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**EARLY MARITIME CONTACTS OF KALINGA WITH SRI LANKA :
TRADITION, TEXT AND ARCHAEOLOGY**
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EARLY MARITIME CONTACTS OF KALIᅅGA WITH SRI LANKA : TRADITION, TEXT AND ARCHAEOLOGY

BENUDHAR PATRA

Maritime activities and overseas trade have become an inseparable part of the history of those countries bordering the seas. India and Sri Lanka because of their geographical proximity to the sea, which provides them a natural advantage for maritime activities, have been interacting closely since early times. A country like India, with a big peninsula surrounded by an expanse of seas- on the south-west by the Arabian Sea (*Ratnākara*), on the east and south-east by the Bay of Bengal (*Mahodadhī*) and on the south by the Indian Ocean- a hub of seafaring activities, was bound to consider the sea as vital as its land mass. It possessed all the potentialities to be a great maritime power. Along with a conducive geographical location, the early growth of her shipping and ship-building techniques, the genius and energy of her merchants, the skill and daring spirit of her seamen, the enterprise of her colonists, and the zeal of her missionaries secured to India the command of the sea for ages. Kaliᅅga or ancient Odisha which constituted an integral part of the Indian subcontinent and was situated on the coast of the Bay of Bengal also played a vital role in the maritime activities of India. It had close maritime interactions with Sri Lanka or ancient Sinhala (Figure 1 & 2) since very ancient times, at least from circa fifth century BCE. The Ceylonese chronicles, i.e. *Mahāvam̄sa*, *Dīpavam̄sa*, *Cūlavam̄sa*, *Dāthāvam̄sa*, accounts of the Chinese travellers like Fa -Hien, Hiuen Tsang, the discovery of Sri Lankan coins from Kaliᅅga and inscriptions and art specimens have attested to such ancient relations. Kaliᅅga's overseas relations with Sri Lanka, indeed, constitute one of the most fascinating chapters in the maritime history of Kaliᅅga owing to her preponderant role in shaping and moulding the polity, society, religion, culture, trade and commercial enterprises of Sri Lanka. In the present paper, an endeavour has been made to throw some light on the early maritime contacts between Kaliᅅga and Sri Lanka in historical perspective.

The famous Lanka of the *Rāmāyaᅇa* has generally been identified by

scholars as Sinhala /Ceylon or modern Sri Lanka (Asthana:1976: 140-141). Being an island on the southernmost part of the South Asia, Sinhala or Sri Lanka, since earliest times, was open to maritime influences. It was the meeting place for the merchants and sailors coming from the Eastern as well as the Western seas, and became the nerve centre of the inter-oceanic trade and commerce. "Among the Indians it [Sri Lanka] goes by the name of Siedidiba, but the Pagans [Pagan was a kingdom in Burma] call it Taprobane... As its position is central, the island is a great resort of ships from all parts of India, and from Persia and Ethiopia, and in like manner it dispatches many of its own to foreign ports." (Gunawardana:1987: 54). Sri Lanka is India's closest neighbour in the south and was probably the first country in Southern Asia to feel the impact of Indian immigration (Singhal:1972:99). As a matter of fact, the trade route from the East coast of India to South-East Asia, China and other countries passed through the Sri Lankan coast (Nicholas & Paranavitana:1961: 11). (Figure 3, 4, 5 and 6) As such, Sri Lanka was an important halting station in the sea-route between India and South-East Asia. Among the Indians who had made voyages to this island, Kaliṅgans had a lion's share, a fact which has been proved by the accounts of the Chinese travellers and the Ceylonese chronicles. The important ancient ports of Sri Lanka were Mahātitthā (modern Mantai), Gokannā (modern Trincomalee), Jambukola (modern Jaffna Peninsula) etc.

The island of Sri Lanka has a continuous record of settled and civilized life for over two millennia. It is believed that the content and direction of this has been shaped by that of the Indian sub-continent. Sri Lanka or Sinhala's two major ethnic groups i.e. the Sinhalese and the Tamils, and its two dominant religious cultures, Buddhist and Hindu, made their way onto the island (Sri Lanka) from India (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*:1977: 1). The island's proximity to India made it vulnerable to a variety of Indian influences. However, the narrow stretch of sea which separated the two ensured the distinctive and autonomous character of its own (De Silva:1981: 4). The cultural trait that comes from India though totally did not obliterate their originality yet managed to cause an independent change.

According to the earliest Sinhalese tradition, as recorded in its chronicle *Mahāvamsa*, (Geiger:2011: 51-54), the first Indian immigrants who went to Sri Lanka were prince Vijaya and his 700 followers. The account of prince Vijaya

and his followers, who occupied the country and founded the Sinhalese dynasty, stands on the border line between legend and history (Das:1977: 122). According to the *Mahāvamsa*, (Geiger:2011:51-54) prince Vijaya, son of king Sinhabāhu of Sinhapura, went to Ceylon and became the first king of the island. It is recorded that Vijaya's great-grandmother Susimā was a Kalingan princess and had married to the king of Vaṅga (Bengal). Her daughter was carried away by a lion when wandering in Lala on the road from Vaṅga to Magadha and the lion begot on her a son whose name was Sinhabāhu [Sihabāhu], the father of Vijaya (Geiger: 2011:51). Sinhabāhu, consequently slaying his *Sinha* (lion) father became the king at Sinhapura. Sinhapura was a historical city of Kalinga from pre-Christian centuries till the period of early as well as the later Gaṅga kings (Das:1977:123). The early Gaṅga kings issued some of their copper plate grants from Sinhapura (Das:1949: 93).

