

Buddhism among Tamils.

An Introduction

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The Basis

The title of this book is *Buddhism among Tamils. Part 3. Extension and Conclusion* (=BaT 3). It precludes acquaintance with three other proceeding volumes, all published in the series *Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Historia Religionum*.¹ They are abbreviated to BaT 1, BaT 2, and BWPE [Fig. 60–62].

The word “extension” in the present volume BaT 3 refers to the fact that new scholars participate in the Uppsala team [Fig. 50],² namely A. J. V. Chandrakanthan (E. Jē. Vi. Cantirakāntan) from To-

¹ 1. A Buddhist Woman’s Path to Enlightenment. Proceedings of a Workshop on the Tamil Narrative *Maṇimēkalai*, Uppsala University, May 25–29, 1995 (=BWPE), published in 1997. The authors were Civacuppiramaṇiyam Patmanātaṅ, Āḷvāppillai Vēluppiḷlai, Paula Richman, Pirēmā Nantakumār, D. Dennis Hudson, Peter Schalk, David Shulman, Anne Monius, Araṅkarācaṅ Vijayalaṭcumi, Irāccantiraṅ Nākacuvāmi. – 2. Buddhism among Tamils in Pre-Colonial Tamiḷakam and Īlam. Part 1. Prologue. The Pre-Pallava and the Pallava Period (=BaT 1), published in 2002. The volume contains a map of Tamiḷakam and Īlam, BaT 1–3 which is copied in Fig. 58–59. Buddhism among Tamils in Pre-Colonial Tamiḷakam and Īlam. Part 2. The period of the Imperial Cōlar. Tamiḷakam and Īlam (=BaT 2), published in 2002. – The authors in BaT 1–2 were Irāmaccantiraṅ Nākacāmi, Civacuppiramaṇiyam Patmanātaṅ, Peter Schalk, Turaicāmi Tayāḷaṅ and Āḷvāppillai Vēluppiḷlai. – All three volumes cover the pre-colonial period only. BWPE is limited to Tamiḷakam with outlooks on Īlam. BaT 1–2 cover both Tamiḷakam and Īlam. – The frontiers of Tamiḷakam in the pre-colonial period are given in BaT 1 and Fig. 58–59. – The history of the toponym Īlam is described in BaT 1. In short, Īlam refers always to the island as a whole. Īlam is Lamkā that in Tamil is rendered as Ilaṅkai. Īlam should not be identified with Tamiḷīlam [Fig. 63]. A periodisation of Pauttam in Tamiḷakam is in BaT 1, 59–63. The naming of a period as “Caṅkam age” has been avoided. It does not refer historically to a period, but is an ideological periodisation from the 7th century, BaT 1, 64–65. Transliterations follow the *Tamil Lexicon* system. – A correction: In BaT 1, 493, note 653 and 654 refer not to Īlam as the text gives, but to Ilaṅkai.

² For the Uppsala team, see Peter Schalk, Academic Exchange between Yāḷppānam and Uppsala, 1988–1996, *Uppsala studies in the History of Religions 3* (1996) (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1996).

ronto and Jude Lal Fernando (Jūd Lāl Pranāndu) from Dublin. They bring an extended perspective to the concept of Buddhism among Tamils. Both write about the post-colonial period in Īlam (Laṃkā), the first about reformbuddhism or socially engaged Buddhism in the specific character of Ambedkarbuddhism during a short period in the 1960s in the North of Īlam; the second about contemporary political Siṃhala Buddhism (*siṃhala budu samayam*) imposed mainly in Caiva (Shaiva) areas in Īlam. “Extension” refers also to the article by Anne Monius who deepens her former analysis of the commentary of *Vīracōḷiyam*.³ She highlights the connection between Tamil and Buddhism by demonstrating the *Vīracōḷiyam*’s and the Commentary’s close relation to the Buddhist literary world in Sanskrit. Their Tamil and Buddhism in a Cōḷa Court was situated in much broader currents of explicitly Buddhist discourses of grammar and poetics. To analyse Tamil through Sanskrit lenses gives these works a unique position.

The word “conclusions” in part *BaT* 3 refers to a summarising of some discussions which have taken place since the publication of the three volumes, during almost 20 years. Alvappillai Veluppillai has undertaken to do this extremely complicated work which is a summary not of Buddhism among Tamils, but of the history of academic study of Buddhism among Tamils. My “Introduction” takes up some conclusions, but refers mainly to different uses, academic and non/academic, of the concept “Buddhism among Tamils”.

After the publication of *BaT* 1–2 in 2002 a remarkable change has taken place. The study of Buddhism among Tamils before 2002 was mainly an occupation by professional historians and philologist. Today we can also see a strong interest from journalists and amateur historians for the history of Tamil Buddhism in Tamilakam and Īlam.⁴

³ Anne Monius, “The *Vīracōḷiyam*: Language, Literary Theory, and Religious Community”, Id. *Imagining a Place for Buddhism. Literary Culture and Religious Community in Tamil-Speaking South India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 116–136.

⁴ See for example J. L. Devananda, “Tamil Buddhism in Ancient South India and Sri Lanka”, <http://www.srilankaguardian.org/2011/11/tamil-buddhism-in-ancient-south-india.html>, <http://transcurrents.com/news-views/archives/6419>; <http://dbsjeyaraj.com/dbsj/archives/3031>; <http://www.srilankaguardian.org/2010/10/tamil-buddhists-of-past-and-future.html> – Anon., “Buddhism – A Tamils' Contribution”, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9WoNEd3ypI>. – Lakshman Jayawardana, “Ancient Buddhist links between Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka”, <http://www.lakehouse.lk/mihintalava/gaya07.htm>. – Anon., “Tamil Buddhists (et al)”, <http://indica.ca/2011/11/tamil-buddhists-et-al/> – Anon., “Special lecture on “Tamil Buddhist””, *The Daily Mirror*, 12 May 2010, <http://www.buddhistchannel.tv/index.php?id=43,9158,0,0,1,0>. – Ameen Izzadeen, “Sinhala Ignorance of Tamil Buddhism in Sri

They produce popularised versions of historical research according to the principle “it is believed that...” without giving references. In Īlam this new interest has a special background. Even politicians engage in the study of Tamil Buddhism. They take positions for or against the statement that some historical Buddhist sites in the North and East of Īlam were managed by Tamil speakers.⁵ Behind this discussion linger claims for territorial control by both Siṃhala and Tamil speakers which makes the issue a political one. It is possible today to start a heated debate on blogs and in other social media about this issue.⁶

Buddhism among Tamils

What is Buddhism among Tamils? Some answer by using the expression Tamil Buddhism (*tamilppauttam*, Tamil Pauttam). These are, however, not equivalents in all usages. Buddhism among Tamils may be used as a blanket for several concepts, among them for Tamil Buddhism, but also for Prākṛit- and Pālibuddhism⁷ and for Siṃhala Buddhism used by Siṃhala speakers expanding into the Tamil speaking areas in Īlam. Even Sanskrit Buddhism was known by Tamil speakers.⁸

Buddhism among Tamils is also a *territorial* concept; it includes all kinds of Buddhism in Tamil speaking areas in Tamilakam and Īlam.⁹ Buddhism among Tamils is also a concept of time. In Tamilakam it covered a period of a millennium if we disconnect it from neobuddhism in the 19th and 20th centuries. Neobuddhism in Tamilakam was a new start which retrieved the past, but did not have an unbroken relation to the past. In Īlam the time perspective is longer; there were appearances and disappearances, ups and downs, up to the modern formations guided by contemporary local leaders like Vimalasāra Nāyaka Thera in Vavuniyā.¹⁰

Lanka”, July 3, 2007, <http://federalidea.com/focus/archives/43> – Anon. Tamil Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Lankanewspapers.com, Saturday, 5 May 2012; http://www.lankanewspapers.com/news/2012/5/76332_space.html.

⁵ See pp. 42, 44, 55, 56, 133, 138, 139, 142 in this volume.

⁶ See for example Devananda, “Tamil Buddhism in Ancient South India and Sri Lanka”...

⁷ See *BaT* 1, 73–74.

⁸ *BaT* 1, 52–53, 73–74.

⁹ *BaT* 1, 53.

¹⁰ *BaT*, 30–33.

Buddhism among Tamils in Tamilakam was heavily exposed to the polemic from the Caiva (Shaiva) and Vaiṇava (Vaishnava) side from the Pallava period onwards which resulted in a marginalised position in Tamilakam.¹¹ Alvappillai Veluppillai has written on several anti-Buddhist spokesmen from the *patti* (*bhakti*)-movement like Campan-tar,¹² Appar,¹³ and Māṇikkavācakar.¹⁴ We often forget that some Buddhists participated in the controversy, for instance Cāttaṇār who evaluated non-Buddhist(Buddhist) religions low.¹⁵

We should be aware that Buddhism was heavily attacked by Caiṇam (Jainism) too.¹⁶ Alvappillai Veluppillai was able to document the presence of institutionalised Caiṇam already in the pre-Pallava period which is not possible to accomplish with institutionalised Buddhism.¹⁷ Furthermore, we have to add that royal or state patronage of Buddhism in Tamilakam was exceptional and regionally limited.¹⁸ One such exception is Nākapaṭṭiṇam (Nagapattinam) which was supported by three Cōla(Chola) Kings, not for religious, but for pragmatic-political reasons.¹⁹ King Irājarāja (Rājarāja) who invaded Īlam consented to having a Mahāvihāra was named after him, the Irājarājaperumpalli at Periyakuḷam in the Tirukōṇamalai region.²⁰ It has been described by Alvappillai Veluppillai,²¹ Sivasubramaniam Pathmanathan,²² and myself.²³ Its religion is typical for what is called here Īlaccōlappattam ‘Buddhism of the Cōlas in Īlam’.

¹¹ *BaT* 1, 19–21, 89.

¹² *BaT* 1, 153–155, 446–486, *BaT* 2, 664–666.

¹³ *BaT* 1, 153–155.

¹⁴ *BaT* 1, 155–156, 486–504.

¹⁵ Ālvāpiḷḷai Vēluppillai, “A Negative Evaluation on Non-Buddhist religions in the *Maṇimēkalai*”, *BWPE*, 223–241.

¹⁶ *BaT* 1, 21–22, 224–225.

¹⁷ *BaT* 1, 22–23, 167–203.

¹⁸ *BaT* 1, 21–22, 29, 62–63, 89–90. For royal patronage see R. Champakalakshmi, “Buddhism in Tamil Nadu”, *Buddhism in Tamil Nadu. Collected Papers* (Chennai: Institute of Asian Studies, 1998), 69–96. Peter Schalk, “The Caiva Devaluation of Pautta and and Caiṇa Asceticism in Precolonial Tamilakam”, *Asceticism and its Critics. Historical Accounts and Comparative Perspectives*, Edited by Oliver Freiberger, *AAR Cultural Criticism Series* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 118–121.

¹⁹ *BaT* 2, 514–518.

²⁰ *BaT* 1, 158.

²¹ *BaT* 1, 159–162.

²² *BaT* 2, 767–776.

²³ *BaT* 2, 776–783.

Tamiḷ Buddhism

Let us now concentrate on one part of Buddhism among Tamils, on Tamiḷ Buddhism. What is that? Anne Monius writes that

in terms of ‘Tamil Buddhism’, my feeling is that there is no such coherence implied in the extant sources. I would more simply refer to ‘Buddhist thought and practices among native Tamil speakers’, leaving room to consider the work of, say, Buddhadatta and Dhammapāla alongside the Maṇimēkalai.²⁴

This brings us again to Buddhism among Tamils as a blanket for Tamiḷ Buddhism and for Pālibuddhism in Tamiḷakam. Let us leave Pālibuddhism aside and concentrate on only Buddhism transmitted in Tamiḷ. What is thought and practised by Tamiḷ speakers as Tamiḷ Buddhism? Is there an *indigenised* set of ideas and practises which we can call Tamiḷ Buddhism or is Tamiḷ Buddhism an imitation of a known school’s teachings or of a blend of known schools’ teaching?²⁵ True, there seems to be no coherence if we keep track of the history of Tamiḷakam and Īlam. We have to introduce distinctions regarding persons, regions and periods and define each separately. We find Hīnayāna, Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna, but there is still a debate about how to classify certain texts and text passages.²⁶ A number of scholarly views are presented.²⁷ Ramachandran Nagaswamy (Irāmaccantiraṅ Nācacāmi) has identified sectarian affiliations among Buddhist monks in Tamiḷakam.²⁸

There is no unifying canon for Tamiḷ Buddhism as we know canons to exist in Sanskrit, Pāli, Chinese and Tibetan Buddhism.²⁹ The written sources from Tamiḷakam are of different genres and can be and

²⁴ Written communication on 15 July, 2012.

