

An Overview on the Representations of God Saman in Ancient Sri Lanka

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Abstract:

This research will integrate into the areas of Social Archeology and Historical Archeology. Of the 85 statues and cave temples we explored, 26 were represented by the god Saman in the perfume chamber, and on 12 occasions the perfume chamber was positioned in front of the Buddha statue facing both (Table 1) in both statues and paintings. The god Saman is thus depicted in the perfume chamber. In addition, a system of temples dedicated to God Saman came to our attention in the Western Province, Sabaragamuwa and Central Provinces (Gamalath and Kekulawala, 2020: 507-536). It is important to note that Saman's early Theravada Buddhism underwent a gradual evolution after the 15th century. We have pointed out that the Mahayana religion was influenced by Hinduism. This research focuses on the number of hands, handprints, objects, body color, and data on elephants and their comparable differences related to the identity of the god Saman. This research has shown that there is a great variety of Saman deities, especially those made between the 18th and 20th centuries AD. It is also worth noting how the Hindu influences during the reign of the Nayakkar dynasty kings highlight these differences. In the end, the Hindu-inspired representation of Saman is enough to conclude that the Vedic deity is Yama (Paranavitana, 1957). The myth that Samandeviyana was the god Yama, built by Paranavithana, is deeply reconsidered here. The connection between the god Saman and King Rawana is hypothetically shown by the depictions that culminate in the early indigenous Yaksha tribal identity of that god. The closest example is the painting Saman Deva, published by Davy in 1821.

Keywords- God Saman, Yama, Vibheeshana, Gandakuti, Mahayana.

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Research Problem

To study whether the Buddhist identity of God Saman can be revealed in the statues and paintings presented in the Buddha statues.

Research Methodology

Qualitative and quantitative methods were used for the research. There, observations and symbolic studies have been carried out under qualitative methods. Under the quantitative method, a comparative study has been conducted including the Saman devalas, murals and statues of 24 sites (GIS map) showing the positioning representation of God Saman with God Upulvan and the information contained in the secondary research about the respective places.

Discussion

Table number 1 shows the status of the main deity in the fragrance chamber of the 25 temples. By comparison, this is a testament to the fact that the Buddhist image of Saman is more preserved throughout the island than that of Upulvan. These data are extracted from 85 samples from the 12th to the 19th century (see Table 1). The gods of the Hindu pantheon did not pose a threat to their existence due to the color of their bodies from the god Upulvan to the god Saman. We have shown how the existence of Upulvan Surindu in popular Buddhism was later threatened by the matching of the blue color of Lord Vishnu to the bright color of the body of god King (Devaraja) Upulvan Deva (Gamalath and Kekulawala, 2020:399-404).

The god Saman is one of the four deities who protects Sri Lanka and is first mentioned in a document named Nikaya Samgrahaya of the 14th century AD (Nik, 37-38). At the same time, in the Lankathilaka and Gadaladen rock inscriptions (EZ Vol.Iv,27: 90-110) and Alawala Amuna rock (Paranavitana, 1960:5) inscriptions made during the same period, the name of the god Saman has been included among the guardian deities of Sri Lanka (Gamalath and Kekulawala, 2020: 120-139). However, there is evidence in the Culavamsa and the Poojavali that King

Parakramabahu II gave great prominence to the worship of Saman in the 13th century AD (ibid). Therefore, it can be believed that the concept of four guardians deity may have been included by the god Saman around the thirteenth century. Kihirali Upulwan, Saman Boksal, Vibheeshna and Skanda Kumara are the first three local deities among the four deities in the body code. Vibhishana was the brother of King Rawana. Then only the god Skanda or Kataragama will be a god of Hindu origin in Vedic literature. The 25 Buddha statues we explored represent the god Saman (Table 1). The Buddha image house dates from the 14th to the 18th century AD. It is noteworthy that only the Buddha image houses and not the Samandewala have been used here. The highest number of times, that is, on 12 occasions, the god Saman is seen in the fragrance chamber, staring at the Buddha, and taking the statue out to the front wall. On at least four occasions, Lord Saman appeared to the left of the Buddha, where Vishnu is most often (Table 1).