Tradition holds that Sinhabāhu of Sinhapura banished his son Vijaya and his 700 companions for their misconduct, and set them afloat on a ship (Geiger: 2011:53-54). After a long and eventful voyage, Vijaya with his turbulent companions landed near the present site of Puttalam on the north-west coast of Sinhala and set about the business of colonizing the island. The scene of Vijaya's landing in Ceylon can be seen in the paintings of Ajantā cave (Plate I). This has been considered as the beginning of the story of man in Sri Lanka (DeSilva: 1981:3). According to *Mahāvamsa*, (Geiger: 2011:54) prince Vijaya landed in Sri Lanka in the region called *Tāmbapāṇṇi* on the day that the *Tathāgata* (Lord Buddha) lay down between the two twin-like *sāla*-trees to pass into *nibbāṇa* (*nirvāṇa* or salvation). The newly conquered island was called Sinhala or Sinhala Dvipa after the name of Sinhabāhu (Behera: 1977:118); (Das: 1949: 89) and Sinhapura, the father of Vijaya and the capital of Vijaya's father respectively. Geiger, however, holds that the members of the clan to which Vijaya belonged, appear to have been called Sinhala, the 'lion men' (Das:1949:89). Thus, came the name of the new inhabitants of the island.

The time of migration of Vijaya was significant because it was said to have coincided with the opening of the Buddhist era in Sinhala and the foundation of state and civilization. According to the *Cūlavamsa*, Sinhapura was the capital of Kalinga. Vijaya was a prince of Kalinga and it was from this kingdom that he set sail for Lanka or Sinhala. Hence, the confusion created by

scholars to identify *Lalā* or *Latā* or *Ladā* territory situated on the road from Vāṅga to Magadha mentioned in the *Mahāvamsa* with Gujarat and the consequent theory of Vijaya's emigration from the western coast of India, stands dispelled in the light of the location of Sinhapura in Kalinga (Das:1977:123). The association of Sinhala with Kalinga was so deep rooted that later Ceylonese rulers styled themselves as descendants of Kalinga *Chakravarti Vamsa* (Behera:1992:7). King Nissānka Malla of Ceylon says in his inscription (Wickremasinghe:1912:132) that he was the son of Sri Jaya Gopa of Kalinga *Chakravartin* dynasty, then ruling at Sinhapura, who were descended from the race of king Vijaya. Thus, the episode of Vijaya is closely associated with the Kalinga dynasty. As the episode of Vijaya is irremovable from the Ceylonese history, so is his ancestry inseparable from Kalinga associations. Regarding the immigration of Vijaya, M.N. Das (Das:1949:96) remarks,

“Many other evidences may be there to prove that from no part of the Indian mainland did Vijaya and his innumerable followers come to Ceylon except Kalinga. Without Kalinga the story of Vijaya does not stand. Vijaya's great-grandmother, Susimā, was a princess of Kalinga; his grand-mother Suppā Devī was taken away by a Kalinga chief to whom she married; his father, Sinhabāhu built the city of Sinhapura in Kalinga from which city Vijaya was banished for his lawless [delinquent] behaviour. The first Indian migration into Ceylon [Sri Lanka], therefore, that took place five hundred years before the Christian era, was undoubtedly from Kalinga.”

Vijaya must have sailed from the eastern coast of India, most probably from the port of Tāmraliptī. From his time onwards there was a constant interaction between India and Sri Lanka, which might have influenced the socio-religious ideas of the islanders so as to make them amenable to the teachings of Aśoka at a later date.

It is known from the *Mahāvamsa*, (Geiger: 2011:62-64). that king Vijaya towards the end of his reign had invited his younger brother Sumitta in Sinhapura to come to Sinhala as his successor. The latter was unwilling to do so; instead, he sent his youngest son Pāṇḍuvāsudeva. Pāṇḍuvāsudeva landed at Gokannā (present Trincomalee) in the north-east of the island with thirty-two followers, and was subsequently enthroned at Upatissagama ensuring the continuity of the

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Vijayan dynasty in Sinhala. Gokannā was a natural port which regularly received ships from the Bay of Bengal (DeSilva:1981: 3); (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* :1977: 2). Even in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when Polonnāruva was the seat of government in Sinhala, there were several kings, in this island, who claimed to belong to the Kalinga royal family (Paranavitana:1936:57).

The matrimonial relations between the royal dynasties of the two kingdoms played an important role in Kalinga-Sri Lanka contact during the historical period. Matrimonial relations led to direct political developments. The Sinhalese king Mahendra IV Srisaṅgabodhi, who ruled over Sinhala from c. 953 CE to c. 969 CE, had a Kalingan princess as his queen whose son succeeded him on the throne (Paranavitana:1936:57). The relatives of this Kalingan princess emerged as a strong force in the Sinhalese court politics, when her twelve year old son, Sena V ascended the throne (c. 969 CE to c. 979 CE). Sena V's successor was yet another son of the Kalingan princess who ruled as Mahendra V from c. 979 CE to c. 1027 CE. Mahendra V, in his only inscription, claims to have been a scion of the Kalinga family (Paranavitana:1934:61).

