

WORSHIPING OF STŪPA REVEALED BY SINHALESE MESSAGE POEMS (SANDESAKĀVYA)

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Introduction

It is possible to study about the worshiping of Stūpa through books and archaeological evidences. From the information found in books, Stūpa worshiping can rarely be seen in Messagepoems. Sinhalese Messagepoems cannot be seen with a Sinhalese origin. Many scholars believe that Sinhalese Messagepoems have originated due to the influence of Messagepoems or errands (*Dūta Kāvya*) written in North and South Indian regions. Messagepoems are introduced by the names such as *Dūta*, *Sandesa*, *Asna* and *Hasna*. Although Sinhalese Messagepoems were written before the Literary Period of *Gampola*, those are not existent at present. Messagepoems composed from the time of *Gampola* Literary Period onwards are visible at the present time. For a successful Messagepoem, it is necessary to have a messenger (*Hāraka*) and a receiver of a message. Messagepoem writers of Sri Lankan have used a live messenger in their Messagepoems like a bird, four-footed animal (quadruped) and the receiver like a great human being or a god. From a Messagepoem, there has been the request of a great person either from lay community or clergy to fulfil the message. Those Messagepoem writers have described in a vivid manner all the places that are passed by the messenger and the people who are met from the starting place to the end of the journey to deliver the message with a description of the way to deal with those persons and places. The main focus of this research paper is the worshiping of Stūpa that the messengers of the Messagepoems did

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when they met a religious place during their journey to deliver the message. There are many instances in Sinhalese Messagepoems that the messengers have been worshiped the places known as *Dāgaba*, *Wehera*, *Caitya* and *Stūpa*.

Objective

The objective of this research is to find the information regarding the Stūpa worshiping revealed by Sinhalese Messagepoems.

Methodology

Many details regarding the good deed of worshiping of Stūpa and letting others to worship Stūpa can be obtained from various books. Among them, Sinhalese literature holds a remarkable place. Sinhalese Messagepoems are considered as a tradition of books or writing with Sinhalese verse tradition. As the methodology, the researchers use the information about worshiping of Stūpa found in the Sinhalese Messagepoems such as *Mayura*, *Tisara*, *Parevi*, *Selalihini*, *Hansa*, *Girā*, *Kōkila*, *Sevul*, *Neelakobei*, *KahakuruluandKirala*.

Discussion

The Sanskrit word 'Stūpa' is introduced by the terms '*Thūpa*, *Dāgeba*, *Caitya* and *Wehera*'. The term '*Wehera*' has been used to refer to 'Temple' also. So, the investigation on Stūpa worshiping in Sinhalese Messagepoems has a great significance at this juncture. According to Messagepoems, even the monks who resided in the temples have done the worshiping of Stūpa. But, in this research, the details of letting the messengers of Messagepoems to worship Stūpa are examined.

Many of the Sinhalese Messagepoems were written during *Kōtte* literary era. A significant place is held by the Messagepoem *Selalihini* (Starling as the messenger). The message was taken to *Kelaniya* from *Jayawardenapura Kōtte*. On the way when the bird starling goes to *Kelaniya*, it meets *KithsirimēWehera* near Kelaniriver. There, before



worshipping Bodhi tree and statues, the bird is asked to worship *Dāgaba* or *Stūpa* in the following manner.

*“Sonda munirada pidu kala yasa merada sama
Puda kala ohu neth nil kelumev bera ma
Sandayuru sanda velen randi rusiru manara ma
Vandanehi tō dāgap maha bō pilima”* (Verse 42)

The *Stūpa* is very white in colour. It is similar to the gathered rays of honor of the Buddha.

Next, the messenger is asked to worship the *Stūpaat Watadāge* which is circular, white and attractive.

*“Pera uvindā gena girindā sindu sala ta
Negi pehedā pena samudā seti numu ta
Mena ulindā pehe vihidā nedigu bi ta
Sedi vatadā gei wandu dāgeba dimu ta”* (Verse 63)

The Buddha having arrived to *Kelaniya* with the invitation of *ManiakkhikaNaraja* delivered a sermon. A *Stūpa* has been built in the place where the Buddha was seated to deliver the sermon. The messenger is requested to worship the *Stūpa* with this verse.

