

FEMININE ELEMENTS IN SINHALESE BUDDHISM

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I. "BUDDHA MOTHER"

Materials so far published on Theravāda Buddhism have shown little evidence of any feminine element. It is well known that in Chinese Buddhism a Bodhisattva under the feminine form of Kuan Yin has achieved paramount importance, and that the senior lady in a Chinese household used to be known as "the old Buddha". But little or nothing is known to the wider world of similar connections between Buddhas or Bodhisattvas and femininity in Theravada Buddhist countries.

At first sight the religion of Sinhalese Buddhists is indeed lacking in feminine elements. In marked contrast to their Dravidian neighbours, the Sinhalese have very few goddesses. Of these only Pattinī (herself of Dravidian origin) is important, and though her former status is exemplified by her shrine in Kandy as one of the four guardian deities of Ceylon, her importance is declining. Nor does a superficial acquaintance with Sinhalese Buddhism proper yield much material; the Buddhism is in most respects closely based on the Pali Canon, in which the female element might be said to be confined to a few female saints (*arhats*). The existence of these female saints is widely known in Ceylon, and recently a film was made about one of them, Paṭācārā, but they are of no importance in the living religion. Sinhalese religious literature, belief and practice do however make connections between canonical characters and women, in both metaphor and myth, and I plan a series of articles exploring such connections. This article examines a metaphor; the next, printed below, a myth based on a metaphor.

This article will deal with the equation Buddha-mother. I write "equation" because the comparison is made both ways: there is a Sinhalese saying, "*Ammā gedara Budun*", "The mother is the Buddha of the home", with which compare the Chinese saying mentioned above; and the Buddha is sometimes called, in more elevated language, *Amā māṇiyō*, "the immortal mother". Moreover in the commonest collocation of all it is unclear who is being addressed: "*Budu Ammā*"—"Buddha

mother"—is an exclamation used in times of stress. In newspaper accounts of murders one frequently reads that the victim cried "*Budu Ammā*" (or "*Budu Ammē*" in the vocative) as he went down. This juxtaposition in *extremis* of the religion's chief figure, however masculine he may be in theory, and the mother, must be of psychological significance, and is what gives the comparison its main interest for the student of comparative religion.

The mother is compared to the Buddha in various quatrains (*sivpada*) which float either singly or in groups through the large body of popular verse, mostly of anonymous origin, which is printed in pamphlets and hawked on pavements, at fairs and at bus stands, throughout Sinhalese territory. Many of the verses used in these popular compositions are no doubt much older than the publications in which they now occur; and they have the general appearance of oral literature, their construction being loose in both grammar and sense. Verses comparing the mother to the Buddha often occur in connection with a story which will form the subject of my next article, the story of how the Buddha in a former life saved his mother from shipwreck. A poem in my possession entitled *Mage Budu Ammā* (My Buddha Mother)¹ is in fact devoted to this story, and concludes

Me dā obe guṇa sihi kara manaram mā

Pu dā vaṇḍimi namadimi mage Budu ammā.

Today, recalling your delightful qualities,

I honour, reverence and worship my Buddha mother.

On the other hand a poem ostensibly on the shipwreck story, *Mano-pranidhānayē Sivpada*², but very loosely constructed, has several stanzas praising mothers, of which the following three are representative:

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| 34 | <i>Malē malē nobanin ape ammā</i> | ṭa |
| | <i>Topen apen dena dē nāta undā</i> | ṭa |
| | <i>Vena dē nātata detanē kiri bunnā</i> | ṭa |
| | <i>Budun sēma vāṇḍa siṭu ape ammā</i> | ṭa |
| 36 | <i>Utun guṇē kiyatōtin Budun</i> | nē |
| | <i>Ātun vaṭina guṇavada mavupiyan</i> | nē |
| | <i>Yodun ganana dana sampat evun</i> | nē |
| | <i>Pādun ratē pādadena divapura yan</i> | nē |
| 37 | <i>Ape ammā tosita gos upadin</i> | nē |
| | <i>Tosita purē diva yahanaka vāḍa un</i> | nē |

¹ VILSAN JAYAVIKRAMA, *Masura vaṭina kavi hevat Yahapat avavāda*, Vidyodaya Press (Colombo), p. 8.

² Copyright M. R. SIRISENA, pub. Gāmiṇi Press, Kandy, 32nd edition 1966.

Mahāmāyā dēviya sē siṭin nē

Kusē ipadilā Budu siri viṇḍin nē

- 34 Younger brother, younger brother, do not scold our mother. There is nothing for you and me to give her. Because she gave us the milk of her two breasts, even without anything else [i. e. even if for no other reason], remain worshipping our mother like a Buddha.
- 36 If one were to tell the highest qualities of the Buddhas, the qualities of parents are worth tusked elephants, are they not? Their wealth and riches are leagues long. Driving in a driven vehicle they go to the city of heaven.
- 37 Our mother, having gone to Tusita heaven, is born there; in the city of Tusita she sits on a heavenly couch; she is like Queen Mahāmāyā; being born in her womb the Buddha experiences glory.

In the latter part of these rather garbled verses the purport is that parents, especially mothers, earn so much merit by their goodness to their children that they enjoy wealth on earth and a rebirth in heaven; by association of ideas the focus then shifts to the Buddha's mother, Mahāmāyā, and her rebirth in heaven, and the poem goes on to talk of the Buddha's birth.

So far as I can discover, the Buddha is never compared to a mother (or *vice versa*) in the Pali canon or the commentatorial literature³. The comparison is however well known to Sinhalese Buddhists. Its first occurrence is probably in the *Butsaraṇa* of *Vidyācakravartī*⁴, a religious prose classic dating from the early thirteenth century. The penultimate chapter of this work consists of a series of 258 literary figures, most of them similes, concerning the Buddha. Here are translations of relevant similes:

- 72 (pp. 286-7) Saying 'I go to the Buddha for refuge', one should take refuge in the Buddha, who further, like a mother who eats medicinal food to cure a suckling baby who is ill, throughout four hundred thousand uncountable eons consumed medicine for the peace of the creatures ill with the moral defilements.
- 84 (p. 288) Saying 'I go to the Buddha for refuge', one should take refuge in the Buddha, who further, like the mother who ponders

³ A famous passage in the *Visuddhimagga* (IX. 108) compares the four sublime states (*brahmavihāra*) to the feelings of a mother, but does not mention the Buddha.

⁴ Ed. Rvd. LABUGAMA LĀNKĀNANDA, Colombo, M. D. Guṇasena, 2nd ed. 1960. All references are to chapter 15 in this edition.

that when her child gets milk from her breast it benefits, is happy, not for himself, thinking that when all the world who are his children take the essence of the doctrine at his heart he gains their minds.

- 85 (p. 288) Saying . . . Buddha, who further, like a wet-nurse in charge of a prince, who saves her breast-milk for the prince though her own child cry, saved his compassion for the denizens of the world however much his own body suffered.
- 93 (p. 289) Saying . . . Buddha, who further, like a mother cow who, fearless through mother-love, enters the ford where lies the leopard who has taken her calf, through affection enters the ford of transmigration where lies the leopard of desire who has taken his children, the people to be trained.
- 129 (p. 295) Saying . . . Buddha, who further, like a mother with pregnancy cravings for what her child is thinking of, is of great compassion, with cravings for nirvana, which the denizens of the world desire.
- 203 (p. 304) Saying . . . Buddha, who further, like a fond mother who feeds her child meat after removing the bones, feeds all the denizens of the worlds, his children, the right views after removing the wrong views.
- 208 (p. 305) Saying . . . Buddha, who further has a congregation of four kinds which, like a child which gazing on its mother's face and laughing with happiness drinks milk, gazes on his blessed face and with gladness and delight listens to his preaching.
- 247 (p. 313) Saying . . . Buddha, who further like a mother who through affection for her child takes no account of the pains of birth, through affection for creatures makes no account of the pain he undergoes.

