A. OBJECT AND PROBLEM OF RESEARCH

1. Presentation of Buddhist monasticism in Sri Lanka

Theravāda-Buddhist monasticism as it appears in Sri Lanka is a complex phe-
nomenon. There is no centralized organization of monasticism. Some of the
monasteries, which can be located either in the forest, village or town, are
interconnected, others exist as independent units. There are several lin-
eages of higher ordination (*upasampadā*), but there is no formal procedure
for making application for admission to the various monastic fraternities
(*Nikāya*). Usually the pupils and novices are selected personally by the Chief
Incumbent (*Vihārādhipati*), i.e. the Chief Monk of the monastery concerned.

The mode of life varies considerably from one monastery to another. In some
monasteries most of the day is spent in meditation. In the majority of the
monasteries in the up-country, teaching, administration and ritual duties
provide, however, the daily routine of the monks. Apart from these there
exist monasteries inhabited mainly by Western monks who devote their time
almost entirely to reading, writing and meditation. Most of their works have
been published by the Buddhist Publication Society in Kandy.

For an outsider carrying out fieldwork, one of the most striking features
of current Buddhist monasticism in up-country Sri Lanka is that very few
monks do alms-rounds (*piṇḍapāta*). Seldom can one see the expected sight of
a monk walking round in a dignified manner with his begging-bowl. This old,
not to say canonical, practice has almost entirely been replaced by the "food-
giving" ceremony known as *dānē* (householders invite monks to their home and
give them food). It is no longer the yellow robe and the begging-bowl that
are the outward tokens of the role of a monk in the up-country, but the yel-
low robe and a large, usually black, umbrella.

1.1. On the definition of the term monastery. The common Sinhalese term for
a monastery in Sri Lanka is *pansala*, which in the proper sense of the word
refers to a monk's residential quarter, i.e. house. In everyday speech, how-
ever, *pansala* also refers to the entire setting, the monastery as a terri-
torial unit. Apart from *pansala*, the Sinhalese also quite frequently employ

the terms *ārāmaya* and *vihāraya*. *Ārāmaya* literally means delight with a spatial concept pleasure-ground, park, garden. Originally the term *ārāmaya* was associated with the mode of life of the monk in the sense that the monk finds pleasure or delight in practising the teaching (*dhamma*, Skr. *dharma*) of Buddha, the founder of Buddhism. *Vihāraya* literally means abode, but nowadays also denotes a temple housing images of Buddha and other deities. These two terms are mainly used as part of the name of a monastery, for example, *Asgiriya Vihāraya* and *Śrī Saddharmārāmaya*.[1] *Ārāmayas* and *vihārayas* usually consist of several monastic houses (*pansala*) and other buildings (see § 1.3.) and therefore represent large or principal monasteries.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, the terms *āvāsaya*,[2] *āśramaya* and *tapovanaya* were re-introduced and adopted by the Buddhist modernists.[3] *Āvāsaya* denotes a monastery in which there is no building other than the abode (*pansala*), which is the living quarter for a monk or nun. This type of monastery is usually of quite recent construction and only inhabited part of the time. The term *āśramaya* refers to a hermitage and is an innovation from India with its Hindu traditions. Most of the *āśramayas* in Sri Lanka are inhabited by Western recluses. Finally there is the term *tapovanaya*, which denotes a cave monastery, where the Sinhalese recluses live either in small groups or alone and adhere strictly to the rules of *Vinaya*, often augmented by other ascetic practices.[4]

Other terms are also used by the Sinhalese to denote Buddhist monasticism. The perhaps most commonly employed term is *sangha*, which literally means community, but in its present-day use seems to denote a theoretical unit embracing the various monastic fraternities (*Nikāya*). *Sangha* is therefore often used to refer to an assembly of monks, the individual monks of which may belong to different lineages of higher ordination, coming together for a specific meeting.

Another term quite frequently used in Sri Lanka is *sāsana*, which is a word used in connection with Buddha, i.e. *Buddha sāsana*. Originally *sāsana* was a term, which referred to the teaching (*dhamma*) of Buddha. Nowadays, however,

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1 On the basic vocabulary, see Gombrich 1971a, 75ff. See also Pāli-English Dictionary 1972, 108; 642 and Encyclopaedia of Buddhism I, 1961, 135-136.

2 On the term *āvāsaya*, see Dutt 1962, 58-59.

3 On the Buddhist modernists, see Bechert 1966, 67-81; 258.

4 On this term, see Pāli-English Dictionary 1972, 667.

it is a technical term for the bearers of the teaching, i.e. the Buddhists as an oecumenical unit.[5]

The current English words in use are temple and monastery. The basic etymological meaning of the word monastery, derived from the Greek *monos* ("alone"), is that of solitude and isolation. It also indicates the socially and historically significant feature of living alone in the sense of being unmarried or celibate, although this connotation is not directly related to its etymology. In the English use the term monk (Gr. *monachos*) has come to refer to men living not in complete or absolute isolation, but to men sharing the same mode of life. They are in a specific way separated from the world, but not completely and not from each other.[6]

We thereby arrive at a minimum definition according to which a Theravāda monastery (in Sri Lanka) indicates *an area of settlements, where monks have gone into refuge to devote their life to practising the Noble Eightfold Path.*[7]

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5 See, for example, Bechert 1974, 31 and Gombrich 1971a, 60.

6 See, for example, ERE VIII, 1915, 781. For a historical survey of the term *monachos*, see Morard 1973, 332-411.

7 There are several definitions of monasticism. In this study I have defined the term monastery from the viewpoint of the circumstances of the social life on the one hand and the goal of life on the other.

Weber has viewed a religious congregation or community as a result of routinization (Veralltäglichung), i.e. "as a result of the process whereby either the prophet himself or his disciples secure the permanence of his preaching and the congregation's distribution of grace, hence insuring the economic existence of the enterprise ...". Weber 1966, 60-61.

Wach defines a monastic group in terms of a social protest within Ecclesia as a "founded and organized congregation of those who, because of their protest, decided to live a common life of religious devotion in closer association than appears otherwise possible or desirable in a *fraternitas*. The ideal is conceived of in terms of the original central religious experience". Wach 1967, 182.

Bharati 1974, 336 aims at a more general definition on monasticism from an institutional viewpoint on the basis of crosscultural material: "Monasticism is a term covering religious institutions, ritual, and belief systems whose agents, members or participants attempt to practise religious works that are above and beyond those required by the religious teachings of their society or of exceptional individual religious and spiritual leaders in their society; i.e. those who have interpreted radically the tenets that apply to all believers or to the whole society. Beyond such a statement, one can speak only of the major characteristics of monastic life and its institutions, since none of them is universal".

Bharati makes also another interesting observation about the prerequisite of monasticism: "There is no monasticism in societies that do not have a written and transmitted lore. Non-literate societies do not have monastic institutions, since the monastic takes his departure from an established corpus, or written body of religious doctrine, which has undergone criti-

When the main attention is focused on the social aspects of monasticism, the interpretation of the definition naturally takes the viewpoint of the mode of life of the monks, since monasteries are in fact groups of men pursuing a religious ideal in retirement from society and constituting a social organization referred to by the term monastery.[8] When, on the other hand, the emphasis is on the message, the teaching of Buddha (*dhamma*), the interpretation of the definition assumes the ideological perspective. The monasteries are namely inhabited by men who live in refuge for the principal purpose of practising *dhamma* and thereby keep to a mode of life which provides them with the ultimate meaning of their existence.

1.2. The structure of monasticism. In Sri Lanka Buddhist monasticism (*sangha*) is divided into three main fraternities known in Sinhalese as *Nikāyas*, namely *Syāma Nikāya* (founded in 1753), *Amarapura Nikāya* (1802) and *Rāmañña Nikāya* (1864).[9] These *Nikāyas* are further subdivided in such a way as to constitute a complex net of monasteries.

