

THE GALATURUMUĀ FRATERNITY

by

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ABSTRACT: Sri Lanka can rightly claim that she has fostered ancient education in the island by establishing a number of excellent seats of learning from the pre-Christian era. Such centres active in the middle of the Anuradhapura period have been collectively referred to as *Viyat-pat -Āta -Gaṇaya*.

Galaturumala was but one of them. As the *Mahāvamsa* testifies, origin of the GalaturumuĀ fraternity could be dated to the time of Dāthopātissa 11 (659-667). The location, probably, would have been the site of the Pāsāna Dipaka Vihāra built by Mahādāthika Mahānāga in the first century A. C. This place could be traceable as Kudumbigala in the pānama pattu of the Ampāra District.

A galaxy of many an eminent scholars of this fraternity has enlightened, as literary and inscriptional evidence show the sphere of Pali, Sanskrit and Sinhala learning till its decline with the advent of foreign powers.

01. In the Anuradhapura period there arose eight fraternities of the Saṅgha with their respective head - quarters known as *Mūla* or *Āyatana*. These eight have been generally referred to as *Aṭṭhamūla Vihāra*, *Aṭṭhāyatana* and *Viyatpat Aṭaṇaya*¹. Their names are: GalaturumuĀ, Uturumula, Vilgammūla,

1. *Uṇapūranasahito Mahāvamsa*, (Mv.) Ed. Polvatte Buddhadatta Mahāthera, Colombo, 1959, LIX, 59, LXXVI, 33, LXXXII, 18; *Pūjāvāliya* (PV.), Ed. Kirielle Gnānavimala thera, Colombo, 1951, p. 783; *Nikāyasāṅgrahaya*, (Ns.), Ed. Perera, A.S., Colombo, 1935, p. 19; *Daladā Pūjāvāliya*, Ed. Gonahena jotipāla thera and Kaṇḍāne Paññāsekharā therā, Horāna, 1954, p. 50. Scholars however have tried to intepret the term, *Viyatpat Aṭaṇaya* in a number of ways:

- (i) C.M. Fernando- 'eight departments of record', Ns. English trans. by C.M. Fernando.
- (ii) C.W. Codrington-(Probably) 'eight corps of skilled foot soliders', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (CB)*, XXXI, p. 398.
- (iii) D.B. Jayatilaka- 'eight tradition', *Silumina Literary Supplimen*, 09.02.1936.
- (iv) M. Kumāraṇatunga- eight departments in charge of recording of various activities' (of government departments), *Nikāyasāṅgraha Vivaraṇaya*, 1928, p.28.
- (v) Vaṭaddara Medhānanda Thera- 'What is meant by *Viyatpat Aṭaṇaya* is nothing but those eight *Mūlas*', Introduction to *Anāgatavamsa* (Av.) by Vaṭaddara Medhānanda therā, Colombo, 2503 B.E p. VIII.

Note: I am inclined to endorse the views expressed by learned therā Medhānanda.