Therefore, the statistical data show that the place of worship of Lord Vishnu in the Gandha Kutuya from the 18th century onwards was not occupied by Upulvan and Saman in the Gandhakuthi built during the same period and outside the Buddha image house (Table 1). This is due to the departure of both the Buddhist gods Saman and Upulvan from the concept of four guardian deities, which has been accepted since the 18th century. The two places were dedicated to Goddess Pattini and Lord Vishnu. The other two are “Skanda” or God Kataragama and God Natha. The Nayakkara dynasty (except during the reign of King Keerthi Sri Rajasinghe) first showed how Vishnu was added to the temples of the island during the Kandyan period (Gamalath and Kekulawala, 20,) and the widespread spread of the religion of Saman is evident in Buddhist temples in the Sabaragamuwa and Central Provinces (Table 1 , Map 1). Dharmadasa & Tundeniya (Dharmadasa & Tundeniya, 1994: 62-63) refer to these two provinces as the two main sites of the god Saman. Map 1 shows the distribution of the statues and statues of the god Saman and the spread of the temples (Map 1). Accordingly, we can see the spread of the god Saman in the Western Province as well. An examination of the statistics in Table 1 shows that the worship and popularity of the gods Saman and Upulvan were on an equal footing until the 18th century AD (Table 1). Another reason for this is that both of them were the leaders of the Buddhist Church and

were popular among the Buddhists as the four guardian deities of Sri Lanka from the 13th century to the 16th century AD. Until the middle of the 18th century AD, Lord Vishnu did not have such a status in Sri Lankan Buddhist culture. These statues and paintings date back to the 15th - 19th centuries AD.

Although Dharmadasa and Tundeniya state that the importance of God is expressed in terms of the size of the enclave and its significance (Dharmadasa & Tundeniya, 1994: 64), this view is consistent with the prevalence of worship among devotees today. But it cannot be confirmed on the basis of archeological evidence on a historical Buddhist basis. For example, the archeological evidence of the god Saman, which is now popular in the Sabaragamuwa and Central Provinces, dates back to around the 13th century AD. Written historical evidence is also found in other sources, beginning with the Culavamsa, dating to the 13th century AD. However, the Mahavamsa states that the popularity of this deity was recorded on a Buddhist basis during the Anuradhapura period from the 6th century AD.

Of the 85 statues we have examined, 26 have statues and paintings of Saman Deva (Gamalath and Kekulawala 2020, 361-385). Of these, the oldest surviving Saman Deva statue is in the Dambulla Cave. According to the Dambulla Vihara headline, the statue can be traced back to the reign of King Keerthi Sri Rajasinghe with the words "Forty five Buddha statues and two Maitriya Natha and two Upulvan Saman gods" (Davy, 1821:67-68). It can be suspected that the statue of Upulvan Deva was brought from Kandy to this cave in Dambulla during the reign of King Senarath (1604-1635 AD). In the 18th century, a similar four-armed Samandeva painting was published by John Davy in his work (ibid). On the back of the painting is the scepter on the right, which also means the scepter. In the back left hand is a half blossom or half blooming lotus flower. The front hand holds the ashinsana posture. This painting and the statue of Aththalawala bear the typical iconic features of Hindu theology, which became strongly associated with the Sri Lankan Buddhist community after the 16th century AD. It is because of this Hindu combination that Karunakarathna (1984) points out that the upper end of the Jaya konthe will be in the shape of a thrishule.

