



The impact of *Vajrayana* Buddhism on Sri Lankan culture: A study from the historical perspective

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Abstract

The sects that emerged after the Second Buddhist Council were later divided into different countries under different names. Among them, *Vajrayana* Buddhism can be described as a sect belonging to the MahAyana Buddhism. Although Sri Lanka is a country where Theravada Buddhism prevails, when studying its history, it is seen that *Vajrayana* Buddhism came to Sri Lanka during the Anuradhapura period and that the *Vajrayana* tradition and its influence are included in our rituals, books and primary texts. The research problem of this research is to study whether *Vajrayana* Buddhism existed in the ancient period of Sri Lanka where Theravada Buddhism prevailed and whether it had an impact on the culture of our country. The purpose of this research is to study whether *Vajrayana* Buddhism existed in Sri Lanka historically, at what stage, and what impact it had. Qualitative research methodology was used as the research methodology in conducting this research. According to the data uncovered at the end of the research, it is apparent that *Vajrayana* Buddhism has had an impact on many aspects of Sri Lanka. By studying the historical information, it was revealed that Sri Lankan monks who accepted *Vajrayana* Buddhism have lived in Sri Lanka, that books have been written about it, that *Vajrayana* Buddhism has influenced the practices to some extent, that *Vajrayana* Buddhism has also been included in the composition of classical literary texts, and that *Vajrayana* Buddhism has also influenced the arts and architecture of Sri Lanka. Therefore, the final conclusion we could reach in this study is that *Vajrayana* Buddhism existed in ancient Sri Lanka and its influence is still present today. It was also revealed that the influence of *Vajrayana* Buddhism has influenced many aspects of culture.

Keywords: *Abhayagiriya*, *DhArabi*, MahAyana tradition, *Vajrayana* Buddhism, Sri Lankan culture

Introduction

The study of Buddhist history reveals that the teachings of Gautama Buddha were divided into two main parts and eighteen sub-parts after the Second Buddhist Council. It can be seen that MahAyana Buddhism was divided into many more. One of them is *Vajrayana* Buddhism. The literal meaning of *Vajrayana* is vehicle of diamond. The meaning of *Mantrayana* is *Mantra* vehicle. The meaning of *Tantrayana* is *Tantra* vehicle. Tantric Buddhism is also known as secret Buddhism. From the above study of the literal meaning, it is seen that the word *yana* means vehicle and by adding other words to it, various Buddhist religious traditions with different names have been formed. Buddhist scholars believe that *Vajrayana* originated in medieval India, between the fifth and seventh centuries AD.

The three main sources of information about *Vajrayana* Buddhism are the *NikAyasaMgraha*, Chinese records, and Tibetan records. In addition to these historical records, other evidence also reveals the existence of *Vajrayana* Buddhism in Sri Lanka. *Ratnakuta* Sutta found from the *cetiya*giri monastery, the *Vajrasattva Jambala*, and the images of *TARA Devi* provide evidence for this.

Evidence of the existence of *Vajrayana* Buddhism can also be found in places such as the *DhArabi* House Shrine of the Polonnaruwa Rock Temple and the *NAlanda* Temple in Matale. Information about the *Vajrayana* can also be found in the *NikAyasaMgraha*. It is a book written in the 14th century [1]. In it, *Vajrayana* is mentioned as *VajiriyavAda*. *Vajiriya* is the old Sinhala word used for vajra or diamond in Sanskrit. According to the *NikAyasaMgraha*, the *Vajrayana* came to Sri Lanka from *Vajra Parvata* in India during the time of King *Matwala Sen*, i.e. between 846-866 AD. This king accepted the teachings of the *Abhayagiriya*

