

JINÂLANĀKÂRA

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INTRODUCTION

A HIGH antiquity is accorded to the *Jindāṅkara*. The postscript to the text ascribes the authorship to Buddharakkhita, who is stated to have been born in Ceylon of a distinguished family in the 117th year of the *nirvāna* of Buddha, *i.e.*, in B.C. 426. His birthplace was Rohana, and it appears that he was the head of a congregation of priests in Colīkatambaratṭha (afterwards Tāmbamaṇi), the maritime western division of Ceylon, where the Colās of the Coromandel coast originally settled. His learning and quick-wittedness acquired for him a considerable reputation, which traditional history has preserved to the present day.

Accepting the date of Buddharakkhita given above as correct, we must ascribe the text to a period nearly a century before the reign of Tissa, better known as Devānampiyatissā, in whose reign Mahinda, after the Council of Pātāliputra, came as missionary apostle to Ceylon, bringing with him the authorised version of the Buddhist scriptures, with their commentaries. That island had become a field for missionary work in the first century after the death of Buddha. It had come under Brahmanic influence some time before, and with the establishment of the colony from Bengal under the rule of Vijaya, in B.C. 527 (a date supported by Burmese chronology), good scope must have presented itself for the spread of the Buddhist faith that had been but lately received with favour in the Gangetic delta, although Vijaya himself was less concerned with religious affairs

than with the economic development of the territory acquired by him.

Buddharakkhita probably sprang from a family that had settled in south-eastern Ceylon and migrated to Tambamani when the colony from Bengal had secured a proper footing. It was in all likelihood of the Mâgadha race, for Buddharakkhita is represented by his commentator as writing for the Mâgadheses in particular. With the inducements to missionary work in Vijaya's domain, our author must have joined the church, and as an outcome of his devotion to Pali studies, composed the *Jinâlaṅkāra*.

The name of the treatise signifies "Embellishments of the Conqueror," and is sufficiently indicated in the following stanza:—

Ñānâsinâ titikkhena jitamârabalaṃ jinam
Jinâlaṅkāra nâmena âlaṅkārena 'laṅkari.

"He (Buddharakkhita), by the adornment known as *Jinâlaṅkāra*, adorned the Conqueror (Buddha), who, with the sharp sword of knowledge, overcame the forces of Mâra." The commentator, moreover, describes the author as a "Treasurer" (Bhaṇḍagârika) who, taking the attributes of Buddha, deposits them in the scented basket *Jinâlaṅkāra*. "Buddharakkhitâcariyo sabbalokissarassa anantajinassa Buddhassa bhagavato guṇâlaṅkârabhaṇḍâni gahetvâ Jinâlaṅkârassa saṅkhâte gandhakarandake pakkipetvâ punnâyakaratanasadissa yogâvacarakulaputtassa niyyâdesi."

In the flourishing days of Buddhist literature in Burma the text was studied in every monastery of importance, but it is now much neglected, and copies are becoming rare. Its reputation as an ancient work composed by an able scholar in unique style is, however, still maintained through an excellent *Tikâ*, which, as a storehouse of much information in connection with the life and