The Ceylonese chronicle *Cūlavamsa* (Geiger:1996 Pt.I:211); (Rath:1947:355) states that king Vijayabāhu I of Ceylon (c. 1054 CE to c. 1109 CE) married a 'charming young princess of the royal family of Kalinga' named Trilokasundarī. But what is more significant than the marriage was the despatch of three Kalinga princes viz., Madhukarṇava, Bhimarāja and Balatkara from Sinhapura to Sinhala who were allowed to settle in that kingdom by the king.

Vijayabāhu I's marriage with a princess of Kalinga seems to have been dictated by political considerations (Paranavitana:1936:58); (Gupta:1974:246). He was a contemporary of Anantavarman Choḍagaṅga Deva of the Gaṅga dynasty, whose period has been considered as the golden age in the history of Kalinga. Trilokasundarī was the mother of Vikramabāhu who played a prominent, though difficult role in the Sinhalese politics. Her daughter Ratnāvalī was the mother of Parākramabāhu, one of the greatest kings of Sinhala who ruled from c. 1153 CE to c.1186 CE. Vikramabāhu, the son of Vijayabāhu and Trilokasundarī, had a Kalingan princess named Sundarī as his consort. Sundarī or Sundaramahādevī was the younger sister of the above mentioned three Kalingan princes (Madhukarṇava, Bhimarāja and Balatkara). Sundarī has left an

inscription in a cave at Dimbulagala (Udumbaragiri) wherein she records that she effected some repairs to the cave and had it named, after the land of her birth, *Kaliṅga-lana* (the Kaliṅga Cave) (Wickremasinghe: 1928:195-96).

The son of Vikramabāhu and Sundaramahādevī was Gajabāhu II (c. 1137 CE to c. 1153 CE) who, according to the *Mahāvamsa*, is said to have been a scion of the Kaliṅga royal family. His claim to the Kaliṅga lineage must have been through his mother and grand-mother because at that time the Sinhalese kings traced their descent on the mother's side (Paranavitana: 1933:235-36). However, Gajabāhu II had no son of his own and is said to have invited to his court foreign princess of a different faith, apparently intending one of them to succeed him on the throne (Geiger: 1996 Pt.I:291). It seems very probable that these invited princes were from Kaliṅga and belonged to the Gaṅga dynasty as one of the princes of Gajabāhu's court is said to have been named Choḍagaṅga in the *Mahāvamsa* (Geiger: 1996 Pt.I:306). Choḍagaṅga is a name found common among the Gaṅgas of Kaliṅga. Thus, towards the end of Gajabāhu's reign, it appeared as if the throne of Sinhala would pass to the princes from Kaliṅga (Paranavitana: 1936:59). However, Gajabāhu II was defeated and overpowered by his envious cousin Parākramabāhu.

Parākramabāhu or Parākramabāhu I, as has been stated, was the grandson of Trilokasundarī and ruled over Sinhala from c. 1153 CE to c. 1186 CE. Being a descendant of the Kaliṅga princess Trilokasundarī, Parākramabāhu obviously leaned towards Kaliṅga (Das: 1977:125). Parākramabāhu I, however, had no son to succeed him and therefore, invited his nephew Vijayabāhu from Sinhapura in Kaliṅga. Vijayabāhu succeeded Parākramabāhu I and designated himself as Vijayabāhu II. He, however, ruled for one year only and was killed by a member of the Kaliṅgan faction who succeeded him as Mahendra VI.

Mahendra VI ruled only for five days and was overtaken by Nissānka Malla, the son-in-law of Parākramabāhu. Nissānka Malla, son of king Jayagopa and queen Pārvatī of Kaliṅga, went to Sinhala by the efforts of Parākramabāhu who gave him his daughter in matrimonial alliance. Nissānka Malla most likely belonged to the Gaṅga family of Kaliṅga. He was born at Sinhapura. His chief queen was named Kaliṅga Subhadrā. He ruled from c. 1187 CE to c. 1196 CE and was a powerful king. Nissānka Malla in his inscription has been given the epithets of "Sirisāṅgabo Kaliṅga Parākramabāhu Virarāja Nissānka Malla

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Apratimalla" (Paranavitana: 1936:60). He was not only the greatest of the Kalingan kings that ruled Ceylon, but also one of the most notable among the long line of the island's rulers. Nissānka Malla also styled himself as Kirti Nissānka and was the first historical monarch of Sinhala belonging to a pure Kalinga dynasty (Das: 1977: 126). His reign was considered as the glorious years which were crammed with records of activity and constructive achievements in administration, economic rehabilitation, religion and culture 'which could be stretched comfortably for a longer period and yet could be called as splendid and awe-inspiring' (DeSilva: 1981:60). The inscriptions of Polonnāruva contain vivid accounts of his achievements. Nissānka Malla was a great builder. The Rankot Vihāra at Polonnāruva, the cave temple of Dambulla, the Tooth Relic Temple, the Nissānkalatā Maṇḍapāya, and even the Nissānkeswara temple at Rāmeswaram (in India) were some of the evidences to his constructive genius. However, of all the architectural monuments attributed to the reign of Nissānka Malla, the most unforgettable was the collection of temples and *vihāras* in the so-called Great Quadrangle, which has been described as the 'most beautiful and satisfying proportioned buildings in the entire Indian world' (Rowland: 1956:206). Nissānka Malla was very fond of flaunting his Kalinga origin. In his coins, the legend reads, *Kalinga Lamkeja (sa)*. He named his capital Polonnāruva as *Kalinga-Pura*. Nissānka Malla also established *Kalinga Udyāna* (Kalinga Park/garden) and *Kalinga Vana* (Kalinga forest) in the Polonnāruva city after the land of his birth. The people of Kalinga since the time of Vijaya, who established their hegemony in the island, regarded the country as theirs. This fact is vividly expressed in the records of Nissānka Malla, (Behera: 1992:7) viz., "since the time of Prince Vijaya, it is to the princes of the Kalinga dynasty that the island of Lanka has belonged. Therefore, if there are any of them to be found, then it is the duty (of the people) to place them in position of supremacy and thus protect the religion."

