A STUDY OF BUDDHISM IN CEYLON IN THE FIFTEENTH
AND SIXTEENTH CENTURIES (Circa 1400-1600).

By

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Abstract

In this study an attempt is made to examine the condition of Buddhism in Ceylon in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. As a necessary introduction, the first chapter examines the sources pertaining to the period. Apart from the Pali and Sinhalese chronicles, other literary works, especially the śandaṇa poems, have been examined in detail with a view to estimating their historical value. For a correct understanding of the religious history of the period a brief survey of the political situation of the country is given on the basis of the earlier studies and publications. After the examination of the political background, chapter III goes on to discuss the organizational matters of the Sangha. This covers the two Fraternities, i.e. Vanavāsa and Gāmavāsa, Ayatanas, Gapanas and the lineages of the Sangha. In this discussion we have also dealt with the tendency of the Sangha of this period to mention the family connexions of monks, in addition to their affiliations to certain religious institutions. The next chapter is devoted to a discussion of the relationship between the State and the Sangha. In this chapter, the decline of Sangha
has been examined on the basis of an analysis of the various
causes that led to it. The fifth chapter consists of a
detailed survey of the monastic education of the period.
Apart from the history and development of the Pirivenas
of the period, general function and the outlook of these
institutions have been discussed in this chapter in detail.
The next chapter deals with Ceylon’s relations with other
Theravāda countries in the medieval period in general
and during the proposed two centuries in particular. The
main issues discussed in the last chapter are the religious
cults, festivals and deities of this period. Besides the
cult of Tooth Relic and that of the Samantakūṭa, the
bodhisattva cult and that of the four guardian deities have
been discussed.

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