

**Depicting the Buddhist Cultural
Personality: A Textual Study of Early
Sinhala Film Song Lyrics**

**Nāgānanda International
Journal of Humanities & Social
Sciences**

Vol:10, No. 5, 2025 pp. 01-39

© NIIBS Publications.

All Right Reserved

<http://www.niibs.lk>

Issue Published Online: 01 December 2025

ISSN No: ISSN 2961-5801-G (online)

Subhash G. K.

Department of Music and Creative Technology, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Abstract

This study investigates the representation of the Buddhist cultural personality within the lyrics of early Sinhala film songs from 1947 to 1966. Emerging during the post-independence Buddhist cultural revival in Sri Lanka, these songs offer a unique lens into the era's evolving religious and social consciousness. Using a qualitative approach and Thematic Analysis on a purposive sample of 50 lyrics from 25 prominent lyricists, the research examines how literary, contemporary, and historical figures are used to construct this cultural identity. The findings reveal a multifaceted depiction of the Buddhist personality. The Buddha is portrayed not only as a religious mentor and philosopher, but also as an omnipotent figure and social deliverer, reflecting an evolving popular devotion. The lyrics further incorporate historical characters who embody Buddhist heroism and link religious devotion to national pride. Crucially, the core of the cultural personality is also expressed through the voices of commoners (devotees, philosophers, housewives, and pilgrims). These characters articulate personal struggles, interpreting themes of love, loss, and suffering through core Buddhist concepts. Furthermore, the lyricists often adopt the persona of a Dharma preacher, embedding instructions on morality, renunciation, and the path to Nirvana within the songs. Collectively, the lyrics reflect a collective Buddhist consciousness that transforms personal experience into a vibrant spiritual and moral expression, confirming the profound influence of Buddhism on early Sinhala art and culture.

Key Words: *Film Song Lyrics, Buddhist Culture, Buddhist Cultural Characters, Social Consciousness, Creativity*

Received : 01 July 2025

Revised : 25 August 2025

Accepted : 10 September 2025

Published : 01 December 2025

TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Subhash G.K. Depicting the Buddhist Cultural Personality: A Textual study of early Sinhala Film song Lyrics. Nāgānanda International Journal of Humanities and Social Science.7:4, Pp. 01-39

1. Introduction

Making musical words or lyric making has a rich and diverse history that spans centuries and cultures (Kennedy, 2017). Its development highlights the timeless power of human expression (Dabukke, 2025). Songs preserved cultural traditions and significant events, later evolving to reflect social, political, and artistic changes (Tekell, No Date; Balodis, 2024). Songs' lyrics can convey philosophical ideas, political viewpoints, scenic descriptions, and stories (Dyer, 2012). The Film song is a supportive art form of Cinema, which is used for the implement of the theme (Herath, 2013; Kumara, 2015).

Thēravāda Buddhism was introduced to Sri Lanka by Mahā Mahinda Thēra during the reign of King Dēvānampiyatissa of Anurādhapura, in the eighteenth year of the reign of Emperor Ashōka of India (Geiger, 1912; Tyagi, 2023; Mahinda, 2024). Modern Buddhist Culture in Sri Lanka ought to be regarded as a complex religious setting with a variety of rituals, faiths, and beliefs (Mangala, 1977; Gombrich, 1988; Wickremaratne, 2006; Nanayakkara, 2019). In Sri Lanka, Buddhism forms an important part of this whole, and its influence can be seen in Sinhala songs. Film song lyrics, as a part of Sinhala Song music, also reflect this Buddhist cultural system.

The Sri Lankan Buddhist Revival Movement, which began in the late nineteenth century (Premarathna, 2023; Malalgoda, 1976), reached its peak by the mid-twentieth century (Field, 2013). With the country's independence in 1948, ideas of local nationalism gradually emerged, and the political shift of 1956 further accelerated the Buddhist cultural revival (Swearer, 1970; Gombrich & Obeyesekara, 1988). The effects of these social, religious, and cultural changes are reflected in contemporary artistic expressions. This cultural consciousness is particularly evident in the film songs, which first appeared in 1947. The historical and contemporary characters portrayed, along with the perspectives of individual lyricists and the lyrics of the film songs

themselves, reveal the nuanced dynamics of human engagement with Buddhist culture in contemporary time, though formal scholarly studies on this remain limited. This study investigates the above scenario how the Buddhist cultural personality is represented in the lyrics of early Sinhala film songs. Further, it examines how these representations reflect the creativity, cultural perspectives, and ideological orientations of their lyricists and composers.