Temple and is currently identified as the first Sena king. The chronicle "*MahAvamsa*" states that this king accepted and practiced *Vajrayana* Buddhism introduced by monks from *Vajra Parvata*. *Vajra Parvata* is identified with *Sri Sailim* in South India, *Sri Parvata* in the Tibetan tradition, and Diamond Mountain in Korea. It is identified with *Vajra Parvata* in Sri Lanka. Since the *NikAyasaMgraha* states that *Vajrayana* originated with monks from the mountain, in Sri Lanka that Buddhism is known as the *Vajrayana* sect of the *Vajra Parvatavasi* (living in *vajra Parvata*). Although *Vajrayana* arrived in Sri Lanka in the ninth century, as stated in the *NikAyasaMgraha*, there is evidence that *Vajrayana* Buddhism existed in Sri Lanka even before that. This is also revealed in the characters of the two Indian tantric teachers named *Vajrabodhi* and *Amogavajra*, who arrived in Sri Lanka in the eighth century.

King *Sena I* faced strong opposition for accepting *Vajrayana* and lost his kingdom. He was also accused of selling Sri Lanka to South India. Historical information reveals that he died unfortunately in Polonnaruwa. However, it is revealed that King *Sena I* was happy with the *Vajrayana* Dhamma. The *NikAyasaMgraha* uses the term "Secret Discourse (Dhamma)" for the *Vajrayana* teachings. It is also known as "Gruhya Dharma". The *NikAyasaMgraha* reveals that when the *Vajrayana* Dhamma was taught to the student, he was instructed not to reveal this Dhamma to anyone else while sitting nearby. However, we can mainly discover information about *Vajrayana* Buddhism from the *NikAyasaMgraha*. The *NikAyasaMgraha* lists the names of thirty-four books that belong to different sects [2]. Twenty-six of them are considered works of Tantric Buddhism. If they are,

1. Gūḍhavinaya 2. Māyājālatantra 3. Samājatantra
4. Mahāsamayatattvatantra 5. Tattvasaṃgrahatantra
6. Bhūtaḍāmaratantra 7. Vajrāmtatantra
8. Cakrasaṃvaratantra 9. Dvādaacakratantra
10. Herukādbhūtantra 11. Mahāmāyātantra
12. Padankṣepatantra 13. Catuṣpīṣṭatantra
14. Parāmarddhatantra 15. Mārīcudbhavatantra
16. Sarvabuddhatantra 17. Sarvaguhyantra
18. Samuccayatantra 19. Mārīci kalpa
20. Herambha kalpa 21. Trisamaya kalpa
22. Rājakaḷpa 23. Vajragandharakaḷpa
24. Mārīciguhyā kalpa 25. Suddhasamuccaya kalpa
26. Māyāmārīci kalpa 27. Ratnakūṭa sūtra of the Āndrakas

When studying the above list of texts, it is clear that Tantric Buddhism or *Vajrayana* Buddhism existed in Sri Lanka in the past. It is clear that all the other texts except the *Ratnakūṭa* text are by the people of *Vajrayana* Mountain. Accordingly, it can be assumed that the other texts were compiled by the *Vajrayana* monks. Although the chronicle “MahAvaMsa” does not mention anything in this regard, a long description can be revealed from the *NikAyasaMgraha* about the *Vajrayana* and *Tantrayana* monks. According to Chinese sources, the monks *Vajrabodhi* and *Amoghavajra* came to Sri Lanka and lived in *Abhayagiriya* monastery. Information is also revealed that they taught Sri Lankan students. It is said that the monk *Amoghavajra* collected the Tantric texts to take the Sri Lankan texts to China. The monk *Amoghavajra* came to Sri Lanka during the reign of King *Agrabodhi* VI, who was also known as *ūiḷa MeghavarBa*, and his reign was from 741-781 AD. With the help of the king, Venerable *Amoghavajra* was able to take a large number of books to China, of which he had translated more than eighty-nine into Chinese by the time of his death. Historical texts state that he also served as an advisor to three Chinese kings. Namely, *Hsüan-tsung* (712-756), *Su-tsung* (756-762) and *Tai-tsung* (762-779) [3]. It is said that *Vajrabodhi* Thera received the support of Venerable *Amoghavajra* in translating Sanskrit texts into Chinese. His name is mentioned in hundreds of Chinese scriptures. Based on the above facts, the contribution made by Venerable *Amoghavajra* to the spread and advancement of *Vajrayana* Buddhism in Sri Lanka cannot be quantified.