Nissānka Malla was succeeded by his son Virabāhu, who was murdered on the very day of his accession. Thereupon, Nissānka Malla's younger brother Vikramabāhu ascended the throne. After three months, Vikramabāhu was murdered by a *bhāgineyaka* (nephew or sister's son) of Nissānka Malla who styled himself as Choḍagaṅga and ascended the throne in c. 1196 CE. Choḍagaṅga of Sinhala (Sri Lanka), however, did not prove himself successful as

a ruler and was deposed after nine months of his accession. The throne was then occupied for three years by Lilāvati, the queen of Parākramabāhu. At the end of 1200 CE, another Kalinga prince named Sāhasa Malla ascended the throne at Polonnāruva on 23 August 1200 CE. Sāhasa Malla was a step brother of Nissānka Malla and was born at Sinhapura. However, the rule of Sāhasa Malla lasted for two years only. The military leaders who plotted against him succeeded in making Kalyāṇavati, the queen of Nissānka Malla, as the ruler of Ceylon who remained on the throne for six years. After Kalyāṇavati, for the next six years, there followed the succession of a number of kings and queens, who ruled for a brief but troubled period. Taking the advantage of political instability and confusion, Parākrama Pāṇḍya, an invader from the Pāṇḍya kingdom of India, captured the throne in c. 1211 CE (Das: 1977: 126). After a brief interval, Ceylon was once again passed into the hands of another Kalingan prince named Māgha. Prince Māgha led his expedition towards Ceylon with about 2400 soldiers in c. 1214 CE. He successfully drove out the Pāṇḍyan invader, Parākrama Pāṇḍya and established his rule over Sinhala. Māgha justified his claim over the throne of Sinhala on the ground of the right of inheritance from his kinsmen who had ruled before. Māgha ruled over Sinhala for 21 years (c. 1214 CE to c. 1235 CE) and as a very strongman gave Sinhala a better government. A notable feature of his administration in Ceylon was the distribution of land to his followers, many of whom even constituted outside elements. S. Paranavitana, (Paranavitana: 1936:64) however, has considered the rule of Māgha as a 'veritable reign of terror' and regarded him as a 'cruel oppressor' and a scourge sent by heaven to punish the people of Sinhala. But these expressions seem to be inaccurate and untenable because when Māgha succeeded to the Sinhala throne, political situation was chaotic and full of confusion. There was no peace, order and stability in the kingdom. So, a strong government was the need of the hour and Māgha provided that. Hence, his rule should not be perceived as oppressive; rather it was beneficial and a blessing in disguise for Sinhala. Māgha's rule, however, was followed by internal disintegration and external invasions. Infighting among the Kalinga people was the main reason for the decline of their influence over Sinhala after Māgha. The Kalinga dynasty had maintained itself in power for such a long period of time not only with the support of an influential section within the country, but also due to the inherent weakness of the sections

that opposed them. In any case, the Kalinga element in Ceylon must have been deep-rooted.

Besides political relations, religious and cultural interaction between the two kingdoms was brisk. In the history of Sinhalese Buddhism, Kalinga had a major role to play. According to the Sinhalese tradition, Buddhism first reached Sinhala by a mission sent out under the patronage of the Mauryan emperor Aśoka (c. 269 BCE to c. 232 BCE) led by his son Mahindā (Mahendra) (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*: 1977:2). This mission of Aśoka to the Sinhalese king Devanāmpiya Tissa (c. 250 BCE) was just like a seed of Buddhism sown in the fertile soil of Ceylon, where later on, it grew and multiplied (Roy: 1967:75). From Tāmraliptī, Mahendra is supposed to have departed for Sinhala through the sea-route along the eastern coast of India. There, Mahendra chanced to meet the Sinhalese king Tissa and preached him (the king) a sermon on the Buddha (Geiger: 2011: 88-90). The king is said to have been immediately converted and then devotedly invited the missionaries to his capital. King Tissa granted the royal park *mahāmāgha* as a residence for the ordained priesthood. It is said that this was the beginning of the *mahāvihāra*, the historic centre of Buddhist orthodoxy in ancient Sri Lanka (DeSilva: 1981: 12). The *prathama stūpa* (first *stūpa*) was also built on the soil of Sinhala with the entry of Mahendra into the capital (Roy: 1967:76). Within a short time of Mahendra's mission, Buddhism emerged as the established religion of the country. The *Sāmantapāsādika* reveals that Emperor Aśoka sent to Sinhala a sapling of the sacred *Bodhi* Tree in the custody of his daughter *therī* Saṅghamittā (Saṅghamitrā) (Sahu: 1955: 183-184). In the retinue of the princess, eight Kalingan families were sent to Sinhala, who formed the nucleus, around which developed the Therāvādā school of Buddhism in that island. Saṅghamitrā sailed from Tāmraliptī port to Jambukola in Sinhala through the sea route along the coast. After reaching Sinhala, Saṅghamitrā is believed to have ordained Annulā, the chief queen of Tissa and organised the order of nuns. Saṅghamitrā also planted the *Bodhi* Tree there. Later on, Fa-Hien, the Chinese pilgrim went to Sinhala from Tāmraliptī through this route. Besides Tāmraliptī, *Che-li-ta-lo* (Māṅikpāṅṅā), another famous port of ancient Odisha (Kalinga), had also active contact with Sinhala. From *Che-li-ta-lo* Hiuen Tsang, (Watters: 1961:194) the Chinese pilgrim (c. seventh century CE), who came to India during the reign of Harshavardhan is believed to have thought about the