²⁵ For the concept indiginisation in this context see Peter Schalk, “Explorations of the Concept of Tamil Buddhism. A Preliminary View”, *Lanka. Studies in Lankan Culture*, 1992 (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1992), 31–42, especially 32–33. See also Ālvāpṭillai Vēluppillai, “Historical Background of the Maṇimēkalai and Indiginization of Buddhism”, *BWPE*, 53–95.

²⁶ *BaT* 1, 84–89.

²⁷ *BaT* 1, 96–108.

²⁸ *BaT* 1, 112–115.

²⁹ *BaT* 1, 54, 72. Peter Schalk, “Canon Rejected: The Case of Pauttam among Tamils in Pre-Colonial Tamilakam and Ilam”, *Kanononisierung und Kanonbildung in der asiatischen Religionsgeschichte, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-Historische Klasse. Sitzungsberichte, 820. Band*, Herausgegeben von Max Deeg, Oliver Freiberger, Christoph Kleine (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2011), 233–258.

are de facto collected in one volume called *peruntokai* ‘great collection’(see below).³⁰ Beyond this we also find Pāli and Sanskrit texts relating to Tamilakam.³¹

Moreover, a number of texts in Sanskrit and Tamil which are highly critical of Buddhism confirm the existence of Buddhism in Tamilakam.³² Buddhism can be studied through the eyes of the inimical beholder.

Inscriptions from Tamilakam and Īlam, they too “witness” about the presence of Buddhism.³³

A special group of sources are artefacts from Tamilakam which can be dated and so can confirm that there is no Buddhist artefact older than the 4th century.³⁴ The influence of artefacts from Āntiram in the formative period of Buddhism in Tamilakam has been studied by Ramachandran Nagaswamy.³⁵ He has also studied coins and was not able to find any unambiguous trace of Buddhism in the pre-Pallava period.³⁶ I have checked all scholarly references to Buddhism in Tamilakam during the pre-Pallava period and found no convincing statement.³⁷ This does not exclude the existence of a non-institutional movement in Tamilakam by Buddhist merchants and pilgrims in the pre-Pallava period. They have, however, left no traces.

Īlam has produced an important literary source, a group of sources which is given the blanket name *vamsic* literature. It is an important source for the study of relations between Prākṛit-Siṃhala and Demaḷa (Tamil) speakers up to the arrival of the British.³⁸

If we put all writings together which have been generated in Tamil by Tamil speakers during the pre-colonial period we get not more than one thick volume.³⁹ One scripture in this imagined book is

³⁰ They are all listed in *BaT* 69–72.

³¹ *BaT* 1, 73–74.

³² *BaT* 1, 74–77, 89, *BaT* 2, 785–810.

³³ *BaT* 1, 77–79, 347–375.

³⁴ *BaT* 1, 78–79, 91–93. Peter Schalk, “The Oldest Buddhist Artefacts Discovered in Tamilakam”, ‘Being Religious and Living through the Eyes’. Studies in Religious Iconography and Iconology. A Celebratory Publication in Honour of Professor Jan Bergman, Edited by Peter Schalk and Michael Stausberg. Uppsala: AUU, 1998, 307–328.

³⁵ *BaT* 1, 111–112.

³⁶ *BaT* 1, 122–124.

³⁷ *BaT* 1, 238–347.

³⁸ *BaT* 1, 79–83.

³⁹ *BaT* 1, 72.

Maṇimēkalai turavu which has been elevated in the modern period as a typical representative of Tamil Buddhism.

In the 1930s, there was an attempt made to collect Buddhist fragments in one volume. It is called *peruntokai* [‘the great collection’]⁴⁰ but this cannot be identified as a canon, not even as an open one. Some of its parts have been translated in *BaT* 2.⁴¹

Profiles of Tamil Buddhism

There is no such thing, it seems, as uniform Tamil Buddhism in Tamilakam and Īlam – except for on the score of language. This lack of coherence and the plurality of contents and practises should, however, not prevent us from identifying shifting profiles of Tamil Buddhism during periods. Such profiles have dominant religious elements which constitute their profiles.

One such profile is Cōla Buddhism which dominated during the imperial Cōlas in Tamilakam and Īlam during parts of the pre-colonial period.⁴² In Īlam we find Īlaccōla Buddhism. In addition we find socially engaged Buddhism of the Dalit Movement and of the anti-Brahmanical Dravidian Movement during the colonial and post-colonial period. It is possible to describe Tamil Buddhism as consisting of indigenised forms of Buddhism on the basis of its different regional and temporal profiles. In the case of Tamilakam there are at least three profiles emerging during the Pallava, imperial Cōla and colonial periods. For Īlam there are at least five profiles.

Buddhist Profiles in Tamilakam

Let us look at Tamilakam first. We turn towards the Pallava period. Again, there is no *institutional* evidence for Buddhism in Tamilakam before the Pallavas.⁴³ This statement refers to the present state of all sources made available. Duraisamy Dayalan / Turaicāmi Tayālan has registered 80 sites of vestiges still unearthed in Tamilakam,⁴⁴ but he

⁴⁰ *BaT* 1, 70.

⁴¹ *BaT* 2, 811–827.

⁴² *BaT* 2, 514–518.

⁴³ *BaT* 1, 83–84, 206, 238–347.

⁴⁴ *BaT* 2, 559–568.

also has come to the conclusion that based on our present sources Buddhism starts with the Pallavas.⁴⁵

The Pallava period started ca 400 and ended in about 850. The rulers did not promote Buddhism⁴⁶ and the Buddhist institutions were in a state of decay caused by a massive attack by the *patti*-movement.⁴⁷ The Puttar (Buddha) was depicted as being bewildered.⁴⁸ The Chinese pilgrim Xuantsang's reports are unreliable when it comes to statistics but he establishes the fact of the existence of Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna institutions in Tamiḷakam.⁴⁹ The Sanskrit ācariyas 'teachers' had their influence outside Tamiḷakam⁵⁰ and the Pāli ācariyas marginalised themselves as they insisted on refusing the use of Tamiḷ.⁵¹ Kāñci was not a Buddhist site where Buddhism was centralised administratively during the Pallavas⁵² and the *Cilappatikāram* and *Maṇimēkalai tūravu* cannot be exploited for backing the statement that Buddhism flourished in Kāñci.⁵³ The rulers of the Pallava dynasty deselected Buddhism consciously⁵⁴ and the reason for this was not only religious, but also political.⁵⁵ Narasiṃhavarman II is allegedly an exception. He supposedly built a *vihāra* at Nākapattiṇam in the shift from the 7th to 8th century. This cannot however be verified.⁵⁶ The influence of Buddhism in the modern period in Tamiḷakam on literature and social reform movements is insignificant, limited, arbitrary and personalised, in short contingent.⁵⁷ Possible reasons for the marginalisation and final extinction of Buddhism in Tamiḷakam are given, including intra- and interstate conflicts with Īlam.⁵⁸

What then can we say positively about Buddhism in Tamiḷakam during the Pallavas? I refer to the establishment of the *Pautta vi-kāram* in Kāviriṇṇampattiṇam from the 4th–5th century.⁵⁹ Its original

⁴⁵ *BaT* 2, 559.

⁴⁶ *BaT* 1, 66–67, 378.

⁴⁷ *BaT* 1, 379, 420–421, 446–486.

⁴⁸ *BaT* 1, 382.

⁴⁹ *BaT* 1, 285–290, 400–403.

⁵⁰ *BaT* 1, 383–387.

⁵¹ *BaT* 1, 387–395.

⁵² *BaT* 1, 381, 395–397.

⁵³ *BaT* 1, 397–400.

⁵⁴ *BaT* 1, 397–420.

⁵⁵ *BaT* 1, 408–413, 421–430, *BaT* 2, 835–842.

⁵⁶ *BaT* 1, 403–408.

⁵⁷ *BaT* 1, 28–29.

⁵⁸ *BaT* 1, 83–84, 408–430.

⁵⁹ *BaT* 1, 430–444.

name is unknown. This establishment is the oldest preserved Buddhist *institution* in Tamilakam.⁶⁰ The influence from Āntiram (Andhra) is visible in the artefacts⁶¹ and the place was well-known in Īlam in the *Sīhalavatthupakaraṇa* as a passage for pilgrims to Northern India.⁶²

Kāvrippūmpaṭṭiṇam was situated in the area of the ancient Cōlas which was conquered by the Pallavas. The Buddhist institution was founded before that conquest and has therefore nothing to do with the Pallava rulers. True, they tolerated its existence, but the general impression is that they exposed Buddhism to decay.⁶³ I have given a detailed description of this important place which can be called the cradle of Buddhism in Tamilakam.⁶⁴

Ramachandran Nagaswamy has made a detailed study of the Buddhist images and sacred architecture in Kāvrippūmpaṭṭiṇam and other places.⁶⁵

In this area of the old Cōlas, we also find a monk known as Coḷika Saṃghamitta in the reign of King Goṭhābaya (309–322 or 249–262).⁶⁶ The monks story is told in the *Mahāvamsa* 36: 110–113 and tells about his travelling between this area and the island.⁶⁷

We conclude that Kāvrippūmpaṭṭiṇam was influenced by both Āntiram and Īlam and that the finds tell about Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna expressions which is in accordance with what Xuanzang had heard.⁶⁸

From the time of Narasiṃhavarman's II rule is a record about a Buddhist monk, Vajrabodhi by name, who was skilled in tantric rituals, but this monk left the Pallava court for China and therefore no trace is visible in the form of successors in the Pallava area.⁶⁹ We can add Vajrayāna to the collection of Buddhist currents of ideas during the Pallavas.

The contemporary retrieval of Bodhidharma as a son of a Pallava King has no basis in Tamil sources; it depends on a special non-consensual reading of a Chinese source. The present inflating of wish-

⁶⁰ For the beginning of Buddhism in Tamilakam see *BaT* 1, 66–67.

⁶¹ *BaT* 1, 436–438, 444.

⁶² *BaT* 1, 431.

⁶³ *BaT* 1, 378–430.

⁶⁴ *BaT* 430–446.

⁶⁵ *BaT* 1, 127–129.

⁶⁶ The first date refers to Wilhelm Geiger's and the second date to the Pēradeṇiya school's chronology.

⁶⁷ *BaT* 1, 444–446.

⁶⁸ *BaT* 1 285–290.

⁶⁹ *BaT* 1, 405–406.

ful thinking in visual media about an invented personal history of Bodhidharma in Tamilnāṭu may help to create interest for Tamil Buddhism, but it is done in a way that may lead to a disappointment when facing the the void.

We do not find an indigenous form of Tamil Buddhism related to the Pallava Court, but we find a document written in Sanskrit at the Court by Mahendra Vikrama Pallava in about 600. It is called *Mattavilāsa prahasana* and describes Buddhism as a religion in decay.⁷⁰ It shows that the Court acted not out of pure xenophobia against Buddhism. It tried to argue with many examples that Buddhism was allegedly unworthy to exist within Pallava culture.

We have to turn to the civil society outside the Court to find pro-Buddhist literary creations, to the *Cilappatikāram* which has references to Buddhist institutions, and to the *Maṇimēkalai turavu* which is a missiological Buddhist work.

