

The Contribution of Library Tradition for Ancient Education System in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

After arrival of Arahath mahinda in 3rd century BC, different sectors in the country were changed in to new arena including the education. With increasing number of Maha Sanga in that period, their educational needs were very complex and vivid. Pirivena education came into seen with the idea of changing the ducation system into proper education. The small room where one or few Bikkus were lived and learned was changed in to larger recidences which became Pirivenas or Buddhist educational centers. Eventually these centers of leaning were opened not only to Bhikkus but laypersons too. Pirivena became the mother for the evelvement of libraries in Sri Lanka. First Pirivena library was established at Mahavihara. According to historical sources there have been several branches of pirivenas to Mahavihara and there were too libraries. Art of writing and writing tradition was started by the then Bhikkus based on Buddhism. That was helpful to develop library system and tradition in Sri Lanka. Objectives of this paper is to explore the situation of early Pirivena libraryes, education tradition and ppirivena education.

Keywords: *Historical education, Buddhism, Pirivena libraries, library education, Library history, Temple libraries*

Introduction

The contribution made by Pundiths and anceinet kings were very supportive to develop Pirivena and Pirivena libraries and the education system of Sri Lanka. It is presumed that libraries were started for the storage, preservation and conservation of traditional and knowledge of Buddhism. The tradition initiated by Mahavihara was influenced for the establishment of Abhayagiriya and jethavanaramaya tradition. Different Pirivena tradition were established based on the Mahavihara, Abhayagiriya and Jethavanarama. They wanted to show their Pirivena education tradition and so that art of book writing was evolved. Writing of books manuscripts made a substantial contribution to education and it gave boost for developing good library system. Mahavihara library contained books related to Theravada while L librariesa attached to Abhyagri and Jethavanarama contained books on Mahayana with varied and mixed collections of books. Both Pirivena traditions collected books like Seehalaattakatha, Mahawamsa, Deepawansa, Uttara viharattakatha, Maha viharattakatha both historical sources and attakathas. The depiction given in Vansatthaappakasini which was used for writing Mahavansa and other tradition of wrting historical souces indicate that there have