largely correct in identifying that process in terms of separation, liminality and re-aggregation.[27] Moreover, it is equally clear that pilgrimage, as a devotional act, can result in a transformation or regenertion of social and religious identities. However, differing types of religious behavior observable at various sacred places of pilgrimage also indicate that pilgrimage may not necessarily climax in "exterior mysticism," or in an anti-structural, convivial, egalitarian "communitas."[28] Rather, a comparative study of religious behavior at various pilgrimage sites indicates that certain sacred places are settings for specific types of religious behaviors, not all of which conform to Turner's notion. In the case of Kandy, I have characterized this behavior as reverential "civitas." I will now determine the significance of pilgrimage to Kandy first within the context of Sinhalese Buddhist religion and then within a cross-cultural comparative context.

While pilgrimage to Kandy sustains the ethos of the public civil religion formerly administered and symbolized by the presence of the king, other sacred places in Sri Lanka and India express other dominant spiritual orientations of great importance to the Sinhalese. Bodh Gayā in India, the seat of Gotama's enlightenment, and Sarnāth, the place of the Buddha's first sermon, have been for centuries the destinations of pious Buddhist pilgrims, especially Theravāda bhikkhus. Gunawardana has pointed out that pilgrimage to sacred places in India associated with the most important events in the life of Gotama continuously resulted in the cross-fertilization of Theravāda Buddhist traditions during the medieval periods of Sinhalese history.[29] Then, as now, Sarnāth and, especially, Bodh Gayā, are centers of Buddhist cultural integration.

More importantly, however, observable religious behavior at Bodh Gayā and Sarnāth has very little in common with the ritual life carried out in Kandy. At Bodh Gayā, except for the remnants of an Asokan gateway, signs of kingship and civil religion are totally absent. There are no public pageants or processions celebrating ethnicity or nationalism. Here, the fo-

cus is upon the mythic events surrounding the enlightenment of the Buddha. Buddhist pilgrims, escorted either by Tibetan, Japanese, Burmese, Thai or Sinhalese monks, visit seven holy sites within the boundaries of the Mahābodhi shrine that commemorate the Buddha's activities before, during and after his enlightenment. The emphasis, in all forms of ritual behavior at Bodh Gayā, is upon the paradigmatic spirituality of the Buddha, a spirituality which can be and has been emulated for centuries by Buddhist religious virtuosos. In each of the national temples representing the various strands of Buddhist tradition, the life of the Buddha is depicted either in mural paintings or in a series of framed pictures. Thus, at Bodh Gayā, what is venerated is not the "this-worldly" power of the Buddha and the means by which that power can be utilized to sustain the moral order and prosperity of a nation, realm of kingdom. Rather, what is quietly celebrated, in meditation and commemoration, is the path to nibbāna through enlightenment, of which the life of the Buddha is a model. Therefore, in reference to a frequently employed metaphor for describing the structure of Theravāda Buddhism (the "two wheels of *Dhamma*"[30]), pilgrimage to Bodh Gayā constitutes a cultic affirmation of the religious quest for an "other-worldly" nibbāna. That is, in contrast to Kandy, where "this-worldly" Buddhaic power is symbolized by the tooth-relic and its association with Sinhalese Buddhist ethnicity or nationhood, Bodh Gayā is a place of pilgrimage celebrating spiritual transcendence of the social and temporal world, the path which leads beyond conditioned, saṃsāric existence. To put it another way, Kandy is an *axis mundi* for the establishment of orderly power in this world while Bodh Gayā symbolizes the Buddhist quest for liberation beyond all forms of order. Unlike pilgrims to Kandy, most pilgrims to Bodh Gayā, at least until modern times, have been bhikkhus. In the life of the Buddha and in the Bodhi Tree that symbolizes the Buddha's enlightenment, bhikkhus envisaged the possibility of their own spiritual emancipations. In the Buddha's life they find a personal model which inspires emulation. Here, the pilgrimage experience is one of commemorating the spiritual paradigm of the master.

