

Were there Two Elders by the Name of Chappada?

CHAPPADA was a Burmese Elder who wrote several works in Pali, the well-known among which are the *Saṅkhepavaṇṇanā* on the Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha and the *Suttaniddesa* on Kaccāyana's grammar. As he lived in Ceylon for some years he was known to both the communities of monks, in Ceylon and in Burma. Dr. Malalasekara, in his *Pali Literature of Ceylon*, has written about this Elder as follows¹: "It was about this time, somewhere about the beginning of Parākrama's regime in A.D. 1165, that the Elder Uttarājīva left Pagan to visit the celebrated Mahāvihāra, taking with him, as we saw, a copy of Aggavaṃsa's great work, the Pali Grammar, Saddanīti. Uttarājīva was accompanied by his pupil, the novice Chapaṭa², known in religion as Saddhammajotipala, whose fame surpassed, for a time, even that of Aggavaṃsa. He received the *upasampadā* from the Saṅgha in Ceylon, and lived with them several years, studiously learning the Dhamma as handed down in the Mahāvihāra, and perhaps mastering many texts which were as yet unknown in Burma. He was a man of great skill and ability, and his stay in the sacred island was of great importance to the literary history of Burma". He adds (page 197): "Chapaṭa was the author of several works, eight in all, according to the *Gandha-vaṃsa*, only one of which was written in Ceylon, the *Saṅkhepavaṇṇanā*, a commentary on the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* . . .".

The original statement about Chappada is found in the Kalyāṇī Inscriptions³ of Dhammaceti, 1476 A.D., where it is stated as follows: "One hundred and seven years after this event, or in the year 526, Sakkarāj⁴, King Srisaṅghabodhi-Parakkamabāhu purified the religion of Lan-kādīpa. Six years after the latter event, or in the year 532, Sakkarāj, Uttarājīvamahāthera, the Preceptor of the King of Pugāma, with the object of worshipping at the shrines

1. P. 196. Ch. X.

2. This is not his personal name, but that of his birth-place. Most of the Burmese Elders are known by the name of their birth-place or of the monastery in which they live. For instance, the famous Elder Jāgara, who visited Ceylon at about A.D. 1878, was known to the Burmese as "Shwejin Shayādaw", i.e. "the Great Teacher of Shwejin": The Ven. Vajirārāma, who brought here a gem-studded golden casket for the Tooth Relic, in about 1896 A.D., was called so because of the monastery built for him by the chief queen, Vajirakkhandha-devī, of Mindun Min.

3. Edited and translated into English by Taw Sein-ko, (as the title page of my copy is torn I am not able to state the year in which it was printed).

4. A.D. 1164.

in Laṅkāḍīpa, set out for Kusimanagara⁵, saying to himself: "I shall embark in a ship with a great many priests". Who was this Uttarājīvamahāthera? He was a native of Rāmaññadesa⁶, and was a pupil of Ariyavaṃsathera . . . On arrival at Kusimanagara, Uttarājīvamahāthera embarked in a ship, accompanied by many other priests and by a *sāmaṇera*, whose age was fully 20 years. Who was this *sāmaṇera*? Why was he called Chappaṭasāmaṇera? His parents were natives of Kusimaratt̥ha, while he himself was a pupil of Uttarājīvamahāthera. He was called Chappaṭasāmaṇera, because his parents were natives of a village called Chappaṭa, in Kusimaratt̥ha".

"Uttarājīvamahāthera embarked in a ship and set out for Laṅkāḍīpa. On his arrival there, the mahātheras, residing in Laṅkāḍīpa, came together in a body and accorded him a meet reception. As they were well disposed towards him they said: 'We are the spiritual successors of Mahāmahinda-thera, who established the Religion in Laṅkāḍīpa, while you and the other priests in your company are the spiritual successors of the two mahātheras, called Soṇa and Uttara who established the Religion in Suvannabhūmi. Let us all, therefore, perform together the ceremonies incumbent upon the Order'. Having spoken thus, they performed the *upāsampadā* ordination of Chappaṭa, the twenty-year old *sāmaṇera*".