The comparison of the Buddha with a mother is most thoroughly made in a text, the Mātṛ Upamāva ("Mother Simile"), which is used in a particular ritual context: one of the lengthy preliminaries of the kind of all-night preaching session called a "twin-seat sermon" (*yugāsana baṇa*) or "sermon from two seats" (*āsana dekē baṇa*) is the recitation by one of the two participant monks, the one who occupies the seat called *dharmāsana*, of a lengthy simile involving the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. These similes are in Sanskritized Sinhalese (miśra Siṃhala) and probably of common origin. The Mātṛ Upamāva is the most popular of them. Although the ceremony of the "twin-seat sermon" is very rare, perhaps obsolescent, I found that the Mātṛ Upamāva is fairly widely known by heart by elderly monks in the Kandy area, where I did my research.

Other evidence too suggests a Kandyan origin for the Mātṛ Upamāva. Of the 15 manuscripts of our text listed in Mr. Somadasa's catalogue of palm-leaf manuscripts in Ceylonese temple libraries, 12 are in the Central Province, most of them in or very near to Kandy. Moreover the work is anonymous and undated, but its style suggests the second half of the eighteenth century, when Kandy was the centre of a Buddhist revival.

Like others of its kind, the text purports to be an exposition of three short Pali quotations, which in this case respectively compare the Buddha to a mother, the Doctrine (*dharma*) to milk, and the Order (*saṅgha*) to suckling babies; really the simile is thus all one. Whether these are genuine quotations or pseudo-quotations I cannot establish. The first simile used in the text below is clearly based on the first simile (72) quoted above from the Butsarāṇa; my impression is that this forms the starting point for what is otherwise a substantively original text.

The Mātṛ Upamāva sometimes turns up in pamphlets, pertaining to the class of publication quoted above, entitled *Baṇa ārādhana saṅgraha* ("Collection of invitations to preach"), which in fact contain many of the texts used in connection with a "twin-seat sermon". The copy which I have seen lacks the title page (i. e. the cover), but is more than forty years old. Its text is however exceedingly corrupt. I have also consulted two MSS, the one in Bōdhimaḷu Vihāraya, Raṇavana, Kaṭugastota, the second in the Colombo Museum, A. B. 5, number 1134 in W. A. DE SILVA's catalogue of that collection⁵. The Raṇavana MS is very close to the printed version, of which it could even be a copy. The Colombo manuscript on the other hand is a clearly written copy of a manuscript from the Anuradhapura District, dated 1900, and a widely divergent and much superior text. I have preferred its readings in nearly every instance. I am presenting the text of this manuscript only till the end of the simile, which is to say that I stop at the fourth line of the second side of the fifth page.

Text of the Mātṛ Upamāva

Mātā iva Buddho yi yanuvēn dāvāna lada apa tilōguru Budura-jānavahansē tunlōvāsīnta māṇikenekun hā samāna vannēya. kesē nam Budun māṇiyanta baṇdu upamā ātisēkda yatahot yamsē daruwaṇta kiri dena māṇiyō vanāhi tamangē daruwaṇta napuru rōga piḍā haṭaganiti yana

⁵ My thanks are due to the incumbent of Raṇavana *pansala* and to the Librarian of Colombo Museum for their permission to copy the MSS.

bhayin viṣama vū apathyāhārādiya anubhava nokoṭa kiri yahapat vīmaṭa ma sudusu vū āhārapānayan ganīti. ē paridden ma apa Budurajānanvahanṣē da apathya āhāra gānmak hā samāna vū prāṇaghātādi dasa akusala dharmayan nokoṭa kiri yahapat vīmaṭa sudusu āhārapānādiya gannā mavaka men dasa kusala dharmayehi hāsurunu sēka. Tavada māñiyō behet bīpiya nohāki tamangē bāla daruwanṭa yam rōgapīḍādiyak pāmiñi kalhi anubhava karanṭa duṣkara vū rukṣatiktādi amanojña rasa āti behet taman anubhava koṭa ē ma behet rasa oḅjāven haṭagat kiri ē bāla daruwanṭa povat. ē kiri bun daruvangē rōgapīḍādiya sanhiñḍi niduk nirōgi bhāvayaṭa pāmiñeti. ē paridden apa tilōguru samyak sambuddha nāmati tun lō amā māñiyānvahanṣē da behet bīpiya nohāki bāla daruwan vāni tamangē nuvañin nirvāṇa dharmaya avabōdha koṭa gata nohāki prajñāhīna bāla daruwan vāni vaineya jana nāmati putrayangē kleśarōgayan nisā anubhava karanṭa duṣkara vū rukṣatiktādi amanojña rasa āti behet anubhava karana mavaka men mē lōkayehi lāmaka satvayaku visin karanna tabā sitanṭa da aviṣaya vū ūs is mas lē am̄bu daruwan dan dīma ādi vū samatrimṣat pāramī dharmayan purā ē pāramitānubhāvayen labana lada samyak sambōdhi āti va hevat tamanvahanṣēgē hāmaṭa paḷamuva ma nirvāṇa dharmaya avabōdha koṭa kleśarōgavalin piḍita va hevat tamanvahanṣē vaineya jana nāmati putrayanṭa ē daham nāmati amṛta kṣīra pānaya povana piñisa karuṇā nāmati hastayen alvā vaḍā gena maitrī nāmati ākayē hovā gena āśayānusaya jñāna nāmati ūsin balā carita viśēṣa nāmati mukhayen gena aṣṭāṅgasvarasamupēta madhura svara nāmati tanayen pāhāra kan nāmati [oṣṭhayē vivṛta koṭa cittasantāna nāmati mukhayābhyantarayehi daham nā]mati amā kiri deva prajñā nāmati divehi pañca prīti madhura rasa ganvā vidarśanā bhāvanā nāmati grīvayen satipaṭṭhāna nāmati udarābhyantarayehi bahā siyalu klēsa rōga vyapasamanaya koṭa nirvāṇa nāmati niduk nirōgi bhāvayaṭa pamuñuvā vadāla sēka. Tavada māñiyō tamangē bāla daruwan vaḍā gena ākayē hovā gat kalhi ovun māñiyangē guṇa no dannā bāvin māñiyānṭa atin payin pahara deti ākrōṣa paribhava vacanayen beṇeti iṭa ē māñiyō kisi kōpayak no koṭa atin payin pahara dena bāla daruvangē at pā simba sanahā mihiri rasavat kiri povā sanahannāhuya. ē paridden ma apa Budurajānanvahanṣē Āḷavaka Āṅgulimālādi vaineya jana nāmati putrayan visin ovungē Buduguṇa nodannā avasthāvehi Budunṭa kī ākrōṣu paribhavayan guṇa tamanvahanṣē iṭa kisi kōpayak nokoṭa prēmāyē vaḍā gena kiri povā sanasana māñi kenekun men karuṇā nāmati hastayen alvā vaḍā gena mē daham nāmati amā kiri povā nirvāṇa sāpayen sanasā vadālasēka. Mesē anēkākāra vaśayen māñi kenekunṭa bañdu upamā āti kāmarūpārūpa saṃkhyāta vū tun lovaṭa mātr vū apa tiloguru bhāgyavat arhat samyak sambuddha sarvajñarājottamayānanvahanṣē da.