Table 1 shows that there are eighteen Buddha image houses of Saman Deva statues and paintings which were made at the same time as the Dambulla statue and the 19th century statues of Attanagalla, Kolamediriya, Elugala and Karagampitiya (Gamalawala and Kekulawala, 2020). But the first work on these dates to the late 18th century. There are two statues of Saman Deva belonging to the first quarter of the 20th century in the Muthiyangana image House and Lenavara image house. Among the statues and paintings presented in Table 1, the Aththalawala statue is unique in that it has four arms attached to it. There is no mark on the hands and the elephant in the background is a Buddha image house built in the days of King Keerthi Sri Rajasinghe. Another Saman deva painting with four arms attached can be seen in the Cave Temple No. 2 in Mulkirigala. Here he is holding a sword in one hand. John Davy also added four hands to the painting Samandeva, published in 1821 (Davy, 1821). Chandrika Magamma is of the opinion that the oldest statue of Samandeva in Sri Lanka is in the Galpottawala temple in Pelmadulla. It is difficult to identify even the features of the statue due to the large number of ornaments worn on the statue to prove the devotion of the devotees. She points out that although this statue is mentioned in the Culavamsa during the reign of King Parakramabahu II (1236-1272 AD) and was taken to Samanola by the Minister of Deva Pratiraja at Gampola, it is difficult to present the relevant archeological evidence. She further points out that the statue of Saman Deva in the Godakawela Tampita Vihara was also made under the influence of that statue (Magamma, 2006:123-125). Although Paranavithana interprets the white statue of Gonamariya Tampita Vihara as a statue of Samandeva (Paranavithana: 1957,48), he does not carry an object in the hands of the statue, and Upulvan statue placed on the other side of the Buddha image, always associated with the god Natha as the Natha deity. We have also shown that the color of the god Natha is white (Gamalath and Kekulawala, 2020:421-423).

Saman Deva Statues in which we explore and have discussed a large amount of evidence of this (ibid). According to these facts, Samanala Kanda shows the favors bestowed on the god Saman by kings Vijayabahu the Great, Parakramabahu the Great and Nissankamalla (1017 to 1198 AD). There was an idol of Saman Deva and there may have been Saman Devalayas in other parts of

the island.

God Saman is one of the main obstacles to beginning the confirmation of the parable of Paronavitana (Paronavitana, 1957), which is interpreted as the Vedic god yama. They are as follows:

1. No statues of Vedic deity Yama (except stupas, relic chambers and Anuradhapura period image houses) found in any of the 12th to 19th century Buddha image houses (including cave temples) examined under Table No. 1
2. Regarding Paronavithana's data from the Saman-yama equation cannot be compared chronologically, as all the statues found in Sri Lanka date back to the 12th century and earlier, and no statue of Saman Deva made in those periods has been found in Sri Lanka so far.
3. Although Paronavithana points out that Saman has a bow in one hand and an arrow in the other, he will only carry a stick or a cane in the hands of the idols of the same deity he has presented. It can also be seen that the Saman Deva statues and paintings made in Sri Lanka from time to time up to the end of the 19th century have always been replaced by other symbols. Discussing this, the two standard symbols of the god Saman are the bow and the arrow, and although the vehicle is accepted as the white elephant, there are many paintings that carry only the arrow in the hand without the bow. Also, many 20th century Saman deities have a lotus flower in their hands, but the Saman Deva statue in the cave temple in the upper courtyard of Mulkirigala has a rose in its hand. Also in the Muthiyangana Vihara, there is a book in one hand of the Saman Deva statue which belongs to the same period. Also, in several Buddhist temples including the Pelmadulla Rajamaha Viharaya, Saman paintings painted in the 19th and 20th centuries have a sword instead of an arrow in one hand. John Davy's 1821 painting of Saman deva carries a scepter on one hand and a half-blooming lotus flower on the other (Paronavitana, 1957:45, Fig.5). Therefore, Table 1 identifies instances where Saman paintings and statues created between the 18th and 20th centuries are depicted outside

the standard markings (Gamalatha and Kekulawala, 2020:361-385). Also, the vehicle of the god Saman is a white elephant, and when it is accepted that the vehicle of the god Yama is buffalo (Ibid, 240), there is a great mismatch between the two gods. Furthermore, the four arms and one face of Yama mentioned in the Vedic literature can never be reconciled with the Saman deity.