tooth relic of the Buddha preserved in that distant island (Sri Lanka) "Far away, 20000 *li* distant in the south was the *Seng-ka-lo* (Ceylon) Country, and from this place [*Che-li-tū-lo*, which was a thoroughfare and resting-place for sea-going traders and strangers from distant lands] on calm nights one could see the brilliant light from the pearl on the top of the tope over the Buddha's Tooth-relic in that country [Ceylon]." The Buddhist text *Dāthāvamsa* (Law: 1925:34-54), describes in detail the event of the despatch of the sacred tooth relic of Buddha from Dantapura in Kalinga to Sinhala, in the ninth regnal year of the Sri Lankan king Shri Meghavarṇa (c. 304 CE to c. 352 CE), who received the precious relic with great honour from Dantakumār and his wife Hemamālā. (Plate II) Hemamālā was the daughter of the Kalingan ruler Guhaśiva (Guha of the *purānas*). The tooth relic of Buddha was brought to Kalinga after his *parinibhāna* (*parinirvāṇa*) by a Buddhist saint named Khematherā and was given to the Kalingan king Brahmadata who built a *stūpa* at Dantapura (identified with modern Pālur in the Gañjām district of Odisha) to preserve the relic. Centuries later, Guhaśiva, the then king of Kalinga faced difficulty in protecting the relic from being attacked by the kings of other religions and decided to send the same to the Sinhalese king through the safe hands of his daughter Hemamālā and son-in-law Dantakumār (a prince of Ujjain). The sacred tooth relic was received with great honour by the Sinhalese king and since then, it continues to be considered as the most sacred national treasure of Ceylon and is still worshipped at Kandy. (Plate III) Here, all the ancient customs and ceremonies are scrupulously maintained, offerings are made daily (Plate IV) and in honour of the relic an annual festival lasting for fourteen days is held at Kandy every year in the month of August (Das: 1949: 99-100). The relic, since ancient times, is playing an important role in the local politics because it is believed that whoever holds the relic holds the governance of the country. Kandy was the capital of the Sri Lankan kings and because of the sacred tooth temple is considered as a world Heritage Site. However, the shifting of the tooth relic from Kalinga to Sri Lanka vindicates the fact that Kalinga was then having an efficient and well-managed naval power, otherwise king Guhaśiva could not have trusted or thought to send the most precious tooth-relic of Lord Buddha via sea route to Ceylon in the hands of his daughter and son-in-law. It can also be presumed that the ships were regularly plying between the port of Tāmraliptī and Sri Lanka. On the basis of the representation of ships in a

sculptured frieze collected from the vicinity of the Brahmeswar temple, Bhubaneswar, now preserved in the Odisha State Museum (Plate V), in one of which two persons are represented being seated, K.C. Panigrahi (Panigrahi: 1950:114). believes that the long ear lobes of the two seated personages show Buddhistic affinity and the persons are a prince and a princess holding something in their hand, probably the relics of Buddha, which they are transporting to other countries. If the view of K.C. Panigrahi is to be taken, we can mention here that the scene represents the transportation of the tooth relic of Buddha from the Kalingan port of Pālor/ Dantapura to Sri Lanka in the safe custody of prince Dantakumāra and princess Hemamālā.

The Kalinga-Sri Lanka religious relations through Buddhism operated in other forms also. The *Cūlavamsa* (Geiger: 1996 Pt.I:70-71). states that during the reign of Ceylonese king Aggabodhi II (c. 592 CE to c. 602 CE), the king of Kalinga accompanied by his wife 'with the resolve of world renunciations' visited Sinhala to listen to the preachings of the Buddhist monk Jotipāla.