It seems as if caste in general and its dynamic aspect, the kinship system in particular, have been the organizing principle and cause of the founding of new monastic groups ever since monasticism was introduced to the island in the third century B.C. Consequently, the main difference between the recently founded three *Nikāyas* lies in the practical principles involved in recruiting novices. Although Buddhist monasticism was not originally supposed to be restricted to any particular caste, such a restriction did arise, especially during the colonial period, when monasticism survived mainly in up-country Sri Lanka. As a result of this practice, *Amarapura Nikāya* and *Rāmañña Nikāya* were founded in protest against the *Syāma Nikāya* and its custom of recruiting novices exclusively from the *Goyigama* caste. Later the tendency to restrict recruitment to a particular caste has become the normal practice in the two latter *Nikāyas* as well.[10]

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cism and has generated countercriticism as well as a dialectic that presupposes a literate, codified manipulation of the doctrine. The monk and the monastic founders may either support or oppose the official religious tradition, but the presence of such a tradition is essential as the matrix of all monastic endeavour". Bharati 1974, 336.
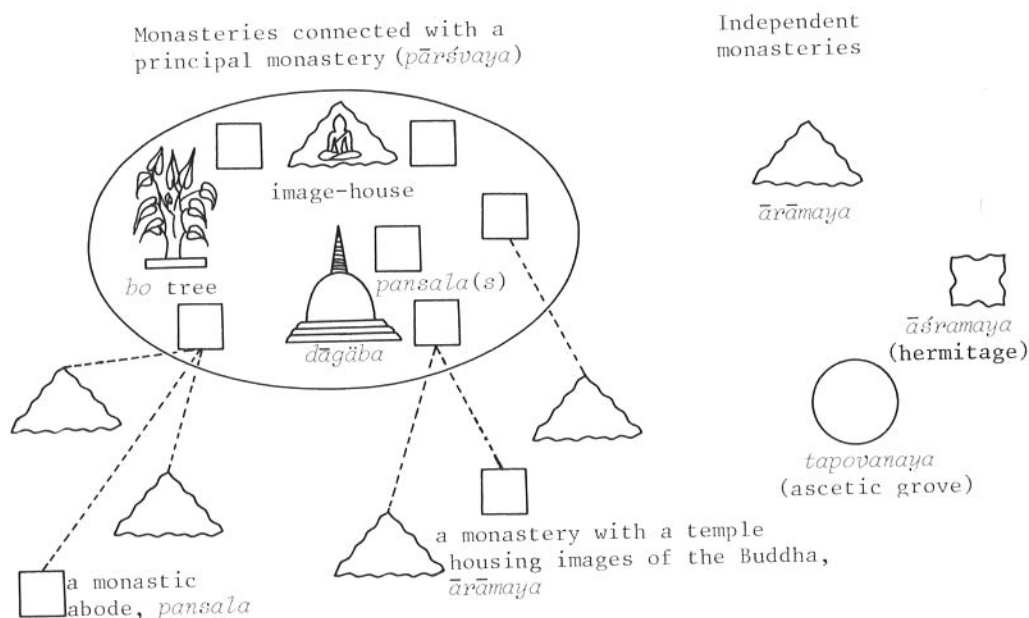
For the characteristics of the monastic orders, see Mensching 1947, 197-202.

8 Chadwick 1968, 415-416.

9 A comprehensive list of the *Nikāyas*, their principal monasteries and their Supreme Chief Monks (*Mahānāyaka*) has been published by Bechert 1966, 263-267.

10 Gombrich 1971a, 310ff. Evers 1972, 7. Kemper 1973, 5-6.

Syāma Nikāya, which is studied in this dissertation, is subdivided into several principal monasteries known as *pārśvayas* ("chapters"), each of which constitutes a octopus-like structure of organization. Each principal monastery functions as a center, with which the various smaller monasteries (*ārāmayas* and *pansalas*) that are spread out all over the up-country are connected.[11] As regards the *Amarapura Nikāya* and the *Rāmañña Nikāya* the structure of organization is looser and many of the smaller monastic groups deny that they constitute parts of an original *Nikāya*. Consequently, these function as independent units, which means that the *Amarapura Nikāya* and the *Rāmañña Nikāya* are more fictional than factual entities.[12] This structure of monasticism can be illustrated as follows.

Monasteries connected with a principal monastery (*pārśvaya*)

Independent monasteries

image-house

bo tree

pansala(s)

dāgäba

a monastic abode, *pansala*

a monastery with a temple housing images of the Buddha, *ārāmaya*

ārāmaya

āśramaya (hermitage)

tapovanaya (ascetic grove)

As we can see, the word *Nikāya*, which here has been translated into English as "fraternity"[13], stands for a rather complex system. In Pāli Canon (*Ti-*

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11 Evers 1972, 7. Kemper 1973, 25-26. Carrithers 1979, 294ff.

12 Evers 1972, 7. Kemper 1973, 25-26. Kemper 1980, 30ff.

13 The word *Nikāya* has been translated into English as "sect", "order" or "fraternity". See, for example, Kemper 1973, 6 and Malalgoda 1976, 87.

piṭaka) the word *nikāya* has the loose meaning of group or collection, when referring to, for example, the parts of the Canon known as *Digha-nikāya*, *Majjhima-nikāya* etc.[14] In Sri Lanka the word is used equally loosely, sometimes referring to the three main fraternities (*Nikāyas*), sometimes to any of the subgroups that have emerged within one of the three *Nikāyas*.[15]

What is it then that constitutes a *Nikāya*? The first point to make is that there exists no supreme authority under which the three major *Nikāyas* would stand. None of the three *Nikāyas* represent the same lineage of higher ordination (*upasampadā*). *Syāma Nikāya* originates, as the name denotes, from Thailand, while *Amarapura* and *Rāmañña Nikāya* imported their lineage of higher ordination from Burma. Secondly, a *Nikāya* simply designates a body of monks, presided over by a Supreme Chief Monk (*Mahānāyaka*), which holds independent higher ordination ceremonies for its novices.[16] Consequently, a *Nikāya* exists as soon as it has been recognized by the Registrar-General.[17]

There are altogether about 5,500 monasteries in Sri Lanka, 1,500 of which belong to *Amarapura Nikāya*, 1,000 to *Rāmañña Nikāya* and the remainder (about 3,000) to *Syāma Nikāya*. Most of the monasteries are inhabited by only a few monks and very often by a sole monk, whereas in the largest monasteries of *Syāma Nikāya* three to five monks occupy each abode (*pansala*), of there being several of these within the monastic area.[18] Every village has its own temple and most villages have several, including small meditation houses and other monastic buildings.[19] Altogether there are about 17,000 Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka.[20]

From the point of view of economics, the monasteries can be divided into two categories. First, those which were founded during the time of the kingdom

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14 For a list of the contents of the Pāli Canon, see Thomas 1969, 257ff.

15 Kemper 1973, 26.

16 Green 1967, 6 simply defines a *Nikāya* as "an exclusive group of *bhikkhus* who share a distinctive name, have a roster of officers, and collectively perform the *upasampadā* or higher ordination ceremony". Cf. Kemper 1973, 25.

17 Gombrich 1971a, 309. See also Kemper 1973, 5ff.

18 On the *vihāra* system, see Evers 1972, 4-10.

19 Bechert 1966, 223-224.

20 The relevant statistical accounts have been published by Bechert 1973, 580-582. For a discussion of the statistical accounts, see Bechert 1966, 224 and Evers 1968a, 21. Kemper 1973, 32ff estimates only 8,000-10,000 *upasampadā* monks.

and therefore hold land. Second, monasteries of later origin possessing no landed property or next to none and existing mainly on the support of the laity (both male, *upāsaka* and female, *upāsikā*). The former monasteries belong without exception to *Syāma Nikāya*, while the latter belong either to *Amarapura* or *Rāmañña Nikāya*.

1.3. *The buildings and environment of a monastery.*[21] The buildings of a principal monastery in the up-country are the *pansala* (the residence of the monks), the *vihāragē, budugē* or *pilimagē* (the temple housing images of Buddha), the *dāgäba* ("relic-container", Skr. *stūpa*), the *poyagē* (the building used for monastic ceremonies), the *banagē* (the house for speeches), the *piriveṇa* (the monastic school) and finally the *bo* tree.[22]

Apart from these, many larger monasteries also contain a separate *dansalāva* (kitchen and dining hall) and a *gabadagē* (storehouse). This indicates that most of the monks in the principal monasteries no longer gain their sustenance by alms-rounds (*piṇḍapāta*). These monasteries usually own large tracts of land (*vihāragam*), which provide the food and income needed to support monastic life.[23] Gifts are nevertheless offered to monks in connection with ceremonies, such as *dānē* ("food-giving"), *pirit* (a recitation ceremony to avert evil) and *kathina pinkama* ("robe-giving"), acts through which the giver is believed to acquire merit (*pin*).