But the social "this-worldly" and personal "other-worldly" orientations represented by pilgrimage to Kandy on the one

hand and pilgrimage to Bodh Gayā on the other do not exhaust all dimensions of Sinhalese Buddhist spirituality. Neither the Buddha nor the power symbolized by his relics can come to the direct aid of those faithful experiencing an immediate personal crisis. In times of physical affliction or mental anxiety, many Buddhist laity undertake pilgrimages to the shrines of deities who, although occupying subordinate positions in relation to the Buddha within the Sinhalese hierarchical pantheon, are believed to have the power and disposition to respond to the fervent pleas of their faithful. In modern-day Sri Lanka, increasing numbers of Sinhalese Buddhists make pilgrimages to the shrine of Skanda, the son of Śiva, also known as Murugan, or more popularly, as Kataragama. Although Kataragama is the god par excellence of the Ceylon Tamils of the Jaffna peninsula, many Sinhalese Buddhists participate in Kataragama's annual *perahära* festival, which recalls the god's mythic love affair with a *Vedda* maiden and his establishment of a shrine where he responds to the needs of his devotees. Here, religious experience and religious behavior cannot be characterized in terms of reverential "civitas" or commemoration of the Buddha's paradigmatic spirituality. Rather, the cult of Kataragama involves an astonishing array of ascetic and exotic forms of ritual behavior, all engaged in out of either intense emotional gratitude to Kataragama for healing various afflictions, or as a means of persuading him to intervene on the devotee's behalf. The cultic ambience at Kataragama is utterly bhakti. That is, it is decidedly emotional and devotional in tone and frequently culminates in states of intense ecstasy.[31] Furthermore, worship here is highly personal, emphasizing the intimacy between the devotee and his god.

While Bodh Gayā represents the nibbānic orientation or model of spiritual quest ideally emulated by the Theravāda bhikkhu, and while Kandy represents the public civil religion legitimated by the presence of the tooth-relic and its past association with traditional power, Kataragama is a sacred place where individuals can appeal to perceived active divine power to intercede on their behalf. Kataragama is not a Buddha who has transcended saṃsāra, nor is he a protector of the nation-state. He represents a form of sacral power that is immediately accessible to the common person in times of great personal

need. Ecstatic and petitionary devotionalism at Kataragama is thus quite different from the spirituality of the bhikkhus, whose religious quests are based upon rigorous self-effort or spiritual discipline. Kataragama represents "other-power" manifest in "this-world." Although the power of the tooth-relic in Kandy might also be described in this way, its power was (and is) traditionally appropriated for the general well-being of the king and thus the nation, while the power of the god Kataragama is enlisted for the benefit of any individual devotee who is willing to undertake austerities of self-mortification to express deep faith.

By comparing pilgrimage to Bodh Gayā and Kataragama with pilgrimage to Kandy, we see beginning to emerge a structure reflective of Sinhalese Buddhist religion in general, a religion replete with varying modalities of religious experience and religious expression. That is, none of the pilgrimages can be singled out as embodying a root metaphor characteristic of the general spiritual quest of all Sinhalese Buddhists. Rather, what this comparison suggests is that there are at least three major orientations within Sinhalese religion: 1) Bodh Gayā, a pilgrimage site commemorating the enlightenment experience of the paradigmatic Gotama, represents the spiritual orientation of the Theravāda bhikkhu quest for nibbāna through enlightenment; 2) Kataragama, a pilgrimage site where access to transformative "this-worldly" sacral power is sought, represents the orientation of the faithful lay devotee for whom the enlightenment quest of the bhikkhu is but a distant future possibility; and 3) Kandy, a pilgrimage site where religion legitimates a people's religious, cultural and political past and present through civil ceremony, represents an orientation shared by bhikkhu and layman alike: a national quest to preserve and promote the religion of the Buddha and consequently to maintain prosperity and moral order in society as a whole.

These three religious orientations, which are evident from this consideration of types of pilgrimage within Sinhalese religion, are not, however, entirely unrelated. What all three pilgrimages have in common is functional in nature: the need to cope with various manifestations of *dukkha* (suffering, unsatisfactoriness), the basic problem of human existence as perceived from within the Buddhist world view.[32] Thus, Sinhalese reli-

gious beliefs and practices, as they can be ascertained through a study of pilgrimages, represent complementary modes of response to specific aspects of the human condition. While *dukkha* is specified in particular fashion by individuals on the basis of their own personal experiences, types of response are in part determined by religious role (lay or monastic). From this perspective, pilgrimage to Kandy is ritual participation in public ceremonies traditionally designed to avert civil, ethnic, or national disintegration. That is, within the total field of Sinhalese religion, mass pilgrimage to Kandy represents continued affirmation of the sacralizing power of the Buddha to meet the collective material and social needs of the people. The "emotional response"[33] of thousands of peasants to the tooth-relic's annual procession attests to its continuing perceived efficacy as sacral power. Or finally, to phrase this another way, pilgrimage to Kandy is an act of collective allegiance to the traditional religious way of life upon which the indigenous order of social and economic existence has been based.