In *BWPE* is an introduction which summarises the research on *Maṇimēkalai turavu* in relation to the *Cilappatikāram* with regard to earlier research, authorship, genre, dating, sectarian affiliation, historical setting, interpretative themes like causation, Gods and the Buddha, the soul, the *amuta curapi*, “reformed Buddhism”, rituals, and gender.⁷¹ These two literary creations do not represent specified schools/sects, but especially *Maṇimēkalai turavu* has much information about Buddhist schools in relation to non-Buddhist schools. This information has been worked upon by the author Cāttaṇār into a personalised version of Tamil Buddhism. The date of this work has reasonably been decided by Alvappillai Veluppillai till about 550.⁷² This dating is accepted by me till other new facts appear.

Alvappillai Veluppillai also emphasises the way Cāttaṇār has indigenised Buddhism into Tamil Buddhism by communicating a large set of Buddhist terms in Tamil as translations from Sanskrit and Pāli.⁷³ This is a significant part of the profile of Buddhism during the Pallava period alongside with the pluralism of traditional Buddhist ideas. Let me give two examples of the former: Anne Monius and Araṅkarācaṅ Vijayalaṭcumi have focussed in a study how Cāttaṇār has used the concept of *karman* in his Tamil translation *viṇai* in a similar but not identical way as was done by the Sarvāstivādins in the

⁷⁰ *BaT* 1, 116–118.

⁷¹ *BWPE*, 9–34.

⁷² *BWPE*, 16–21, 54–57.

⁷³ *BWPE*, 75–80, 90–91, 94.

Abhidharmakośabhāṣayam.⁷⁴ Alvappillai Veluppillai has made a deep study of the concept of *marupirappu* ‘rebirth’ in *Maṇimēkalai turavu* and noted an abundance of stories about rebirth which contrasts strongly with the scarcity of such stories in other Tamil narrative poems.⁷⁵

A continuous debate is going on today between scholars as to whether *Maṇimēkalai turavu* should be read as a source for historical facts as does Alvappillai Veluppillai or as a dream book as does David Shulman.⁷⁶

It can be added that from the time of Cāttaṇār Buddhism is classified not just a contingent expression of religiosity, but as a *camayam* ‘religion’, as an autonomous institution, alongside with other religions, but as the ultimate one, in Cāttaṇār’s evaluation. *Maṇimēkalai turavu* would have been a good start for the formation of an institutionalised Tamil Buddhism⁷⁷ were it not for the fact, shown by Alvappillai Veluppillai, that this work was forgotten; it had no continuous reception. Only in the 1890’s with Caminātaiyar’s edition was this work retrieved from oblivion.⁷⁸

To conclude, if *Maṇimēkalai turavu* is today taken as profile of Buddhism for the Pallava period, then, if we follow the intentions by the author Cāttaṇār, we face a non-sectarian version of Buddhism which, however, is compatible with late Hīnayāna traditions. These have much in common with early Mahāyāna doctrines. This version of Buddhism is indigenised not only through language but also by a key concept of Tamil culture which is *karpu* ‘chastity’.⁷⁹ The girl Maṇimēkalai is an exemplary case of *karpu*. The modern selection of *Maṇimēkalai turavu* as representative for the Pallava period and for Tamil Buddhism through the ages is symptomatic of a lack of sources. This selection approaches a manipulated historical writing that suspends the pluralism of Buddhist ideas during the Pallava period and following periods.

⁷⁴ Anne Monius, Araṅkarācaṇ Vijayalaṭemi, “Ētunikaḷcci in the *Maṇimēkalai*: the Manifestation of Beneficial Root: ‘Causes’ and Renunciation”, *BWPE*, 261–275.

⁷⁵ Ālvappillai Vēluppillai, “The Role of Rebirth in the Lives of Maṇimēkalai”, *BWPE*, 277–295.

⁷⁶ David Shulman, “Cāttaṇār’s Dreambook”, *BWPE*, 241–260.

⁷⁷ Peter Schalk, “Tamilische Begriffe für Religion”, *Religion in Asien? Studien zur Anwendbarkeit des Religionsbegriffs*, *Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Historia Religionum* 33 (Uppsala: AUU, 2012), 80–124.

⁷⁸ *BaT* 2, 523.

⁷⁹ See *BaT* 1, 55.

We come now to the imperial Cōḷa period (ca. 850 to ca. 1300). The Cōḷa rulers did not allow any visible influence of Buddhism at their Courts. In that way they followed the Pallavas, but like the Pallavas the Cōḷas were pragmatics and allowed the establishment of a huge Buddhist institution at Nākaṭṭiṇam in the 10th and 11th century as Buddhist centre specialised on trade with Southeast Asia.⁸⁰ It replaced Kāviriṭṭiṇam in the South away from the political and cultural centres of the Cōḷas who were dedicated Caivas and who actively promoted Caivam by royal protection.

Ramachandran Nagaswamy has studied the bronzes and votive *stūpas* from Nākaṭṭiṇam.⁸¹ This study which is fundamental for the study of Cōḷa Buddhist buddhology, was extended by Sivasubramaniyam Pathmanathan⁸² who also made a deep study of the historical setting of that place.⁸³

Caiva polemic against Buddhism continued from the Caiva side intensively in works like the *Tirukkalamṭakam*,⁸⁴ *Civañāṇacittiyār*,⁸⁵ *Periyapurāṇam*.⁸⁶ Alvappillai Veluppillai has shown that in a work like *Nīlakēci* and in other works the Caivas too kept up the same polemic.⁸⁷ A Tamil Buddhist work, *Kuṇṭalākēci*, survived these attacks only in fragments.⁸⁸

The Pāli ācariyas continued to cultivate their relations to Īlam, but made no progress in Tamilakam after Buddhaghosa's legacy to spread Buddhism in Pāli only.⁸⁹ The Vaiṇavas also joined in the attack against Buddhist institutions.⁹⁰ Buddhism was indeed harassed during its whole history in Tamilakam in the pre-colonial period.

First Alvappillai Veluppillai,⁹¹ then Anne Monius⁹² got the impression that Buddhists were treated better than Caivas. I have doubts.

⁸⁰ *BaT* 2, 534–553.

⁸¹ *BaT* 1, 129–145.

⁸² *BaT* 2, 584–609.

⁸³ *BaT* 2, 569–584.

⁸⁴ *BaT* 2, 519, 632–644.

⁸⁵ *BaT* 2, 519–521, *BaT* 2 785–810 (= Tamil text, transliteration and translation by Ālvāpīḷḷai Vēluppīḷḷai).

⁸⁶ *BaT* 2, 521–522.

⁸⁷ *BaT* 1, 167–203, *BaT* 2, 609–631.

⁸⁸ *BaT* 2, 518, 611–614.

⁸⁹ *BaT* 2, 517, 523–534.

⁹⁰ *BaT* 2, 523–534,

⁹¹ *BaT* 1, 467–476.

We all agree that we cannot use the story, wrongly ascribed to Campantar, about the impalement of 8000 Caiṇas,⁹³ as an argument. The story was probably a fiction, let go to be used for mentally terrorising the Caiṇas. The argument for the alleged better treatment of Buddhists is quantitative, the Buddhists are scolded fewer times than the Caiṇas, and qualitative, the Caiṇas are scolded harsher than the Buddhists. This is not immediately convincing. “More often” and “harsher” may be misleading. We have to evaluate the fact that the Caiṇas have survived throughout the centuries, that they have a continuous tradition of more than 2000 years in Tamiḷakam, that they have been able to preserve a large treasure of Tamiḷ-Caiṇa literature, that the Cōḷa royal Court integrated them to the chagrin of Caiva critics, and that the Caiṇas even today are statistically identifiable in Tamiḷnāṭu. We can say nothing like that about the Buddhists. One reason for the survival of the Caiṇas is the ability to adopt themselves to Tamiḷ culture by using Tamiḷ from their first appearance in Tamiḷakam in the 2nd century AD., and their willingness to take over Caiva forms of worship. In cases where the Buddhists acted like the Caiṇas they could suspend for some time their complete marginalisation, but could not prevent it to happen from about the 14th century AD. and onwards. To give one illustrative example: The complete marginalisation of the Pāli *ācariyas* is due to their unwillingness to use Tamiḷ in their *dhammadūta* work.⁹⁴ Another reason was that Caiṇas were not regarded as a threat like the Buddhists in a protracted inter-state conflict with Īḷam.⁹⁵

The dominance of Caivam was unquestionable and it greatly influenced also the profile of the surviving Buddhism. We call it Cōḷa Buddhism. There were two kinds of it. First, we have as source the inscriptions of the bronze pedals in Nākaṭṭiṇam. The buddhology in them is so close to Caiva theology that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the one from the other.⁹⁶ The reader gets the impression that Cōḷa Buddhism is on its way to be assimilated into Caivam. Today this

⁹² Anne Monius, “With No One to Bind Action and Agent: The Fate of Buddhists as Religious ‘Other’ in Tamil Caiva Literature”, *The Tamils: From the Past to the Present. Celebratory Volume in Honour of Professor Āḷvāpiḷḷai Vēluppiḷḷai at the Occasion of his 75th Birthday*. Edited by Peter Schalk. Colombo/Chennai: Kumaran Bookhouse, 2011, 153–177.

⁹³ *BaT* 1, 451. Schalk, *The Caiva Devaluation...*, 127–128.

⁹⁴ *BaT* 1, 387–395. *BaT* 2, 523–534.

⁹⁵ *BaT* 1, 409–430.

⁹⁶ *BaT* 2, 828–834 (Tamiḷ text, transliteration and translation by Civacuppiramaniyam Patmanāṭan).

assimilation is completed as we can see today in Tamilnāṭu from the ritual treatment of surviving statues of the Puttar from the Cōḷa period.⁹⁷

Cōḷa Buddhism became Tamil Buddhism also in Īlam during the Cōḷa period. Today we find artefacts like statues of the Puttar, once belonging to an institution of Tamil Buddhism, completely integrated and assimilated in Caiva kōvils.⁹⁸

Ramachandran Nagaswamy has reproduced a Caiva ideology of assimilation of other religions.⁹⁹

Second, we find in the *Vīracōḷiyam* and in its commentary an emotional and devotional form of Mahāyāna which also comes close to Caiva *patti*, and it appealed to Tamil sentiments: The relation between Avalōkitaṅ (Avalokiteśvara) and Civaṅ was mediated through the personality of Akattiyār (Agastya). Caiva *patti* is pointed out as source of influence on the *Vīracōḷiyam* and its commentary, but a part of the concretisations given for this influence can as well be traced to a Buddhist tradition that may have influenced Caiva *patti*.¹⁰⁰

This kind of emotional and devotional Buddhism was also closely connected with intensive Sanskrit studies which gives it a unique profile. Anne Monius writes:

The formation of Tamil words in accordance with Sanskrit principles, and the composition of Tamil poetry in accordance with Sanskrit theories of alaṃkāra or ornamentation—all framed with the authoritative Tolkāppiyam rubric of treating grammar and poetics as a single topic—constitute the heart of the Vīracōḷiyam's Project.¹⁰¹

Anne Monius emphasises not only the devotional aspect of this kind of Buddhism,¹⁰² but also the motive of the heroic self-sacrifice of the Puttar in contrasting comparison with the concept of heroism in the

⁹⁷ A. Srivathsan, "Buddhism in Tamil Nadu: The 'Buddha Samy' of Thiyaganur", www.thehindu.com/arts/magazine/article3500352.ece. The article is also published in <http://dbesjeyraj.com/dbsj/archives/6972>.

⁹⁸ *BaT* 1, 91–93.

⁹⁹ *BaT* 1, 115–116, *BaT* 2, 644–662.

¹⁰⁰ G. Vijayavenugopal, "Some Buddhist Poems in Tamil", *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* (Vol 2, 1979 Number 2), 93–95, http://www.search-results.com/web?q=Tamil+Buddhism&qsrc=121&o=100000048&l=dis&atb=sysid%3D406%3Auid%3D4dd2e7b6b6038dab%3Auc%3D1346568735%3Ab%3DSearchnu%3Asrc%3Dhmp%3Ao%3D100000048%3Aq%3DTamil%2520Buddhism&locale=en_US&qid=456C5E1CFC898F2B5A12928E67106C9B&page=10.

¹⁰¹ See p. 113 in this volume.