The *pansala*, which is the Sinhalese term for the monk's residence, is either a one- or a two-storied house. Most of the *pansalas* are washed white or light blue, and their roofs are usually red-tiled. In the up-country most of the *pansala* premises are built on a series of terraces surrounded by trees and bushes. The number of rooms in each *pansala* varies between three and eight (sometimes even more). Every Chief Monk (*Vihārādhipati* = "Chief Incumbent") of the *pansala* has his own office, where he receives the visiting laymen. Moreover, there is a sleeping quarter for each monk or novice, a large hall and in some *pansalas* a separate kitchen and dining hall. The shower-bath places and the wall-hung lavatories are usually outside the *pansala* itself or housed in a small annex behind the *pansala*. Some larger monasteries also have garages for cars which have been donated to the monastery.

The sleeping quarters are usually furnished with a rather soft bed, a writing desk, an armchair, a low foot-stool for the visiting layman, a bookshelf and

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21 The material for this subchapter is derived primarily from my own observations in the field and from my case monastery, which I have characterized as a principal monastery.

22 For the principal buildings, see Bareau 1957, 2-27 and Gombrich 1971a, 76ff.

23 Evers 1972, 4.

a small wardrobe for the monk's robes and other personal effects. The rooms of the young monks in many respects resemble student rooms, while the rooms of the older monks are decorated with emblems, pictures of various ceremonies and family albums as well as old palm leaf manuscripts and other articles of historical value, artifacts which point to the origin of pupillary succession (*paramparāva*) of higher ordination (*upasampadā*).

The name of each *pansala* located, say, in the up-country is usually derived from the name of the Chief Monk's native village. If the Chief Monk's name is, for example, Vattēgama Sumangala, the monastery would be known as *Vattē-gama pansala*. When a new Chief Monk is appointed, the name of the *pansala* is either retained or, more frequently, it gradually takes on the name of the village whence the new Chief Monk came as a novice.[24]

In every principal monastery there will certainly be a *vihārage* or a *pilimage* (rather confusingly also called *vihāraya*), a Buddha image-house[25]. This is a building containing religious art in general along with a statue of Buddha varying in size, ornamentation and complexity. Usually it is larger than life-size and may be in a sitting, reclining or standing posture, the sitting posture being the one most commonly found. It is situated in the innermost shrine facing the entrance door. In front of the Buddha image statue there is always some sort of table (*mal āsanaya*), on which offerings, principally flowers are laid. Every Buddha image usually contains a relic. In theory everyone who makes a pious visit to a monastery (*pansala*) should pay his respect before the image, but in many monastic areas the *dāgäba* serves this purpose.

A *vihārage*, however, contains other statues as well. In many monasteries the Buddha image is flanked by two of Buddha's disciples. A *vihārage* may also contain a *dēvālē*. This is a shrine to the gods and indicates the dual function of a *vihārage*, the inclusion of a complementary religious system, referred to by Evers as the *dēvālē* system.[26] Such a *dēvālē* can consist of a small shrine within a *vihārage* or merely a separate hut. In some cases there are large and magnificent buildings separate from the *vihārage* which form a *dēvālē*, or a completely autonomous religious system.[27]

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24 For the parallel between the name of the monastery (*pansala*) and the name of the family (*pavula*) in the Kandyan society, see § 5.5. and § 6.1.4.

25 For a discussion of the various terms for these dwellings, see Gombrich 1971a, 11.

26 For the dual function of the *vihārage*, see Evers 1968b, 545ff.

27 See Schalk 1976, 78-92.

Dāgäba, which is the Sinhalese name for *stūpa*, means literally a "relic-container" or "relic-chamber", which is precisely what it is. In pre-Buddhist times the *stūpa* was probably a burial mound. When Buddha died (*parinibbāna*) his relics were distributed, or so the story goes, and buried in such mounds; hence, the custom of building similar mounds for other holy monks (*arhats*) as well.[28]

The ideal type of a *dāgäba* and its sixfold symbolic significance can be illustrated as follows.[29]
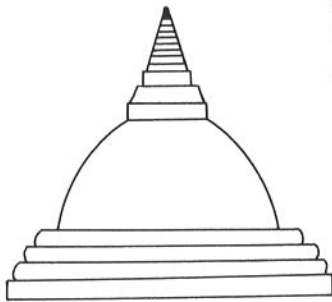
6) The pinacle signifies the goal of life, *nibbāna*
5) The tapering spirals signify the Noble Eightfold Path
4) The four-sided enclosure signifies the Four Noble Truths
3) The dome (*gaba*) signifies the bearers of the teaching of the Buddha (*Buddha-sāsana*)
2) The three rings signify the Three Refuges (*tiratna*)
1) The base of the *dāgäba* signifies confidence (*saddha*)

In reality the *dāgäbas* vary in respect of architectural style and therefore do not completely conform to the ideal type, though many of the features do exist. Moreover, many of the *dāgäbas* are surrounded by four small shrines designed for the offering of flowers.

There are several kinds of *poyagē*, or building for monastic ceremonies. Usually the *vihāragē* is used for this purpose. For a principal monastery, however, the *poyagē* is essential. It is always surrounded by boundary stones (*sīmāgala*) to indicate the limits (*sīmāva*) of the sacred area, where such fundamental rituals (*vinayakarma*) are performed as the higher ordination (*upasampadā*) and the recitation of the monastic rules (*Pātimokkha*).[30] Therefore the *poyagē* is usually enclosed, since the acts of the monks are considered private.

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28 Gombrich 1971a, 77.

29 For details, see de Silva 1974, 39. Govinda 1976, 16ff and Gothóni 1980, 44-45.

30 Bechert 1961, 21ff. See also Kemper 1973, 26ff.

The *baṇagē* is the place where the monks deliver speeches on the day of the full moon (*poya*). It is usually a simple square structure with walls of half height which enable the laity outside to see and hear what is going on inside. The monk who is giving the speech sits in a special chair on the central, slightly raised, part of the floor. The *baṇagē* is in many respects a multi-purpose building, which is also used for alms-giving (*dānē*), meetings and daily offerings to the Buddha images (*pūjā*).

The *pirivēṇa*, or school, is the first centre of instruction for the novices, especially for those who enter the monastery at the tender age of ten. The school provides an elementary education and both laymen and novices attend the classes. Some of the sons of the laymen later take the lower ordination (*pabbajjā*). The monastic schools were quite important before the colonial period, but have lost much of their prestige since the implementation of the new educational systems.

The *bo* tree (*bō gaha*) is the same species of tree under which Buddha is said to have attained Enlightenment. The *bo* tree at Anurādhapura[31], the *Mahāvaṃsa* tells us, is a cutting of the original tree and it is claimed to be the first *bo* tree planted in Sri Lanka. All the other *bo* trees on the island are said to have grown from cuttings of the Anurādhapura *bo* tree.[32]

The *bo* trees are usually surrounded by a parapet (*bämma*), which contains a niche or other appurtenance (*mal āsanaya*) for the offering of flowers. Most of the trees are old and when a new monastery (*ārāmaya* or *pansala*) is established it is often the tree that determines its location. The *bo* trees are regarded as sacrosanct and many stories are told of miracles that have taken place in areas in which such a *bo* tree grows. It is therefore hardly surprising that the *bo* tree at Anurādhapura has become a centre for pilgrims, a centre to which hundreds of thousands of laymen flock every year to make their offerings.

1.4. Types of monasteries. On the basis of the organizational structure of monasticism a distinction can be made between a principal monastery (*pārśvaya*) and a subordinate monastery (*ārāmaya* or *pansala*).[33] As regards the use of the Sinhalese terms for monastery as well as their English equivalents, there is scant agreement among scholars. Bareau, for example, has approached monasti-

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31 *Mahāvaṃsa* XVIII.