III. Cross-cultural Comparisons to the Kandyan Pilgrimage

In his recent book on pilgrimage and Christian culture, Victor Turner has identified Kandy as a "prototypical" pilgrimage. By "prototypical," he means "those pilgrimages which, on the authority of documentary or widespread traditional evidence, were established by the founder of a historical religion, by his first disciples, or by important national evangelists . . . ." He continues: "Such pilgrimages, though sometimes founded on ancient sites, dramatically manifest—in their symbolism, charter narratives, ecclesiastical structure, and general international repute—the orthodoxy of the faith from which they have sprung, and remain consistent with root paradigms." He goes on to cite as examples Jerusalem and Rome for Christianity, Mecca for Islam, Benares and Mt. Kailas for Hinduism and Kandy for Buddhism. Syncretic or archaic pilgrimages, which constitute his second type, are distinguished from "prototypical" pilgrimages in that they manifest "quite evident traces of syncretism with older religious beliefs and symbols." Finally, limiting the third and fourth types of pilgrimages to examples

taken only from the Christian tradition, he distinguishes between "medieval" pilgrimages "which take their tone from the theological and philosophical emphasis of that epoch," and "modern" pilgrimages which "are characterized by a highly devotional tone and the fervent personal piety of their adherents." With further regard to modern pilgrimages, he states that they "form an important part of the system of apologetics deployed against the advancing secularization of the post-Darwinian world."[34]

The great strength of Turner's interpretive model and his typological schema is that it attempts to ascertain the intimate nature of relations which might exist between metaphor and ritual, belief and practice, or spiritual and social experiences. By appealing to cognitive structures (myth, beliefs and their metaphorical expressions) on the one hand, and their idiomatic ritual expression within historical and social contexts on the other, Turner has advanced a theoretical *tour de force* that is especially relevant to diachronic frames of reference.

Yet, it does not necessarily follow that his classification schema, developed to interpret the significance of pilgrimage in Christian culture, is easily portable.

In attempting to confirm Turner's classification of Kandy as a "prototypical" pilgrimage, I have encountered a variety of problems. For instance, Kandy seems to meet all of the criteria Turner cites as indicative of his last three types of pilgrimage: it is highly syncretic (veneration of Hindu gods forms an important part of the ritual proceedings), it is late medieval (having been established by Kīrti Śri in the middle of the eighteenth century), and, as Seneviratne argues, it is an indigenous cultural response to modernity. With reference to its being "prototypical," while it is true that Kandy is regarded, especially within Sri Lanka, as a center of orthodoxy (given the presence of two prestigious monastic chapters), one wonders about the orthodoxy of the "root paradigm" to which it is "faithful." What ritual life at Kandy *does* depict is the intimate relationship established in Sri Lanka between spiritual and temporal power, or between religion and politics and the structure of society. Perhaps this may be regarded as a "root paradigm" for a traditional public structure, but it does not really reflect a spiritual paradigm to be emulated personally by individual Buddhists.

Bodh Gayā on the other hand, does, and Kataragama and other shrines provide a complementary personal orientation for the laity. I do not mean to ignore the private orientation of pilgrimage to Kandy; but even when one takes into account that individual pilgrims petition the power of the relic for their own personal reasons, one is still left with the problem of reconciling this kind of religious behavior to the "root paradigm" of the Buddha's quest of enlightenment through self-effort. These considerations lead me to call into question the comparison of Kandy to other such "prototypical" pilgrimages.