Another significant aspect of Kalinga's contact with Sinhala is the influence of the language of Kalinga on that of Sinhala. H. Oldenberg argues that *Pāli* went to Sinhala from Kalinga (Oldenberg: 1879: lii, liv-lv). He compared the *Pāli* of Sinhala with the dialect of Khāravēla's inscription (Hāthīgumphā Inscription) at Khaṇḍagiri and Udayagiri. E.Muller, in his *Pāli Grammar* has also accepted this theory (Muller: 1884: iii). However, this supposition needs to be thoroughly investigated and testified. Further, the similarities between the language of old Sinhalese and Aśokan inscriptions in Eastern India, especially that of Dhāuli (near Bhubaneswar) corroborate to the fact of good cultural contact between Kalinga and Sinhala (Shahidullah: 1933: 747-748). The paintings of Sigiria and images of the Buddha at Anurādhāpura in Sinhala too bear close resemblance with the paintings of Sitābāñji and images of the Buddha at Lalitagiri in Odisha (Chandra: 1954:79).

The age old political and cultural links between Kalinga and Sinhala must have augmented the volume of commercial relations between the two kingdoms. The sea-borne trade between Kalinga and Sinhala continued throughout the ancient period. The sailors of Kalinga were quite accustomed to making voyages to Sinhala, which occupied a strategic position so far as the overseas trade of Kalinga was concerned, as all the routes passed through this kingdom. Foreign

merchants were attracted to this island because of its importance as a centre of international trade. Megāsthēnes, the Greek ambassador to the court of Chandragupta Maurya (c. 322 BCE to c. 298 BCE), who called the island as Taprobane said that the country produced more gold and large pearls than India (McCrindle: 2008:60-61). According to Varāha Mihira, *Garuḍa Purāna* and Bhoja, Sinhala was one of the many chief centres of pearl-fishing in the whole of the Indian Ocean (Mookerji: 1962:47); (1999:68). In the maritime trade between Kalinga and South-East Asian countries, Sri Lanka acted as the halting place for the merchants and sailors. The discovery of Sinhalese king Shāhasa Malla's copper coins (Plate VI) from Māṅikpāṅṅā (*Che-li-tā-lo*) in Odisha, Polonnāruva in Sri Lanka and Kutchina in Indonesia, gives proof of a maritime trade network linking coastal Odisha, Sri Lanka and Indonesian island of Sumatra. Fa-Hien sailed from Tāmraliptī to Sri Lanka in a large merchant vessel which refers to brisk maritime trade between Tāmraliptī and Sri Lanka. The journey of Fa-Hien from Tamralipti to Sri Lanka took 'fourteen days and nights'. In the words of S. Beal, (Beal: 1964:166).

“He [Fa-Hien] then shipped himself on board a great merchant vessel. Putting to sea, they proceeded in a south-westerly direction, and, catching the first fair wind of the winter season [i.e. of the North East monsoon] they sailed for fourteen days and nights and arrived at the country of the Lions (Sinhala/Ceylon). Men of that country (Tāmraliptī) say that the distance between the two is about 700 *yojanas*. This kingdom (of lions) is situated on a great island. From east to west it is fifty *yojanas*, and from north to south thirty *yojanas*”

The retinue that accompanied the sapling of the Bodhi-Tree (Bo-sapling) from India to Sri Lanka included families of traders (Geiger: 2011:128); (Raghavan: 1964:16). Trade led the way to political conquest. From the accounts of Cosmas, who belonged to c. sixth century CE, it is known that Sinhala used to purchase elephants from India, and the price of elephants was fixed by a cubit measurement. The king of Sinhala paid a good price for the elephants coming from the Indian marts (Maity: 1957:131). Kalinga in ancient times was famous for elephants. Therefore, it is natural to suppose that Sinhala received elephants from Kalinga. Kalinga imported pearl, silver and copper from Sinhala and exported precious stones, ivory, pepper, betel-nuts, drugs and fine textile

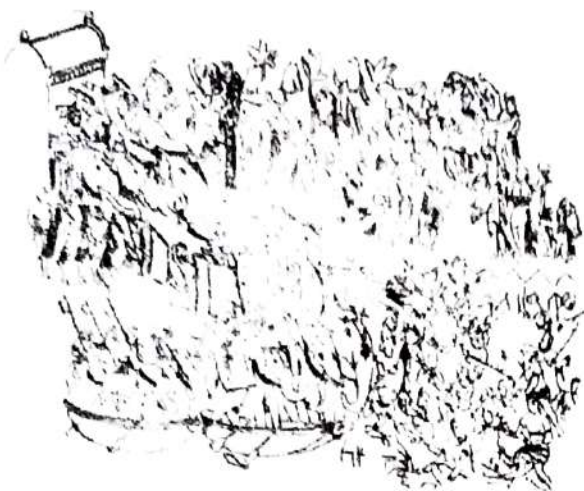


Plate I: Scene of Vijay's landing in Ceylon. Paintings of Ajantā Cave.



Plate II: Wall painting at Kelaniya Temple of princess Hemamālā and her husband, prince Danta Kumār. It is portrayed that Hemamālā is carrying Gautam Buddha's tooth relic hidden in her hair to Sri Lanka.

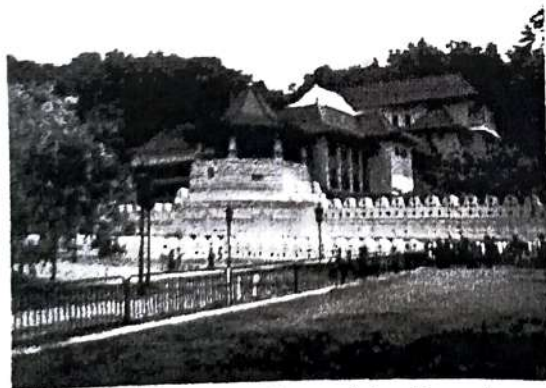


Plate III: Front View of the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic (Sri Dalada Maligawa) at Kandy, Sri Lanka.