32 Rahula 1956, 56ff.

33 Kemper 1980, 31ff.

cism in Sri Lanka principally from the historical point of view. He concentrated on the buildings within the monastic area and the changes in their architectural style, comparing the ancient temples with the modern ones. Hence, he uses the terms temple, monastery and *vihāraya* synonymously and makes no distinction as regards the functions of the different monasteries.[34] Evers follows the same practice and frequently uses the terms *vihāra(ya)* and *ārāma(ya)* synonymously, both of which he translates as either "temple" or "monastery".[35]

Bharati, writing in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, gives us a typology based on the history of monasticism both East and West. He distinguishes six organizational or institutional types: 1) *eremitic* (emphasis on living alone), 2) *quasi-eremitic* (emphasis on religious retreat, loose organizational structures, no administrative links with mother institutions, no external hierarchies), 3) *cenobitic* (emphasis on a formulated rule, the *regula* of the Christian orders, *vinaya* and *śīla* in the Buddhist *Nikāyas*), 4) *quasi-monastic* or *paramilitary* (emphasis on social and political activity), 5) *mendicant monks and orders* (emphasis on living by begging, for example, Sinhalese Buddhism) and 6) *other organizational or institutional types* (emphasis on permanent versus temporary membership, for example, *sangha* in Thailand).[36] In this (cross-cultural) typology, Bharati considers Buddhist monasticism in Sri Lanka to belong to category five, mendicant monks and orders. This label is somewhat misleading, as only a very few Sinhalese monks do alms-rounds nowadays. A shift has taken place in the relationship between monks and the laity, a shift which implies a further subdivision of Bharati's category five.

A similar typology is found in the *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*. Three different terms are used in the Pāli Canon to denote three types of monasteries, namely, *vihāra* (located in or near a town), *āraňňa-vihāra* (located in the forest) and *dūra-vihāra* (hermitage, remote dwelling).[37] This typology is principally based on the criteria of location, a distinction which is nowadays more theoretical than practical, as most of the monasteries are located either in the town, the inner suburbs or in a village.[38]

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34 Bareau 1957, 4; 1-3.

35 Evers 1972, 4ff.

36 Bharati 1974, 337-339.

37 Encyclopaedia of Buddhism I, 1961, 135-136.

38 Gombrich 1971a, 270.

As has been pointed out above, there are certain difficulties in distinguishing different types of monasteries. First, the terms are used somewhat confusingly. The terms *vihāraya* and *ārāmaya* may refer both to a principal and to a subordinate monastery. The monastery concerned can be a centre of offerings near a main road or a remote small monastery sometimes located deep in the forest. Secondly, there is no central organization. Thirdly, most of the subordinate monasteries house just one or two monks, while others may house up to fifteen monks. The statistics are somewhat incomplete and no differentiation is made concerning the function of the various monasteries.

Well aware of these difficulties, I shall endeavour to point out some of the salient characteristics that come to light when attempting work out an overview of the complex net of monasticism in Sri Lanka. Several restrictions must nevertheless be made regarding the typology suggested. First, it is not based on statistical accounts, since no such information is available on the mode of life of the monks in the various monasteries. Second, the typology has been made on the basis of the impressions I received when visiting some dozen monasteries in the up-country during my period of fieldwork (§ 8.1.).

Type of monastery

Characteristics	Principal monastery (*pārśvaya*)	Subordinate monastery 1 (*ārāmaya*)	Subordinate monastery 2 (*pansala*)	Hermitage monastery (*āśramaya*)	Cave monastery (*tapovanaya*)
1. Location	town or village	inner suburb main road	outer suburb	forest or island	forest or mountain
2. Size	area 1-2 acres 20-50 monks	area 1-2 acres 5-15 monks	area 1 acres 1-5 monks	area 1 acres 1-3 monks	area 1 acres 1-10 monks
3. Buildings	*pansalas* *bo* tree image-house *dāgäba* school library (meditation)	*pansalas* *bo* tree image-house *dāgäba* (school) library meditation room	*pansala(s)* *bo* tree shrine-room (*dāgäba*) meditation room	*pansala(s)* *bo* tree shrine-room library meditation room	cave(s) *bo* tree shrine-room meditation cave
4. Lineage	some *Nikāya*	some *Nikāya*	(some *Nikāya*)	no *Nikāya*	no *Nikāya*
5. Organization	principal monastery	subordinate monastery	(subordinate monastery)	independent monastery	independent monastery
6. Ordination	may ordain	may not ordain	may not ordain	may not ordain	(may not ordain)
7. Food supply	no alms-rounds *dānē* and lay supporters	no alms-rounds *dānē* and lay supporters	sometimes alms-rounds, *dānē* and lay supporters	(no alms-rounds) (*dānē*) and lay supporters	alms-rounds
8. Activity	ritual performances studying teaching administration	ritual performances studying full moon day ceremonies administration	meditation preaching mission minor rites	meditation reading writing publication	meditation ascetic practices
9. Mode of life	ritual and social activity	ritual activity (mission)	meditation (mission)	meditation intellectual activity	meditation ascetic practices

Thus, the typology is based strictly on observations made in the up-country. The literature on monasticism in the low-country nevertheless tends to substantiate my classification. Thirdly, I have used the Sinhalese terms when referring to the various monasteries, although I am aware that the Sinhalese themselves use the terms somewhat confusingly. To make my point clear I have also used the English equivalents in order to map the monasteries in relation to the organizational structure of monasticism in Sri Lanka. Finally, I would like to stress that the typology is presented here principally for the purpose of pointing out the characteristics of my own case monastery in relation to the other kinds of monasteries prevailing in Sri Lanka today. The case monastery dealt with in this study is a principal monastery located in the up-country, the characteristics of which indicate that it cannot be labeled as a mendicant order (as suggested by Bharati), since the monks do no alms-rounds and do not live as mendicant monks.

2. Previous field observations and interpretations

In the early nineteenth century Ceylon (Sri Lanka) became one of the most important sources of field information for Western scholars of Buddhism. The island provided us with material to such an extent that Gombrich, for example, concluded somewhat hastily that Buddhism was discovered for the West mainly by British missionaries and civil servants during that period.[39] Yet writings exist, albeit fragmentary, which can be traced as far back as to the 2nd century A.D. In these writings Buddhism is described and understood somewhat differently depending on the time and place the writing was done. Even so, the concepts used by different writers vary, thus bearing out the truism that everyone is a child of his own age. Nevertheless, their findings are of great importance, especially as by reading and analyzing them, we become more aware of our own social and cultural conditions and parallels with our own era.

When tracing these fragments, we find among the early writers theologians, explorers, civil servants, missionaries, Buddha enthusiasts and "pre-anthropologists" or predecessors of our modern field-workers. In this connection it is worth noting that even we, who regard ourselves as scholars in comparative religion, are but one link in a long and winding chain of human minds endeavouring to study and understand human life. In this brief digression,

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39 Gombrich 1971a, 51.

the main attention will be put on those writings that more or less directly concern the island of Ceylon and Buddhism as practised there.

2.1. Early reports on Buddhism. Clement of Alexandria (150-215 A.D.) is the first Western Christian writer who gives an account of those who believe in Buddha. His knowledge of Buddhism was probably derived from Pantaenus, a convert to Christianity from Stoicism who is reported to have visited India. In a book entitled *Strōmateis* ("Miscellanies"), in which he deals with the various gymnosophist groups in India, he incidentally mentions those who follow the teaching of Buddha. The term gymnosophist is a Greek word, which came into use probably through the conqueror Alexander the Great, who during his travels of conquest in South India used it to describe the fact that the Indian gurus were usually seen going nearly naked. They were accordingly regarded as philosophers of sorts within the Greek frame of reference. Clement of Alexandria distinguished between two groups of Indian gymnosophists, namely, Sarmanaes and Brahmins. He writes:[40]

> "And of these there are two classes, some of them called Sarmanae, and others Brahmins. And those of the Sarmanae who are called Hylobii neither inhabit cities, nor have roofs over them, but are clothed in the bark of trees, feed on nuts, and drink water in their hands. Like those called Encratites in the present day, they know not marriage nor begetting of children.

> Some, too, of the Indians obey the precepts of Buddha; whom, on account of his extraordinary sanctity, they have raised to divine honours".

The Indian gymnosophists were also known to the Syrian Bardesanes, an expert on astrology who was converted to Christianity in 179 A.D. He described the differences between the two groups as follows:[41]

> "The Brahmans are one family, the descendants of one father and mother, and they inherit their theology as a priesthood. The Shamans, on the other hand, are taken from all Indian sects indifferently, from all who wish to give themselves up to the study of divine things".