Khīram iva dhammo ya yanuven dakvāna lada apa Budurajānanva-

hansēgē śrī saddharma ratnaya vanāhi māñiyān visin daruwanṭa dena lada mihiri rasavat kiri hā samāna vannēya. kesē nam Budungē dharmaya kiraṭa bañdu vū upamā ātisēk da yat yamsē māñiyangē tanayen upadanā vū kiri kesē upadanē da yatahot māñiyō daruwan kerehi pavatnā vū putra snēha nāmati maitrī sita karana koṭa gena ē maitriyagē ānubhāvayen śarīra oḅjāvehi napuru varṇa gandha rasa perali subhra varṇaya hā yahapat madhura rasa bhāvayaṭa pāmiñennēya. ē paridden ma apa Budurajānanvahanṣē da sakala vaineya jana nāmati putrasamūhayā kerehi putrasnēhayak hā samāna karuṇāven ma pāramitā purā avabōdhaya karana lada dharmaya da śarīra oḅjāvehi napuru varṇa gandha rasa perali upadanā vū kiri men prthagjana sita perali arhatphalādhiḡamayāta pāmiña avabōdhaya karana lada dharmaya da mihiri rasavat kiri hā samāna vannēya. Tava da yamsē māñiyān visin dena lada kiri nātnam bāla daruvangē śarīravayava saṅṭhānayan sampūrṇatvayen vāḍimāk vēvayi pāvātīmāk vēvayi novannāhuya. ē paridden ma Budungē daham nāmati amṛta kṣīra pānavaya kirīma nātnam prajñāhīna vaineya jana nāmati putrayangē guṇa dharmā nāmati śarīrayangē vāḍimāk vēvayi pāvātīmāk vēvayi novannāhu ya, daham nāmati amṛta kṣīra pānaya kirīmen hevat śrī saddharmaya āśimen bālīmen sila samādhi guṇa dharmā nāmati śarīrayan vaḍā gena hevat nipakabhāvayayī kiyāna lada prajñāvagē abhivṛddhibhāvayaṭa gos nirvāṇayada avabōdhaya karannāhu ya. Tavada māñiyangē kiri bāla daruwanṭa itā yahapat mihiri rasa āttē ya. ē paridden ma Budungē dharmaya da dharmasardhāvantayinṭa kenek āsvat bāluvat ātīyī kiyāna trṭhiyakaṭa no pāmiñena heyin da mihiri rasavat kiri hā samāna vannēya. Tavada bāla daruvō kiri bi sāpīpāsaduk sanhiñḍuvā genu suva sē veseti. ē paridden ma satara mahā gaṅgāvehi jalapravāhaya genavut mukhayehi bāhā vūvada ugura pamaṇa temā liya nohāki udarāgniyeṇ da dā pipāsava āvidinā vū prētayō da pavā daham nāmati amṛta kṣīra pānaya koṭa hevat daham kaṇa vākunu pamanakīn ēbañdu krūrātara prētadukādiyen midī utum vū amṛta mahā nirvāṇa sampattiyāta da pāmiñennāhu ya. Mesē noyek kāraṇayen amṛta kṣīra pānayaṭa bañdu vū upamā āti saparyāptika navalōkōttara śrī saddharma ratnaya da.

Khīrapāyikā dārakā viya saṅgho yi yanuven dakvāna lada maha saṅgharatnaya nam kiri bi vāḍena putra samūhayak hā samāna vannē ya. kesē nam saṅgharatnaya putrayanṭa bañdu upamā ātisēk da yatahot yamsē māñiyangē kiri bi vāḍena bāla daruvō māñiyangē kṣīra rasayehi bāñḍi māñiyangen ven va iñḍinṭa no kamāti veti hāma vēlehi ma māñiyangē nama kiyā kiyā hañḍamin māñiyān karā diva gos māñiyangē tanaya kaṭuvā kiri bomīn māñiyān vālaṇḍa ganiti rātriyehi nidana kalhi da māñiyangen ven no va māñiyān vāda hena tāna ma sayanaya karannāhu ya. ē paridden ma Budun daham nāmati kṣīra rasayehi bāñḍi vasana Buddhaputrayānvahanṣēlā da Budungen viyō va inṭa no kamāti veti.

Vakkalīsthavirādīn men hāma vēlehi ma Budun bala balā Buddhāḷambanapritīn pīna pīnā Budun dāka dāka ma hīndīti. Budun pīrīnivan vī pasu va Buddhaputra vū saṅghayāvahansēlā caitya pratimāghara bōdhi-vr̥kṣādīya pavatnā tānvalaṭa davasa tun varak elāmbī vandanamānādīya keremin nava arahādī Buduḡuṇayan nīrantarayehi sihi karannāhu ya. Tavada māṇiyangē kiri bī vādena putrayan aturen samahara kenek ē māṇiyangē avavādaya no gena māṇiyanta no kīkaru va siṭīti ovuṇṭa māṇīyan santaka vū māṭṭṭ dhana dāyāda sampat no lābeti, māṇiyangē avavādayan piḷigannā vū svaca kīkaru vū daruvō pamaṇak ma māṇīyan santaka ran ridi mutu māṇik dāsi das gava mahis kṣētra vastu ādi vū māṭṭṭ dhana dāyāda sampat labā gena isuruṭa pāmiṇennāhu ya. ē paridden ma Buddhaśāsanayehi pāvīdi vū bhikṣun aturehi da Budun visin vadārana lada trividha śikṣā nūmati avavādayan no gena dussīla bhikṣunṭa da Buddhaśāsanayen lābiya yutu dhana dāyāda sampat no lābeti, Budun visin vadārana lada adhiśīla śikṣā ya adhicitṭa śikṣā ya adhiprajñā śikṣā ya yi kiyana lada mē trividha śikṣā vū paridden piḷipadanā Buddha-putrayānavahansēlā pamaṇak ma ē Buddhaśāsanayen lābiya yutu vū śraddhāghanaya śīladhanaya hiridhanaya ottappadhanaya śrutadhanaya tyāgadhanaya prajñāadhanaya yi kiyana lada saptavidha ārya dhana dāyāda sampat labā gena sōvān sakṛdāgāmī anāgāmī arhat mārgaphalādīya lāba aiśvāryabhāvayaṭa pāmiṇennāhuya. Mesē anantākāravasayehi kiri bī vādena putrayanta baṇḍu vū upamā āti anuttara puṇyākṣētra maha saṅgharatnaya da yana mē ratnatrayaṭa nīrantara cārītra pavitra silācārādī guṇa gaṇāṅga saṃgata vū Śāriputra Maudgalyāyana Ānanda Rāhulasthavira Mahā Kāśyapādi Buddhaputra vū saṅgharatnaya da.

Mesē Buddharatnaya nam tun lō vāsīṇṭa māṇi kenekun hā samāna vannēya. Buduḡgē dharmaya nam mihiri rasavat kiri hā samāna vannēya. Buddhaputra saṅgharatnaya kiri bī vādena putrasamūhayan hā samāna vannēya. mesē upamāviśayātīkrānta vū tavada Buddhadharmasaṅgha saṃkhyāta vū trividha ratnayaṭa māgē kāyādi dvāra trayen namaskāra keremi hevat sakasā vaṇḍīmi.

Translation

“The Buddha is like a mother”. Our holy king Buddha, teacher of the three worlds, who is so described, is like a mother to the inhabitants of the three worlds. Should it be asked how the Buddha is similar to a mother: Any mother who is giving milk to her children, fearing lest bad disease and affliction befall them, does not consume noxious, unwholesome food, but takes food and drink fitted to making her milk wholesome. In the same way our holy king Buddha too does not do the ten bad deeds (such as killing) which are like taking unwholesome food, but like a mother taking food and drink fitted to making the milk

wholesome he conducts himself in the ten good ways. Further, a mother, when any disease or affliction has befallen her babies, who cannot drink medicine, herself consumes the medicine which is hard to consume because of its unpleasant harsh, bitter flavour, and makes her babies drink the milk which arises with the efficacy of that medicine's essence; the diseases and afflictions of the children who have drunk the milk die away and they reach a state free from disease and pain. In the same way the holy immortal mother of the three worlds too, namely our truly fully enlightened teacher of the three worlds, like a mother who because of the diseases of moral defilements of her children, namely the people capable of being trained, who, lacking wisdom, cannot realize and attain by their own intelligence the state of nirvana, just as babies cannot drink medicine,—like the mother who consumes the medicine which is hard to consume because of its unpleasant harsh, bitter flavour, first fulfilling the full thirty perfections by righteous gifts of his eyes, head, flesh, blood, wife and children, things which the stupid creatures of this world cannot conceive of, let alone perform, attained the full complete enlightenment by the force of those perfections—in other words realized that state of nirvana himself, before all others; and then in order to make the children, namely people capable of being trained, who were afflicted with the diseases of moral defilement, drink the draught of ambrosial milk, namely the dharma, seized and carried them with the arm of compassion, held them on the hip of kindness, looked at them with the eye of his knowledge of inner potential, took them by the mouth of their individual characters, proffered the breast of his sweet voice endowed with the eight qualities, opened the lips of their ears, gave them inside the mouth of mental process the milk of immortal doctrine, and by putting on the tongue of wisdom the sweet flavour of the five joys, and by making it descend from the neck of insight meditation to inside the belly of setting up mindfulness healed all the diseases of moral defilement and brought them to the painless diseaseless state of nirvana. Moreover when a mother holds her babies and carries them on her hip, because they do not know their mother's quality they hit their mother with hand and foot and scold and abuse her, but the mother does not get at all angry but kisses and comforts the hands and feet of the babies who are hitting her with hand and foot, gives them delicious sweet milk to drink and thus consoles them. In the same way our holy king Buddha, when his children, namely people capable of being trained such as Ālavaka and Angulimāla, not knowing his quality of being a Buddha, scolded and abused him, did not get at all angry but affectionately took them up and gave them milk to drink, and like a consoling mother took them with the hand of compassion, carried

them, and giving them this ambrosial milk of the dharma to drink consoled them with the bliss of nirvana. Thus the mother of the three worlds (called world of desire, world of form, and world of no form), our teacher of the three worlds, the blessed arhat, the truly fully enlightened, omniscient, holy supreme king Buddha, bears a similarity in several ways to a mother.