Kandy is not a "Mecca" of the Buddhist world. While Angarika Dharmapala once referred to Bodh Gayā as "the Buddhist Jersusalem"[35] during his fight to return Buddhist sacred places in India to Buddhist hands, nowhere does one find references within the tradition that make such grandiose claims about Kandy. More accurately, Kandy represents simultaneously a sacred palce of pilgrimage and the traditional center of Sinhalese highland ethnicity. Kandy is not a "center out there," in the peripheral sense in which Turner coined the phrase. Rather, it has more in common with regional cultural centers in India that are also accorded sacrality due the prominent presence of a ritual symbol that evokes recurrent sentiments of religio-ethnic heritage and autonomy legitimated by sacral power. In considering comparable sacred places, Kandy has more in common with the Sikh center of Amritsar in the Punjab with its Golden Temple, within which is housed the *Guru Granth Sahib,* a symbol of God's continuing providence. Or again, Kandy is somewhat similar to Santa Fe, New Mexico, and the associated symbol of Our Lady of Conquest.[36] In both of these examples, ritual proceedings, either in the form of annual processions or in individual acts of devotion which take place at specific shrines within the precincts of a sacred center, celebrate the special past relationship enjoyed between a people and the divine, however the divine is perceived. That is, sacred places like Kandy are sustained in popularity because they affirm the unique religio-cultural identity of a given people. Thus, the attractive power of Kandy as a sacred place of pilgrimage is due less to pan-Buddhist associations than to a particular people's understanding of its special, historical relationship to sacral power, which in the past insured their continued

collective legitimated existence in the face of the ambiguities of life, understood traditionally by them as *dukkha.*

I have attempted to construct a new typology for pilgrimages, which I believe is more relevant to the inherent structures of Sinhalese religion. Rather than basing this typology upon historical origins, as Turner has done in his own work, I have concluded that a typology based upon types of religious experiences and religious behavior is more fitting. Pilgrimages in Sri Lanka reflect the three-fold orientation of Sinhalese religion: the paradigmatic spirituality of the Buddha, the civil religion of the Sinhalese people, and, as Obeyesekere has recently characterized it, "the rising tide of bhakti religiosity in Buddhist Sri Lanka."[37] By understanding the significance of pilgrimage within these three orientations, we can gain a more accurate awareness of how a people of central importance to the history and maintenance of the Buddhist tradition have articulated the various dimensions of their own spirituality through a recognizable modality of religious expression that is culturally ubiquitious.

NOTES

1. Nancy Falk uses this phrase to designate the tradition "in which the Buddha is said to have authorized both the familiar pilgrims' visits to the great sites associated with his life and the practices associated with his relics and *stūpas.*" See Nancy Falk, "To Gaze on the Sacred Traces," *History of Religions* 16 (May, 1977), p. 285, n. 15; for the canonical version of the origins of relic veneration, see *Mahāparinibbāna Suttānta* in *Dīgha Nikāya* (*Dialogues of the Buddha*), trans. and ed. by T. W. Rhys Davids in *Sacred Books of the Buddhists*, Vol, 3 (London: Pali Text Society, 1977; first published in 1910): pp. 154–57 and pp. 185–91.

2. See further discussion and relevant bibliography in Frank Reynolds, "The Several Bodies of Buddha: Reflections on a Neglected Aspect of Theravada Tradition," *History of Religions* 16 (May, 1977): pp. 374–89.

3. Even before the arrival of the tooth relic in the 4th century C. E., relics assumed major importance in the ritual life and symbolism of Sinhalese royalty. For a summary, see Tilak Hettiarachy, *History of Kingship in Ceylon up to the Fourth Century A. D.* (Colombo: Lakehouse Investments, 1972), pp. 25–29 *passim*; for another excellent study of the prominence of relics in relation to royal imagery, see Alice Greenwald, "The Relic on the Spear: Historiography and the Saga of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī," in Bardwell Smith, ed., *Religion and the Legiti-*

mation of Power in Sri Lanka (Chambersburg, PA: Anima Books, 1978), pp. 13–35.

4. A detailed summary of the legend may be found in G. P. Malalasekera, *The Pali Literature of Ceylon* (Colombo: M. D. Gunasena and Co., 1928), pp. 65–68; and A. M. Hocart, *The Temple of the Tooth in Kandy*, Memoirs of the Archeological Survey of Ceylon, Vol. IV (London: Luzac and Co., 1931), pp. 1–5.