Some Tibetan sources also reveal information about *Vajrayana* Buddhism. A Tibetan monk named *ThArAnAtha* Thero, who lived in the 16th century CE, wrote two books. (*Tāranātha’s* History of Buddhism in India), (*Buddha’s* Lions or Eighty-Four Siddhas) are the two books. Both of these books mention *RatnAkaraūAnti* Thero, also known as *ūAantipA* Thero, who lived in Sri Lanka for many years and taught Tantric Buddhism to the people of Sri Lanka before going to *Vikramāūiḷa* in India. In a book written by *ThArAnAtha* Thero, it is recorded that a scholar named *RatnAkaraūAnti* came to Sri Lanka. The envoys sent by the king of Sri Lanka brought back about two hundred *MahAyana* texts. He lived in Sri Lanka for seven years and taught those texts. Some sources also state that he established sutra schools and eventually left five hundred *MahAyana* disciples in Sri Lanka and went to India.

Research Problem

Historical information reveals that in addition to Theravada Buddhism, other religious groups lived in ancient Sri Lanka. Among them, those who accepted *Vajrayana* Buddhism,

studied it, and propagated it are the main ones. Also, evidence that *Vajrayana* Buddhism existed has been identified today. Therefore, when did *Vajrayana* Buddhism arrive in Sri Lanka? When did it spread? What was its impact on Sri Lankan culture? The research problems of this research were the questions.

Research Objective

When studying history, it is revealed that various religious groups lived in Sri Lanka since ancient times. Among them were monks who accepted *Vajrayana* Buddhism, studied it, and propagated it, as well as lay people. Therefore, the aim of this research is to study when *Vajrayana* Buddhism arrived and existed in Sri Lanka and what impact it had on Theravada Buddhism and Sri Lankan society in Sri Lanka.

Research Methodology

There are two main research methods used in the study and research of humanities and social sciences. One is the quantitative research method. The other is the qualitative research method. Qualitative research method was used for this research.

Vajrayana Buddhism and Sri Lankan Buddhist Rituals

Sri Lanka is a Theravada Buddhist country in terms of Buddhism and more than half of the population living in Sri Lanka is a Theravada Buddhist, as revealed by demographic and statistical data. Although Sri Lanka is a Theravada Buddhist country, a study of some rituals shows that there are non-Buddhist rituals and Buddhist rituals. Among them, it can be identified that there are rituals related to *Vajrayana* Buddhism. This can be identified by paying attention to the following aspects.

- *Mantra* use - Some Theravada monks in Sri Lanka use *mantras* (charming) and are accustomed to chanting them. In *Vajrayana* Buddhism, protective and healing *mantras*, which are similar to the use of mystical sound vibrations, are also relevant. They can also be seen being performed by some Theravada monks. According to Theravada Buddhism, it can be recognized that the Buddha completely disapproved of their performance.
- Sacred *mandalas* and *yantras* - Ritual images similar to the *mandalas* and *yantras* used in *Vajrayana* Buddhism are seen in some places in Sri Lankan Buddhism and local medicine to heal diseases. It can be identified as an element incorporated into Sri Lankan culture through *Vajrayana* symbolism. It can be described as a function that recalls the nature of mystical practices depicted in *Vajrayana* Buddhism.
- Deity Worship and Bodhisattva Worship - Several statues of *Avalokitesvara* Bodhisattva and *Vajrapāṇi* Bodhisattva have been discovered in several parts of Sri Lanka. They are currently housed in the National Museum of Sri Lanka. They are listed below along with the relevant years.