Moreover, Buddha was known to the Syriac-speaking Babylonian Mani (215-276), who founded a dualistic religion of the Gnostic type known as Manichaeism. In *Acta Archelai*, which is considered to be a report of discussions held between Mani and bishop Archelaius, Terebinthus is mentioned as Mani's predecessor. As Terebinthus was most erudite and versed in Egyptian wisdom he

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40 *Strōmata* I, 71. The translation is taken from Wilson 1880, 399.
41 McCrindle 1975, 167.

was also called Buddha. According to the legend he was born of a virgin and educated by an angel in the mountains. This legend was also known to Eusebius Hieronymos (347-420), who in his writings known as *Adversus Jovinianum* connected Buddha with the Indian gymnosophists, viewing him according to the Greek custom as a wandering ascetic, a philosopher.[42]

Marco Polo (1254-1324), the most outstanding traveller and explorer, was the first European to make detailed observations of beliefs and customs in the Far East. In his book of travels, which he dictated when imprisoned in Genoa, he gives an extensive account of his 25 years in Asia. Buddhism in Ceylon is described as follows:[43]

> "Furthermore you must know that in the Island of Seilan there is an
> exceeding high mountain; it rises right up so steep and precipitous
> that no one could ascend it, were it not that they have taken and
> fixed to it several great and massive iron chains, so disposed that
> by help of these men are able to mount to the top. And I tell you
> they say that on this mountain is the sepulchre of Adam our first
> parent; at least that is what the Saracens say. But the Idolaters
> say that it is the sepulchre of *Sagamoni Borcan*, before whose time
> there were no idols. They hold him to have been the best of men,
> a great saint in fact, according to their fashion, and the first
> in whose name idols were made" (italics — R.G.).

In his description Marco Polo distinguishes between two religions, namely, the Saracens and the Idolaters. During the Middle Ages the term Saracens was used to denote Arabians in particular, but later on, all Muslims in general. The term Idolaters, on the other hand, denotes the observation that the Buddhists seemed to be "image-worshipers" (Greek *eidōlatrei'ā*) as they had fashioned Buddha images. This interpretation is quite understandable, as the veneration of the Buddha images and the placing of flowers on their altar is one of the most striking religious practices in Sri Lanka. In his description Marco Polo uses the term Sagamoni Borcan, the Mongolian name of Buddha, when referring to the founder of the religion.[44] Hence it has been concluded that his knowledge of Buddhism is derived from Mongolia, where he is known to have been. Later on Marco Polo also gives an account of Buddha's "mythical" background, a description in which he interprets the legend of the youth of Buddha quite freely and imaginatively.[45]

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42 Hegemonius 1906, 91. *Adversus Jovinianum* I, 42.

43 Yule 1903, II, 316-317.

44 There is also another Mongolian form of the name, namely Šigemuni Burqan.

45 Yule 1903, II, 317ff.

Robert Knox, an English merchant seaman who was taken prisoner in Ceylon in 1660 by king Rājasiṃha II also gave attention to the veneration of the Buddha images in his book "An Historical Relation of the Island of Ceylon". Consequently, he views the religion of the country as Idolatry. Buddha was interpreted as a god and characterized as a saviour of souls. Knox writes:[46]

> "There is another great God, whom they call Buddou, unto whom the Salvation of Souls belongs. Him they believe once to have come upon the Earth. And when he was there, that he did usually sit under a large shady Tree, called Bogahah. Which Trees ever since are accounted Holy, and under which great Solemnities they do to this day celebrate the Ceremonies of his Worship. He departed from the Earth from the top of the highest Mountain on the Island, called Pico Adam: where there is an Impression like a foot, which, they say, is his, as hath been mentioned before".

Knox's observations of the religious life in Ceylon in the 17th century can be regarded as "pre-anthropological", since the third chapter contains an extensive and entertaining description of the religion, gods, temples and priests of Ceylon. He seems to have been quite amazed by the large number of temples, graven with images and figures, for he devotes a good deal of time to their description. He rightly recognizes that the images and idols (as he calls them) reflect a pantheon in which Buddha is venerated along with a number of other gods. According to Knox's interpretation, the gods bring blessings and success, whereas sickness and diseases proceed from the devil. He also advanced the view that apart from the public temples, there were also many people who had built in their yards private shrine-houses (he calls them chapels) containing Buddha images. These were venerated by lighting candles and lamps and by placing flowers on the altar every morning, religious practices which are still observed today.[47]

Knox distinguished between three kinds of priests, as he prefers to call them. The first and highest ranking are the Buddhist monks, which he calls the "priests of the Buddou God". He also refers to them as *Tirinanxes*.[48] They live in monasteries called *Vihar*, many of which are endowed and have farms belonging to them. It is interesting that Knox seems to view the *Tirinanxes* as landlords, an interpretation which Weber has pointed out and Evers analyzed in detail.[49] The second in rank are the priests of the temple of the

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46 Knox 1956-1957, 115.

47 Knox 1956-1957, 117.

48 Knox 1956-1957, 117.

49 See, for example, Evers 1972, 15ff.

other gods (*dēvālēs*), which he calls *Koppuhs*. These are nowadays known as *kapurālas*. The third in rank are the priests of the spirits, which he calls the *Jaddeses*.[50]

2.2. Ancient Buddhist monasticism as pictured by Sukumar Dutt. In 1962 Sukumar Dutt published a historical study of Buddhist monasticism entitled "Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India, their history and their contribution to Indian culture". In this *magnum opus* Dutt describes and analyzes the very first phases of Buddhist monasticism and its transformation into a stable institution, covering a period from 500 B.C. to 1200 A.D. It is an attempt to sum up all the information collected so far on that subject.[51]

The material of Dutt's monograph consists of literary sources collected from four different languages, namely, Sanskrit, Pāli, Chinese and Tibetan, and of archaeological sources, which required extensive field studies of archaeological sites. Although his work is principally historically orientated, it extends the range of vision of many of his predecessors (Bareau, Demiéville, Lamotte, Oldenberg, Przyluski, Rahula, Thomas and others[52]) in that he treats his material from a socio-cultural viewpoint as well.[53]

The theoretical framework of Dutt's study draws largely on the cultural anthropological point of view presented by Kroeber, Kluckhohn and Coon, who held that culture embraces the "sum-total of things people do as a result of having been so taught."[54] By studying monasticism in close relation to the social and cultural milieu in which it exists and of which it is a part, Dutt proposes three different theses, all of which seem to me fairly sound.

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50 Knox 1956-1957, 119ff.

51 This study can be seen as a third enlarged revision in a series of several minor studies, the first of which was published as early as 1924, entitled "Early Buddhist Monachism" and the second in 1957, entitled "The Buddha and Five After-Centuries".

52 For the various schools of Buddhist studies, see Gothóni 1974, 7-11 and Gothóni 1979, 188ff.

53 Occasionally, one gets the impression that Dutt considers the Canon to be a mass of information, each part of which has almost the same source value. From previous text-critical studies we know, however, that the various parts of, for example, Pāli Canon were compiled on different occasions and that there is a considerable time span between the oldest and the youngest parts of the Canon. Nevertheless, Dutt's study has become a standard work on early Buddhist monasticism, perhaps by virtue of his historical vision and imagination.

54 Dutt 1962, 19.

First, there is the notion that Buddhism should not be seen as a philosophi-
cal or intellectual system, but rather as a message to be transmitted, a
message which is based on experience. As a result of this finding, Dutt pre-
fers to see Buddhism not as an -ism *per se*, but as an organized way of fol-
lowing the principles inherent in that message. It is the institutionalized
monkhood and its functioning, closely related to a particular milieu in time
and space, which according to Dutt should be the focus of one's attention.[55]

In the second thesis Dutt arrives at the root of monasticism in the sense of
its being an institution, stressing that it was not invented by the Buddha,
but rather had its origins in the pre-Buddhist religious movements of ancient
India.[56] In this connection he refers to the practice of becoming a wandering
almsman, which in the canonical literature is referred to by the term "going
forth" (*pravrajyā*) and by the expression "passing from home to homelessness"
(*agārasmā anagāriyan*)[57]. In the development towards a monastic institution
Dutt recognizes two additional phases. The first one came into being when the
followers of the Buddha (*Sakyaputtiya Samaṇas*) began to observe the rain-
retreat (*vassāvāsa*), which meant that the wandering almsmen stayed in one
particular place during the rainy season of ancient India.[58] This was the
fundamental step from an eremitic practice towards a more settled form of
life. Many religious movements at that time chose a place of retreat for
practical reasons, since it was very difficult to walk when the ground was
wet and muddy. The followers of the Buddha differed, however, from the fol-
lowers of the other religious leaders mainly in that during their rain-
retreat, they began to perform ceremonies such as "recitation of rules of
behaviour and conduct" (a collection which later was called *Pātimokkha*),
"invitation" (*pavāraṇā*) and "distribution of robes" (*kathina*).[59] The second
step was taken when two different kinds of settlement came into being, namely,
āvāsa and *ārāma*. The difference between these two settlements was mainly that
an *āvāsa* was built by the monks themselves, while an *ārāma* was donated by the
laity. Both had huts for the monks' habitation, but whereas the *āvāsa* tended

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55 Dutt 1962, 21ff.