"After this, Uttarājīvamahāthera, having accomplished the object of his visit, namely, the worshipping, etc., at the shrines in Laṅkāḍīpa, made preparations to return to Pugāma. Then the priest Chappaṭa thought thus: 'If I were to return home with Uttarājīvamahāthera, owing to the impediments caused by my relatives, I should not be able to enjoy that peace and quiet which are conclusive to the study of the Tipiṭaka together with its commentaries. It is, perhaps advisable, therefore, that I should, with the permission of the mahāthera, remain in Laṅkāḍīpa, and return home only after I have mastered the Tipiṭaka together with its commentaries'. Accordingly, Chappaṭa asked permission from Uttarājīvamahāthera and remained behind in Laṅkāḍīpa. Uttarājīvamahāthera, accompanied by his large company of priests, embarked in a ship, and returned to Kusimanagara. Thence he proceeded to Pugāma, and took up his residence there".

"Meanwhile, the priest Chappaṭa by dint of hard study, had acquired a knowledge of the Tipiṭaka together with its commentaries; and, as he has completed his tenth year in orders, he acquired the designation of *thera*. Being now desirous of returning to Pugāma he reflected thus: 'If I were to return home alone, and if, in the event of the death of Uttarājīvamahāthera, I did not wish to associate with the priests of Pugāma in the performance of ecclesiastical ceremonies, how could I, in the absence of a *pañcavaggagāna*,

5. Modern Bassein.

6. Lower Burma.

perform such functions separately? It is, perhaps, proper, therefore, that I should return home in the company of four other priests, who are well-versed in the Tipiṭaka'. After reflecting thus, he appointed Sivalithera, a native of Tāmalitti, Tāmalindathera, the son of the Rāja of Kamboja, Ānandatthera, a native of Kañcīpura, and Rāhulathera, a native of Laṅkāḍīpa, to accompany him, and embarking in a ship, returned to his native country. These five mahātheras were well-versed in the Tipiṭaka, and were learned and able, and among them, Rāhulathera was the ablest and the most learned".

"On the arrival of these five mahātheras at Kusimanagara, the time for journeying on to Pugāma was unseasonable, because of the approaching *vassa*, and they, accordingly, observed their *vassa* at Kusimanagara. The site and walls of the monastery, where they spent the *vassa*, may be seen to this day, on the south side of Kusimanagara. At the conclusion of the *vassa*, Chappaṭamahāthera celebrated the *phavāraṇā*, and set out for Pugāma, accompanied by the four *theras*. Meanwhile, a few days before the arrival of Chappaṭamahāthera, Uttarājīvamahāthera had died".

This inscription, although it gives a lengthy description about Chappada's activities, does not mention any work written by him. The Elder, who was the author of several works, has clearly stated that he lived not during the reign of Parākramabāhu the Great, but during the reign of Parākramabāhu VI, whose capital was Kotte. Now let us quote his own statement from the colophon of the Saṅkhepavaṇṇanā:—

1. "Puṇṇe dase navanavutiguṇe ca vasse vasse sahasagaṇane Jinanibbutimhā iddhārimaddanapurā vara-Tambapaṇṇiṃ patvāna yo Siriparakkamabāhubhūpaṃ
2. Nissāya sāsanaṃmalāṃ suvisodhayitvā bhikkhūhi ciṇṇavinayehi susaṅgātehi bandhāpayī puravare Jayavaḍḍhanavhe sīmaṃ vipattirahitaṃ vinayanurūpaṃ,
3. Sikkhāpayī yatigaṇe vinayābhidhamme paññāvadātahadayo sadayo janānaṃ appicchatā-viriya-sīla-guṇappasattho saddhādhanō sakalasissa-janānukampī,
4. Sabbatthayutta-piṭakattaya-pāradassī so Chappadavhayasuto yati rājakanto nānānayaṃ paramasaṅgahavaṇṇan'emaṃ saṅkhepato viracayī munisāsanaṭṭhaṃ".