Anuradhapura Veheragala Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva Image - (9th century AD) (Picture 01)

Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva Image - (9th century AD) (Picture 02)

Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva Image - (9th century AD)

Kurunegala Vajrapāṇi Bodhisattva Image - (9th century AD)

Sitting *TArA* Image found in *Talampitiya, Kurunegala* - (9th-10th century AD)

MAIA TArA Image (*TArA* Holding a Rosary) found in Mannar - (10th century AD)

The worship of the above Bodhisattvas and the performance of rituals to them can still be seen in some places today. They are also seen to be mixed with TheravAda rituals.

- Secret rituals of the forest ascetic life - The monks of Sri Lanka can be divided into two groups. That is, the village monks and the forest monks. It has been identified that the forest monks engage in meditation practices related to the *VajrayAna* tradition and Tantric Buddhism.

VajrayAna Buddhism and the Sri Lankan Woman

It is also useful to study the status of the female monks in Sri Lanka with *VajrayAna* Buddhism. Some scholars are of the opinion that according to TheravAda Buddhism, the Nuns have been given less attention in Sri Lanka. However, it can be identified that through *VajrayAna* Buddhism, women have been given the same status as men. Although the Buddha had given women the same status as men, it can be seen in studies on the Bhikshuni Order that it changed later. The reason for this is that the Bhikshuni Order disappeared from the world. Although the majority of the Sri Lankan TheravAda monks believe that such a thing cannot be re-established, it is considered an underestimation from the perspective of women.

The Bhikshuni Order introduced by the Venerable *SaMghamittA* gradually disappeared from the world after a period of time. There is not enough information that the monks provided support for the establishment of the Bhikshuni Order in Sri Lanka. Although the Bhikshuni Order was established in other countries of the world, it seems that the monks have objected to the establishment of the Bhikshuni Order in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the initiation of the Bhikshuni Order in Sri Lanka was delayed day by day, and even today, many monks are reluctant to acknowledge the existence of the Bhikshuni Order in Sri Lanka.

Nuns in Sri Lanka are known only as *Dasasil MAtAwa*. They are not called Bhikshunis (Nuns). However, according to a recent court ruling, they can use the title Bhikshuni. In *VajrayAna* Buddhism, female monks are given high respect and are also recognized as having a special role. The character of *TArA* in Tibetan Buddhism is a good example of this. In *VajrayAna* Buddhism, *TArA* is called a Bodhisattva. *SurenjAw* is another important woman in *VajrayAna* Buddhism. She is also known as *Haritha TArA*. One of the twenty *TArAs* mentioned in Tibetan Buddhism, she is a popular bodhisattva of healing and protection. Many such women are mentioned in *VajrayAna* Buddhism, and it seems that all women were given high recognition and respect in society. However, although women are not treated differently in general society in Sri Lanka, ordained women are not given much importance. At least they had to win a lawsuit to take the name of bhikshuni. That too, less than a year ago. However, there are bhikshuni monks in *VajrayAna* Buddhism, and they are also recognized in the country and Buddhist dispensation.

Abhayagiriya Temple and VajrayAna Buddhism

There were three major religious centres during the Anuradhapura Kingdom, the oldest state in Sri Lanka. They

were the *MahAvihAraya*, *Abhayagiriya* and *Jetavana*. The *MahAvihAraya* was built during the reign of king *DevAnampiyatissa*, in the 3rd century BCE. The *Abhayagiriya* was built during the reign of king *WaTTagAminlabhaya in pali* or *VaLagambA* in Sinhala, in the 1st century BCE. The *Jetavana VihAraya* was built by King *MahAsena*, in the 3rd century BCE. The *MahAvihAraya* was the main religious centres where TheravAda monks lived. Both *Abhayagiriya* and *Jetavana* were known as study centres for non-TheravAda monks at that time. *Abhayagiriya* and *Jetavana VihAraya* were considered educational centres where monks who followed *MahAyAna* and *VajrayAna* Buddhism were located. It can be revealed by studying history that these religious centres developed and declined from time to time. When some kings came to power, they developed their respective religious centres according to their preferred philosophy. For example, it is said that when King *VohAratissa* came to power, he harassed and punished the monks who followed *VaitulyavAda* or *MahAyAna* and destroyed a large number of books related to it. Similarly, it can be revealed by studying the history of Sri Lanka that during the reign of *GoThAbhaya*, he punished the heretical monks and destroyed the *MahAyAna*. However, it can be revealed by studying the history of Sri Lanka that during the reign of king *MahAsena*, the *MahAvihara* was destroyed and overgrown with weeds and that *MahAyAna* or *VaitulyavAda* Buddhism was given high recognition. At that time, King *MahAsena* developed *Abhayagiri* and did not show any interest in TheravAda monks. *VajrayAna* Buddhism flourished during the Anuradhapura period from the late seventh century to the early eleventh century [4]. Tantric texts including the *SarvatathAgatvasaMgrahaya* were written and edited during that period. This text was composed in South India in the mid-seventh century and completed around the eighth century. During the reign of the second *Lambakarna* (clinging ears) king of the Anuradhapura period, *VajrayAna* Buddhism had reached a very advanced stage.