“The Dharma is like milk.” The jewel of blessed true doctrine of our holy king Buddha, which is so described, is like the delicious sweet milk given by a mother to her children. Should it be asked how the Buddha’s doctrine is similar to milk: if one ask how the milk which arises from the breast of any mother is produced, the answer is that when the mother has kind thoughts, namely parental affection, for her children, by the force of that kindness the bad colours, smells and tastes in the body’s juice are transformed and clear colours and wholesome sweet tastes come into being. In the same way our holy king Buddha too fulfilled the perfections out of compassion which is like parental affection towards the children, namely all people capable of being trained; and the doctrine which he realized, like milk which arises when the bad colours, smells and tastes in the body’s juice are transformed, transformed unenlightened thoughts and reached the attainment of the fruit of enlightenment, so that the doctrine which he realized is also like delicious sweet milk. Moreover, unless there is milk given by the mother, the wish that all parts of the babies’ bodies grow completely and so endure is not fulfilled. In the same way, unless there is drinking of the ambrosial milk of the doctrine enunciated by the Buddha, the wish that the bodies, namely the good qualities, of the children, namely the people capable of being trained but lacking in wisdom, grow and endure is not fulfilled; but by drinking the ambrosial milk of the Dharma—in other words by hearing and looking at the blessed true doctrine—the bodies, namely the good qualities, grow—in other words they attain increase of that wisdom called sagacity and thus realize nirvana. Moreover mother’s milk tastes very sweet to babies. In the same way the Buddha’s doctrine too is like delicious sweet milk for those who have faith in the Dharma since if anyone hear or look at it they do not reach a satiation of pleasure. Moreover babies by drinking milk allay their hunger, thirst, and other troubles, and are comfortable. In the same way even the pretas who wander burning with hunger and thirst so great that even by bringing the flood of waters of the four great rivers and pouring it into their mouths one could not even dampen their throats, if they but take a draught of the ambrosial milk of the Dharma—in other words if their ears are merely anointed with the doctrine—they are freed from the terrible sufferings of pretas and attain the

perfection of the supreme, deathless, great nirvana. Thus the jewel of the blessed true doctrine, consisting of the whole scripture, which is above the nine worlds, bears a similarity in several ways to the draught of ambrosial milk.

“The Sangha is like milk-drinking children.” The jewel of the great Order, which is thus described, is like a group of children who grow by drinking milk. Should it be asked how the jewel of the Order is similar to children: any babies who grow by drinking their mother’s milk and are attached to its flavour, do not like to stay separated from their mother, but constantly run to their mother, calling her by name and while taking their mother’s breast and drinking the milk embrace her; and when they go to sleep at night do not leave their mother but lie just where their mother is lying. In the same way, the holy sons of the Buddha, who dwell attached to the flavour of the milk of the Buddha’s doctrine, do not like to stay separated from the Buddha, but like the elder Vakkali and others constantly on all occasions look at the Buddha, thrill with the joy which he causes them, and remain gazing at him. After the passing away of the Buddha, his sons, the holy members of the Order, repair three times a day to places where there are such things as stupas, image-houses and Bo trees, and while worshipping them constantly call to mind the arhatship and other eight qualities of the Buddha. Moreover, some of a mother’s children, when they have drunk her milk and are growing up, do not take her advice but disobey her; and they do not inherit from her the property that she owns; only those children who take her advice and obey her inherit from her the gold, silver, pearls, jewels, slaves of both sexes, cows and buffaloes, fields and lands and other property that she owns, and thus reach eminence. In the same way, those among the monks who have renounced the world for the teaching of the Buddha who do not take the advice he enunciated, namely the triple discipline, those immoral monks do not inherit the riches they should receive from the Buddha’s teaching; only those holy sons of the Buddha who behave in accordance with the triple discipline enunciated by the Buddha (the discipline of morality, thought and wisdom) inherit the seven-fold noble riches of faith, virtue, shame, modesty, learning, liberality and wisdom, attain the way and fruit of the stream-enterer, the once-returner, the non-returner and the arhat, and reach eminence. Thus the jewel of the Order, the sons of the Buddha such as the elders Sāriputta, Moggallāna, Ānanda, Rāhula and Mahā Kassapa, who had all the various qualities of constantly pure and virtuous conduct, and who are the supreme field in which to sow merit, bears a similarity in innumerable respects to a group of children who grow up by drinking milk.

Thus the jewel of the Buddha is like a mother to the inhabitants of the three worlds; the Buddha's doctrine is like delicious sweet milk; and the jewel of the Order, the Buddha's sons, is like a group of children who grow up by drinking the milk. Further, I reverently worship and pay homage with my three doors of body, voice and thought to the triple jewel of Buddha, Doctrine and Order, who pass beyond the scope of such similes.

II. BUDDHA BY HIS MOTHER'S BLESSING

This article introduces and presents a piece of Sinhalese popular literature, the *Manopraṇidhānayē Sivpada*, the body of which is printed, with an English translation, near the end. The interest of the poem lies not in its literary value, which is negligible, but in its content, which represents a deviation from classical Buddhist doctrine. The article sets out to trace the antecedents of the story, to indicate its diffusion, and to examine and account for the deviation.

A fundamental tenet of Theravāda Buddhism as understood by scholars in the West and as expounded by its teachers and publicists in the East is that a man's spiritual salvation is to be attained solely by his own efforts. This applies whether he is striving merely for his own enlightenment, that is to become an ordinary *arhat*, or, having attained it, he goes on to preach to the worlds, that is to become a *samyak sambuddha*, commonly known in the West as a Buddha.

The Pali texts tell us of the career which culminated in the attainment of Buddhahood by Siddhattha Gotama. Some five hundred and fifty of his lives as a Bodhisattva, on his way to Buddhahood, are recounted in the *Jātaka* stories. These are prefaced in the *Jātaka* book as it has come down to us by an account of how the ascetic Sumedha received at the feet of the Buddha Dīpaṃkara a prediction or disclosure (*vivarāṇa*) that he would in due course become the Buddha Gotama. Dīpaṃkara was the first in the line of Buddhas, according to this account, a line in which Gotama Buddha is the twenty-fifth¹. The careers of all Buddhas are similar, and all begin, many eons before they culminate in Buddhahood, with a vow to attain Buddhahood taken in the presence

¹ That logically he could also be reckoned as the twenty-eighth is of no relevance here; though three Buddhas before Dīpaṃkara are listed in the text, Dīpaṃkara is reckoned as number one, because of the three earlier ones nothing is known to this tradition but their names.

of a Buddha, who recognizes the aspirant and marks the beginning of his career as a Bodhisattva with the prediction of its ultimate success. In the Pali canon and commentaries, the basic scriptures of Sinhalese Buddhism, nothing is said of the future Gotama before his birth as Sumedha.

It is therefore surprising to find as a common and well-known theme of Sinhalese Buddhism the story of Gotama's former lives extended backwards beyond Sumedha, and doubly surprising that the story now begins with a life in which he formally begins his career as a Bodhisattva by receiving it as a blessing from his mother. I have discussed in the previous article² the comparison made in Sinhalese Buddhism between the Buddha and a mother; this introduction of a mother as a crucial element in the Buddha story, providing the original impulsion towards Buddhahood, seems to have much the same psychological significance. Moreover, the themes of this article and of the previous one tend to be combined in popular literature, as I recorded in the previous article.