"The Elder who came from the prosperous city of Arimaddana to the noble island of Tambapaṇṇi, in the year 1090 after the demise of the Buddha, purified the sāsana with the help of the King Parakkamabāhu, and caused a sīma to be consecrated, according to the vinaya rules and avoiding all unlawful

acts, in the city of Jayavaḍḍhana, by the monks who had a thorough knowledge in vinaya-ceremonies and who had well subdued their senses,

That Elder, known by the name of Chappada, who was dear to the king, and well-versed in the three piṭakas which have many-sided meanings, having a heart cleansed by wisdom, kind to the people, of few desires, laudable for his virtue and perseverance, having devotion as his own wealth, with compassion on the pupils, taught Vinaya and Abhidhamma to many monks.

The same Elder compiled this concise but descriptive commentary on the Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha, for the welfare of the religion of the Buddha".

Here the author says that he taught *dhamma* and *vinaya* to the monks of Laṅkā, but does not state that he learnt anything from the Ceylonese monks.

There was no Jayavaḍḍhanapura other than that of Kotte in Ceylon. So it is very clear that this Chappada, the author of some works, visited Ceylon during the reign of Parākramabāhu VI of Kotte.

His personal name, Saddhammajotipāla, is found in two places at the end of the Saṅkhepavaṇṇanā:—"Arimaddana-nagara-gocaragāmakena . . . Laṅkādiṭṭha-paradīpavāsīnaṃ sotujanānaṃ pariyattim pariyāpunantena, Chappado ti visutena . . . tipīṭakadhara-garūhi gahita-Saddhammajotipālo ti nāmvahayena therena katā Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha-saṅkhepavaṇṇanā niṭṭhitā". "The concise commentary on the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, compiled by the Elder, who was named 'Saddhammajotipāla' by the Great Elders who were erudite in the three Piṭakas, and who was well-known by the name of 'Chappada', whose subsisting sphere was the city of Arimaddana, and who has taught *dhamma* to many students of Ceylon and of other countries, has now come to an end".

The second place where his name appears is the last line of the colophon: "Iti Saddhammajotipālatherena racitā Saṅkhepavaṇṇanā niṭṭhitā".

There is no evidence to prove that the former Chappada had this name of Saddhammajotipāla. The author of the *Sīmālaṅkārasaṅgaha* was Mahāsāmi Vācissara, who was a pupil of Sāriputta, Saṅgharāja, and was the librarian of Parākramabāhu I. He himself wrote a commentary on his own work. Afterwards, the Elder Chappada, the second, wrote a new commentary on the *Sīmālaṅkārasaṅgaha*, in which he states:

"Sabbatthayutta-piṭakattaya-pāradassī
so Chappadavhayasuto yatirājaputto
Sīmāyalaṅkārasaṅgahavaṇṇan'emaṃ
saṅkhepato viracayī munisāsanattham".

This Elder should have lived in a period considerably posterior to the time of Parākramabāhu I and Vācissara, to write a new ṭīkā, while there was a ṭīkā by the author of the text himself.

The *Saṅkhepavaṇṇanā* was compiled at the request of a person called Mahāvijayabāhu. This person, the author says, was well-known in this island like the full-moon in the spring:

"Āgatāgamasatthena cando va saradambare
pākaṭen'idha dīpamhi Mahāvijayabāhunā
Ukkuṭikaṃ nisīditvā sāsanaṭṭhābhikāṅkhiṇā
yācito'haṃ karissāmi Saṅkhepapada-vaṇṇanaṃ".

"Being requested, seated in a respectful posture, by Mahāvijayabāhu, who is learned in religions and sciences, who is well-known in this island like the full-moon in the spring, who wishes the welfare of the Buddha's religion, I will compile this Saṅkhepapadavaṇṇanā".