56 Dutt 1962, 24ff. See also Spiro 1972, 280-281.

57 Dutt 1962, 41-45.

58 Dutt 1962, 49.

59 Dutt 1962, 55-57. See also Bechert 1968b, 320-329 and Spiro 1972, 280-
   282.

to be a rain-retreat settlement only, the *ārāma* developed into a more perma-
nent residence for monks.[60] With the rise of settlements called *leṇa*, Dutt
considers Buddhist monasticism to have become established.[61]

The third thesis is based on the idea that there was a division between monk-
hood and laity from the very beginning. In stressing this, Dutt differs from
Oldenberg, Bechert and others[62], who consider that early Buddhist monasticism
was an institution for the élite only, there having been no Buddhist laity
whatsoever. With regard to Buddhist doctrine (*dhamma*) Dutt writes: "It is de-
scribed as a way (*magga*), and those to whom the way has been opened — the
initiate, the ordained, the 'Knowledgeable' — are enjoined to extend it to
the *Bāhujana* (Man in the many)."[63] Thus, he takes the view that from the very
beginning the monks and the Buddhist laity formed a single unit, in which
both parts had their own rights and duties on the various levels of inter-
action.

2.3. Recent studies on present-day Buddhist monasticism[64]. In 1957 the well-
known French Buddhologist André Bareau published a book entitled "La vie et
l'organisation des communantés bouddhiques modernes de Ceylan," which is one
of the first studies on Buddhist monasticism that attempts to combine a tex-
tual and a historical approach with material collected in the field. It deals
with monasticism in Sri Lanka principally from the viewpoint of the buildings
and the edifices.[65]

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60 Dutt 1962, 58-59.

61 Dutt 1962, 148ff.

62 See, for example, Bechert 1973a, 11-12.

63 Dutt 1962, 22.

64 Due to the limited amount of space, only those studies and questions are
here considered which more or less directly are connected with the problem
area of the present study. Apart from those here reviewed, there are a num-
ber of comprehensive studies on the relationship between Buddhism and so-
ciety in South-East Asia, the following of which have proved to be quite
useful; Michel Marlière, *Étude d'un groupe de trois monastères bouddhiques
sis à Thonburi (Thailande), essai de sociographie bouddhiques.*- Hautes
études orientales 7, Paris 1977; Melford E. Spiro, *Buddhism and Society,
A Great Tradition and its Burmese Vicissitudes.* New York 1970; S.J. Tambiah,
*World Conqueror and World Renouncer, A Study of Buddhism and Polity in
Thailand against a Historical Background.*- Cambridge Studies in Social
Anthropology 15, Cambridge 1976; and B.J. Terwiel, *Monks and Magic, An
Analysis of Religious Ceremonies in Central Thailand.*- Scandinavian Insti-
tute of Asian Studies Monograph Series 24, Bangkok 1975. For the vast amount
of literature published during 1960's and early 1970's, I refer to Bechert
1973b. On Buddhism and Buddhist studies in Finland, see Aalto 1971, 79-80
and Gothóni 1981b.

65 For a discussion of the textual, historical and anthropological approaches,
see Spiro 1972, 3-6.

The material of Bareau's study consists of drawings of monastery area plans and photographs of various edifices and presumably of observations of, and interviews with, monks, although very little concerning the actual collecting of material is mentioned in the book. As most of the material has been collected through personal fieldwork, one would have expected an explicit account of the principles adopted when selecting the various monastery plans and edifices. Fortunately, the material is published in appendices, which make it possible for anyone who has done fieldwork in Sri Lanka to check the source-critical aspects.[66]

The study concerns the comparision between the buildings and edifices of the monasteries of today with those of the Anurādhapura (from the 5th to the 10th century) and the Poḷonnaruva periods (from the 11th to the 16th century). The first part of the study is devoted to the comparision and focuses on ten edifices, namely, the temples, which house images of the Buddha (*vihāragē*), the *stūpa* (*dāgäba*), the *bo* tree, the preaching hall (*baṇagē*)[67], the ceremonial hall (*poyagē*), the library, the residence building(s) (*pansala*), the clock tower, the school (*pirivēṇa*) and the hermitage. The second part contains a straight-forward description of the modern iconography, the cult, the mode of life of the monks and the monastic community.

Bareau's monograph deals with the modern monasteries, although he is also concerned with the origins of the present-day edifices and practices. One may, however, take Bareau to task for describing Buddhist monasticism in Sri Lanka as though it represented a typical setting. No one who has visited the island can be unaware that there exists no typical monastery at all, but only various ways of practising monastic life (see § 1.4.). Although the buildings and the edifices are the same, the dynamic life within each monastery vary to a great extent. The life of the monk in the urban area, for example, differs considerably from that of a rural monk. This also applies to monastic life in the up-country and the coastal areas.

In 1962 Nur Yalman published a short article entitled "The ascetic Buddhist monks in Ceylon". It is an essay based on observations of, and interviews with, a group of ascetic monks who reappeared in Sri Lanka in the 1950's. It deals with monks who belong to a revivalist movement which the ordinary villagers called *Tāpasa*, a name referring to the ascetic mode of life of the monks.

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66 Bareau 1957, I-L and I-V.
67 Bareau 1957, 2; 16-17 uses the term *dharmasālā*.

Yalman distinguishes between two categories of monks; orthodox Buddhist monks and ascetic Buddhist monks. He has noticed quite correctly that these *Tāpasas* have withdrawn from the world and rejected the established institutionalized forms of monastic and temple (*vihāragē*) life.[68] The *Tāpasa* community can therefore be found in caves and functions outside the established orthodox Buddhist fraternities (see § 1.4. the cave type of monastery).

In a recent paper Michael Carrithers, who also deals with the modern ascetics of Sri Lanka, connects the rise of the various ascetic movements with the pattern of change in Buddhism. According to his thesis the shape of the social history of Theravāda Buddhist monasticism can be characterized by a few enduring principles. He writes:[69]

> First, the Sangha is organized in small face-to-face kin-like groups. Second, monks and laymen are closely interdependent. Third, the Sangha is dispersed throughout the agrarian country-side, and this, along with the first two principles, leads to the gradual abandonment of ascetic practices and the adoption of lay values: a tendency I have called domestication.

According to Carrithers, the history of Buddhist monasticism in Sri Lanka can therefore be viewed as pendulum movement between two extremes, namely, the reform monks and the domesticated *Sangha*. The tendency of the pendulum, however, is to favour domestication, as if magnetized by the cultural and social milieu.[70]

In 1967 Hans-Dieter Evers published an article entitled "Kinship and property rights in a Buddhist monastery in central Ceylon," in which he studied the relationship between patterns of transmission of property and the kinship relation between teacher and pupil. It is the first and so far only attempt that has been made to discover the extent to which a kinship system in a Theravāda Buddhist society is reflected in the teacher-pupil relationship within a monastery.

The material of Evers' perceptive analysis consists of personal fieldwork material collected in Sri Lanka during the years 1964-1965 and information supplied by the Public Trustee, Colombo. No explicit account is given concerning the fieldwork process, except the reference to the particular monastery in which the material was collected.[71]

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68 Yalman 1962a, 316.

69 Carrithers 1979, 294.

70 Carrithers 1979, 297ff.

71 Evers 1967, 709.

The starting point of the article is the Sinhalese kinship system and its principles. Although there are some distinct differences between the kinship system within the society and the system in use within the monastery (such as, for example, the members of a monastery are all males; there is no marriage and, consequently, no children), Evers' still finds the kinship system and relationships to be of prime importance for the structure of the social system in the monastery. This is reflected in two ways. First, the property-owning groups follow the model of patrilineages, Secondly, the relationship between members of lineages is usually based on kinship. As one would expect, kinship is relevant to the social structure of a monastery whenever property rights are involved. Thus Evers finds that a monk selects a pupil from among his own kin if he exercises administrative control over temple property which the pupil might inherit. Moreover, he stresses that the relationship is either matrilateral or patrilateral, with a slight preference for the *māmā-bänā* relationship (sister's son).[72]

Apart from these studies dealing with Sri Lanka, there is one important case-study that has been carried out in Thailand. This is Jane Bunnag's study entitled "Buddhist monk, Buddhist layman, a study of urban monastic organization in central Thailand." It is a social-anthropological study concerning the relationships between monks and laymen in certain interaction situations.