4. There is a strong discrepancy between the archeological and historical evidence that emerges regarding the use of Yama and Saman statues. Although certain deities were used in Ceylon during the 5th to 12th centuries AD for security, prosperity, and governmental purposes, the god Saman can be pointed out as one of the four gods who protected Sri Lanka. Accordingly, a national recognition which was not given to a particular deity has been attributed to the god Saman. Statues of certain deities have always been found inside of relic chambers of the stupas, under the Buddha statues, or in the 12th century, carved in corrugated stone as guardians of statues and gates of palaces, but as shown in Table 1 for more than 500 years. The status of a deity can be seen living and working in the scent chamber with the Buddha.
5. References to the god Yama in the anecdote indicate that the Vedic god Yama disguised himself as a Buddhist and later adapted it (Ibid, 240). However, there is no mention in the Attakatha literature of the origin of the god Saman. It is difficult to imagine that Ven. Buddhaghosa was unaware of the god Saman in the Mahavamsa, as there is a period between the time when the Mahavamsa was written and the Attakatha was written.
6. If the god Saman is a later incarnation of the Vedic god Yama, then the statue of Saman must have been popular in India with the Vedic god Yama, but it should be noted that no statue of the god Saman has ever been found in Indian archeological sites.
7. Although Saman is said to have attained the fruit of Sovan after hearing the Dhamma from the Buddha (Mv, 1.33), no other deity in Buddhist literature or chronicles has attained such a status.

8. Thus, the Saman-yama equation proposed by Paronavithana cannot be substantiated, and it is now time to look at the new myth of Naomi Kekulawala as a follower of King Rawana from a local Buddhist point of view (Gamalath and Kekulawala, 2020:330-331). Among the historical facts presented by her, the Lankavatara Sutra is consistent with the story that the Buddha recited the Dhamma to Ravana at the top of the great mountains of Sri Lanka and that the Sovan fruit was obtained. Also, the Lankavatara Sutra is a book written in the 3-4th century AD and that fact is included in the Mahavamsa in the 5th-6th century AD. Accordingly, the new allegory presented by Goddess Saman as a follower of King Rawana can be further explored by using local legends.

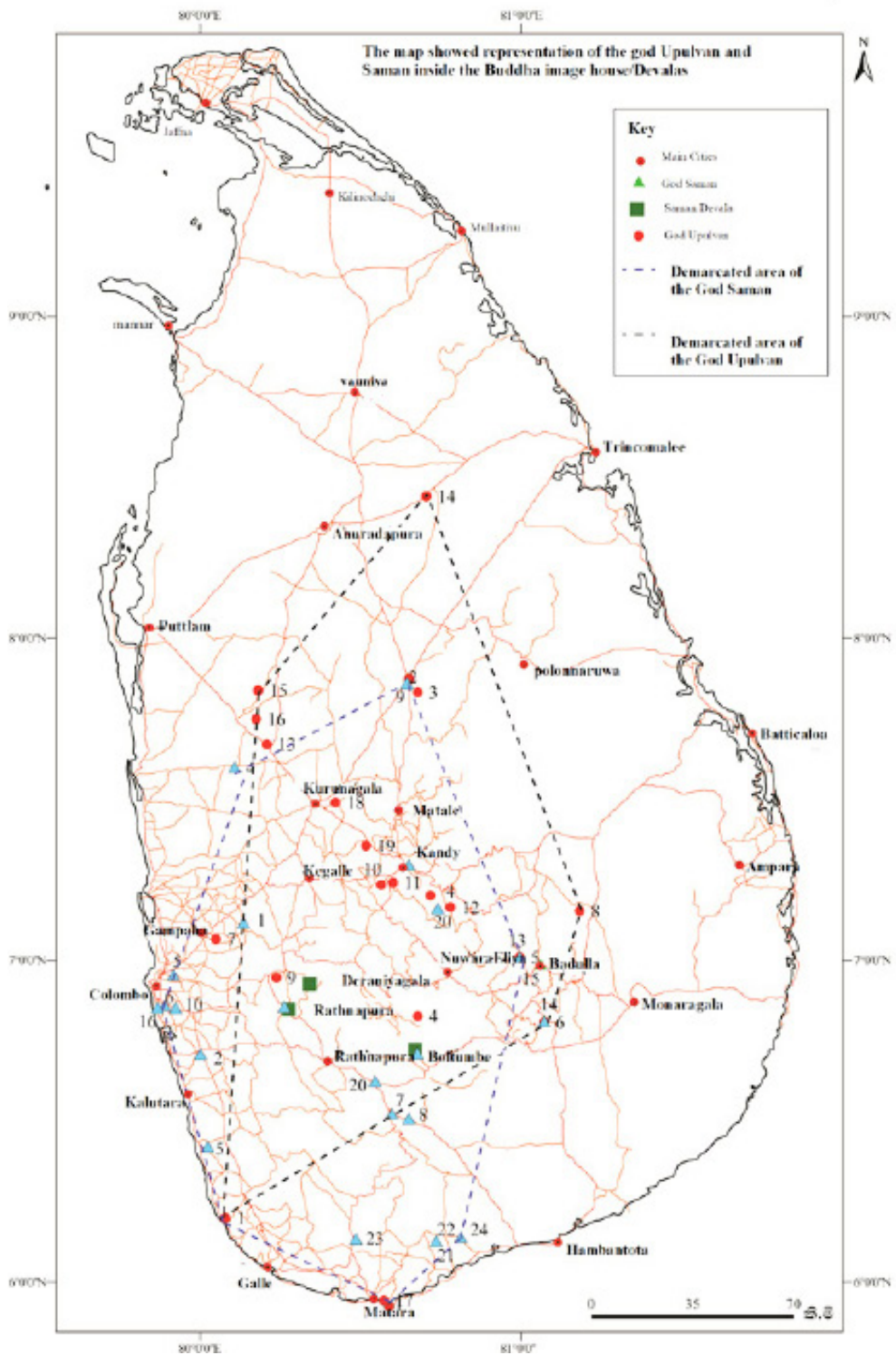
It is possible that the paintings depicting the rigidity of the god Saman depict the above demonic condition. For example, he holds a bow and arrow in a painting republished by Upham (1829) and republished by Paronavithana (1957). The painting also sparks the royal style of the god Saman. Clothing and jewelry, as well as the strange crown on the head, bear witness to this. Upham believes that the above characteristics of the god Saman are due to the fact that he was a former ruler of Kumbanda. Here in our analysis of the Samantabhadra Bodhisattvas (Ibid, 173) it can be said that the name Samantabhadra was added to describe the Bhadra or good form of the god Saman, that is, the good that arises after the deification of King Ravana.