Who was this well-known person Vijayabāhu? There was no such layman at the time of Parākrama VI. The only person whose learning could have gained such fame at that time was the Principal of Mahāvijayabāhu Pariveṇa, i.e. the Elder Rāhula, who afterwards became Saṅgharāja. It was then customary to call the principal of an institution by its very name.

I have already discussed Chappada's date in my work entitled *Theravādi-Bauddhācāryayo* published in Sinhalese. Since then I have come across an article, written by Mr. S. Z. Aung, B.A., on the "Abhidhamma Literature in Burma", published in the Journal of the Pali Text Society 1910-1912 in which the matter had been discussed. There he says: "The Saṅkhepavaṇṇanā, by Chappada, is the third ṭīkā on the Compendium⁷. This author is believed to have visited Ceylon in *Anno Buddhi*, 1714 (sakkarāj 532 or A.D. 1170). In his introductory verse, he describes himself as one who had been to Ceylon three times⁸. He says he wrote it at the request of Mahāvijayabāhu, who was 'conspicuous in the Island, even as the moon in the sky of 'sarada' or autumnal season, by the royal arms which had been and would be attained'⁹. He refers to the existence of the earlier ṭīkā on the Compendium, and compares the *Tikāgyaw*¹⁰ to the 'moon which cannot shine within bamboos, etc.' and his own work to the 'fire-fly which can'. This pretty simile will give the reader an idea of the scope of the work in question. In the conclusion of the

7. That is Compendium of Philosophy or *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*.

8. This is not so. Mr. Aung has misunderstood the first two lines of the introductory gāthās. *Tikkhattuṃ patta-Laṅko yo, patitthapesi sāsanaṃ* does not refer to the author but to the Buddha whose name is mentioned in the (3rd) next line: *vanditvā Lokanāthaṃ taṃ*.

9. Here again he has mistranslated some lines. I do not see any passage there giving such a meaning. Perhaps, he has taken *sāsana*, in *sāsanaṭṭhābhikāṅkhiṇā*, to mean 'governing'.

10. The Burmese name for Abhidhammattha-vibhāvinī ṭīkā of Sumaṅgala-Mahāsāmi.

work, the year A.B. 1990¹¹ is mentioned. The author of the *Sāsanañānkāra*¹² draws attention to the discrepancy between this date and that given in the *Kalyānī Inscriptions* ”.

In his *Pali Literature and Language*¹³, Professor Geiger states: “*Saddhammajotipāla* or *Chappada* belongs to the circle of *Sāriputta*’s disciples. He was a native of Burma, but he received his education in Ceylon, where he stayed from 1170 to 1180 according to tradition. Of his works the following belong to the sphere of *Vinaya*: (a) *Vinayasamuttāhānādīpanī*, (b) *Pātimokkhasodhanī*, (c) *Vinayagūḥatthādīpanī*, in which the difficult passages of the *Vinaya* have been discussed, as well as (d) *Sīmālañkārasaṅgaha-Tīkā*. To the *Abhidhamma* belong: (e) *Mātikatthādīpanī*, (f) *Paṭṭhānagaṇanānāyā*, (g) *Nāmacārādīpa*, as well as his best-known work (h) *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha-saṅkhepaṭīkā*, a commentary on the work of *Anuruddha* mentioned in 26.7. Finally there is still to mention (i) *Gandhasāra*, apparently an anthology of sacred texts ”.

Neither Professor Geiger nor Dr. Malalasekara seems to have read any works of this later *Chappada*. If they had done so, they would have been surprised to find the name of *Jayavaddhanapura* mentioned in his works. There was no ‘*Jayavaddhanapura*’ in Ceylon before the reign of *Parākrama VI*. This author never mentions the name of *Uttarājīva* as his preceptor, who was an eminent person and the tutor of the King of *Arimaddana*; and he does not say that he has learnt anything from the Elders of Ceylon. So this second *Chappada* must be a different person from the one mentioned in the *Kalyānī Inscriptions*. Perhaps, the statement in the inscription might have erred by taking *Parākrama VI* to be *Parākrama I*. It has appended the title ‘*Siri-saṅghabodhi*’ to this monarch, which, I believe, was never attached to the name of *Parākrama I*, but to that of *Parākrama VI*. Anyhow, Geiger’s statement that “*Saddhammajotipāla* or *Chappada* belongs to the *Sāriputta*’s disciples ” becomes untenable.