¹⁰² Anne Monius, *Imagining a Place for Buddhism...*, 142–148.

Tolkāppiyam.¹⁰³ This is a highly interesting example of indigenisation which of course has many other faces also, not least in versions of the soteriology and ontology of Buddhism and its social appearance of renunciation.

The project's relation to persons and not to Buddhist institutions prevented a continuous transmission over time through these institutions. The *Vīracōḷiyam* project as described above is mainly a linguistic project to study Tamil through Sanskrit, not a religious one. It had a patron in the second half of the 11th century known as *Vīracōḷaṅ*, but there is no indication that he patronised Buddhism.

Ramachandran Nagaswamy has translated and commented upon passages from the *Vīracōḷiyam*.¹⁰⁴ *BaT* 2 contains an analysis, Tamil texts in transliteration and translations from this Buddhist devotional tradition, presented by Alvappillai Veluppillai.¹⁰⁵ I give here an example, *Vīracōḷiyam*, yāppuppataḷam, 11, *urai*, that illustrates the view that even the highest god of *smārta* Hinduism, Brahmā, worships the Buddha.

When celestial beings from all eight directions, led by Brahmā came and worshipped (Your) feet-flower with clean flowers, entreated an enquired, You preached kindly for the benefit of our scared people, to whose evil bond, lust, wild rage and difficult to remove delusion were serving as strong instruments; You also told them mercifully to proceed on the path of virtue, leading to happiness.¹⁰⁶

In the 14th century the lamp of Buddhism in Tamilakam was extinguished.¹⁰⁷ Alvappillai Veluppillai has found an inscription from 1580 in Kumbakōṇam of a Caiva kōyil which remembers the existence of a former Buddhist *vikāram*. Buddhism had become a mere memory in the 16th century. Only at the end of the 19th century was Tamil Buddhism retrieved by Cāminātaiyar from the past. His legacy was a text edition and a creation of a Tamil Buddhist terminology to be used in philological work.¹⁰⁸ This was the beginning of studies about Buddhism among Tamils. The historical-philological method was and is dominant also in the work of the Uppsala team.

We come now to the third profile. Buddhist activists in the 20th century used this legacy from Cāminātaiyar for their purpose. Ayōtti-

¹⁰³ Ibid., 148–155.

¹⁰⁴ *BaT* 1, 118–122.

¹⁰⁵ *BaT* 2, 522, 644–662.

¹⁰⁶ *BaT* 2, 816.

¹⁰⁷ *BaT* 1, 29.

¹⁰⁸ *BaT* 1, 96–98.

tācar was one of them. He founded the *Dravida Buddha Sangham* in 1898 at Irāyapeṭṭai,¹⁰⁹ later called South India *Sakya Buddha Association*. In 1911 Ayōttitācar succeeded in convincing the British administration that Buddhism should be classified as being separate from Caivam and Vaiṇavam.¹¹⁰ Through Professor Narasu,¹¹¹ there is a link from Ayōttitācar to the rationalists within the Dravidian movement from the 1930s onwards,¹¹² and to the Ambedkar movement.¹¹³ An anti-brahmanical polemic and an empathy for the downtrodden, especially the Dalits, connect them. What today internationally is called “socially engaged Buddhism” has roots in these movements.

It should be mentioned here that the *South India Sakya Buddha Association* in Ceṇṇai was not united with the *Mahabodhi Society* which had been founded 1892 in Ceṇṇai under the influence of the Anagārika Dharmapāla. Ayōttitācar had good contacts with anti-colonial monks in Īlam, but not with anti-Tamiḷ zealots. Ayōttitācar thought that the downtrodden under his protection were derived from the Śākyas and that his form of Buddhism preserved the pure teaching of the Puttar.¹¹⁴ Ayōttitācar’s focus was social, not ethnic.

The *Mahabodhi Society* in Ceṇṇai has since its foundation in 1892 had a missiological approach, but in the racist spirit of the Anagārika Dharmapāla. Its focus too was ethnic. In the 1980s and the 1990s the monks and the Society as such were regularly in confrontation with solidarity groups of Tamiḷ speakers, sympathisers of the Tamiḷ resistance movement, who suspected the monks to be agents for the political and military interests of the insular Government.¹¹⁵

Today, Buddhists cannot be given more than a dash in the contemporary census of Tamiḷnāṭu(Tamilnadu) and Kēraḷam(Kerala), former central areas of Tamiḷakam. The Caiṇas fare better: 0.0.1 % of the population. It is of interest to explain why Caiṇam has been

¹⁰⁹ *Ayōttitācar cintanaikaḷ (camayam, ilakkiyam)* II (New Delhi: The Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, 1999), 10. For a solid work on Ayōttitācar and his movement’s history see G. Aloysius, *Religion as Emancipatory Identity. A Buddhist Movement among Tamils under Colonialism* (New Delhi: New Age International, 1998).

¹¹⁰ S. Perumal, “Revival of Tamil Buddhism: A Historical Survey”, *Buddhism in Tamilnadu, Collected Papers*, Chennai: Institute of Asian Studies, 1998, 529–542, 530–531.

¹¹¹ Perumal, *Revival of Tamil Buddhism...*, 530–531.

¹¹² Loc.cit.

¹¹³ Loc.cit.

¹¹⁴ Aloysius, *Religion as Emancipatory Identity...*, 56.

¹¹⁵ *BaT* 1, 24.

somewhat better off than Buddhism. This has been the case along in the past. Royal patronage was not refused to them as strictly as to the Buddhists.¹¹⁶ The Caiṅas adopted the language Tamil soon after their arrival in Tamilakam in the pre-Pallava period and they adopted local customs without letting themselves to be assimilated.¹¹⁷ Caiva and Vaiṅava xenophobia also hit them hard, but they survived.¹¹⁸

Profiles of Tamil Buddhism in Īlam

We now turn to Īlam with its five profiles of Tamil Buddhism.

1. There is a source consisting of inscriptions in Prākṛit which were written in Pirāmi (Brāhmī) by Tamil speakers. They date from the 2nd century BC to the 3rd century AD.¹¹⁹ The period is called “early Anurātapuram period” by historians. These Tamil speakers were Buddhists whose Buddhism cannot be distinguished in content from the Buddhism of contemporary inscriptions by Prākṛit speakers. There is a visible Tamil substratum. They are all about donations to a *vikāram* (*vihāra*). This kind of Buddhism may be called merit-Buddhism because donations accrue merit which is useful to profit from in a coming existence. Merit-Buddhism is visible in all currents of Buddhism, but in the special source, here inscriptions, merit-earning is focussed and emphasised.

These merit-earning Buddhists were active in the political, administrative, and religious centre, Anurātapuram, but there are also inscriptions from Periya-Puḷiyāṅkuḷam¹²⁰ and Ampārai.¹²¹ All these inscriptions show the existence of early settlements by Tamil speakers confirming the record of the *Mahāvamsa*. Moreover, these inscriptions confirm that some of these Tamil speakers were Buddhists. The conclusion formulated in 2002 remains: Some Tamil speakers from the earliest historical period were Buddhists. They promoted Buddhism and contributed to the building and maintenance of the classical showpieces of monumental architecture, like for example the buildings in the vicinity of the Abhayagiri vihāra in Anurātapuram. The Buddhists were organisationally and linguistically integrated

¹¹⁶ For this, see *BaT* 1, 25.

¹¹⁷ *BaT* 1, 25.

¹¹⁸ *BaT* 1, 25–28.

¹¹⁹ *BaT* 1, 94,348–375.

¹²⁰ *BaT* 1, 373–374.

¹²¹ *BaT* 1, 374.

through Prākṛit with the insular Mahāsaṃgha. There was concord and co-operation between Tamiḷ speakers and non-Tamiḷ speakers with the common aim to establish monumental Buddhism on the island.¹²²

This does not contradict the first part of the *Mahāvamsa* which is wrongly said to have closed the door for Tamiḷ speakers to become Buddhists.¹²³ The point of the Duṭṭhagāmiṇī story is that Tamiḷ speakers may become human through Buddhism; without Buddhism they are beasts.¹²⁴ The *Mahāvamsa*'s first part reveals a literally narrow-minded, but classical Indian conceptualisation of humanity based on religion only, here on Buddhism only. The author of the early part of the *Mahāvamsa* was in no way unique by making religion the distinct characteristic of humanity, but by making one specific religion that characteristic, Buddhism became exclusive and excluding. The idea of a universal humanity was still rare and where it appeared it was a universalised concept based on a parochial experience of man about man.

There is one historical person, albeit covered with legends. He represents the type of Tamiḷ who remained faithful to his non-Buddhist, probably post-Vedic tradition from South-India. His name is Eḷāra, Tamiḷ Ellālan. He was King of the island before King Duṭṭhagāmiṇī (101–77, 161–137) who killed Eḷāra, because he was not a Buddhist, according to the early part of the *Mahāvamsa*. Duṭṭhagāmiṇī allegedly established a Buddhist state on the island, a state under “one umbrella”. This incident has been retrieved during the present conflict many times. Eḷāra is identified with the leader of the Tamiḷ resistance movement, Veluppillai Prabhakaran (Vēluppillai Pirapākaran), and Duṭṭhagāmiṇī is identified with the head of state, now President Mahinda Rājapakṣa. A homology is created which overrides a cleft of 2000 years.¹²⁵ This is an example of instrumentalisation by retrieval of an ancient formation of Buddhism as a totalitarian state ideology. It aims at marginalising non-Buddhists today and eliminating contingencies about the promoting of a constitutional unitary state. This is constitutionally in force since 1972. Especially the Tamiḷ Resistance Movement is identified as an anti-Buddhist force repeating allegedly the past of pre-colonial invasions. It is said to be supported by Catholics and by many million Tamiḷ speakers in Tamiḷnāṭu. The Eḷāra-

¹²² *BaT* 1, 375.

¹²³ *BaT* 1, 35–39.

¹²⁴ *Loc.cit.* See pp. 38, 130, 132, 156–157 in this volume.

¹²⁵ See pp. 38, 130, 132, 156–157 in this volume.

Duṭṭhagāmiṇī story is very complex, indeed, which is made visible in my paper in this volume called “Eḷāra – again”.¹²⁶ In the modern version of this story, backed by parts of the Mahāsaṃgha, there is room only for *siṃhala budu samayam* in the *urumaya* ‘heritage’.

2. Having left the stage of Prakrit-Tamil merit-Buddhism, we now come to Īlaccōḷappauttam as a second profile.¹²⁷ In the Cōḷa empire’s official writings the name *īlam* for the whole island was regularly used. It is documented in the island earlier than *laṃkā*. *Īlam* alternated with *ciṅkalam*.¹²⁸

Prākṛit Buddhism which for ritual and teaching purposes was based on the Pāli canon and on its Pāli commentaries was discontinued among Tamil speakers. The religious language within Buddhism shifted to Tamil in the 8th century.¹²⁹ The oldest Tamil *Buddhist* inscription is dated to the 8th century and is from the Apaikiri site in Anurātapuram.¹³⁰

The Cōḷa connection to Īlam was evident in many invasions from but also to the Cōḷa empire from Īlam. These invasions from Tamilakam to Īlam gave Tamil speakers a devastating image in Īlam. They started from the beginning of the historical period. Eḷāra was such an early spill-over from Tamilakam. During the Cōḷa imperial period the door to Buddhism was closed in some sources; then Tamil speakers were classified as beasts in some of these sources, generally all Tamil speakers.¹³¹ There were, however, other sources which kept a door open for Tamil converts to Buddhism; Buddhist rulers demonstrated pragmatism and endurance with these Tamil speakers, but their endurance was questioned by their obligate and inherited xenophobia.¹³²

There was a *dāmiḷa bhikkhu saṃgha* which received the Jayasena-pabbata vihāra from the hands of the *mahesi* of King Udaya I (792–

¹²⁶ See p. 129 in this volume.

¹²⁷ *BaT* 2, 47–48.

¹²⁸ *BaT* 2, 672–675. For the history of the toponym Īlam see Peter Schalk, *īlam<siḷaḷa: An Assessment of an Argument. Acta Universitatis Uppsaliensis, Historia Religionum 25*. Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2004.