The material of Bunnag's monograph consists mainly of information gathered by means of a questionnaire together with various monastic documents on education, economics, the rights and duties of the abbot of a monastery, regulations concerning the appointment of higher ecclesiastical officials and statistical accounts. Before she distributed the questionnaires to 187 monks living in twenty monasteries in the municipal area, she was able to explain the aim of her study to the assembled monks at *Wat Monthop* (the name of the principal monastery). One hundred of these forms were returned, but only 90 of them were sufficiently complete to make possible the correlation of different items of information.[73]

Bunnag approaches her central problem, the relationship between the monks and the laymen, from the viewpoint of public material, i.e. official rites and ceremonies. She found out that kinship or long-standing friendship provided the basis, and in fact the *sine qua non* for relationships between monks and laymen. In Sri Lanka we find the same pattern, which de Silva

72 For the details and analysis, see Evers 1967, 706-707. See also § 6.1.4.
73 Bunnag 1973, 190.

called "the domestic function of the Sangha."[74] It means that the monks are what can be called family monks and often at the same time relatives or friends.

The second principle which Bunnag discovered was referred to as the "contingent linkage", a term indicating that the relationship was usually mediated through some other monk, either the abbot of the monastery or a junior member, who was related to the layman or was a personal friend of his.[75]

The final work to be considered in this connection is that of the well-known German scholar Heinz Bechert, who in 1966, 1967 and 1973 published a series of studies in three volumes entitled "Buddhismus, Staat und Gesellschaft in den Ländern des Theravāda-Buddhismus". It has immediately proved to be a standard work on the tendencies of modern Buddhism in the Theravāda countries.

The study is based on voluminous documentary material, which especially covers the interrelation between Buddhism, state and society. In addition to presenting a detailed overview and analysis of the material, Bechert also gives extensive references concerning the various subjects. Consequently, the study provides a fundamental and reliable source for every fieldworker, who will surely find this basic research quite useful.[76] Apart from the three volumes mentioned, Bechert has also written a number of articles of a more theoretical nature. These will be referred to in this monograph in connection with the subjects concerned.

3. Framing of the problem

This dissertation is entitled "Modes of Life of Theravāda Monks: A Case Study of Buddhist Monasticism in Sri Lanka". The expression "mode of life" indicates that the accent is on the outer shape of monasticism, the prevailing pattern or manner of monkhood rather than on the spiritual dimension of monkhood. In the second part of the study, we go into the biographies, social relations, values, attitudes and norms of nine monks in detail. The starting point of the study is that monasticism cannot be studied *per se*. Therefore, an attempt has been made to view it in relation to the Sinhalese culture and society of which it forms a major part. Consequently, we shall deal principally with those aspects that have proved to be of vital importance for the existence of Buddhist monasticism in Sri Lanka.

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74 Bunnag 1973, 77-78. de Silva 1974, 96-97. See also Carrithers 1979, 294ff.
75 Bunnag 1973, 78-85; 89; 136-141.
76 See, for example, Gombrich 1971a, 56.

3.1. Material of the study. The primary sources for this study consist of canonical scriptures and document texts on the one hand, and field material collected by personal fieldwork on the other. The numerous microstudies on the subject, based on anthropological fieldwork, provided an important body of research, which proved to be indispensable for this study.[77]

The first source to be considered is the Pāli Canon (*Tipiṭaka*), which consists of an ancient, sacred and canonized collection of texts, the "Bible of the Buddhists" as it were. The standard editions and their translations are all available in the series published by the Pāli Text Society in London. As regards this study, the collection of monastic rules known as *Pātimokkha* (227 in number), classified according to the penalty for infringement and which are to be recited once a fortnight is of principal interest in that apart from constituting a purely monastic ritual, they also provide the canonical norms of behaviour for monks.

The second source consists of such monastic (*sāsana*) documents as the *Katikāvata*, which is a book of regulations that lays down the principles of application of the original rules. There are several revised editions of the *Katikāvata*, the first of which was promulgated during the 12th century and the present one, which was adopted in 1923 and is now about to be revised. Of particular interest is the edition by King Kīrti Śrī Rājasiṃha (1747-1782), which remains the foundation of the *Katikāvata* in use today.[78] Apart from this *Katikāvata*, important information has also been obtained from the unofficial register book and speeches by the monks concerned, held on various ceremonial occasions.

The third source is the various reports and sessional papers published by the government press in Colombo. Of particular interest are the sessional papers of the Buddhist Committee of Inquiry (1957) and the Buddha Sāsana Commission (1959).

The fourth source comprises the statistical accounts published by the Department of Census and Statistics in Colombo.

My personal fieldwork in Sri Lanka, carried out from October 1974 to April 1975, provide the main field material for this study. It was collected by means of *guided interviews*[79] and as high a degree of *participant observation*

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77 The standard bibliographies on Buddhism in Sri Lanka are the one by Bechert, published in 1973, and the two volumes by Goonetileke, published in 1970.

78 The various *Katikāvatas* have been edited and translated by Ratnapala, 1971.

79 For the structured questionnaires, see the appendix.

as possible. The first interview schedule was answered by twenty monks and two laymen and the second interview schedule by nine monks. All interviews were tape-recorded. The observations were noted down in diaries and some of the situations were perpetuated by taking colour slides and by shooting 16mm documentary films (see §8.1. and §8.4.).[80]

Finally, the numerous microstudies on Theravāda Buddhist monasticism, based on anthropological fieldwork, provide invaluable insights and interpretations against which it is not only possible but rewarding to check one's own results and thereby participate in an exchange of ideas with other scholars working in this area.[81] Some of the studies constantly referred to were presented in the above (§2.3.); the others will be discussed in the relevant sections of this monograph.

3.2. *The three level approach and the aim of the study.* This study concerns men who live celibate lives, who have withdrawn from society. In this particular case, living in a principal monastery does not, however, exclude social contacts within society. The monks in Sri Lanka, especially in the up-country, do take part in several social activities, such as teaching in government schools and universities, role-performance in rituals and meeting personal friends who are part of the lay community. This type of principal monastery can thus be considered to constitute a society within a society, i.e. a society in miniature, in the sense that the social composition of the fraternity tends to be a mirror-image of the social structure of the surrounding society. The following reservations must, however, be kept in mind. There is, of course, an abstenance from marriage and sexual intercourse, a practice which is considered to free the individual from the ties of family life. It is a corollary of this practice that there is no natural recruitment of novices. As we shall see in chapter B, these two insufficiencies have been accommodated through a system known as "pupillary succession" (§6.1.3.), a practice which illustrates quite distinctly the mirror-image nature of the fraternity.

In order to study the case monastery as holistically as possible, it is here approached from three different levels of analysis: the society, the organization and the individual. The primary concern is to view monasticism not

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80 The field material consists of 37 tapes, 187 slides and about 60 min. of 16mm films edited in two versions, the first one 38 min. and the second one 25 min. both entitled "Buddhism in Sinhalese Culture", see page 250.

81 For the limitation and incompleteness of every scientific system, see Bronowski 1977, 58-73. For the problem of self-reference, see pages 67-71.

as an immutable institution that passed from India to Sri Lanka (at that time
Ceylon) in the third century B.C., but as a complex religio-social phenomenon,
which has changed in regard of practical arrangements since the days of its
appearance on the island and which through various processes of adaptation and
interaction has assumed its present shape. Consequently, our first task is to
map out the circumstances of life within the principal monastery. Thereafter
attention is focused more on the level of the monks as individuals. An attempt
is made to describe and analyze the dynamics of life in the principal monas-
tery concerned. Thus the level of analysis proceeds from the general to the
particular.[82]

On the level of *society*, the aim is to study the relationship between patterns
of behaviour within the principal monastery on the one hand, and the society
on the other. Attention is focused on the internal relation of the triple
macrostructure monastery, laity and state as well as on the cultural and the
social reflections from society onto monastic life. It is in connection with
these questions that monasticism is viewed in relation to its socio-cultural
environment, i.e. the region in which it functions.[83]

On the level of *organization*, monasticism can be characterized as an insti-
tution which more than two thousand five hundred years ago was established
in order to preserve, hand down and teach the idea of enlightenment "dis-
covered" by Gautama Buddha. Buddhists often express the vocation of monasti-
cism as to "keep the Wheel Turning" (*Dhammacakka*).[84] From this historical
perspective monasticism appears as an institutionalized tradition with an
emphasis on continuity.[85]

From the sociological perspective, the dominant feature of monasticism is its
social dimension, whereby it constitutes a fraternity. Being a fraternity, it
evidences a distinct social composition, with a social hierarchy, rules of
conduct, ritual sequences and performances and a complex system of economic

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82 This tack has been suggested by, for example, Hultkrantz 1973, 53-58, who
considers it useful to divide a monographical study into two parts, one
of which favours description, while the other is more analytical. See also
Geertz 1966, 42ff.