The story of how the future Gotama received Buddhahood from his mother is widely known as the *manopraṇidhānaya* or "Mental resolution". *Praṇidhāna* (= Pali *paṇidhāna* or, more commonly, *paṇidhi*) is a technical term for an aspiration to spiritual progress, and *par excellence* for the aspiration to Buddhahood which begins a Bodhisattva's career³. In the classical texts this *praṇidhāna* takes place in the presence of a Buddha and is immediately followed by his prediction (*vivarāṇa*) of success; moreover there is just one. But in mediaeval Sinhalese texts comes an elaboration: the resolution is first made mentally (*manopraṇidhāna*) and then orally (*vāḱpraṇidhāna*). The earliest text to contain this elaboration is the *Saddharmālaṃkāraya* (hereinafter *Sdhal.*), written c. 1400; according to its second chapter the future Gotama Buddha made several mental and several oral resolutions, culminating in the one made when he was Sumedha. The first of all the mental resolutions was the one described in our story. Here is a translation of the text⁴.

At that time our great Bodhisattva was born in a certain family, and when he grew up practised the virtue of looking after his mother. He wished to go to the Land of Gold in pursuit of

² "Buddha Mother", printed above.

³ Other Pali synonyms for *paṇidhi* are *abhinīhāra* and *patthanā*. *Prārthanā* (= *patthanā*) is the most usual word in Sinhalese. The ambiguity of the concept is discussed below.

⁴ *Saddharmālaṃkāraya* ed. KIRIÄLLE ÑĀNAVIMALA, Colombo 1954, pp. 41—42.

wealth. Approaching some merchants who at the time had boarded a ship in order to go trading, he put his case to the chief merchant; with his agreement he boarded the ship with his widowed mother and embarked on an ocean voyage. On the seventh day the ship he was on was shattered by a violent wind. Treading the mass of waves which rose to the sky like rocky pinnacles, twisted by the force of the gale, he put his mother on his back and began to swim in the ocean. Then the afore-mentioned Great Brahmā, seeing the great Bodhisattva swimming in the sea, thought, "This great man, without regard for the various dangers from wild fish such as crocodiles, saw-fish and carp in this great ocean which has no visible end to its length or breadth, has put aside love for his own life and is trying to save the life of the mother who bore him. So this great man of such resolute heroism is entirely capable of fulfilling the principles which lead to Enlightenment." On reaching this conclusion he entered the Bodhisattva's mind and caused him to concentrate his thoughts so that he made a vow (*prārthanā*) for Buddhahood. Then the great man, given energy by Great Brahmā, vowed⁵,

"I am enlightened—I shall enlighten; I am freed—I shall free others;

I have crossed—I shall carry over the flood of *samsāra*, the great peril."

Thus he thought, "In future I shall be enlightened and save the whole world," and through the force of the spiritual power for Buddhahood which he had mentally conceived on making his vow, and through the spiritual power of Great Brahmā he came from sea to land. He reached a certain village in the country and lived there with his mother, waiting on her for the rest of his life.

Simple as it is, this story—even without the vow for Buddhahood—does not seem to occur in the Pali canon or commentaries. But it is very like an episode in the Mahājanaka Jātaka (no. 539) in which the Bodhisattva, in his birth as Prince Mahājanaka, is shipwrecked and swims in the sea for seven days till he is saved by the goddess Maṇimekhalā, whom the four guardian deities of the world (*lokapāla*) had appointed to guard the ocean, telling her that creatures who have such good qualities as looking after their mother (*mātupatṭhānādiguṇayuttā*) should not be allowed to drown⁶. Mahājanaka had been staying with his mother, an unfortunate widow; but she was not on board with him

⁵ The following is a Pali verse.

⁶ Jātaka ed. FAUSBØLL, vol. VI, London 1964, pp. 34—35.

and plays little further part in the story. However I have little doubt that it is this episode which provides the raw material for our story. In the Sdhal. version the future Buddha is shipwrecked on the seventh day out and rescued after an unspecified time by Brahmā, acting on his own; whereas in the Jātaka he is shipwrecked on the seventh day out and rescued after swimming for seven days by a goddess acting for the four guardian deities. The popular version reproduced at the end of this article has him wrecked at an unspecified point in the voyage and saved after seven days, thus agreeing more closely with the Jātaka than with the Sdhal.; and, more decisively, mentions as rescuers the goddess of the ocean, the four guardian deities, and even Śakra, the *deus ex machina* of countless Buddhist stories, as well as Brahmā. Although the Sdhal. has been a very popular and influential text, this proves that the popular version does not depend on it alone, even for narrative detail.

But a much more important discrepancy between the above version and the popular version below is the part played by the mother. In the Sdhal. it is Mahā Brahmā, not the mother, who is responsible for the future Buddha's *praṇidhāna*. Divine intervention at this point is itself flagrantly uncanonical; yet since Brahmā entered the Bodhisattva's mind it is still just arguable that the idea of Buddhahood originated with him—for did it not originate in his mind? At any rate it certainly did not originate with his mother, nor is she said to comment on it or even to know of it.

The *manopraṇidhāna* story is regularly mentioned after the Sdhal. in literature which deals with Gotama Buddha's career, beginning with the Saddharmaratnākaraya⁷. It is however not clear when the role of the mother in promoting Buddhahood is made explicit. It is this feature, it seems to me, which is the story's *raison d'être*; and if it is objected that it does not occur in the earliest surviving version, just quoted, I would suggest that this is because the Sdhal. is a compilation by a learned monk who would not write anything so flagrantly inconsistent with doctrine. At the very least we can say that the future Buddha's association with his mother accounts for the story's undoubted popularity.

One indication of the story's popularity nowadays is that it is quite often depicted in Buddhist temples, though it is not among the traditional subjects of the Kandyan artist. The oldest painting I have found

⁷ Saddharmaratnākaraya ed. DHARMAKĪRTI ŚRĪ SUGUNASĀRA DEVĀNANDA, Colombo 1955, p. 84.

of it, at Sapugaskanda Raja Maha Vihāra in the Colombo District⁸, must date from near the end of the last century, and is in three scenes. Usually however the story is iconographically reduced to one scene: the Bodhisattva swimming through the ocean with his mother on his back, a ship (sometimes a steamer!) sinking in the background and a deity poised in the sky. This is the form taken also by a popular colour print produced between the world wars which can still be found hanging in monasteries, barbers' shops, private houses etc.

Another indication of the story's popularity is that it forms a basis for further mythologizing. An old villager asked me if I knew the origin of the word *sādhu*, which is used on all public religious occasions, much like *amen* in Christian countries, to associate oneself with the proceedings. It is a Sanskrit and Pali word meaning "good", but this was not what he had in mind. When the future Buddha and his mother had come to land on an island created for them in the ocean, he explained, and when the mother had given her son Buddhahood (*sic*), he asked her who would bear witness to his vow. No living thing but they was present, so their two witnesses were the ocean (*sāgaraya*) and the island (*dūpata*), whose initial syllables combined into the first ever "Sādhu". [In fact in colloquial Sinhalese pronunciation the *d* is not aspirated.]

Doing fieldwork in rural Ceylon I found fairly widespread among the laity the idea that one's mother's blessing is essential before one can become a Bodhisattva and set off on the path to Buddhahood. In the essentially oral text presented below there is no doubt about it: just as the old villager said, she gave him Buddhahood (*Budubava dunnā*)—see verses 13, 14, 17, 26, 32. In verse 27 she "arranged" (*sādā*) his Buddhahood. In verses 24 and 25 the same thing is expressed by the term *varama*, which also occurs in three of the verses just cited (13, 26 and 32); and in verse 22 the future Buddha asks his mother for a *varama*. In the title of this article I have translated *varama* (plural: *varam*)⁹ as "blessing". Etymologically the word is connected with Sanskrit *varam*, which means a choice, boon or wish (in the sense of "The fairy gave him three wishes"). It does not necessarily connote a supernatural agent; for instance a king can give *varam*. However in Sinhalese the word has a common derived usage which does link it with gods: typically, the

⁸ These paintings are labelled Mātuposaka Jātaka. In fact the story of that name (FAUSBOLL no. 455) has no connection with our story. The slip arose because our story in the Sdhal. begins by saying that the future Buddha practised "the virtue of looking after his mother" (*mātuposaka dharmā*). So the artist presumably knew the Sdhal. version.