¹²⁹ *BaT* 2, 683.

¹³⁰ *BaT* 2, 682–690.

¹³¹ *BaT* 1, 39–47.

¹³² *BaT* 1, 48–52.

797, 797–801), according to *Mahāvamsa* 49:24¹³³ Tamil mercenaries, merchants and settlers became Buddhists and were accepted in the military and civil administration (see below).

Those Tamil speakers who were dedicated to Īlaccōlappattam can be classified in three different categories. Some continued to be loyal to the political centre in Anurātapuram. They were mercenaries in the service of the King and could only survive by keeping to the oath of allegiance to the King of the Siṃhala speakers. To them was entrusted the guard of the most holy relic, the tooth of the Puttar. These mercenaries' Īlaccōlappattam can be studied in inscriptions from Mayilaṅkuḷam,¹³⁴ Morakakavelai,¹³⁵ Vijayarājapuram and Polonaruṅvā.¹³⁶

Others were merchants organised in guilds with strong connections to Tamilakam. They too have left traces about their religion.¹³⁷ Mercenaries and merchants could live in the same city as Siṃhala speakers, albeit in different parts.

S. Patmanathan (Civacuppiramaṇiyam Patmanātan) has analysed a number of Tamil inscriptions left by merchants and mercenaries reflecting their engagement in Buddhism as Īlaccōla Buddhism.¹³⁸ Alvappillai Veluppillai extended this important documentation about the interaction of Tamil Buddhism and the state.¹³⁹

Tamil speakers were also settlers in settlements, some of them in the periphery of power. They were remnants from Tamilakam in the East of the Cōla invasions. Their religion can be studied in the inscriptions from the Velkam vēram in Eastern Īlam¹⁴⁰ and several other inscriptions from Polonaruṅvā,¹⁴¹ Hiṅgurakagoḍa,¹⁴² Paṅḍuvasnuvara,¹⁴³

¹³³ This is the reading by Wilhelm Geiger. In his translation of the *Cūlavamsa*, Part 1, 1953, p. 129, he says that all MSS are corrupt. "If my restoration is correct---it would mean that also Damiḷas in Ceylon were Buddhists, but that the bhikkhus of this nationality formed a special group". Geiger's amendment is discussed with acceptance in R.A.L.H. Gunawardana, *Robe and Plough. Monasticism in Early Medieval Sri Lanka*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1979, 47.

¹³⁴ *BaT* 2, 699–703.

¹³⁵ *BaT* 2, 722–737.

¹³⁶ *BaT* 2, 737–767.

¹³⁷ *BaT* 2, 675–681, 690–694, 694–698, 703–706, 713–722.

¹³⁸ *BaT* 2, 682–689, 694–776.

¹³⁹ *BaT* 2, 690–694.

¹⁴⁰ *BaT* 2, 776–783.

¹⁴¹ *BaT* 2, 706–709.

¹⁴² *BaT* 2, 709–712.

¹⁴³ *BaT* 2, 726–737.

Puḷiyāṅkuḷam and Māṅkaṅāy.¹⁴⁴

The religion of the mercenaries, urbanised merchants and rural settlers appeared as active, reflected and constructed syncretism of Buddhism and Caivam.¹⁴⁵ This syncretism is now called Īlaccōḷappauttam. It was an interpretation of buddhology in Caiva terms – sometimes in Vaiṇava terms – which made the Puttar an *iṣṭadevatā* ‘chosen godhead’. This process was non-exclusive in doctrine, but selective in ritual. It was a form of authorised henotheism which we first could study already in the inscriptions from Nākapattiṅam,¹⁴⁶ but somewhat later also in Īlam.¹⁴⁷ Evidently, this kind of Buddhism qualified the mercenaries, traders and settlers among Tamil speakers to be accepted as humans, if not by conviction of the Mahāsaṅgha, then by the pragmatism of the rulers.

3. We now come to the third profile of Tamil Buddhism. It has disappeared like Prākṛit Buddhism and Īlaccōḷappauttam. It is related to Mahāyāna which has a long history in Īlam,¹⁴⁸ albeit it has always been marginalised in Īlam by one of the 17 Hīnayāna schools known as Theravāda in the tradition of the Mahāvihāra in Anurātapuram. Still in the 1990s a monk’s conversion from Hīnayāna to Mahāyāna was stigmatised by the Mahāsaṅgha.¹⁴⁹

There is one bilingual inscription from the 14th century in Siṃhala and Tamil from the Laṃkātilaka vihāra.¹⁵⁰ In this inscription we find a syncretistic buddhology, dominantly Mahāyāna, but encountering Caivam, Vaiṇavam and Smārta references, formed by ideologues or

¹⁴⁴ BaT 2, 754–767.

¹⁴⁵ BaT 2, 678–681.

¹⁴⁶ BaT 2, 569–609.

¹⁴⁷ See also BaT 2, 47.

¹⁴⁸ W. S. Karunatilaka, “Mahayanism in Ceylon during the Anuradhapura Period: Epigraphical Evidence”. *University Buddhist Annual* 9 (1958–1959): 17–20. N. Mudiyanse, *Mahāyāna Monuments in Ceylon* (Colombo: M D Gunasena, 1967). Id. “Three Unpublished Mahayana Bronzes from Ceylon in the British Museum”, *Journal of The Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch)*, NS, 14 (1970): 46. Id., “Nagarjuna and Sukhavati Lokeshvara”, *Spolia Zeylanica* 32 (1972): 61–64. Id., *The Art and Architecture of the Gampola Period*. Colombo: M D Gunasena, 1963. Senerat Paranavitana, “Mahāyāna in Ceylon”, *Ceylon Journal of Science*, Section G, 2 (1928–1933): 37–71. Id., “Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara in Ceylon”. *B C Law Volume*, Part 2. Poona: 1946, 15–18. Richard Gombrich, *Precept and Practice. Traditional Buddhism in the Rural Highlands of Ceylon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 221–223.

¹⁴⁹ Peter Schalk, “Articles 9 and 18 of the Constitution of Lanka as Obstacles to Peace”, *Lanka* 5 (1990): 279–292.

¹⁵⁰ BaT 2, 779–780. Paranavitana, “Lankatilaka Inscriptions”, *University of Ceylon Review* 18 (1960): 1–18.

theologians. The text refers to a hierarchic pantheon of divine beings, at the top of which a Puttar is seated on a diamond throne and the other divine beings are regarded as aspects of him. The inscription makes no ritual distinction between the Puttar and the gods because it says that the lamps are offered to both.¹⁵¹ We face Mahāyāna inclusive thinking of the devotional kind which was practised also by Tamil speakers. There is a link to the *Viracōliyam* and a link to Tamil *patti* from a phenomenological, not from a historical, point of view.

4. We now come to the fourth profile. We move to the 20th century.

There has been in the 15th and 16th century in Īlam an intensive learning of Tamil by Buddhist monks being native Siṃhala speakers, but this learning disappeared. There was a *dhammadūta* tradition for monks to go to Tamil speaking areas, not to convert Caivas, but to cultivate and maintain Buddhism among Siṃhala speaking settlers. There were always Tamil speakers in Īlam who valued the Puttar highly, but to convert to Buddhism and to abandon Caivam was a big step. It happened, however. Even a local community could go together and convert to Buddhism. The influence from Ambedkar and his followers in Tamilakam was felt intensively in the 1950s and 1960s in Yālppāṇam. In the present volume (*BaT* 3) A. J. V. Chandrakantan describes the process of conversion from and reversion to Caivam among Ambedkar's followers in Yālppāṇam. The question about conversion from Caivam to Buddhism or even to Islam is still unexplored for the case of Īlam.

Even beyond social motives there is a Buddhist community of converted Caivas in Vavuṇiyā.¹⁵² True, the number of all converted seems to be very small, much smaller than the number for converted Caivas to Christianity. What is the reason for this? This question brings us to the fifth profile.

5. We now come to political Buddhism in the footsteps of the Anaḡārika being enforced as alien element on Tamil speaking areas by Siṃhala speakers. They are part of the state administration including the armed forces. We have to distinguish between Buddhist politics of the idealised Aśokan type and political Buddhism.¹⁵³ Both are going back to the pre-Christian era in Īlam. Political Buddhism instrumen-

¹⁵¹ Loc.cit.

¹⁵² *BaT* 1, 30–33.

¹⁵³ For this distinction see Peter Schalk, "Political Buddhism among Lankans in the Context of Martial Conflict", *Religion, Staat, Gesellschaft: Zeitschrift Für Glaubensformen und Weltanschauungen* 2.2 (2002): 223–242.

talises Buddhism for political aims. In Īlam, this aim was and is to unify the island under one umbrella, in modern terms to create and preserve a unitary state whose ideology is majoritarianism.

Today again, we see in Īlam an intensive learning of Tamil by Buddhist monks who are native speakers of Siṃhala. Today, they bring with them pamphlets translated from Pāli, Siṃhala and English into Tamil. Their task is to spread knowledge about Siṃhala Buddhism to Tamil speakers and of course also to care for the traditional religious edification and political motivation to old and new Siṃhala speaking settlers in the “reconquered” areas. Information is spread by these *dhammadūta*-monks: Buddhist sites in Tamil areas are in reality Siṃhala Buddhist sites. I learned from a young Buddhist monk in 2004 that Kantarōtai, where he was stationed as guide, was also a place visited by the Buddha.

The political aspect of Siṃhala Buddhism alienates Tamil speakers who see in it a danger for the preservation of their culture and above all for their possession of territory. Tamil speaking intellectuals who have made a distinction between the teaching of the Puttar and that of the political monks have felt attracted by the former and alienated by the latter. It would be wrong to ascribe to the Tamil resistance movement the view that Buddhism in general is political and anti-Tamil. The standard image of the Puttar among Tamils, retrieved on every July 25, the day of the biggest anti-Tamil pogrom, is that of a weeping Puttar. He weeps tears of blood looking at his followers who kill Tamil speakers [Fig. 64]. He has compassion which his present followers allegedly have not.

The contemporary teaching by monks and politicians is in its content determined by a special political situation and characterised as “re-conquest” in the article by Jude Lal Fernando in this volume (*BaT* 3). The ultimate aim is to re-establish Siṃhala Buddhism in the whole island as allegedly foreseen in the *Mahāvamsa*. Siṃhala Buddhism is the ideological essence which creates cultural homogeneity in a unitary state. Siṃhala Buddhism is in this situation not just Buddhism transmitted in Siṃhala alongside with Pāli, but also a contemporary political category embossed in 1902 by the Anagārika Dharmapāla (†1933) in his journal *Siṃhala Baudhhiyā* [“The Siṃhala Buddhist”]. He was inspired by the modern nation state that was introduced by colonialism. He changed the character of Buddhism as a universal religion into an ethnocentric and nationalistic one. Buddhism has become Siṃhala Buddhism. His interperation of *dhammadīpa* was ‘island [=Laṃkā] of the *dhamma*’ which he projected into the Pāli canon. Moreover, he equated *dhammadīpa* with *sīhaḷadīpa* ‘the is-

land of the Siṃhalas”. Siṃhalaness, today rendered as *Siṃhalatva*, became an authentic expression of the *dhamma*. True, the canon had the concept of *dhammadīpa* but meaning ‘having *dhamma* as lamp’. Whoever, wherever, whenever should have the *dhamma* as a lamp.

In the *Mahāvamsa* this universal concept was parochialised. *Dhammadīpa* became to mean ‘[the island] having the *dhamma* as [guiding] lamp’. Inspired by this the Anagārika constructed his ‘island of the *dhamma*’ which eliminated the canonical meaning of *dīpa* as lamp.¹⁵⁴ The connection between the *dhamma* and a specific territory is here evident. Political Siṃhala-Buddhism is based on this connection which transforms universal Buddhism into a religious parochialism. Another import point in this connection is that the Anagārika Dharmapāla sees no change between the canonical and his formulation. He makes himself contemporary with what he believes to be the genuine spirit of the Buddha.