83 For the regional aspects, see Hultkrantz 1970, 85ff and Pentikäinen 1978,
36ff.

84 Thereby they refer to the first speech of Gautama Buddha, which is usually
symbolized by the eight-spoked wheel, a symbol which originally seems to
have been the emblem of the World Ruler, the *Cakkavattin* ("he who sets the
wheel in motion"). By analogy the wheel came to be associated with Buddha
as the World Ruler in spiritual matters.

85 For further details, see Gothóni 1980, 44.

assistance. Thus the monks themselves are keenly aware of the distinction insider/outsider or in other terms, member/non-member.[86] A very important micro-social structure within monasticism is the teacher-pupil relationship, which constitutes an axial constellation in the social composition of the fraternity.

Moreover, many principal monasteries in Sri Lanka often enjoy a degree of power by virtue of their status as an organization. Therefore, monasticism has not only religious or spiritual, but also cultural, social and political significance. During the period of colonialism it was the up-country monasteries *par excellence* that guarded and preserved Buddhist monasticism and local culture against foreign encroachment on the unique heritage of a conquered people. It is no exaggeration to say that the monastic organization has acted as a shelter for Buddhism in Sri Lanka during the various periods of occupation by Westerners.

Finally, a principal monastery has a policy which to a large extent depends on the size of the particular monastery and its channels of influence. Nevertheless, every monastery possesses an image in the eyes of the public and it is precisely the maintaining of this image which is one of the main concerns of monastery policy. This is a natural consequence of the fact that many of the Buddhist monasteries are largely dependent on the donations and gifts from the circle of laity connected with them.

On the level of the *individual*, the principal monastery can be characterized as consisting of men, who each in their personal way lead the life of a Theravāda monk in order to expulse human "unease" (*dukkha*) and, through the experience of enlightenment, realize the "extinction of unease" (*nibbāna*).[87] This means that the monks have taken as their ultimate goal in life to practise the teaching (*dhamma*) of Buddha, i.e. the Noble Eightfold Path. The focus of inquiry as regards these questions concentrates on the values, attitudes and norms of the monks.

As the monks do not aspire to complete solitude, but rather are obligated to live as members within institutionalized monasticism, our attention will also be focused on the circumstances of monastic life and the ritual sequences within the principal monastery concerned. Consequently, it is not the monk

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86 In this connection it is important to point out that an organization is internally differentiated and the various subgroups may have quite different interests. See Merton 1957, 288-299 and Becker 1969, 266-267.

87 For further details, see §4.1.

per se that is in the focus of inquiry, but — and this point must be empha-
sized — the monk in relation to specific social relations and realities en-
countered through being member of a social network. In this connection one of
the main questions concerns the degree to which individual monks are bound by
the institutionalized customs, rituals and concepts and, furthermore the man-
ner in which these exert an influence on their behaviour in various situ-
ations.

Given the primary aim of studying how changes in the cultural and social con-
stellations surrounding one particular monastery are *reflected* [88] in the mode
of life of the Theravāda monks and how these factors influence the interaction
between a principal monastery and society, the large themes and various ques-
tions considered can be summarized as follows.

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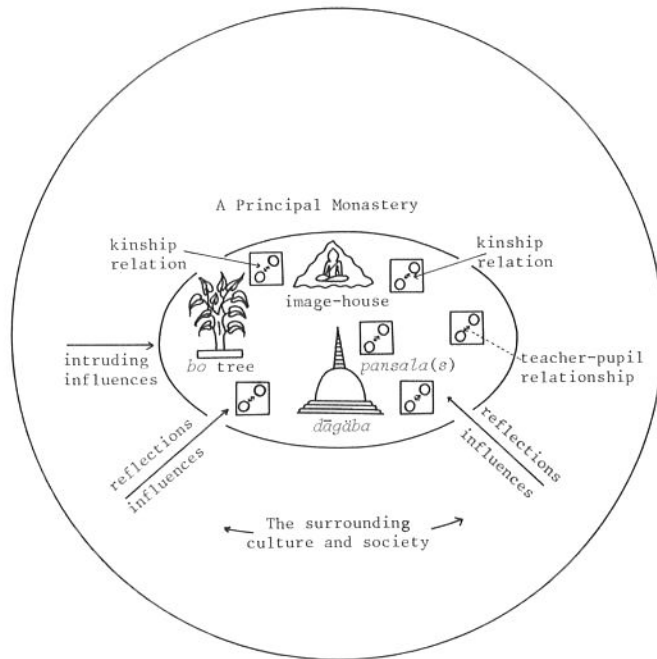
88 The concepts of reflection and influence are used in this study not as
equivalents, but refer to two different processes of infiltration. *Reflec-
tion* is here taken to point to the existence of something in surrounding
society that is mirrored in monastic life. The concept of *influence*, on
the other hand, refers to a situation in which there is someone, a person,
who attempts to exercise an influence upon monastic life. Therefore, *re-
flection* is something that takes place despite the will of the monks, as
a result of the circumstances of monastic life in Sinhalese society and
culture. Moreover, *reflection* takes place gradually, over the centuries.
It is here considered to be a process of infiltration that finds its way
into monastic life more or less unnoticed by the monks concerned. It is
the kind of process that can best be detected or revealed by an outsider,
one who has a sufficiently detached point of view as regards that particu-
lar mode of life (see § 8.).

On the level of *society*, a principal monastery has to adapt itself to the surrounding cultural and social environment and is therefore moulded into a certain shape. More or less distinct *reflections* of the prevailing social and cultural patterns inevitably show up in monastic life. One of the main social reflections in Sri Lanka is that of kinship, which within the principal monastery concerned is known as "pupillary succession".

On the level of *organization*, a principal monastery may to some extent serve as a *shelter* against intruding influences. The case monastery dealt with in this study constitutes a society within a society, i.e. a society in miniature, in the sense that the social composition of the fraternity tends to be a reflection of the structure of the surrounding society. Everything depends, however, on the actual social, economic, political etc. constellations which exist at any given time. Depending on the circumstances, monastic life varies significantly as to the extent of its autonomy or subordination to society. It is always a question of interaction between the monastery and society.

On the level of the *individual*, we are dealing with the specific *circumstances of life* of the monks living in the principal monastery. When mapping the biography and life situation of each monk, we are here principally concerned with those reflections which find their way into the monastery as a result of the life circumstances of the individual monks. In this respect there exist potentially as many *channels of reflection* as there are monks in the monastery.

When the level of analysis intersects with the viewpoint of analysis, the social patterns on the one hand, and the values, attitudes and norms on the other, we arrive at the following grid.[89]

Viewpoint of analysis

Levels of analysis	Social patterns	Values, attitudes and norms
Society	What is the relationship between patterns of behaviour within the monastery and society? What reflections of the society are observable in monastic life?	What is the relationship between the official values, attitudes and norms of the monastery on the one hand, and the religious frame of reference of its surrounding society, on the other?
Organization	What is the social composition of the monastery and how are groupings in it reflected in the activity of the fraternity and its relationship to the society and the laity?	What are the religious prerequisites and means of coercion prevailing within the monastery and what is the nature of their influence on behaviour both within and outside the monastery?
Individual	What is the social network of each monk and how does it reflect his social position in the monastery?	To what degree are monks bound by religious practices, rituals and official values, attitudes and norms and what is the nature of the manner in which these exert an influence on their behaviour in various social settings?

89 These levels of analysis have been taken from the theoretical model presented by Allardt. As regards the viewpoint adopted, I have restricted my analysis to a discussion of the social patterns and values, attitudes and norms, since it is the aim of this study to approach the principal monastery mainly from the level of the organization and the individual rather than from the level of society. See Allardt 1974, 11-24. For an application of the model, see also Pentikäinen 1975, 92ff.