Plate IV: Inner View of the Sacred Tooth relic temple at Kandy, Sri Lanka



Plate V: Shipment of Elephants from Odisha Coast/ Depiction of boats carrying elephants, Brahmeswar Temple, c. 11th century CE, Bhubaneswar, Odisha.



Plate VI: Ceylonese Coin from Māṅikpātnā, Odisha



Plate VII: Worship of Boat (Boita Bandāṇa) on the occasion of Khudurukuṇī Oṣhā, Odisha

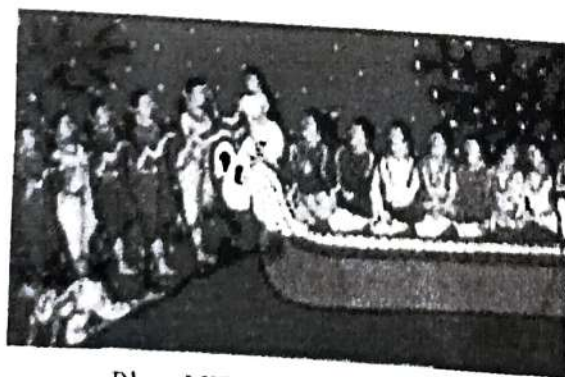


Plate VIII: Boita Bandāṇa (boat worship) on the occasion of Khudurukuṇī Oṣhā



Figure 1: India, Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia



Figure 2: Ancient Sri Lanka



Figure 4: The water-route between India and the Western world.



Figure 3: The Sea Route used by Fa-Hien in his return journey to China via Sri Lanka and Indonesia.

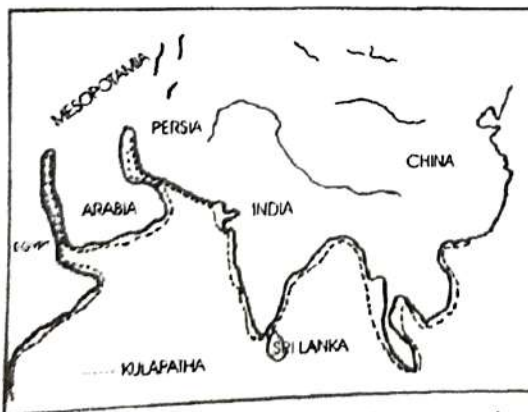


Figure 5: Kulapatha or the coastal route used by the Kalingan sailors.



Figure 6: Route followed by Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, c. 1st century CE



Figure 7: Direction of the South-West Monsoon wind.



Figure 8: Direction of the North-East Monsoon wind.



Figure 9: The coastal route from ancient Odisha to South-East Asia along the coast of Bengal and Burma.

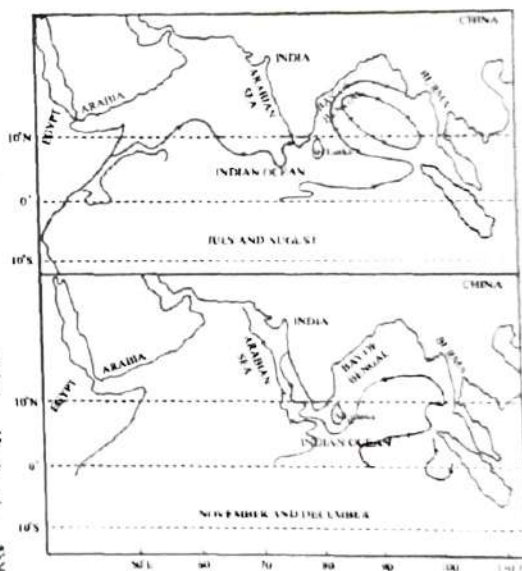


Figure 10: Movement of water in the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean.

products to foreign countries in general and Sinhala in particular. A seventeenth century CE poet of Odisha, Upendra Bhañja known as *kabisamrāt* (poet laureate) in his *kāvya* (poetical work), *Lābanyabatī* (Das, 1983:208) speaks of the trade between Kalinga and Sinhala in the following words: "*bahitra lāgilā āsi Sinhaldvipare, sādhaba jubatimane ati pramodare gale hoitahandāi*" i.e. the boat or flotilla reached the island of Sinhala. The merchant ladies went to adore the ship in cheers. From this, it is evident that maritime trade between Kalinga and Sinhala was brisk even up to the seventeenth century CE.

The Kalingan sailors in course of their maritime interaction with Sri Lanka mainly used the route along the coast. In using this route, they had to depend on many factors such as the timing of their journey, the direction of the monsoon winds, the movement of water, sea currents, waves and tides. Monsoon played an important role in the development of ancient Indian maritime trade. The use of monsoon winds for maritime trade, in fact, was a boon to sailing ships to reach the overseas countries. Monsoon winds, in fact, brought about a radical change in the pattern of shipping in the Indian Ocean (Gunawardana: 1987:59-60). The monsoon winds, otherwise known as the 'Trade Winds', blew for a period of 6 months from one quarter, and for the next six months from the opposite quarter. The Kalingan sailors mostly depended on the monsoon winds for their commencement and return journey. As in those days, the sailors mostly moved with the help of sails, they must have scheduled their journey according to the movement of wind and water.