We have to carry with us two uses of Siṃhala Buddhism, one historical and descriptive which refers to the way how Pāli Buddhism is transmitted by the help of the language Prākṛit developing into Siṃhala in the 8th century, and one which refers to political Buddhism that has “re-conquest” in mind. Some Buddhist zealots like the Anagārika even use English to promote what they call Siṃhala Buddhism. One important point in their message is that historical sites in Tamil speaking areas are survivals of Siṃhala Buddhism. These sites legitimise the re-conquest. This point includes a denial of the possibility that these sites were once constructed by Tamil speakers or by them together with Prākṛit speaking settlers. The denial denies the whole concept of Tamil Buddhism for the case of Īlam; Tamil Buddhism questions the legitimacy of the re-conquest. This brings us to the point of the controversy between the representatives of Siṃhala Buddhism and Tamil Buddhism; it is not about doctrinal or ritual matters, but about possession of land. In this situation, the concept of Tamil Buddhism encountering political Siṃhala Buddhism transforms also from a religious into a political-religious category; it also claims the right of possession and control over territory. Political Tamil Buddhism is a result of encountering political Siṃhala Buddhism and of reacting against it. I refer to the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) politician M. A. Sumanthiran (Cumanthiraṇ) who in an important report has highlighted his concerns about the militarisation of

¹⁵⁴ See Peter Schalk, “Semantic Transformations of *dhammadīpa*”. *Buddhism, Conflict, Violence and in Modern Sri Lanka*. Edited by Mahinda Deegalle (London/ New York: Routledge, 2006, 86–92.

the North and East.¹⁵⁵ In the section called “Creation of Sinhala Settlements” he also mentions “Places of worship” He points out that the rapidly changing demography of the North of Sri Lanka is escalating. The number of Buddhist statues, *vihāras* and *stūpas* on the A9 highway has increased rapidly. A *vihāra* named Mahātota Rāja Mahā Vi-hāra has come up within 50 meters of the famous Tirukkētīsvaram temple in Mannār district. Also the armed forces are preventing people from rebuilding original Christian and Hindu places of worship that have been damaged or destroyed, M. A. Sumanthiran mentions in his report. A *vihāra* is being erected on the site of the Arasadi Piḷḷaiyār Kōvil. In Kokkiḷāy district, Mullaittīvu, a Caiva Kōvil which was damaged during the war is being demolished and a *vihāra* is being erected in that place. Part of the land of the Hospital in Kokkiḷāy and part of the land of a post office are being used to construct this *vihāra*. Earlier, it was the Piḷḷaiyār Kōvil that was there in that place. There are plans to install a statue of the Lord Buddha in Kiṇṇiyā at a place where seven hot wells and a Piḷḷaiyār temple is situated, where, for centuries, Caivas have performed certain religious ceremonies. The Caiva kōvil is now destroyed, and a Buddhist statute has been erected in the vicinity on the other side of the hot wells.¹⁵⁶ In an interview he points out that Buddhist statues have come up in areas where we don’t even have a single Buddhist civilian living.¹⁵⁷

The TNA MP S. Sritharan (Es. Ciṛitaran) is reported to have said that some elements try to prove that some Buddhist archaeological sites were the settlements of Siṃhala Buddhists in history. “Actually, they were the settlements of Tamil Buddhists”.¹⁵⁸ Jude Lal Fernando will take up this development along A 9 highway in his article.

There is a group of intellectuals who see in the concept of Tamil Buddhism an expression of Tamil chauvinism and in political Siṃhala Buddhism an expression of Siṃhala chauvinism. They think that the defenders of Tamil Buddhism are fighting Siṃhala chauvinism with Tamil chauvinism.¹⁵⁹ For them both sides are tarred with the same brush. This is not a fair analysis. The academic historical-philological

¹⁵⁵ M. A. Sumanthiran, “Situation in North-Eastern Sri Lanka: A Series of Serious Concerns”, Tabled in Parliament on 21 October, 2011, Section, 7.3. Published in a revised version in <http://dbsjeyaraj.com/dbsj/archives/2759>.

¹⁵⁶ Loc.cit.

¹⁵⁷ Tamil Canadian, “Speech by TNA’s MA Sumanthiran”, October 30, 2011, http://www.sangam.org/2011/11/Sumanthiran_Interview.php?uid=4520.-

¹⁵⁸ Anon., “Tamil Buddhists”, LankaNewspapers.com, 12 December 2011, http://www.lankanewspapers.com/news/2011/12/73160_space.html.

¹⁵⁹ De Silva, “Vallipuram Buddha Image – Again”, 84.

dimension of the study of Tamil Buddhism is not seen by these intellectuals and the relation between cause (political Siṃhala Buddhism) and effect (political Tamil Buddhism) is covered by the ascription that both parties are tarred with the same brush. The academic discussion about Tamil Buddhism is choked by such comments. It should be made clear that the academic study of Tamil Buddhism only explains what Tamil Buddhism was and is, but does not issue recommendations how to instrumentalise for political aims the knowledge gained.

The concept of Tamil Buddhism was a creation by historical linguists in both Tamilakam and Īlam from the 1890s onwards. In Tamilakam the concept was, however, taken up by individuals and groups in an anti-brahmanical spirit; they instrumentalised Tamil Buddhism for raising a consciousness about being non-brahmanical like the Puttar or about belonging to a now downtrodden, but formerly in the past to a high status group like the Śākyas. Tamil Buddhism was used to induce self-respect among individuals and a consciousness of being non-brahmanical “Dravidians”, or as a justification for social climbing.

In Īlam today exists an organised form of denial of Tamil Buddhism among politicians, scholars and monks being part in the Lankan administration. Those who do not deny may connect Tamil Buddhism with terrorism.¹⁶⁰ There is, however, also a tiny opposition which accepts Tamil Buddhism as a historical reality. I refer to the book *Demaḷa Bauddhayā* [“The Tamil Buddhist”] from 2006 by a senior professor in Siṃhala, Sunil Āriyaratna. The title of the book alludes to the Anagārika’s journal *Siṃhala Bauddhayā* which Sunil Āriyaratna explicitly contradicts.¹⁶¹ There is one more public voice for *Demaḷa Bauddayā* among Siṃhala speakers. Vimalasāra Nāyaka Thera from Vavunīyā dares to say that Kantarōṭai belongs to the Tamils.¹⁶²

The debate about Tamil Buddhism is in the present context a moral debate which is about remedial justice from the side of Tamil speakers in the Tamil Resistance Movement. Political decisions about control of territory has, however, already been made by majority rule based on the ideology of majoritarianism. The state has promulgated

¹⁶⁰ Siriwardana, Thilanka “Tamil Buddhists and Terrorism”, *Academia.edu*. http://kln.academia.edu/ThilankaSiriwardana/Papers/368752/Tamil_Buddhists_and_Terrorism (accessed: 1 September, 2012).

¹⁶¹ Sunil Āriyaratna, *Demaḷa Bauddhayā* (Kōḷaṃba: Ās. Goḍagē saha sahōdarayō, 2006), 295.

¹⁶² *BaT* 1, 31–32.

a unitary Constitution in 1972. It rejects separate or autonomous regions in the island. A popularised summary in public debate of this Constitution is: “Sri Lanka belongs to all citizens”. The Government’s duty is to make Tamil speaking areas accessible to all citizens, if necessary by military force.

An obstacle for the implementation of this seemingly democratic program is that Īlam is not a multicultural society where an ethnic majority has *negotiated* with other ethnic minorities and the majority about the distribution of the resources of the country. True, there are several ethnies, but that alone does not constitute a multicultural society. The Vāddō have been assimilated,¹⁶³ the Burghers have been given the shivers; many have migrated abroad. In Īlam, Sinhala speakers continuously encounter Tamil speakers and Muslims in violent confrontations.¹⁶⁴ The retrieval by the Tamil Resistance Movement in the 1970s of the demonym “Īlavar”¹⁶⁵ for citizens in TamilĪlam [Fig. 63] confronting it against the demonym “Sri Lankans” is a sign of a deep and long-lasting division.¹⁶⁶ “Īlavar” are in this evaluation not Sri Lankans; these again are not Īlavar. Today the formula “Sri Lanka belongs to all citizens” covers up facts of social confrontations through decades of an expanding monoculture in a state formation. Since 1964, as student and researcher in the history of religions I have followed the development of this state formation into a semblance of a *dharmacracy*.¹⁶⁷ It is question of a *semblance* which is necessary for keeping up the ideology of majoritarianism.

We hear often that it is right to establish Sinhala-Buddhist *vi-hārayas* in the North in areas of Tamil speakers because they have established Caiva kōvils and Christian Churches in the South. The Muslims also have established their mosques in the South. The Presi-

¹⁶³ Peter Schalk, *Vādi into Vanniyalettō. Transformation of Images of the Lankan Vāddō* (Uppsala: AUU, 2004).

¹⁶⁴ See NESoHR, *Massacres of Tamils 1956–2008*. Chennai: Manitham publishers, 2009.

¹⁶⁵ Schalk, *Īlam < Sinhala? ...*, 71–120, 224–230.

¹⁶⁶ Peter Schalk, “Īlavar and Lankans. Emerging Identities in a Fragmented Island”, *Asian Ethnicity* 3:1 (2002), 47–62.

¹⁶⁷ Dharmacracy is an analogous formation to toracracy. See Peter Schalk “The Sinhala Concept of a ‘Dharmacracy’ as an Obstacle to Peace in a Crisis of the State”, *Asian Society in Comparative Perspectives* (Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 1990), 1–26. Id., “The Lankan Mahasangha’s Concept of a Dharmacracy and Society”, *Radical Conservatism. Buddhism in the Contemporary World. Articles in Honour of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa’s 84th Birthday Anniversary* (Bangkok: International Network of Engaged Buddhism, 1990), 354–359.

dent appears on the public stage and emphasises freedom of religion, but in reality the Constitution has graded this freedom into “foremost” for Buddhism (and less for the others).¹⁶⁸ Religious freedom is curtailed on direct order of the President and on Court order for Kāli kōvils to halt animal sacrifice when at the same time a Buddhist relic is exposed in public in other places.¹⁶⁹ Animal sacrifice is not illegal normally in Īlam. It is allowed in the name of religious freedom. Animal sacrifice (and caste) among Tamils are regularly objects of creating racial hate among Buddhists against Tamils. Violent conflicts appear in areas of Siṃhala speakers between Buddhists on one side and Caivas, Christians, and Muslims on the other. These conflicts confirm again that the island is not a multicultural society.

The discussion around Vallipuram and Kantarōṭai is a good example of the collision between the academic concept of Tamil Buddhism and the political reaction by political Siṃhala Buddhists who deny not only historical facts but who also seemingly in democratic spirit claim that Vallipuram and Kantarōṭai “belongs to all”. Let us now look at Vallipuram and Kantarōṭai from the view point of historians.

Vallipuram has been objectified by many commentators, by Seneraṭ Paranavitana (Seneraṭ Paranavitāna),¹⁷⁰ Alvappillai Veluppillai,¹⁷¹ K. N. O. Dharmadasa (Dharmadāsa),¹⁷² Ramachnadran Nagaswamy,¹⁷³ Chandra R de Silva¹⁷⁴ and myself.¹⁷⁵ Vallipuram is the place

¹⁶⁸ See Peter Schalk, “Present Concepts of Secularism among Ilavar and Lankans“. *Zwischen Säkularismus und Hierokratie: Studien zum Verhältnis von Religion und Staat in Süd- und Ostasien*. Edited by Peter Schalk. *Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Historia Religionum 17*. Uppsala: Universit t Uppsala, 2001, 54–62.

¹⁶⁹ Anon., “Animal sacrifice will not take place this year – Chief Priest Kali Kōvil”, <http://www.tbcuk.net/?p=12415>. <http://www.adaderana.lk/search.php?mode=o&show=1&query=Kali%20kōvil>.

¹⁷⁰ Seneraṭ Paranavitāna, “Vallipuram Goldplate Inscription of the Reign of Vasabha”. *Epigraphia Zeylanica 4* (1934–1941): 229–237.

¹⁷¹ *BaT 1*, 146–147, 150–151, 165, 230–238. Ālvāpīllai Vēluppīllai, “Religions in Yālpānam up to the 13th Century”, *Lanka 5* (1990): 10–42.