2. Materials and Methods

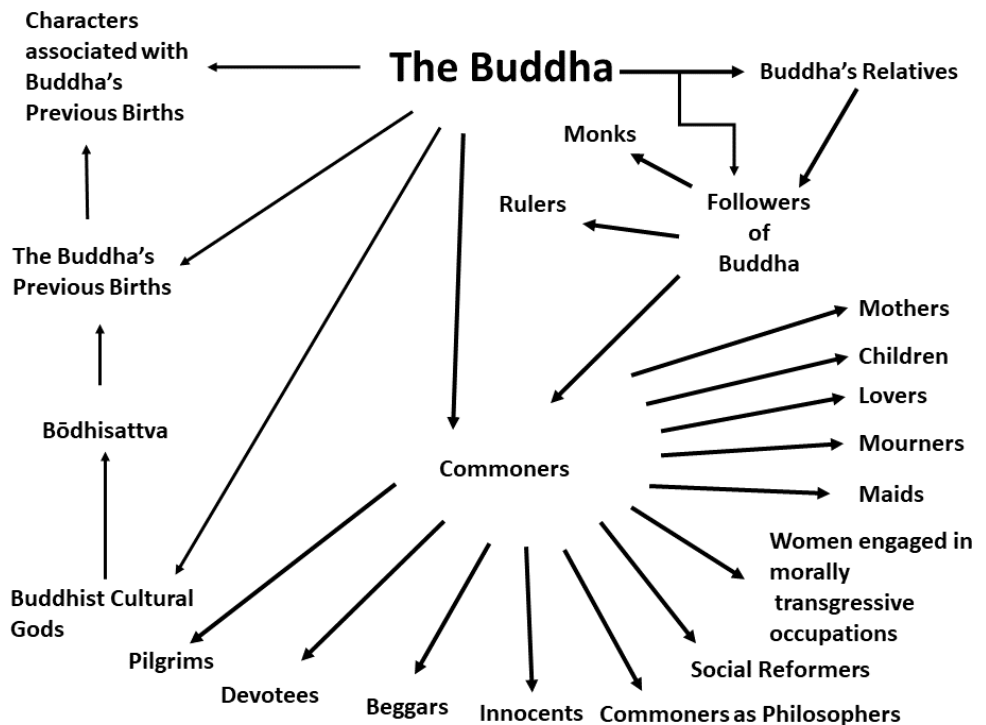
This study used a qualitative approach with secondary data, focusing on 50 song lyrics selected through purposive sampling. The lyrics originally appeared in 'Sindu Pot' booklets, published at film premieres. Ariyaratne later compiled these lyrics in his work 'Sinhala Chitrapata Geetavaliya' (1947–1976). For this research, selected lyrics from the first three volumes (1947–1956, 1957-1961, 1962-1966) were analyzed.

This study is based on the lyrics of 25 lyricists, including D.T. Fernando, Jeewan Lal Nandanakirti, Sirisena Wimalaveera, Herbert M. Seneviratne, W. Benedict Fernando, Karunaratne Abeysekara, A.J. de Soysa, W. Wilfred Perera, Chitrananda Abeysekara, W. Wilfred Silva, Siril A. Seelavimala, Madawala S. Ratnayake, Chandraratne Manawasinghe, Wimal Abhayasundara, B.T. Mendis, Dharmasiri Gamage, and Arisen Ahubudu. Using Thematic Analysis, the study examined the lyrics as reflections of human experience, focusing on the words and the poets' contributions rather than film plots or song placement.

3. Results and Findings

3.1 Concepts and Creativity

The lyrical texts examined in this study include references to a variety of characters that are significant within the Buddhist cultural context (Figure 1). These characters encompass those associated with the Buddha and his previous lives, as well as figures from canonical texts that recount events during the Buddha's lifetime. Additionally, the texts feature historical figures who are particularly relevant to the Buddhist culture of Sri Lanka. The characters portrayed by lyricists in these songs reflect the collective Buddhist consciousness, linking the cultural imagination of the modern era with



traditions that extend back to the early Buddhist period.