There is no evidence to show that *Uttarājīva*’s pupil, *Chappada*, had the name of ‘*Saddhammajotipāla*’, or that he had written any work in Pali.

The *Kalyānī Inscription* has given the name of the Burmese king who was ruling when the former *Chappada*, with his companions, arrived at *Arimaddana*: “At that time¹⁴, a king, called *Narapati-jayasūra*, was ruling in *Pugāma*. He conceived a feeling of great esteem and reverence for the five

11. *Dase navanavutiguṇe* and *vasse sahasaṅgaṇane* are the words of the author, which show the date. I tried to understand this number in every possible way, and found no other way than to multiply 99 by 10 and to add one thousand to it. I am very glad to see that Mr. Aung also has arrived at the same conclusion.

12. An historical sketch of Buddhism in Burma, written in 1831.

13. English translation by Dr. Batakriṣṇa Ghosh, published by the University of Calcutta, 1943.

14. “This yields the date 1181 A.D.” says the translator.

mahātheras”, are words that occur there. Again, it carefully records the date of the demise of *Ānandathera*, who had survived all other companions of *Chappada*: “Two of these *mahātheras*, namely, *Sīvalimahāthera* and *Tāmalindamahāthera*, passed away according to their deeds after maintaining the Religion in splendour to the end of their lives; and *Ānandathera*, after spending fifty-four rainy seasons in maintaining the Religion in splendour in *Pugāma*, also passed away according to his deeds in the year 607 *Sakkaraj* ”¹⁵.

If these statements are taken as true, we cannot say that this *Chappada* who was *Uttarājīva*’s pupil, and the Elder *Chappada*, who was known by the name “*Saddhammajotipāla*”, are one and the same person.

Another noteworthy work by *Saddhammajotipāla* is the *Visuddhimagga-gaṇṭhi*. Neither Professor Geiger nor Dr. Malalasekara has noticed the existence of this work. But the *Piṭakat-samaṅga*¹⁶ and S. Z. Aung have mentioned it. I myself was not aware of this work. When Professor Bapat of Poona recently visited Ceylon, he told me about this work and with my help he obtained a MS. of it written in Burmese characters. Even our museum library does not possess a copy. This MS. is now with me and I am copying it in Sinhalese characters. The opening verses or the colophon of this work do not mention the name of *Chappada* or anyone else. But it is evident that it was written by a Burmese Elder who had a good knowledge of the Sinhalese tradition. Many stories that were not explained in the *Visuddhimagga* are explained here. For instance at one place the *Visuddhimagga* merely says: “*Kuṭumbiyaputta-Tissattherassa silāṃ viya*”¹⁷. The *Gaṇṭhi* relates the story and explains why robbers were inclined to break his legs. Similarly *Ambakhā-daka-Mahātissa*’s story, whose name appears on p. 47, *Visuddhimagga*, is related in the *Gaṇṭhi*. These facts indicate the great value to be attached to this work.

The *Nāmacārādīpaka* is a poem of 299 verses, which is not yet printed in Ceylon. It was written when *Chappada* was residing in an *ārāma*, situated near the shrine named *Tilokanayana-sabbāññudhātu-unhīsacetiya*, to the east of *Arimaddana* or *Pugāma*. It contains a colophon similar, in many ways, to that of the *Saṅkhepavaṇṇanā*. It is surprising to note that this Elder has never mentioned any name of a contemporary Burmese Ruler in his works. If he has done so, we could easily solve the question of his date.

A. P. BUDDHADATTA

15. 1245 A.D.

16. A Burmese work on Pali Literature, printed at Pye-gyi Mandine Press, Rangoon, 1905.

17. Vol. I, p. 48. P.T.S. edition.