⁹ In this text *varam* is written *varan*, but one of many phonetic spellings reflecting its oral character.

four guardian deities of Ceylon rule by virtue of *varam*¹⁰ obtained from Śakra, king of the gods, who in turn has a *varama* from the Buddha. All these *varam* derive ultimately from the Buddha. Here *varama* would be adequately translated "license" or "permission"¹¹; and indeed in the first three verses of our text it is used interchangeably with *avasara*, the normal word for "permission". (*Avasara* in verse 2 corresponds to *varam* in verses 1 and 3.) But in the verses quoted above the *varama* is something more than mere permission, for permitting a thing is not normally tantamount to giving it; yet in the poem giving Buddhahood and giving the *varama* for Buddhahood are interchangeable expressions and equivalent.

In verse 23 the word used in the same context is *vivarāṇa*. Now *vivarāṇa*, which literally means "disclosure", is the technical term for the prediction made by a Buddha that a Bodhisattva who is in his presence will ultimately attain Buddhahood. The paradigm case is Dīpaṅkara's *vivarāṇa* to Sumedha. According to orthodox doctrine this is merely a prediction, not a license, for whether one obtains enlightenment or Buddhahood depends on no one else's fiat or pleasure (but cf. note 11). The mother is therefore at one moment said to be acting like Dīpaṅkara and at the next to be going much further and granting Buddhahood. Elsewhere¹² I have pointed out that the word *prārthanā/patthanā*, which in this context is used as a synonym for *pranīdhāna* but also has a wider application, is supposed according to formal doctrine to mean an aspiration or resolve, but comes in religious practice to mean a prayer; here we have a parallel development, by which the *vivarāṇa* which merely predicts success for the aspiration blends into the *varama* which grants the prayer.

In this text it is only *after* receiving his mother's blessing (a term chosen because it combines the ideas of boon, permission, and harbinger of success) that the Bodhisattva makes his resolve (*pātvē* in verse 24; see also *pātvā* in verse 38; both words are grammatically related to

¹⁰ They are in fact commonly called the *hatara varam deyiyo*, "the four licensed gods". Professor HEINZ BECHERT has pointed out to me that the Sanskrit word *varam* has entered Sinhalese *via* Tamil; thus the *varam deyiyo* show Dravidian influence.

¹¹ I encountered an interesting use of the word *varama* in this sense, a doctrinal deviation of the same ilk as that with which this article is primarily concerned. I asked a rather young and intelligent Kandyan monk whether it was true, as a widespread belief has it, that no one had attained enlightenment since Maliyadeva, i. e. in the last two thousand years. Yes, true, he said; for we have no permission (*apaṭa varamak nā*) to attain *nirvāṇa* under the dispensation of Gotama Buddha.

¹² In chapter V of my book: Precept and practice, Oxford 1971.

prārthanā), and it is much less stressed than the mother's rôle. Indeed it is even possible to claim that in our text the idea of her son's Buddhahood originated with the mother; but in view of verse 19, which is obscure but seems to be a speech by the future Buddha saying that he is thinking of the qualities of a Buddha (something often done by Sinhalese in danger), I would not insist on this. Obscure also is whose merit brought them to shore: obviously it should be the son's, but the most natural reading of verse 20 is that the mother is claiming the credit. But these are debatable points.

This text, then, Manopranidhānayē Sivpada, is of that class of literature, referred to in my previous article (see note 2), which is essentially oral poetry printed in pamphlets (*kavikola*). The term *sivpada* strictly speaking means "quatrain", but in popular literature applies particularly to quatrains in the metre of our work, namely 4×18 measures¹³, the metre known in literary theory as *samudraghōṣa* ("ocean roar"). Lines of our poem frequently have a measure too few or too many, faults which can be glossed over in recitation. As in all traditional Sinhalese poetry, the lines rhyme terminally, one rhyme being used throughout a quatrain; sometimes there are also internal rhymes. The language is often colloquial, sometimes rustic/archaic, and very often incorrect by the standard of spoken and literary Sinhalese alike. There is frequently little or no grammatical connection between one line and the next, and often the connection in meaning is equally vague and obscure. Such vagueness is typical of this class of literature, which depends largely on sound effects and a general impression of edifying matter, occasional flashes of clarity at crucial points in the story being sufficient for the specific message. Indeed, at times the text appears to be a mere patchwork of lines and verses common to many such works. This makes the poem very hard, if not impossible, to date; one can only guess that it is a product of the last 200 years. Its absence from NEVILL's nineteenth-century collection of popular Sinhalese poetry manuscripts¹⁴ is significant but not decisive. The text here presented¹⁵ is marked as the

¹³ A measure (*mātrā*) is the length of a prosodically short syllable; a prosodically long syllable, i. e. a long vowel or a short vowel followed by more than one consonant or by a single final consonant, counts as two measures; but a long syllable may arbitrarily be lengthened and counted as three measures (*pluta*).

¹⁴ See the index (in vol. 1) of the catalogue: Sinhala Verse (Kavi) Collected by the late Hugh Nevill, ed. P. E. P. DERANIYAGALA, Ceylon National Museums Manuscript Series vols. IV—VI, Ceylon Government Press 1954/55.

¹⁵ Apa maha Bōsatānō māniyangaṅga paḷamu vivaraṅga gat piḷivela hevat Manopranidhānayē sivpada (*sic*), Gāmiṇi Press, Kandy, 32nd. edition 1966. I have made a few obvious emendations.

32nd. edition and printed in 1966. It is marginally better than two other very similar printed editions in my possession, both undated but one of them several years older; moreover it has 67 verses while the other two both stop at verse 55. Even so, the poem ends abruptly, several verses are completely unintelligible, and their order has probably been disturbed—though the author does warn us in verse 5 that he does not know end, beginning or middle. The work before us may be a corruption of something better, but as it stands it hardly ranks as literature, and my translation is only an attempt to display the contents.

I first discussed the text with my neighbour, Mr. R. M. U. DHARMAVARDHANA, who must take the largest share of the credit for its explication, and then went through it with my friend Mr. B. L. FERNANDO, who saved me from many errors. My teacher Mr. C. H. B. REYNOLDS was kind enough to suggest some improvements. Even with all this help I fear that I am able to present only a very imperfect draft, and I hope that someone will soon improve on it. As the latter part of the text is about the birth of Siddhattha and so not relevant to this article, I present only the first 40 verses, omitting also verses 34, 36 and 37, not here relevant and reproduced in my previous article.

1. *Asan mekapa paḷamuva Buduvū muniñdu*
Ruvan meraksē vāḍa iñḍa ē muniñdu
Suran samaga savsata mok puraṭa yedu
Varan gaṅṭa vañḍimuva Kakusañḍa muniñdu.
2. *Dōnā kiri sakasē sataṭa ādarē*
Pānā anasaka tun lovaṭama patirē
Pinā ape muniñdu saṃsāra sāgarē
Kōnā gama muniñdu vāñḍa avasara nitarē.
3. *Enṭa kapata tunveni Buduvū muniñdu*
Yanṭa dev puraṭa muniñḍunṭa mal pidu
Venṭa Budu kenek mēlovaṭa parasidu
Gaṅṭa varan Kāśyapa muni rajaṭa vañḍu.
4. *Savsata nisā dun ās is pinata nomīn*
Siv āta muhuda poḷavada mahamerata usin
Pinā ape muniñdu saṃsāra sāgaren
Gavṭama muniñdu vāñḍa avasara labamu itin.
5. *Kakusañḍa muniñdu vāñḍa sita satuṭin kiyati*
Aga mula māda nodāna saṃsēpen kiyati
Muniḡuṅga darana deviyani maranet niyati
Ātnam dōsa tisaraṅga aṅaṭa pahaveti.
6. *Ekvenuvama yahapati Buduḡuṅga piṅṣa*
Rivi enakoṭa eliveyi sāmatāna ahasa