5. Walpola Rahula notes that according to the *Daṭhavaṃsa*, Dantapura was located in Kalinga. Cf. *A History of Buddhism in Ceylon* (Colombo: M. D. Gunasena, 1956), p. 97. He further cites Percey Brown's *Indian Architecture*, wherein Brown identifies Dantapura with Pūri or Bhubaneswar. Brown believes that the Jagganāth Temple "occupies the site of some still more ancient monument, not improbably the shrine of the Buddha's tooth at Dantapura."

6. *Mahāvaṃsa*, Wilhelm Geiger, ed. and trans. (London: Luzac and Co, 1964; originally published in 1912), pp. 89–96. The *Daṭhavaṃsa* account was no doubt intended to establish the same degree of authenticity for the *daḷadā* as the *Mahāvaṃsa* account had done for the Alms-Bowl Relic.

7. The language of "righteousness" consistently applied to ritual and ethical acts of the king is rooted in conceptions of Buddhist kingship modelled after the ideal cakravārtin ("turner of the wheel" of righteousness). For scriptural accounts of the cakravārtin ideal in the Theravāda canon, see the *Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda* and *Aggañña suttas* in the *Dīgha Nikāya* 4, 59–76 and 77–94. For detailed interpretations see S. J. Tambiah, *World Conqueror, World Renouncer* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 32–72; B. Smith, "The Ideal Social Order as Portrayed in the Chronicles of Ceylon," in Smith, ed., *The Two Wheels of Dhamma* (Chambersburg, PA: American Academy of Religion, 1972), pp. 31–57; B. G. Gokhale, "Early Buddhist Kingship," *Journal of Asian Studies* 26 (1966), pp. 15–22; and especially E. Sarkisyanz, *Buddhist Back-grounds of the Burmese Revolution* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965), pp. 10–97; Joseph Kitagawa's brief article "Buddhism and Asian Politics," *Asian Survey* 2 (1962), contains a brief overview of the theme.

8. This belief, set forth in the opening pages of the *Mahāvaṃsa*, is examined in detail by Regina Clifford, "The Dhammadīpa Tradition of Sri Lanka: Three Models within the Sinhalese Chronicles," in Smith, ed., *Religion and Legitimation*, pp. 36–47.

9. Fa-Hien, *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*, trans. by James Legge (London: Oxford University Press, 1886; reprint ed., New York: Dover Publications, 1965), pp. 104–07.

10. Malalasekera, p. 66; cf. G. C. Mendis, *The Early History of Ceylon* (Calcutta: YMCA Publishing House, 1954), pp. 58–59; Howard Wriggins, *Ceylon: Dilemmas of a New Nation* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1960), p. 180 n. 18, compares it to the crown of St. Stephen in Hungary. Other scholars have compared it to Constantine's Labarum and Thailand's Holy Emerald Buddha.

11. Bardwell Smith, "Polonnaruva as a Ceremonial Complex: Sinhalese Cultural Identity and the Dilemmas of Pluralism," in A. K. Narain, ed., *Studies*

in History of Buddhism (New Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation, 1980), p. 310.

12. Tambiah, *World Conqueror*, p. 96, cites a tenth century inscription which reads: "The king is a Bodhisattva on whom the Sangha bestows kingship . . . "

13. Bardwell Smith, "The Ideal Social Order," p. 50.

14. On the manner in which Kīrti Śri strengthened his reign in the eyes of the Kandyan aristocracy by means of the numerous reforms he introduced, see L. S. Dewaraja, *The Kandyan Kingdom of Ceylon 1707–1760* (Colombo: Lake House Investments, 1972, esp. pp. 94–118.

15. Sir Richard Alumhare, *The Kandy Esala Perahara* (Colombo: Ceylon Daily News, 1952), p. 2.

16. Kitsiri Malalgoda, *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society 1750–1900*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), p. 64.

17. H. L. Seneviratne, *Rituals of the Kandyan State* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 71–72 writes that the *kapa* symbolize the sacred center or *axis mundi* of the kingdom.