An inscription mentioning the *VajrayAna* tradition has also been found in the *Abhayagiri* temple in Sri Lanka. Professor *KulatuMga* has mentioned information about it in his works as well as in other publications. One of them is given below.

om vajra guhya gīta samaye
... rkkupūjā pravartataya siṭa... o vajra
guhya. thpa pūjā samaye sarvva
pūjām pravartataya bhrīn śrī
jā. om vajra pragha.. om
vajra.. om vajra..

.....

The same inscription is mentioned in a document by *Lokesh Candra* as follows.

1. om vajraguhyagītapūjāsamaye
2. sarvvapūjām pravartaya hūm | om vajra
3. guhyanṛtyapūjāsamaye sarvva-
4. pūjām pravartaya hūm [|] śrīh om va-
5. jradhūpe hūm | om vajrapuṣpe hūm | om
6. vajradīpe hūm | om vajragan(dhe) hūm |
7. om vajrām(ku)śa (jja)h | om (va)jrapāśa hūm [|] om va 8.
8. jraś (pho)ṭa vaṃ [|] om vajrāve(śa) aḥ

It can be revealed that the names of the gods belonging to

the *VajrayAna* tradition mentioned in the above inscriptions are mentioned. Information about goddesses such as VajrapuŪpa, VajradIpa, VajrAm etc. is among them. When paying attention to the following frame, it can be

understood how similar the inscription found in *Abhayagiri* is to the Vajraguyhavajraman Dala and the Thrailokavijayamah Aman Dal ^[5]. This shows how closely *Abhayagiri* worked with the MahAyAna and *VajrayAna*.

Abhayagiri stūpa inscription	STTS Parallels (ch. 2) Vajraguyhavajra-maṇḍala	STTS parallels (ch. 6) Trilokavijaya mahāmaṇḍala
1. om vajraguyhyagītapūjāsamaye 2. sarvvapūjām pravartaya hūm om vajra 3. guhyānṛtyapūjāsamaye sarvva- pū 4a. pūjām pravartaya hūm	om vajraguyhyagītapūjā samaye sarvvapūjām pravartaya hūm om vajraguyhyānṛtyapūjā samaye sarvvapūjām pravartaya hūm (STT 342)	...om vajragīte gāda gāda hūm phaṭ om vajranṛte vaśīkuru hūm phaṭ (STT 883)
4b. śrīh om va- 5. jradhūpe hūm om vajrapuṣpe hūm om 6. vajradīpe hūm om vajragan(dhe) hūm	Deities not present	om vajradhūpapūjā spharaṇa-samaye hūm phaṭ om vajrapuṣpapūjā spharaṇasamaye hūm phaṭ (STT 885) om vajrālokapūjā spharaṇasamaye hūm phaṭ om vajragandhapūjā spharaṇasamaye hūm phaṭ (STT 886)
7. om vajrām(ku)śa (jja)h om (va)jrapāśa hūm [] om va		om vajrāṅkuśakrodhā karṣaya sarva
8. -jraṣ(pho)ṭa vaṃ [] om vajrāve(śa) aḥ	Deities not present	om vajrapāśakrodha praveśaya sarvasamayān hūm hūm (STT 888) om vajrasphoṭamahā krodha bandha bandha sarvasamayān hūm vaṃ om vajrāveśakrodh āveśaya sarvasamayān hūm aḥ (STT 889)

In addition to the above-mentioned framework, two other inscriptions found near the *Abhayagiriya* pagoda have been identified as being similar to the second chapter of the SarvatathAgatattvasaMgraha ^[6].

