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Influence of Mahayana Buddhism in Sri Lanka: Depicted in Buduruwagala Archeological Site

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Buddhism introduced to Sri Lanka in the 3rd century BC and it was established as Theravada or Vibhajjavādi, based on Mahavihāra at Anuradhapura. A number of monks separated from Mahavihāra and started a new tradition as Abhayagiriya with the royal patronage of King Valagambā in the 1st century BC. Mahayana Buddhism existed in the late 3rd century BC with the arrival of Vaithulyavāda from India. The aim of this abstract is to explain the influence of Mahayana Buddhism into Sri Lankan people, referring Buduruwagala site. The concepts and iconographies of various Buddhas, Bodhisattva, and the strength of Bodhisattva, region gods, and gods of Hinduism were introduced by Mahayana tradition. On the behalf of worshiping Buddha, people used to worship and believed in Bodhisattva and gods introduced by Mahayana tradition. It is clearly depicted in the Buduruwagala site how Mahayana Buddhism influences to Sri Lankan. Buduruwagala is situated in Wellavaya district. It is consists of seven statues sculptured on relief of the rock during the 9th-10th c A.D. are seen in a single rock face. Of the seven Mahayana statues, three smaller statues each are sculptured on either side of the main Buddha statue. It is believed that these statues were created by Mahayana Buddhist in Rohana, Anuradhapura. The Buddha is in the Samabhanga posture and has the right hand gesturing the AbhayaMudra. On the right of the Standing Buddha image are the sculptures of AvalokiteśvaraBodhisatva, Goddess Tārā, and Prince Sudhana and on the left are the sculptures of MaitreBodhisatva, VajrapāṇiBodhisatva and an unidentifiable deity. These sculptures could be identified as a collection of the Buddha and Bodhisatva figures with Mahayana influence. This research has been done with filed visiting and collecting literary sources.

Key words: Avalokitesvara, Buduruwagala, Iconographies, Mahayana Buddhism,