18. The phrase belongs to Clifford Geertz, who defines it as "the theory that the court-and-capital is at once a microcosm of the supernatural order—an image of the universe on a smaller scale—and the material embodiment of the political order. It is not just the nucleus or the engine, or the pivot of the state, it *is* the state. The equation of the seat of rule with the dominion of rule is more than an accidental metaphor; it is a settlement of a controlling political idea—namely, that by the mere act of providing a model, a paragon, a faultless image of civilized existence, the court shapes the world around it into at least a rough approximation of its own excellence. The ritual life of the court, and in fact, the life of the court generally, is thus paradigmatic, not merely reflective, of social order. What it is reflective of, the priests declare, is a supernatural order, 'the timeless Indian world' of the gods upon which men should, in strict proportion for their status, seek to pattern their lives." In *Negara: The Theatre-State in Nineteenth Century Bali* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 13. Tambiah applies the "doctrine of the exemplary center" to medieval Thai polity in *World Conqueror*, p. 123; Smith—citing Paul Wheatley's *Pivot of the Four Quarters* (Chicago: Aldine Press, 1971), Robert Redfield's and Milton Singer's "The Cultural Role of Cities," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 3 (1954): 53–72) and Robert Heine-Geldern's classic "Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia," Data Paper: Number 18, Southeast Asia Program (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1956), pp. 1–3—applies the model to ritual life in Polonnaruva, in "Sinhalese Cultural Identity," pp. 295 and 308–10. Its application to Kandy is self-evident.

19. Malalgoda, pp. 118, quotes a British official upon the relic's seizure: "We have this day obtained the surest proof of the confidence of the Kandyan nation and their acquiescence in the Dominion of British Government."

20. *Culture of Ceylon in Medieval Times*, Heinz Bechert, ed., (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1960), p. 215.

21. Seneviratne, pp. 137–46.

22. Ibid., p. 137.

23. Ibid., pp. 112–14; cf., Nur Yalman, *Under the Bo Tree: Studies in Caste, Kinship and Marriage in the Interior of Ceylon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 58.

24. For an excellent assessment of Buddhism's political participation in recent Sinhalese politics, see Wriggins, *Dilemmas*, pp. 169–210; for a study of modern Buddhist political thought in Sri Lanka, see Bruce Matthews, "The Sinhalese Buddhist Attitude Toward Parliamentary Democracy," *Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies* 6 (July-Dec., 1976), pp. 34–47; and Urmila Phadnis, *Religion and Politics in Sri Lanka* (New Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1976).

25. *Kāyena vācā cittena*
Pamādena mayā kataṃ
Accayaṃ khama me bhante
Bhūripañña Tathāgata.

Devo vassatu kālena
Sassasam patthihetu ca;
Pīto bhavatu loko ca;
Rājā bhavatu dhammiko.

Akasaṭṭhā ca bhummaṭṭhā
Devā nāgā Mahiddhikā
Punnan taṃ anumoditvā
Ciraṃ rakkhantu lokasāsanaṃ.

Cited in Hocart, p. 27.

26. Seneviratne, p. 120.

27. Victor Turner, "The Center out there: Pilgrim's Goal," *History of Religions* 12 (February, 1973), 213–15.

28. Ibid., p. 193. *Passim.*

29. R. A. L. H. Gunawardana, *Robe and Plough: Monasticism and Economic Interest in Early Medieval Sri Lanka* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1979; Association for Asian Studies Monograph Series, No. XXXV), pp. 260–62.

30. Reynolds, "The Two Wheels of Dhamma: A Study of Early Buddhism," in Smith, *Two Wheels*, pp. 6–30.

31. For descriptions of cultic life at Kataragama, see Paul Wirz, *Kataragama: The Holiest Place in Ceylon*, translated from the German by Doris B. Pralle (Colombo: Lake House, 1966); Gananath Obeyesekere, "The Fire Walkers of Kataragama: The Rise of *Bhakti* Religiosity in Buddhist Sri Lanka," *Journal of Asian Studies* 37 (May, 1978), pp. 457–78; and Bryan Pfaffenberger, "The Kataragama Pilgrimage: Hindu-Buddhist Interaction and Its Significance in Sri Lanka's Polyethnic Social System," *Journal of Asian Studies* 38 (February, 1979), pp. 253–70.

32. Cf. John Halverson, "Religion and Psycho-social Development in Sinhalese Buddhism," *Journal of Asian Studies* 37 (February, 1978), pp. 221–32.

33. Seneviratne, p. 147.

34. Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), pp. 17–19.

35. Malalgoda, p. 255.

36. See the treatment of public symbols and civil religion in Ronald Grimes, *Symbol and Conquest: Public and Ritual Drama in Santa Fe, New Mexico* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1976).

37. Obeyesekere, "Fire-Walkers," p. 457.