Conclusion

An important feature of the Saman Deva paintings and statues depicted in the Buddha statues houses and cave temples that we have explored is that they have undergone chronological changes in their presentation. The oldest Saman Deva statue in the country is said to have been made by Pratiraja, the minister of King Parakramabahu II (1236-1272 AD) and placed on the Samanala hill. However, there is not enough definite archeological data to show whether the statue is currently housed in the Galpottawala temple. The oldest Saman Devalaya in Sri Lanka, built on the Samanala hill, dates back to the 12th century and is mentioned by King

Parakramabahu in the Maga Rajavali (Rajavali, 202). However, the Saman Deva statues depicting the twelfth century and the hand-held symbols in the paintings include an arrow and a lotus flower. Statues of a book and a half-blooming lotus flower are seldom found. The most common symbols of the 19th century were the lotus flower, the rose, and the sword. In the background, the white elephant is unchanged as the vehicle of the god Saman. Among the symbols associated with the god Saman, the victory wreath is found only in paintings published by Upham. Paronavithana states that the bow and arrow placed in the annual procession of the Ratnapura Saman Devalaya will be carried in that devalaya. These seem to be the two main signs of the god Saman. The above descriptions also show that this god does not have a specific body color. Originally depicted as a Buddhist biography with two hands, the god Saman was later painted with four hands in agreement with the Hindu Mahayana diplomatic theories. These are all presentations depicted after the 18th century.

Therefore, it can be pointed out that the Theravada Buddhist identity of the god Saman, who presented the essays in the Mahavamsa in the fifth century AD, has undergone some changes in the presentations made after the fifteenth century AD. Here are the facts required to re-examine the logical veracity of God Paronavithana Saman in comparison with the Vedic God Varuna. Also, the new myth that God Saman is a devotee of King Rawana will open the door for further research in anthropological archeology.



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Painting of God Saman publish by John Davy in 1821 (Paranavitana, 1957)