- Duk dena bava baṃbariṇḍu yana men ahasa
Tunvenuwama nāta yavahan pada dōsa.*
7. *Ek unu devi baṃbun Ajapal ruka mulaṭa
Rāskara Māra senagak biṇḍa jaya gaṇṭa
Okkoma api vaṇḍimu mē sāma deviyāṇṭa
Sakvala siv varan avasara devi apaṭa.*
 8. *Upatak paḷamu Dipaṃkaraṭa ipiṭinā
Sūpatak tamayi ennē vaḍa vaḍāganā
Depatak vapura visi amuṇak duṭu pamanā
Kapatat boṭuva sihikara ganna Budu gunā.*
 9. *Kapa upataṭa Kakusaṇḍa muni upannē
Ema sāpataṭa Kōnāgama Budunnē
Kāśyapayā Gavtama muni rajunnē
Buduwena guṇa kiyamu lovturu Budunnē.*
 10. *Ahagena inṭa Buduguṇa tōrādeññā
Sāma siyaḷudena issarahaṭa gaññā
Muniṇḍuge guṇa varune hemihita kiyāññā
Lovturu muniṇḍu saranē mama daraññā.*
 11. *Kali yuga satuni pera kaḷa pin asannē
Vāli goḍakarana veherak usa baṇḍinnē
Eli yak pipunu ranmal gena pudannē
Keli yaṭa kara kusal Budu siri viṇḍinnē.*
 12. *Sārā asan kaplakṣaya perum purā
Mōrā purā Dipaṃkaraṭa nimakarā
Vārā nātuvā sūvisi sata egoḍa karā
Tōrā kiyan ape muniṇḍuge guṇa evarā.*
 13. *Sārā asan kaplakṣaya perum pirū
Vārā nātuvā Budu bavaṭama perum pirū
Gōrā sayura piṭa siṭa gena varan dārū
Tōrā kiyan Budubava dunnē kavurū.*
 14. *Sārā asan kaplakṣayaṭat epiṭa
Pin dan karan enavā matu Budu venṭa
Sāmadā kaḷa kusal enavā pala denṭa
Ammā noveda Budubava dunnē yasata?*
 15. *Sārā asan kaplakṣayaṭat epiṭa
Velaṇḍa kulē ipadilā nisi lesaṭa
Baḍu paṭavana nāv nagimīn jalaya piṭa
Siduru vemīn nāva vāṭunayi anaturāṭa.*
 16. *Siṇḍu māda nāv nāgi yana saṇḍehi raṭakāṭa
Nāva biṇḍa giyē diyapiṭa gāsena suliyāṭa
Mav saṇḍa kara tiyā pīnālā goḍaṭa
Budubava iṭukalē Bōsat etana siṭa.*

17. *Mav saṇḍa katākara putugen asannē
Kavadā pīnālā goḍa eṇṭada putunē
Esē vū putunhaṭa monavada dunnē
Ahasa poḷava siṇḍu nova Budubava dunnē.*
18. *Mavun karalāna samudura pīnaminē
Mūdu kalā devi divasin balaminē
Vāllak mavā duni Sakraja eḍā dinē
Mavun rāgena pīnā iṭa goḍa unē.*
19. *Āṇḍalā tibena divasaḷu madivada ammē
Bāṇḍalā tibena varalasa madivada ammē
Hiṭē tibena Buduguṇa madivada ammē
Jalayen goḍaṭa āvē kohomada ammē?*
20. *Paḷamu varaka aṭapirikara dan dunnē
Tisnamakāṭa kiripiḍu dānē dunnē
Rā tunyamaṭa Buduguṇa sihikara unnē
Esev pīnen jalayen goḍa vemi putunē.*
21. *Vaḍā hoṇḍaṭa ātikala mav saha eviṭa
Sadā nāvē yanavā etura vīmaṭa
Eḍā Baṃbuṭa pennunē Budu veti lovaṭa
Nidānayaṭa mula pirunā etāna siṭa.*
22. *Dasa dharmē dasa atakaṭa bedā genē
Dasa dharmē dasa akusal mudā genē
Maha sayurē pīnālā egoḍa unē
Ape ammā maṭa varamak diyan anē.*
23. *Sārā asankaya peruman purāganē
Soḷosā asankaya peruman purāganē
Sūvisi asankaya peruman purāganē
Lovturu Budu venṭa vivaraṇa labāganē.*
24. *Pātuvē Budubavaṭa pīnāpu tāna siṭa
Ennē pata patā saṇḍa mōraṇa lesaṭa
Bālvē diva netin naralova upadīṇṭa
Dunnā varan upadina tān yasa ruvaṭa.*
25. *Ruvan nisā velaṇḍan karati parasidu
Nāven mulā vennāṭa siduvu maha rudu
Mavun rāgena pīnā goḍaṭa parasidu
Varan dunnē Budu vennāṭa mayi pasiṇḍu.*
26. *Asūrāra dahasak usa jala māvunē
Esev jalaya biṇḍa sunkara pīnaminē
Satara varan devi divasin balaminē
Ammā dunnū varamen Budubava lābunē.*
27. *Ammat putat tani māvata bāsa giya dā
Sat davasak maha muhudē pīnu eḍā*

- Paratera nātuva kala vīriya kumarū edā
Ammat yaṅṅa giyedāyi Budubava sādā.*
28. *Upadinnata koyi lokeda balālā
Mavu vennata mavu kavuruda balālā
Piya vennata ennē kavuruda balālā
Vimasā būlūwayi mē lesa sitalā.*
29. *Rattaranen rathayak gennavālā
Ratē piṭaṭa yeti anabera lavālā
Satara varan deviyō kan namālā
Ratē piṭin yeti ammā nāgilā.*
30. *Ammā viṅḍina duka mē sata no dannē
Namāgena detana rasa kiri povannē
Genvāgena ratē divapurayaṭa yannē
Ammā Tosita bavanē sāpa viṅḍinnē.*
31. *Ammā gosin upadina pirivara maddē
Namā detana kiri pevvā parasiddē
Ammā siri pādāya vāṅḍa pin laddē
Ammā Budun dākapan matu parasiddē.*
32. *Sārā asan kaplakṣaya siṭa pātuvā
Abamal rēnuvē solasaka piṭisiṅḍuvā
Esē memā ammava usulan āvā
Ammā dunnū varamin Budubava lābuvā.*
33. *Kayaṭa vāra tamayi rasa kiri bunnāma
Netaṭa vila tamayi kaṅḍulāli āvāma
Maruṭa ṇaya tamayi kālē āvāma
Dukaṭa mula tamayi vādu mav nātuvāma.*
35. *Bima iritalālayi bimmal pipennē
Kaṅḍa iritalālayi kaṅḍaramba pipennē
Dasa masa pirīlayi ammā vadannē
Esev ammāṭa āyi topi baninnē?*
38. *Tani māvata bāsa giyedāyi mavun putun
Sat dāvasak pinūdāyi muhude utun
Paratera nātuva pātuvāyi ema rasaya nitin
Ammat yaṅṅa giyedāyi Budubavaṭa pātun.*
39. *Yedī kala kusal novamin siṭ satuṭa
Didī ahasa taru pāradū net dekaṭa
Ridī saha oṭunu kapamin siṭ satuṭa
Vādī gora sayurē duk viṅḍa Budubavaṭa.*
40. *Pārak Budubavaṭa dānāgena e Bōsatā
Kāṭat bāri kusal ē kumaruvan patā
Gugurū sat varak mihikata pemīn yutā
Bōsat surapuraṭa vāḍayāyi e Bōsatā.*

1. Listen! The first lord of seers who was a Buddha in this eon, that lord of seers who was like a golden cosmic mountain, who directed to the city of liberation all creatures, including the gods, that lord of seers, Kakusandha, let us worship to obtain his permission.
2. Milking love for creatures like a conch of milk, showing the circle of his command which has spread to the three worlds, our lord of seers who has swum in the ocean of *samsāra*, let us worship the lord of seers Kōṅāgamana for permission always.
3. The third Buddha, lord of seers, to come into the eon, who worshipped lords of seers with flowers in order to go to the city of the gods, in order to become a famous Buddha for this world, worship the king of seers Kāśyapa to obtain permission.
4. Who for the sake of all creatures constantly gave his eyes and head for merit, high as the cosmic mountain with the four oceans and the earth, our lord of seers who swam through the ocean of *samsāra*, let us then worship the lord of seers Gautama and obtain his permission.
5. Having worshipped the lord of seers Kakusandha we speak with joyful thoughts; not not knowing end, beginning or middle we speak briefly. O gods who have the qualities of seers, death too is certain; if there is any fault it disappears at the command of the three Refuges [Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha].
6. In the first place it is good [to recite] for the sake of the qualities of a Buddha; when the sun comes the whole sky grows light; the sky like lords of bees etc., the giving of pain; in the third place there are no defects in the verse by [rhyming with the syllables] *ya, va, ha, n.*
7. The gods and Brahmās who were gathered at the foot of the Goatherd Tree, crushing the assembled host of Māra to obtain victory, all we worship, all these gods; permission for us from the four licensed gods [who are guardians] of the world-system.
8. A first birth even before Dīpaṅkara is welfare indeed, which constantly increases; after sowing two cups twenty measures are seen; even if your throat is cut, bear in mind the qualities of a Buddha.
9. The seer Kakusandha is born to a birth in the eon; of Kōṅāgamana Buddha, also thus [born] for [our] welfare, of the kings of seers Kāśyapa and Gautama, supramundane Buddhas, let us tell of the Buddha-becoming qualities.
10. Stay listening, I shall expound the qualities of a Buddha, I shall bring them all, all forward; gradually I shall describe the qualities of the lord of seers; I shall take refuge with the supramundane lord of seers.