Sri Lankan Paritta Chanting and VajrayAna Buddhism

There are several *Paritta chanting* traditions currently used in Sri Lanka. The TheravAda tradition recognizes that it is a tradition that has been passed down since the time of the Buddha. It can be recognized that the Buddha himself has also used *Paritta chanting* as a protective sermon. It is common for TheravAda Buddhists in Sri Lanka to use *Paritta chanting* on all their auspicious and festive occasions. From the conception of a child to death, Sri Lankan people use *Paritta chanting* on various occasions. *AMgulimAla Paritta* is recited when a child is born, and *Paritta chanting* can be recited by Sri Lankan Buddhists at the time of reading letters, at the time of marriage, in cases of illness, and at the time of death. When we look closely at the *Paritta chanting* currently used in Sri Lanka, it is clear that the traditional features of the *VajrayAna* and the traditional features of the *VajrayAna* are mixed. The DhAraBI feature can be identified in the *Paritta chanting sutras* such as *Jalanandana paritta*, *Sivall Paritta* etc. It is the belief of the people of Sri Lanka that they should be recited a certain number of times and that is how many times they receive blessings. It has been accepted that when certain *Paritta sutras* are recited or chanted one hundred and eight times, one thousand times, ten thousand times, etc., their power is increased. This feature is not a feature of TheravAda *Paritta* sermons, but we can recognize it as a DhAraBI feature. There are seven stanzas called *RandenigAthA* in the Sri Lankan *PiruvAna potvahanse* (Paritta Book), and traditional MahAyAna features can also be seen in them. Some of them are listed below.

- Om om om droṃ droṃ droṃ hrīṃ hrīṃ hrīṃ bhrām bhrām bhrām proṃ proṃ proṃ aṃ iṃ uṃ eṃ om viṣṇu viṣa vināsāya suṃ suṃ namaḥ
- Om kuru kuru dalesvāhaḥ
- Om kuru kuru esvāhaḥ - om namarī esvāhaḥ ^[7]

Since the above features are very similar to the Tantric features of the *VajrayAna* tradition, it can be recognized that the current *Paritta chanting* practiced in Sri Lanka has been influenced by *VajrayAna*. Below is a *VajrayAna* mantra (charm). By comparing the above *Paritta chanting* with it, it can be clearly identified.

1. Om hūm bām, rīm rīm, līm līm, kāṃ khām, gām ghām ngām, tsām tshām, dzhām nyām, trām trām, drām dhrām nām, tām thām, dām dhām nām, pām phām, bām bhām yām, rām lām vām shām kāṃ sām hām hūm hūm phaṭ āṃ āḥ hūm
2. Om kara kara kuru kuru bandha bandha ^[8]...

Sri Lankan Classical Literature and VajrayAna Buddhism

When studying the classical Sinhala literature written in Sri Lanka and Pali literature, it reveals that *VajrayAna* Buddhism has influenced them. The *dampiyA Atuva geTapada*, which is based on the DhammapadaTThakathA, contains some words related to *VajrayAna* Buddhism. At one point, the word VajrakAya is used to refer to the body of the Buddha, and at another point, the *dampiyA Atuva geTapada* states that the blood in his body cannot be shaken by anyone, and this is because he has a *VajrakAya*. The word *VajrakAya* is a word used in MahAyAna Buddhism. The words *VajrakAya*, *DharmakAya*, and *BuddhakAya* are words specific to *VajrayAna* Buddhism ^[9].