Figure 1: Depictions of Buddhist Cultural Characters in Early Film Song Lyrics

(Source: Compiled by the author)

3.2 Portrayal of Buddha's Character

The common terminology “Buddha” signifies ‘The Awakened One’- the one who realized the ultimate truth, Nibbāna (Mangala, 2022). In contemporary society, the Buddha is not only regarded as a great philosopher who expounded the path to Nirvāna, but also as an omnipotent figure believed to have the power to deliver people from the difficulties of daily life (Pyysiäinen, 2003; Gombrich & Obeysekara, 1988). This dual expectation reflects a shift in popular perception, wherein the Buddha’s role extends beyond philosophical teaching to that of a divine protector. Numerous literary and lyrical texts addressing personal and social conflicts incorporate this perception, embedding the Buddha’s teachings within the lived realities of the community.

Although concepts such as devotion were not accepted in the early Buddhist era, the Buddha developed into a figure based on faith for various social and cultural reasons (Pematana, 2020). The data analysis reveals that within these songs, the Buddha is represented in multiple forms, including as a religious leader, a philosopher, and an omnipotent figure endowed with supernatural powers. The depiction of the Buddha in a superhuman form, in particular, signifies a transformation in interpretative traditions, reflecting the evolving conceptualizations of the Buddha across different historical and cultural contexts.

Buddhism emphasizes the universality of the Dhamma and the potential for enlightenment, which is equally accessible to all, regardless of gender. While the historical Buddha was male, the tradition does not focus on venerating his

personal characteristics, but rather on the universal truths, he taught (De Silva, 1988). While the historical Buddha was male, the tradition does not center on venerating his personal characteristics but rather on the universal truths, he taught (De Silva, 1988). This provides a possible basis for the representation of the Buddha in both feminine and masculine forms in certain songs, where he is portrayed not only as a father but also as a mother, and even as a relative figure within familial terms of reference.

In the sample, the Buddha is represented through a wide range of roles, reflecting both spiritual depth and cultural imagination. As a preacher and religious mentor, he is depicted teaching the Dhamma: “Bhavē bhīta hæra dēṣita tilonā dharmē rasē” (Ariyaratne, 2008a, p. 59) and guiding beings on the path to Nirvana: “Lō sataṭā ē dharmē kiyādī... antē nirvāṇēhī mārgē penvū māṇi obe” (p. 129), “Nopenī vimukti mārgē yanenā vū- maitriyē mūla mantrē desū” (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 55), “Saṃsārayē biya duk gini nivū- ajarāmara nivanin suva sædū” (Ariyaratne, 2018, p. 195) and “Sambuddha sudhākara vū- duk nivanin nivālū” (p. 469).

His qualities of wisdom, compassion, kindness, and mercy are highlighted, alongside the Ten Powers (Dasabala) and Nine Qualities. For example, “Saṃsārē maṃmuḷā vū bhava duk goḍēhi dæṅgalū” (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 55), “Asaraṇa saraṇa vū maitrī nidhānē, karuṇā sāgara dayā vimānē” (p. 56), “Guna karuṇā ākarayak baṇḍu vū, pragnāvē sakviti raja vū” (Ariyaratne, 2018, p. 195), “Pāramī pūjita māra parājita dasa bala dhārita himi aparājita” (p. 116).

His role as a philosopher is shown in reflections on life and suffering: “Sāesi tilōnā desū daham sē lovehī nē sæpā sthirē, penvā deminā ipadīmē duk sæmā kal manu lovē” (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 262). His triumph over Mara,

symbolizing victory over death and delusion, is celebrated in some songs as “Pāramī pūjita māra parājita dasa bala dhārita himi aparājita” (Ariyaratne, 2018, p. 116), “Māra pāśa māra bandha rāga dvēśa mōha bhaṅga” (p. 469). In devotional appeals, he is portrayed as an omnipotent figure, such as in a wife’s plea for her husband’s recovery and her son’s enlightenment. For example, “Rækagannaṭa puṁci putā vælapemi... diyunata moḷakæṭi putugē ālōkaya denna budu piyē” (Ariyaratne, 2008, pp. 222–223). He is also invoked as a social deliverer, with one woman asking for the return of her lost husband: “mage pembara sæmiyā magē maṭa labādenu piyē... budu piyē” (p. 245)), and another pleading for an end to her husband’s drunkenness to restore family peace: “Sita māge pæruṇā - sæmi mā surā pānē, gælilā vināsa vī yanavā - samiṅdē samiṅdē” (p. 279).