¹⁷² K. N. O. Dharmadasa, “A Note on the linguistic Aspect of Peter Schalk’s Paper”, *Serendipity* (1994: 3): 88–90.

¹⁷³ *BaT 1*, 220. Nākačāmi Irā, *nākattīvu eṇṇum īlam (cennai: 1994)*, 220–222.

¹⁷⁴ Chandra R. de Silva, “Vallipuram Buddha Image – Again”, *Serendipity* (1994: 3): 84–85.

¹⁷⁵ *BaT 1*, 147, 212–230. Peter Schalk, “The Vallipuram Buddha Image – Again”, *Serendipity* (1994: 2): 41–48. Id. “A reply to Chandra R. de Silva”, *Serendipity* (1994:3): 85–87. Id. “Reply to K. N. O. Dharmadasa”, *Serendipity* (1994: 3): 90. Id., “The Vallipuram Buddha Image ‘Rediscovered’”, *Dance, Music, Art, and Religion*, edited by Tore Ahlb ck ( bo: Scripta Donneriani Aboensis 16, 1996), 295–312.

where archaeologists found both a Buddha-stature [Fig. 50–51] and an inscription in Prākṛit from the first centuries AD. The inscription is no source for the statue and the statue is no source for the inscription. What connects the two is the site.¹⁷⁶

In a heated debate,¹⁷⁷ one party claims that Vallipuram is a former settlement of Siṃhala Buddhism and the other party that it is a former settlement of Tamil Buddhism. So far no political claims are attached, only propositional statements are launched which are true or false.

Strictly speaking, the inscription is not written in Siṃhala, but in Prākṛit which in Īlam transformed into Siṃhala only in about the 8th century. Already the use and projection of “Siṃhala” in the past in this connection of the Vallipuram inscription is an anachronism. It is anachronistic to project modern political Siṃhala Buddhism into the distant past.¹⁷⁸ As shown above, the Anagārika Dharmapāla’s ideological construction of the past as *dharmadīpa* in the meaning of “island of the dhamma” implied a suspension of the difference between then and now; for him now is then and then is now. It is an a-historical and anti-historical position.

What is Tamil in this inscription? The Prākṛit used reveals a Tamil substratum in the form of Prākṛitisations of Tamil.¹⁷⁹ Prākṛit was used by Tamil speakers also in the first centuries AD. in several inscriptions.¹⁸⁰ It is misleading to dismiss this by referring to correspondences between linguistic systems of Sanskrit, Pāli and Siṃhala Prākṛit of the period 3rd century BC to 1st century AD.¹⁸¹ This is an attempt to explain the inscription from “inside” Siṃhala-Pāli and to exclude Tamil. Nobody has denied these mentioned correspondences in other cases, but here we also have to reckon with Tamil - in an inscription which has several Tamil terms.

¹⁷⁶ For the relation of the two in space and time see *BaT* 1, 219–220.

¹⁷⁷ See “Susantha Goonatilake, Lessons: Past, Present and Possible futures – Written Submission to LLRC”, *Lankaweb* (26 November, 2011), <http://www.lankaweb.com/news/items/2010/11/26/lessons-past-present-and-possible-futures/>, 1.

¹⁷⁸ See *BaT* 1, 220. To do this is very popular in by amateur historians. See for example Gam Vaesiya, “Were the Buddhists in Pre-Christian Lanka pure catikkaran ‘Tamils’ whose mother tongue was Sinhala?”, *Lankaweb*, December 5th, 2011, <http://www.lankaweb.com/news/items/2011/12/05/were-the-buddhists-in-pre-christian-lanka-pure-catikkaran-tamils-whose-mother-tongue-was-sinhala/>

¹⁷⁹ *BaT* 1, 220–224.

¹⁸⁰ *BaT* 1, 224.

¹⁸¹ Dharmadasa, “A Note...”, 89.

There is no reason after all discussions to change the conclusion from 2002:

Vallipuram belongs to the Tamil-speaking cultural area, and evidently it did so as far back as I can go in history with written documents. The document above is not what Paranavitāna says, a document of Sinhala settlements in Nākattīvu, but a document of Tamil settlements possessed as a fief by a man who had a Tamil name. The Vallipuram inscription is a document that indicates early Tamil settlements in the North. Even if the great King Vasabha ruled the centre of the island, nakadiva was technically a bhoga in Pāli, a “fief”, and it was a Tamil chieftain, Isiki, who was responsible for the building of the vihāra, not the king.

Buddhism was evidently flourishing in this fiefdom. This is indicated by the building of a new vihāra that probably housed the Vallipuram image.¹⁸²

The result of this summarising study is that the Vallipuram inscription documents a Tamil settlement which was responsible for the cultivation of Buddhism.

Now we come to the Vallipuram Buddha image [Fig. 50–51]. It has been objectified in several publications but has not become an object of a heated debate, probably because the produced knowledge has remained within a small circle of researchers. I will give a short summary of what is known.

When the Perumāḷ kōvil at Vallipuram¹⁸³ was rebuilt at the end of the 19th century, a Buddha statue was unearthed 50 yards north-east of the temple. It remained in the temple lumber room until 1902 when it was set up in the Old Park in Yāḷppāṇam under a bō-tree.¹⁸⁴ In 1906, this Vallipuram Buddha image was presented by the governor Sir Henry Blake to the King of Siam, who was particular anxious to have it, because it was supposed to be of an archaic type. This event together with the statue was forgotten. Islanders born after 1906 have never seen it provided they have not seen it in Bangkok in a *vihāra* known as Wat Benchamabopitr (“Wat Benja”), or “Marble temple”.

I focus on the conclusion. The Vallipuram Buddha image is a typical creation of Amarāvātī art which spread to Īḷam, where it influenced also the first period of the development of Buddhist art in the Anurādhapura school. So we have a triangle of cultural encounter between Amarāvātī, Anurādhapura in its first phase, and Vallipuram.

¹⁸² *BaT* 1, 224.

¹⁸³ For this kōvil see *BaT* 1, 165.

¹⁸⁴ *The Ceylon Antiquary 1916–17*, Vol 2, part 2, p. 96.

The first phase of the Anurādhapura school was dependent of Amarāvati. Only in the second phase did it produce its own peculiar images.

There are two problems connected with the Vallipuram image. The first is to determine where it was made and the second what it originally looked like.¹⁸⁵ Already when standing in Old Park in Yālpānam it was damaged and had lost part of its right arm and had suffered other minor damages.¹⁸⁶

I have studied the statue in Bangkok twice in the 1990s. Under the guidance of Duraiswamy Dayalan from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the Uppsala team studied the statue in January 2012 in Bangkok [Fig. 51–53]. Duraiswamy Dayalan put down his observations in writing:

The Vallipuram Buddha presently standing in one of the niches of the vi-hāra in Wat Benja, Bangkok, is in fact an exact imitation of Amarāvati-Nāgarjūṇikoṇḍa sculptures dated to 5th-6th century AD., although the stones are altogether different. The Amarāvati sculptures are carved out of Palnad limestone which is soft and sedimentary rock. The colour of the rock is from pale grey to dark grey. The Vallipuram Buddha is most probably carved out of granite which is the magma variety of igneous rock. The stone is well formed and the components of the granite stone such as quartz, feldspar, hornblende and mica are clearly visible in the rock. Hence, it is clear that the stone is definitely from Sri Lanka and only the style of the sculpture is taken from Amarāvati.

The sculpture is standing robustly with a curled hair, elongated ear-lobes, broad nose, thick lips and fleshy cheek and chin. The thick drapery worn by him reaches up to the knee portion. These are the typical character of the Amarāvati-Nāgārjūṇikoṇḍa sculptures dated to 5th-6th Century AD. The right hand of the Vallipuram Buddha has been broken and the same is mended with cement concrete. Similarly the wrist and fingers of the left hand are also mended with cement concrete. While mending they added the length of the hand at the wrist so that the hand shown above the shoulder. In fact the left hand is shown well below the level of shoulder in all the Amarāvati-Nāgārjūṇikoṇḍa standing Buddha sculptures of this type.

There is a small socket at the top of the Buddha head found in the Vallipuram Buddha. It is probably to keep the relic, precious materials or some other purposes. The Buddhist centres at Andhra Pradesh, particularly, Amarāvati and Nāgārjūṇikoṇḍa had a close connection with the Sri Lankan Buddhist centres. In fact, one of the vi-hāras excavated at

¹⁸⁵ For an iconographic description of the present shape of the image see Schalk, "The Vallipuram Image 'Rediscovered', 298–300.

¹⁸⁶ *The Ceylon Antiquary 1916–17*, Vol 2, plate 10:2.

Nāgārjuṅikoṇḍa is known as Siṃhala Vihāra. It has been mentioned that the Buddhist monks from Sri Lanka frequented quite often to Nāgārjuṅikoṇḍa and used to stay in this vihāra. Hence, it is clear that the theme and sculptural art might have travelled from Amarāvati to Sri Lanka and they made the sculptures by imitating the features found at Amarāvati. There are a good number of Buddhist sculptures in Sri Lanka which show the affinity of Amarāvati sculptures, although, they are carved at Sri Lanka itself. In addition to this there are a few sculptures found at Sri Lanka which are actually taken from the Amarāvati as they are carved out of Palnad limestone which is the typical stone available in Andhra Pradesh.¹⁸⁷

We learn from Duraiswamy Dayalan's description that the statue was made in Īlam as an imitation of Āntiram art. The artists may have come from Āntiram and trained artists in the North and in Central Īlam. The statue has nothing to do with peculiar Siṃhala art. Its positioning in Vallipuram does not indicate peculiar Siṃhala interests, but it shows interests from Āntiram which is part part of Dravidian culture. It was a Buddhist centre since the time of Aśoka.

There is an argument for stating that this statue is made in Īlam, but by artists from Āntiram who were faithful to their tradition. In statues from Āntiram the Buddha has a clearly visible wisp of hair in the form of a circular spot known as *ūrṇā*. It is not applied on statues from the same school in Īlam, even in the oldest one from Medavac-ciya dated to the 4th century.¹⁸⁸ The Vallipurambuddha had an *ūrṇā*, but it has eroded away. Duraiswamy Dayalan came to the conclusion that "the *ūrṇā* was originally there but it was eroded or cut off. I could see the circle on the forehead indicating the location of *ūrṇā*".¹⁸⁹

Duraiswamy Dayalan refers to an inscription in Āntiram that verifies the relation between the island and Āntiram. There are several inscriptions.¹⁹⁰ They are of special interest for us because they concern also Kantarōṭai which was also under the influence of Āntiram (see below).¹⁹¹

Duraiswamy Dayalan also refers to a *sīhala vihāra* in Nāgārjuṅikoṇḍa. The inscription is from the 3rd-4th century AD.¹⁹² It should be noted that this designation does not mean that the *vihāra* was

¹⁸⁷ Written communication from July 2012.

¹⁸⁸ *BaT* 1, 217.

¹⁸⁹ Written communication from 9 September, 2012.

¹⁹⁰ J. Vogel, "Prakrit Inscriptions from a Buddhist Site at Nagarjunikonda", *Epigraphia Indica* 20(1929-1930): 1-136.

¹⁹¹ *BaT* 1, 146-147.

¹⁹² Vogel, "Prakrit...", 22. See also *BaT* 1, 211.

sīhaḷa, but that the monks living in it came from *sīhaḷa*. *Sīhaḷa* refers here not to an ethnies or to a demos, but to a toponym which was introduced in the 4th century in the island in *Dīpavaṃsa* 9:1.¹⁹³ The inscription speaks about monks from the island *sīhaḷa* who built a *vi-hāra*. These monks may have been Prākṛit- or Tamil speaking, or both.