One of the chronicles written in Sri Lanka is the DhAtuvaMsa. There is also a *VajrayAna* idea. This chronicle mentions a mountain called *Sumerukanda*. It is said in the *LaLATA DhAtuvaMsa* that the Buddha preached the Dhamma from a top that mountain, that is, he preached the Dhamma to the gods in the *TAvatiMsa* divine world, and accordingly, *Sumerukanda* is in the *TAvatiMsa* divine world, and the Buddha preached the Dhamma to the gods there, sitting on it. That is, the *MahAmeru* mountain in sinhala. That description is not mentioned in any TheravAda scripture. This description is mentioned only in the *LaLATA DhAtuvaMsa*. It is believed in the Tantric literature belonging to *VajrayAna* Buddhism that the Buddha preached the Dhamma from *Sumerukanda* as mentioned above.

Sri Lankan Architecture and Vajrayana Buddhism

A study of Sri Lankan art and architecture reveals that there are certain characteristics of *Vajrayana* Buddhism and Tantric teachings. This can be identified especially in the study of art and crafts from the ancient kingdom eras. Characteristics of Tantric Buddhism can be seen in the *Polonnaruwa* Rock Temple or *UttarArAma* Temple. Among the carvings found there, a statue with several *vajras* (diamonds) with two heads carved vertically is found. Such a statue is found in the *Dedigama* Temple in the Kegalle District in Sri Lanka. It is a gold-plated statue. It is a statue made in the same way as the carving in the *Polonnaruwa* Rock Temple with a two heads. Also, such a statue with two heads is found in *Abhayagiri* temple. It can be seen that the *Vajra* is similar to the ancient *Vajras* found in countries where *MahAyana* Buddhism is practiced, such as China, Japan, Vietnam, Tibet and Mongolia. Accordingly, it is very clear that the arts and crafts of Sri Lanka have also been influenced by *Vajrayana* Buddhism.

Conclusion

This research has uncovered many facts about the historical impact of *Vajrayana* Buddhism on Sri Lankan culture. In conducting this research, the extent to which *Vajrayana* Buddhism has affected Sri Lankan culture has been discussed under several aspects. First, when studying or comparing the relationship between *Vajrayana* Buddhism and women and the status given to women in *Vajrayana* Buddhism, it was revealed that women have been given more freedom and respect in *Vajrayana* Buddhism, while Theravada Buddhism has not been given so much freedom. Also, when studying certain practices of *Vajrayana* Buddhism and Theravada Buddhism, it was revealed that the influence of *Vajrayana* Buddhism has affected certain practices in Theravada Buddhism. *Abhayagiri Viharaya* was an ancient major religious centre or headquarters in Sri Lanka. While studying the history of *Abhayagiri Viharaya* (Temple), it was possible to uncover a lot of information regarding *Vajrayana* Buddhism and it was possible to uncover that various research and literary activities were carried out in *Abhayagiri* temple under the influence of *Vajrayana* Buddhism and that books were written. We were also able to discover that *DharaBI* Mantra-like stone inscriptions and other documents were also found in *Abhayagiriya* temple. While studying the *Paritta* chanting, it was revealed that *DharaBI* Mantra-like *Paritta* are currently found in Theravada and that they are used in *Paritta* chanting. Some scholars conclude that they are prepared from the *DharaBI* Mantras of *Vajrayana* Buddhism and Tantrayana Buddhism. Accordingly, it was possible to uncover information that the *DharaBI* Suttas related to *MahAyana* Buddhism are also used in the chanting of *Paritta* in Theravada Buddhism. Examples of these have also been given in this research. Moreover, it was possible to uncover that some of them have been influenced by Buddhism when studying Sri Lankan classical literature and Pali literature. It was also possible to uncover that the arts and crafts of Sri Lanka have also been influenced by *Vajrayana* Buddhism. According to the above information, it was possible to identify in this study that *Vajrayana* Buddhism has influenced every subject area in Sri Lanka. Therefore, it is clear that *Vajrayana* Buddhism is not a new religion to Sri Lanka but a religion with a strong connection.

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