Collectively, these song examples show the Buddha as a preacher, philosopher, and compassionate guide, conqueror of death, healer, and social deliverer revealing his multifaceted role in both spiritual and worldly contexts.

3.3 Buddhist Cultural Characters in Literature: depiction of sampled songs

These lyrics contain information about various characters from Buddhist literature. Some of the characters are derived from Buddhist Jātaka narratives, while others are incorporated from accounts found in the Pāli Canon, the Tipiṭaka, and subsequent Buddhist literary traditions.

3.3.1 Characters in Jātaka Stories; the depiction of Bōdhisattva

Both the Theravada and the Mahayana unanimously accept the Bōdhisattva ideal as the highest (Rahula, 1978). Jātaka stories, found in canonical texts and later collections, are widely popular in Thēravāda Buddhist countries,

appearing in sermons, literature, art, rituals, and festivals, and they narrate the Buddha's previous incarnations or stages of his existence as a Bōdhisattva. Though resembling folktales, they are understood in Buddhist tradition as illustrating the Bōdhisatta's gradual path to perfection across previous lives before attaining Buddhahood (Appleton, 2010; Das, 2023). The characters depicted in the songs related to sample are analyzed below (Table 2).

Table 2: *Characters in Jātaka Stories; the depiction of Bōdhisattwa*

Character	Usage of that Character	Quoted from the Source
in Kusa Jatakaya	1. In his previous life, the Buddha is said to have been King Kusa (Davids, 2013, p. 181; Amaramoli, 1961, p. 1173), who endured significant suffering due to the actions of Devi Prabhavathi.	1.1 svāmī oba mage budu piyāṇō sattakamayi oba pera ātmēdī kusa raja vī ipida kusa nagarēhī Ē prabhāvātī dēvī nisā ē viṇḍi duka apamaṇa nēda piyē (Ariyaratne, 2008a, p. 129)
Wessantara in wessantara Jataka	1. The Character of Wessantara is in the Story of Wessantara jatakaya (Amaramoli, 1961). This stanza describes the incident in that King Wessantara sacrificing his two children	2.1 Mandri dēvī dukē gālī vanagatava hēṇḍū vilāsē vessantara raja dun daru dānē patā ebudu bæv sēsī daru sōkē jaya siri (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 262)
dri in Wessantara Jataka	1. The Sorrow of Devi Madri after the sacrifice of her children by King Wessantara	3.1 Mandri dēvī dukē gālī vanagatava hēṇḍū vilāsē vessantara raja dun daru dānē patā ebudu bæv sēsī daru sōkē jaya siri (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 262)
irrel in Kalandaka Jataka	1. In the Kalandaka Jātaka, the Bodhisattva was born as a squirrel (Amaramoli, 1961) and, seeing his	4.1 Ipadī bōsat lēna kulēhī - Mē daru sōkē vindē pālā verē

	<p>children fall into the ocean, tried to empty the sea with his tail.</p> <p>2. The same incident is described here as well. Here, more attention is paid to the depiction of loving-kindness towards his offsprings that the Bodhisattvas had.</p>	<p>Siṅḍintā valgen samudura pōtaka prēmen daru sōkē (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 262)</p> <p>4.2 Lēna kulēhī bōsat ipadī -mē daru hindā valigē temalā</p> <p>Sayura siṅḍintā sæduvayi ē pera dā - Dukakī ē sā mē daru ālē kavuda nodannē mē muļu lōkē koyida lovē (Ariyaratne, 2008, pp. 329-330)</p>
madatta in Chanda Kinnara Jataka	<p>1. In the Chanda Kinnara Jataka the Bodhisattva was born as a Chanda-Fairy or Kinnara (Davids, 2013, p. 154; Amaramoli, 1961). Here, Brahmadata tells Kinnari about his power and forces her to become his chief concubine.</p>	<p>5.1 Nēka isuru piri barañes supatala tējavanta agaraju mama vemi bala</p> <p>Kimadō hañḍanē siyumæliyē enu mæna māveta priya soṅḍurē</p> <p>Mā aga mehesiya vī sitsē yasisuru raja sæpa labana lesē (Ariyaratne, 2018, pp. 281-282)</p>
Kinnari in Chandakinnara Jataka	<p>1. In the Chandakinnara Jataka story (Amaramoli, 1961), after Kinnara is attacked by king Brahmadata, his wife, Kinnari, laments and curses Brahmadata.</p>	<p>6.1 Mā labanaṭa mā pembara himi saṅḍa mæruvē topa novelō</p> <p>Paviṭu kuriru tā kaḷa mē sāpen aṁbuvat vænasī kap dahasak kal</p> <p>Goratarā nirayē pæsēvā (Ariyaratne, 2018, pp. 281-282)</p>
ce Paduma in Culla Paduma jatakaya	<p>1. In the story, seven princes and their wives were exiled due to their father's jealousy. Driven by hunger, the younger brothers killed</p>	<p>7.1 Urē palā lē povā pipāsē nivā damālat</p>