In India, we have the south-west monsoon from the month of June to September which used to blow from the south-west direction. This wind is favourable for the return of ships from Sri Lanka to Kalinga. This fact is attested by a series of socio-religious festivals like the *khudurukunī oshā* (Plates VII and VIII) which is associated with the return journey of ships from the east falling during this period (refer to Figure no.7). Similarly, during the months from October to December (blows from the middle of October to the end of December) we have the north-east monsoon which is also referred to as the 'retreat' monsoon (Davies: 1968: 76). During this period, the winds blow from the north-east and are quite favourable for ships sailing to Sri Lanka from any of the ports of Kalinga. This is normally taken by the ancient mariners and merchants of Kalinga as the period of the commencement of journey (refer to Figure no.8).

During this period, the Bay of Bengal is comparatively calm and has a fine weather, although occurrence of stray cyclones is not unknown. Sailors from the Coromandal coast including those from the Kalingan coast consider the north-east monsoon to be a fine weather season (Sarkar: 1986:305). The *sādhavas* (not belong to a particular caste but form a community) of Kaliṅga taking advantage of this favourable wind which is also referred to as 'fair wind' or 'fair weather wind', used to set their sail during these months. This fact is corroborated by the celebration of the *boita bandāṇa utsava* on *kārtika puṇimā* (full moon day of *kārtika* i.e., October-November) during this period. The early hours of the morning of *kārtika puṇimā* was then considered as the most auspicious and suitable time for the commencement of a voyage. The commencement of journey in the month of October-November is also corroborated by the travels of Fa-Hien from Tāmraliptī to Sri Lanka, who started his voyage in the month of October 411 CE (Sarkar: 1969:3).

From the above discussion, it can be inferred that the Kaliṅgan merchants set their sail between the months of October and December; first they went to Sri Lanka, and then with the help of the equatorial current proceeded towards Java and other countries of the South-East Asia. They carried on their trade activities for months, and returned home with the help of the south-west monsoon between the months of June and September.

Some scholars, (Crawford: 1993:197) however, point out that 'the Indian traders (of the East coast including that of the Kaliṅgan coast) used to disembark from their ports when the south-west monsoon winds blew from June to September (J. Crawford has mentioned that it blows from April to October), and returned with the north-east monsoon winds, which prevailed in the opposite direction. If this view is to be believed then it must have been applicable to the route that lie north of Kaliṅga along the coast of Bengal, Burma, Arakan etc., to the South-East Asia (refer to Figure no.9). Ships sailing along the direction of the south-west monsoon winds sailed along the north-east coast to Indo-China and Indonesia. The *khudurukunī oṣhā* here probably acted as the beginning of the journey (in the north-east direction). Similarly, in the retreat monsoon winds which blows from the north-east, sailors returned to Kaliṅga along the coast of Burma, Bengal etc. The *kārtika puṇimā* or the *kārtika boita bandāṇa utsava* here marked the return journey of the traders. But the theory that the sailors

started their journey during the north-east monsoon (retreat monsoon) and returned during the south-west monsoon is not only popular but also strongly corroborated by the socio-religious festivals in Kalinga. The festivals like the *boita bandāna utsava* (on *kārtika puṇimā*, October-November) and *khudurukuṇī oṣhā* (on Sundays of Bhādrav, August-September) and the narrations in the story or *bratakathās* are in conformity with such a conclusion. Although festivals can be associated in either way, yet the very nature of a tradition handed over through centuries can be taken as the final say. On the *kārtika puṇimā*, the *boita bandāna utsava* is celebrated by floating boats made of banana leaves and stems in rivers, tanks and the sea. The very nature of the celebration indicates the commencement of the journey and its wishing a bon-voyage to sailors. Similarly, the *khudurukuṇī oṣhā* is celebrated to welcome the returning sailors. This is celebrated by unmarried or newly married girls who keep waiting for the return of their near and dear ones.

Besides the direction of the winds, the movement of ships in the sea was influenced by another very important factor, i.e., the movement or circulation of the water. The latest scientific research shows that water moves in a specific direction during a particular period of the year and is directly connected with the wind direction (refer to Figure no.10). Normally, water moves in the opposite direction of the wind, but at the surface level, by and large, it moves along the direction of the wind. Further, in the Bay of Bengal, sea currents generally run with the wind. Hence, the monsoon winds taken together with the water movement and the sea currents helped to a great extent for the smooth sailing of ships both in their onward and return journey.

In conclusion, we can say that the relations between Kalinga and Sri Lanka are not only old but also very brisk, spreading into different walks of life. Starting with political activities, followed by trade and commercial enterprises, it subsequently expanded into the domain of religion and culture. It is said that in the Greater India movement, the part played by Kalinga in Sri Lanka was really an achievement by itself (Das: 1949:109). It, of course, was not a one-way traffic. If some people from Kalinga ruled over Sri Lanka for few centuries and settled there permanently then there must have been some lasting impact on both sides. However, the predominant role played by Kalinga in shaping the history and culture of Sri Lanka is pertinent and undoubted. In a sense, Sri Lanka owed a

lot to Kalinga for the formation and enrichment of her history, culture and civilization, though the impact of other powers cannot be ruled out altogether.

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