The mending of the right arm of the Vallipuram statue [**Fig. 53**] creates a special problem. Is the arm repaired clumsily or is it made to look as an *āśīsa-mudrā* ‘benediction-gesture’ which is a variant of the *abhaya-mudrā*? The *āśīsa-mudrā* is part of the second phase of the Anurādhapura-school with the Avukana statue as main example.¹⁹⁴ This is from the 8th or 9th century. This *mudrā* is peculiar to Siṃhala iconography.¹⁹⁵

The right arm was mended after the statue had been removed from Old Park in Yāḷppāṇam. The administrators of Wat Benja have shown in pictures one series of mending which was done in Bangkok in the 1990s. A pictorial documentation from 1994 with the mended arm is in *BaT* 1.¹⁹⁶ Another documentation for the situation January 2012 appears in this volume as **Figures 51–53**.

What did the original statue look like? There is of course none from Āntiram which has the *āśīsa-mudrā*. It is therefore improbable that the original Vallipuram statue had an *āśīsa-mudrā*. Its application on the statue from Vallipuram may be a result of a clumsy repair or is inspired by the Avukana statue as an attempt to “Siṃhalise” the Vallipuram statue. An intervention from the Siṃhala side is known. President Prēmadāsa requested the Vallipuram statue to be taken back to the island, but he was only promised to get a copy.¹⁹⁷ What happened to that copy is not known. The President was killed in 1993.¹⁹⁸ The conclusion of our examination is that the Vallipuram

¹⁹³ *BaT* 1, 211. For the use of *sīhaḷa* as toponym see Peter Schalk, *īlam<sīhaḷa? An Assessment of an Argument*. (Uppsala: AUU, 2004), 53–70. *Sīhaḷa* became “Ceylon” during the colonial period in the mouths of non-native speakers.

¹⁹⁴ *BaT* 1, 216.

¹⁹⁵ *The Image of the Buddha*, Edited by David L. Snellgrove (Paris: UNESCO, 1978), 142 [**Fig. 95**].

¹⁹⁶ *BaT* 1, 214–215

¹⁹⁷ Schalk, “The Vallipuram Buddha Image ‘Rediscovered’”, 304–305.

¹⁹⁸ For Prēmadāsa’s concept of Buddhism see Peter Schalk, “The Concept of Concord in President Ranasinghe Premadasa’s Buddhist Political Discourse”, *Lanka* 4 (1990), 22–92. See also Josine van der Horst, ‘Who is He, What is He Doing’. Religious Rhetoric and Performances in Sri Lanka during R. Premadasa’s Presidency

image belongs to Āntiram art and has no peculiar traits of Siṃhala-Buddhist art from the second period in Anurātapuram. It has not been possible to come to a solution whether the repair in Bangkok is the result of a manipulation or of clumsiness.

Another site of controversy is Kantarōṭai. The contemporary Siṃhalisation of this site is described by Jude Lal Fernando in this volume. What the site looked like in 1992 before the “reconquest” is well documented.¹⁹⁹ The historical pre-figuration of that site may be found in Guṇṭupallī in Āntiram and points therefore at a Dravidian influence,²⁰⁰ like in the case of the Vallipuram Buddha image. Not only Āntiram, but also Kēraḷam, being part of Tamiḷakam, stand as possible donator of Buddhism to Yālppāṇam, which Alvappillai Veluppillai has shown.²⁰¹ The connection between Āntiram and Īlam has been described elaborately.²⁰²

There are many other sites, about 40, to be taken up.²⁰³ Like in South India some Aiyaṇār temples have assimilated a Buddhist vi-kāram in Yālppāṇam. Alvappillai Veluppillai has pointed out that when looking for Buddhist remnants one has to go to an Aiyaṇār kōyil and see whether it overlays an original Buddhist sanctuary.²⁰⁴

I emphasise also together with Alvappillai Veluppillai the Tamiḷakam perception from the 6th century that Nākanāṭu had an autonomously developed Buddhist tradition.²⁰⁵ This perception of the Northern part being autonomous was still actual during the Marāṭṭi rulers from Tañcāvūr in the 17th-19th centuries. They made a distinction between Īlam and Yālppāṇam which they had taken over from the preceding Cēturulers from the 16th century onwards who still remembered the Kingdom of Yālppāṇam.²⁰⁶

We have found that in Vallipuram and Kantarōṭai and in many other places Buddhism was cultivated by Dravidian speakers. What follows from that? Absolutely nothing follows from this fact. The same is the case if in these places Buddhism had been cultivated by

(1989–1993), *Sri Lanka Studies in the Humanities and the Social Sciences 2* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1995).

¹⁹⁹ *BaT* 1, 147.

²⁰⁰ *BaT* 1, 146–147.

²⁰¹ *BaT* 1, 95, 148–149. *BaT* 2, 553–559, 558, 690–698.

²⁰² *BaT* 1, 211–225.

²⁰³ *BaT* 1, 151–153.

²⁰⁴ *BaT* 1, 165.

²⁰⁵ *BaT* 1, 147–148, 152–153, 166. See also Schalk, *Īlam <sihaḷa?>...*, 88.

²⁰⁶ *Loc cit.* 221–224.

Prākṛit or Siṃhala speakers only. It is not possible to derive logically from such propositions rights of possession of territory. Politicians have to come forward and produce and enforce such a derivation. They have already enforced a political evaluation that wherever Siṃhala-Buddhists have lived, even 2000 years ago, they have the right to possess this territory. Tamil politicians responded that wherever Tamil speakers lived, even 2000 years ago, they have the right to possess this territory. The colonisation or “re-conquest” by the the Government is a political action which is supported by the ideology of majoritarianism. Its cultivation is in the interest of the Siṃhala majority. The problem for the realisation of this interest is that many of the Buddhist places in the North were not cultivated by Siṃhala-Buddhists.

Conclusion

“Buddhism among Tamils” is indeed a complex conceptualisation. We have to distinguish between Tamilakam and Īlam, between different languages, periods and regions, finally between different interests, religious and political.

“Buddhism among Tamils” is a blanket for several concepts. The most important one is Tamil Buddhism. A minimum definition of Tamil Buddhism is: Buddhism which is transmitted in Tamil and is indigenised in Tamil culture. Tamil religious culture was and still is dominated by Caivam/Vaiṇavam,²⁰⁷ even in the Diaspora.²⁰⁸ Therefore Tamil Buddhism will always be related to Caivam/Vaiṇavam, more or less, during different periods.

In Īlam, Tamil Buddhism is hardly visible; it is quenched between three counteracting interests.²⁰⁹ First, there is political Siṃhala Buddhism which is instrumentalised by the Government to homogenise the culture of the island into one culture as means of consolidating

²⁰⁷ For an overview of the religions of the Tamil speakers see Ālvāpillai Vēluppillai, “Religious Traditions of the Tamils”, *Uppsala Studies in the History of Religions* 2 (1995), Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1995, 11–20. Id. “The Encounter of Religions in the History of Tamil Culture”, *Uppsala Studies in the History of Religions* 2 (1995), Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1995, 21–25.

²⁰⁸ See Peter Schalk, *God as Remover of Obstacles. A Study of Caiva Soteriology among Īlam Tamil Refugees in Stockholm, Sweden*. Uppsala: AUU, 2004.

²⁰⁹ See Peter Schalk, “Buddhism among Tamils in Ilam”, *Religio et Bibliotheca. Festschrift till Tore Ahlbäck 14.3.2001*, Edited by Nils G Holm et al. Åbo: Åbo Akademi Förlag, 2001, 199–211.

the unitary state.²¹⁰ The Mahāsaṃgha as a massmovement is, however, not only an instrument;²¹¹ parts of it is also an actor who instrumentalises the Government to impose Siṃhala Buddhism,²¹² today with the help of an intensive militarisation [Fig. 3–13, 19, 26, 28–31, 36, 38, 42–43, 49]. It is not a question of forceful conversions of Caivas, but of gradual land-grabbing in connection with the “sealing” of a territory by establishing Buddhist sacred architecture. It reduces Tamil interests of control over territory.²¹³ This kind of expanding political Buddhism has a self-designation which the reader should associate to Hindūtvā; it is Siṃhalatva.²¹⁴ Both work against a multicultural society.

Second, there is the traditional Caiva/Vaiṇava xenophobic polemic against Buddhism as an ascetic religion which questions Tamil values. The resistance against Buddhism forced already Aśoka’s missionaries to halt on the Northern frontier of Tamilakam. Especially the asceticism of Buddhism as antisocial behaviour is classified as alien. This Caiva and Vaiṇava polemic goes back to the Pallava period but is today an atavistic hangover.²¹⁵

The present author has been confronted with an evaluation of Tamil Buddhism from a group of Caiva paṇṭitar in Yālpāṇam in 1992. I was invited to present Tamil Buddhism in Īlam to them. They view Tamil Buddhism as an insignificant phenomenon which does not deserve further attention. I agree with the first part, but not with the second part of this view. There is the interest of the historian to study the struggle for survival of a minority religion in Tamilakam and Īlam. There is also the interest of the social scientist to study the gradual integration of Tamil Buddhism as an ideological and political concept in the ideology of the Tamil resistance movement. Finally, there is the interest by Tamil politicians to stop “the re-conquest” by delivering historical counter arguments.

²¹⁰ BaT 1, 34. Peter Schalk, “Sinhalisation as Homogenisation of Culture”, *Sri Lanka: 60 Years of “Independence” and Beyond* (Emmenbrücke: Centre for Just Peace and Democracy, 2009), 133–158.

²¹¹ Peter Schalk, “Operationalizing Buddhism for Political Ends in a Martial Context in Lanka: The Case of Siṃhalatva”, *Religion and Violence in South Asia. Theory and Practice*. Edited by John R. Hinnels and Richard King (Oxon: Routledge, 2007), 139–153.

²¹² Peter Schalk, “Present Concepts of Secularism...”, 52–72.

²¹³ See the article by Jude Lal Fernando in this volume (BaT 3).

²¹⁴ Schalk, “Operationalising...”, 141–145.

²¹⁵ BaT 1, 33.

Third, even within the present Tamil resistance movement some intellectuals among Tamil speakers identify Tamil Buddhism as a masked form of Siṃhala Buddhism, a kind of backdoor which opens up for governmental interests. This conspiratorial speculation functions as a way to choke an academic discussion about Tamil Buddhism. It is also based on ignorance of what Tamil Buddhism is.

Suppose Tamil Buddhism became an accepted category in Īlam, in the governmental administration too. It would make the Tamil speaking community richer. One could add Tamil Buddhism to Caivam, Vaiṇavam, Christianity and Islam. Moreover, it would deprive the Siṃhalatva representatives in the governmental administration and in the Armed Forces of the use of a false historical argument for establishing territorial control and cultural homogeneity under the umbrella of Siṃhala Buddhism only.²¹⁶ The toleration of Tamil Buddhism is, however, meaningful only if the traditional bond between Siṃhala Buddhism and claims to the territory of the island is dissolved. We can imagine a return to the canonical meaning of *dhammadīpa* as anybody, anywhere, at any time having the *dhamma* as lamp. This does not contradict indigenisation of Buddhism through different languages.²¹⁷ The attributes “Tamil” and “Siṃhala” of Buddhism may be kept but without reference to claims of territory. This is not likely to happen. We see an inflating of “the heritage”; it implies a strive for the maintenance of an indissoluble bond between Buddhism and territory for the benefit of those who want a *sīhaḷadīpa*.

In September 2012 the Government had not considered to abstain for the sake of reconciliation from an emotional appeal to the “heritage”. The “heritage’s” artistic expression in the mass production of nationalistic Buddhist *kitsch* is in full sway.²¹⁸ The Government realises, however, that mere might alone is not appreciated; power should be exercised with reference to a package marked by “heritage”. Then, might appears as right and just. The colonisation program must be justified by an appeal to the “heritage” for the preservation of majoritarianism on which the colonisation program is based. The final and ultimate aim is to gain total control over territory which has been administered and possessed for centuries by Tamil speakers. Members of the Tamil Resistance Movement call it *tāyakam* ‘motherland’ which has been rendered as “homeland” in the political discourse in English.

²¹⁶ For an elaboration of this statement see p. 134 in this volume.

²¹⁷ For a canonical view of the use of languages in missiological work and its change through Buddhaghosa see *BaT* 1, 39–41.

²¹⁸ See pp. 57, 133, 134 in this volume.