	and ate their wives. When they threatened the Bhodisattva's wife, the Bodhisattva protected her, escaping while alleviating her suffering by offering flesh from his shoulder and his blood to drink (Amaramoli, 1961, pp. 379–382). This incident is depicted in (21.1).	Koṭekuṭa rahasē pem bændā bisovak pera kālē (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 195)
of Prince Paduma in Culla Paduma jatakaya	1. This song narrates the story of the prince who betrays Prince Paduma. The prince had once saved her life by slitting his own shoulder and offering her his blood to drink, yet she later becomes unfaithful and has an affair with another man.	8.1 Urē palā lē povā pipāsē nivā damālat Koṭekuṭa rahasē pem bændā bisovak pera kālē (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 195)
Varies Incarnations of Buddha in his previous lives	1. That the Buddha was reborn in samsara countless times (this refers to the Buddha's previous lives (Amaramoli, 1961)) (12.1)	9.1 Anēkā jāti saṁsārē Lō utumāṇō pāramitāvan purādukē gililā Ati pirisidu vadāḷa sēka jīvitayē sāmē (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 65)

3.3.2 Other characters associated with Buddhist Literature

Besides the Buddha's incarnations and related figures, some Buddhist literary characters appear in these lyrics. One song mentions **Yasodhara Devi**, the wife of **Siddhartha Bodhisattva**, their son **Rahula**, and **Minister Janna**, who assisted Siddhartha in his renunciation and departure from home. The characters of Yasodhara, Rahula, and Canna Mantri are thus directly associated with Siddhartha's biography: "Satara pera nimiti dæka biṇḍa gihi sæpate bæṅdum- vitara nomæti dēviya saha rahal poḍi putun- Atæra asuge piṭa

næñgī kæñdavan channa æmatiñdun- etera vīya nērañjana gañgin siduhatuñ” (Ariyaratne, 2021, p. 51).

Angulimāla, despite being a murderer, is depicted as showing admiration for the Buddha’s Dhamma: “Mini marā jīvitē gevū angulimālayā ē pæhæduñā nēda dharmē tēri vipākē karmē” (Ariyaratne, 2018, p. 64).

Another prominent literary element frequently referenced in these songs is the concept of Māra, representing the embodiment of temptation, evil, and obstacles on the path to spiritual awakening within Buddhist thought. In the fourth century AD, the philosopher Asanga identifies four types of Māra: Māradēvaputra (God), Marana Māra (Death), Klēśa Māra (Passion), and Skandha Māra (Aggregate condition of life) (Karetzky, 1982). Some scholars also argue that Māra is directly connected with death (Malalasekera, 1937; Guruge, 1997). In these song lyrics, the concept of Māra is interpreted in three ways: in some instances, it refers to the inevitability of death and the impermanence of life, with certain songs emphasizing that humans must ultimately succumb to Māra (death): “Manusatā lōke ipadī mañmulā vuñā mañgadī -hari kiyalā kaļē væradi- maruvagē atē paradī” (Ariyaratne, 2018, p. 64). In some songs, Māra is depicted as a deity, symbolizing the forces that obstruct spiritual progress and enlightenment. According to Buddhist literature, Deity Māra has three daughters- Tanha, Rati, and Ranga (Stache-Rosen, 1975)- who are also mentioned in certain songs; for instance, one song announces the daughters of Māra “Tañhā rati rañgā vesin ā mara dūvaru tidenā- Sahadasabimbara ghōra bhayañkara māraka mara sēnā - Pāramitā balayen paradā sambdu viya trailōnā” (Ariyaratne, 2021, p. 51). Additionally, some lyrics interpret Māra as evil thoughts arising in the mind, as in another song where greed and desire are presented as the evil army of Māra: “Sañsāra gamanē tañhā āśā - Klēśa māra sēnā - Klēśa māra sēnā” (Ariyaratne, 2018, p.