*Ahasin avut mani ak naindu yeduma ta
Rahatan medehi muni hinda mini palaga si ta
Dahamut desū tena kala setariyan ko ta
Mahadāgap himi vandu solasa ten si ta* (Verse 65)

The *Stūpa* built at the place where the Buddha had a bath and wore the robe when he came to *Kelaniya* was known as *Siuru Dāgeba*. The messenger was asked to worship that great *Stūpa* without turning back to the *Stūpa* thinking that it will cause disrespect to the *Stūpa* in that manner.

*Samanola giri gijindu digukala sondeka se tī
Sihilala ganga silil sanahā muni no ge tī
Pehedula tun sivuru enda perava vedasi tī
Tena kala sivuru dāgeba vandu nopē pi tī* (Verse 70)

It is possible to see the *Stūpa* worshipping in the Messagepoem *Hansa Sandēsa*. The Swan that goes from *Kēragala* to *Jayawardanapura* was

requested to worship Stūpa. The messenger swan that enters to *Kitsirime Vehera*, worships the Bo tree, then worships the Caitya with the relics of the Buddha respectfully walking round the Stūpa. It has been presented as follows.

“*Dutuwa pabōdaya vana sata sita niban da*
Pavatina bō pudavat weselin noma da
Muni piribō kala muni dātuwen ban da
Sirimaha bōdagep pedakunen wen da” (Verse 70)

The Buddha, having arrived to the hall of *Maniak Naidu*, had his alms. The Stūpa erected there was worshiped by the messenger.

“*Munidā diva bojun velandū tenehi nan da*
Munidā pihituvā kala dā gebata ven da” (Verse 95)

The swan that rests at *Kelani* temple worships the Stūpa with the relics of the Buddha after monks swept the sacred compounds.

“*Nomanda giya dā munidā rendi dā geba da*
Emada nemada siti silvat sanga gana da
Pabada vihidi piri sirimabō tura da
Peheda nemada epuren yāgan saban da” (Verse 120)

In the Messagepoem *Gira Sandēsa*, the message is taken from *Jayawardadepura* to *Totagamuwa*. The parrot having entered into a temple rests for sometime and worships the Stūpa with the monks who resides at the temple.

“*Waswatu dap bindabuduwū guna nada na*
Apadiya bap munidāgebakaranada na
Kala mulu kap pavatina lesa kala nada na
Vandu dāgep vandinā sanda dina nada na” (Verse 67)

The writer let the messenger worship Stūpa together with the other religious places at *Totagamuwa*.

“*Wehera puda pasanga turu rev nodenatura*
Mitura tosin wenda sedi sonduru pahatura ...” (Verse 231)

The Messagepoem *Paravi Sandēsa* written at the *Kōtte* Literary period is carried by a dove as the messenger. The bird carries the message from *Sri Jayawardanapura Kōtte* to *Upulvāngod* house at *Deviniwara*. On the way, it goes to the *Vehera* passing the village *Magullwella*. There, it worships the Stūpa in *Vatadāge* enshrined with the relic cloth used by the Buddha and

beautified with various arts. The nature of the worship has been presented in the following manner.

“*Emadā sīta pahadā vandana lowedu ru*
Munidā pera sahudā vedu se ayu ru
Subadā lesa susadā endi situru tu ru
Vatadā geya tula dāgaba vandu mituru” (Verse 149)

Apart from the Messagepoems mentioned above, 81st verse of *Kokila Sandēsa*, 94th verse of *Neelakobo Sandēsa*, 50th and 142nd verses of *Kahakurulu Sandēsa* and some other Messagepoems also have included the worshipping of Stūpa. The Messagepoems *Mayura* and *Tisara* have included the Stūpa worshipping. Although other religious places are worshiped by the Messagepoems written afterwards, worshipping of Stūpa cannot be seen in them.

Conclusion

It is clear that the Stūpas which should be worshiped by human beings are worshiped even by the animals. So, the worshipping of Stūpa in Messagepoems creates devotion in the readers and listeners.

Keywords: Stūpa, Sandesa, Messagepoems, worshipping, literature

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