11. O creatures of [this evil age] the Kali Yuga, listen to the merit done formerly. A stupa built of sand becomes a tall construction. Take and offer golden flowers which have blossomed in the open air. Good deeds done for fun experience the glory of a Buddha.
12. Having fulfilled the perfections for four hundred thousand uncountable eons, having ripened, having fulfilled, having brought them to an end for Dipamkara; the twenty-four having brought to the further shore creatures without number, now I shall expound the qualities of our lord of seers.
13. Fulfilled are the perfections for four hundred thousand uncountable eons; fulfilled are the perfections without number for Buddhahood; blessing is received while on the surface of the terrible ocean; now I shall expound who gave Buddhahood.
14. Four hundred thousand uncountable eons ago performing the merit of alms-giving one comes to become a future Buddha; merit performed always comes to bear fruit; was it not his mother who gloriously gave Buddhahood?
15. Four hundred thousand uncountable eons ago he was properly born in a merchant family; he boarded a ship loaded with cargo; because it was pierced on the surface of the water he fell into danger.
16. When he was going to a country on board ship in the middle of the ocean the ship broke up on the water, striking a whirlpool. He put his mother on his back and swam to shore. From that time on the Bodhisattva practised Buddhahood.
17. The mother spoke, asking her son, "When in your swimming will you reach land, my son?" To such a son what did she give? She gave not sky, earth or sea but Buddhahood.
18. He was swimming in the ocean with his mother on his back; the goddess of the sea was looking with divine eye; [or: looking with divine eye at the goddess of the sea . . .] that day King Śakra made and gave a sandy place; taking his mother he swam and landed there.
19. "Is wearing heavenly robes not enough, mother? Is binding up the hair not enough, mother? Is keeping in mind the qualities of a Buddha not enough, mother? How did we come from water to land, mother?"
20. "The first time I gave alms consisting of the eight requisites [for monks, such as robes]; I gave alms of milk rice to thirty holy men; I stayed the three watches of the night thinking of the qualities of a Buddha; through such merit we came to land from the water, my son." [Of none of the four main verbs in this verse is the subject specified; grammatically the subject could be "you", but this interpretation seems less plausible in the context.]

21. At that time with the mother who carefully tended and brought him up, always in a ship he goes [set out?] to reach the other shore. That day Brahmā saw that he was to become a Buddha for the world; from that occasion was fulfilled the basis for the beginning.
22. "Distributing the ten characteristics in ten directions, separating the ten characteristics from the ten bad deeds, swimming in the great ocean I reached the shore; my mother, Oh do give me a blessing."
23. He fulfilled the perfections for four uncountable eons; he fulfilled the perfections for sixteen uncountable eons; he fulfilled the perfections for twenty-four uncountable eons; he received the prediction that he would become a supramundane Buddha.
24. From the place where he swam he resolved on Buddhahood; he [it?] comes step by step like the waxing moon; with divine eye he [?] looked at the world of men in order to be born; she [?] gave a blessing for the place where he [?] was to be born, gloriously.
25. When doing famous trade for gold he fell on very terrible destruction through the ship; taking his mother he swam, famous, to land; she gave him her blessing to become a famous Buddha.
26. Water was made eighty-four thousand deep; cleaving and setting at nought such water he swam; the four licensed deities looked at him with divine eye; he received Buddhahood by the blessing his mother gave him.
27. On the day when mother and son went down a lonely road, that day they swam seven days in the sea; that day the hero exerted himself; and the mother went away having arranged [his] Buddhahood, did she not?
28. Having looked where in the world to be born, having looked what mother should become his mother, having looked who was coming to become his father, he looked considering and thinking in this way.
29. Having had a chariot of gold brought, having had the drums beaten, she goes on the chariot. The four licensed deities gave ear. The mother mounts the chariot and goes on it.
30. These creatures do not know the trouble a mother experiences; proffering her two breasts she gives sweet milk to drink; having had a chariot brought she goes to the divine city; the mother experiences bliss in the palace of Tusita heaven.
31. The mother went and was born in the midst of a retinue. She proffered her two breasts and gave milk to drink, famous. Having worshipped the blessed foot the mother acquired merit. Mother, see the Buddha famous in the future.
32. Since four hundred thousand uncountable eons he made the resolve.

- He was conceived in the sixteenth part of the pollen of a mustard flower. "Thus I came carrying my mother; by the blessing my mother gave me I acquired Buddhahood."
33. Drinking sweet milk is strength for the body; through shedding tears the eyes are like pools; the time comes which is owed to death; the death of the mother who gave [us] birth is the origin of trouble.
35. When the ground is cracked mushrooms erupt; when the tree-trunk is cracked fungus erupts; the mother gives birth after fulfilling ten [lunar] months; thus why do you scold your mother?
38. Down a lonely road went mother and son, did they not? For seven days he, excellent, swam in the sea, did he not? With no further shore he aspired to that sweetness always; and the mother went away, did she not? Aspirations for Buddhahood.
39. The good he had done was not enough to satisfy his mind. He repeatedly gave sway his two eyes which defeated the stars in the sky. He cut away silver and crowns to satisfy his mind. He entered the terrible ocean and experienced pain for Buddhahood.
40. That Bodhisattva recognizing a path to Buddhahood, that hero having aspired to good which no one could do, made the lady earth roar seven times in her affection, and the Bodhisattva went to the city of the gods and Bodhisattvas [i. e. where Bodhisattvas are reborn? The last line is corrupt, but the verse refers to Vessantara].

Verse 39d—"He entered the terrible ocean and experienced pain for Buddhahood"—suggests a determinant for the whole story, repeating a clue provided by the Pali verse in the Sdhal. version. The phenomenal world, the scene of transmigration, *samsāra*, is frequently compared to an ocean (as also in verses 2 and 4 above), and a Bodhisattva to one who helps others to cross a river or sea. The Bodhisattva in his birth as Vessantara says to his children when he gives them away, "Be steady ships to carry me on the ocean of becoming (*bhava-sāgare*). I shall cross over beyond birth and cause the world to cross with me¹⁶." MAX MÜLLER's theory that mythology originated as a "disease of language" was of course an exaggerated fancy; but for an episode to arise from the literal application—perhaps even the misunderstanding—of a metaphor would not be unparalleled in Buddhist literature¹⁷. If I am right, we may claim to have traced not merely the story's antecedents but its very origin.

¹⁶ Jātaka ed. FAUSBØLL, vol. VI, p. 546, verse 461.

¹⁷ My interpretation is corroborated by a passage in the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta. At the end of the first chapter (Dīgha Nikāya, Pali Text Society edition, vol. II p. 89) the Buddha and his monks miraculously cross the

Basically therefore the story of the future Buddha swimming with his mother on his back¹ is just a metaphor taken literally and then amplified by assimilation to the Mahājanaka Jātaka. But the part the mother plays when they reach land is a new element, irreducible to classical antecedents; the idea that even the greatest enterprise the world has ever known might have failed without a mother's blessing at its inception is a Sinhalese contribution.

Ganges while ordinary people are looking for and making boats and rafts. This prose narrative is followed by a verse in which the Buddha says that those who cross the ocean by making a strong causeway while others bind rafts are the wise ones. The metaphor, probably stating the superiority of the Buddhist "noble path" to other vehicles for salvation, has been taken literally by the author of the prose passage.