352). Some lyrics also refer to the War of Māra, reflecting the literary account in which the Bodhisattva defeated the 'Dasamāra army' upon attaining enlightenment. For example, one song describes the Buddha fulfilling the Paramita and defeating Māra: “Pāramī pūjita māra parājita- dasa bala dhārita himi aparājita” (p. 116), while another recounts the Dharmaraja, or Buddha, destroying the evils of passion, hatred, and delusion, which belong to Māra: “Māra pāśa māra bandha rāga dvēśa mōha bhamga - Dhamma rāja rāja rāja pāda padma vandanīya” (p. 469).

3.4 Invisible Personality: the poet as a Buddhist preacher, Devotees and the ideas of Commeners depicted from the Point of Views

The creative consciousness of the songwriter is reflected through the lyrical content, revealing not a single, fixed idea but a complex interplay of contemporary socio-cultural influences (Kennedy, 2017). These influences- whether intentionally or unintentionally embedded- are expressed as personal moods or inner meanings within the song. In these songs, the narrator-often anonymous, conveys advice or teachings, revealing the poet’s character indirectly. In Buddhist-influenced lyrics, this voice typically embodies a Dharma preacher, ascetic, or devout layperson, reflecting a personality shaped by Buddhist teachings and cultural norms.

3.4.1 Buddhist Preachers

In Sri Lankan Thēravāda Buddhist devotional tradition, preaching (*bana*) serves as a key medium for communicating Buddhist doctrine, moral instruction, and meditative ideals (Deegalle, 2007). Buddhist Cultural-themed songs frequently feature preachers as narrators, often shifting between first- and third-person perspectives to express both personal realization and collective spiritual reflection. The narrator’s gender is often indeterminate,

symbolizing a universal Buddhist voice. Across multiple songs, the central themes emphasize the impermanence of existence, the futility of attachment, and the moral path toward Nirvana.

For instance, one song highlights liberation through meditation and the elimination of lust (*rāga*), craving (*taṇhā*), and delusion (*moha*): “*Tṛṣṇā jālē māyā lōkē -Rāgen pæṭalī mōha vikārē – Ælī Kāma añdurē bhava ālē*” (Ariyaratne, 2008a, p. 59). Similarly, another song underscores the transience of wealth and relationships, warning that “*Taṇhā æti vī kāsī podiyaṭā... Maruvā ā dā ē hæra yannā,*” reflecting the inevitability of death (p. 68). The theme of renunciation continues in a further song, where the preacher invites others to abandon worldly ties: “*Podi bæṇḍapu deyak ohe dāla varev – Bhava podiya barayi gena yanṭa bayay*” (p. 99).

Ethical reflection also appears prominently in these songs. One song cautions that a woman can either guide a man toward Nirvana or toward sin: “*Mārgaphalen nirvāṇe labanṭat- Pāpaharin nirayē pæsavanṭat - Striya vē mārga pennumkāri*” (Ariyaratne, 2008a, pp. 99-100). Another identifies **rāga**, **dvēṣa**, and **moha** as the roots of suffering, with their cessation leading to Nirvana: “*Duka keḷavara vē nirvāṇē- Rāga, dvēṣa mōhāndhakārē Gilīla sōka sadāvī*” (p. 195). The impermanence of life is poetically emphasized in a further song, where even the body is described as transient: “*Kuṇu kaya nisaruyi næta pavatinnē*” (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 157). Likewise, another song asserts that “*Mē sasarēhi sæmadā dukāmayi pirilā,*” emphasizing that **saṃsāra** is inherently characterized by suffering (pp. 161-162).

Moral conduct grounded in the **Five Precepts (pañcasīla)** is emphasized in one song, which condemns hatred, delusion, and violence while affirming that “*Pamcaśīlē sāravat vē – Madiyam piḷiveta ē yōgya vē*” (Ariyaratne, 2008, pp.

225-226). The imagery of impermanence recurs in another song, where flowing rivers and falling leaves represent the fleeting nature of existence: “*Uturana gamgā niyaṅgaya ādā – gahakoḷa maelavī viyaḷī yanavā*” (Ariyaratne, 2018, p. 195). Finally, another song presents **taṇhā** and **kilesa** as obstacles to liberation, concluding that listening to the Buddha’s teachings can overcome the suffering of **saṃsāra**: “*Etera viya hækīya egoḍaṭa- muniṅḍu baṇa asā*” (p. 352).

Collectively, these songs illustrate how the Sinhala Buddhist preaching tradition merges poetic expression with doctrinal instruction, using musical and narrative forms to evoke impermanence, morality, and the quest for enlightenment.

3.4.2 The Ideas of Commoners in the Buddhist Cultural Context

These songs reflect the devotional, moral, and emotional views of ordinary people, capturing their struggles, hopes, and understanding of Buddhist teachings. They present a range of characters- from devotees to beggars, homemakers, lovers, and pilgrims. Each of them are expressing faith, suffering, and insight through personal and communal experience. Through these voices, Buddhist cultural identity emerges as a living expression of faith among common Sinhala Buddhists.

Devotees and Moral Councillers Characters in many songs are depicted as faithful devotees who uphold Buddhist values and guide others toward spiritual awakening. These songs reflect deep devotional expressions toward the Buddha, highlighting reverence, faith, and the glorification of his spiritual and moral virtues.

In one lyric, the narrator addresses the Buddha as both a mother and a father,

recalling his suffering in a previous birth as King Kusa due to Dēvi Prabhāvatī, and pleads for his return to teach the Dhamma to her husband: “Svāmī oba mage budu piyāṇō – Sattakamayi oba pera ātmēhī – Kusa raja vī ipida kusa nagarēhī ē Prabhāvatī dēvi nisā ē viṇḍi duka apamaṇa nēda piyē.” (Ariyaratne, 2008a, p. 129). Another devotional lyric about the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, while expressing faith in the triple gem: “Buddham saraṇam gacchāmi – Dhammam saraṇam gacchāmi – Bhṛṅga bhṛṅga gum dena mal gāvā – Sarasā kīvō guṇamayi teruvan.” (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 616). Another song presents a narrator who expresses heartfelt devotion by praising the Buddha’s virtues and the radiance of his body, reflecting deep veneration (p. 397). In another instance, the devotee venerates the Buddha as both father and king during the Buddha Jayanti festival, which commemorates his birth, enlightenment, and passing away, reminding listeners to cultivate sīla (virtue) and samādhi (concentration): “Sādu piyē bhagavā budu rajunē -Śrī padmē vaṇḍim prēmenā mōhe duru karavā... Pas pav ādi akusala dharmē dharmen yaṭapat vāvā- Sīla samādhī puṇya kriyāvē mahimen lova sēnasēvā -Buddha jayantiya mahime balayen jīvamānaya vī.” (p. 150). Another devotional lyric praises the Buddha’s enlightenment and noble qualities such as compassion, wisdom, and kindness: “Samsārayē biya duk gini nivū – met sisilen lova nāhāvū – Ajarāmara nivanin suva sēdu – tilō piyā vaṇḍimu.... Guṇa karuṇā ākarayak baṇḍu vū – pragnāvē sakviti raja vū – Tun lō talayaṭa tarupati vū – apa tilō piyā vaṇḍimu....” (Ariyaratne, 2018, p. 195). Another lyric uses Sanskrit-style metaphors to extol the shining beauty and divine nature of the Buddha, invoking his many titles and qualities, and concludes with a Sanskrit verse of worship that aligns the song with the devotional tradition: “Sambuddha sudhākara vū aṅgīrasa maha muniṇḍā – Saddharma prabhākara vū sirisugata tathāgata vū tilōhimi namadimu dōta naṅgā – Abhayamkara saraṇamkara mahimi” (p. 469). In one song (third-person POV), the narrator

advises a deluded man to seek refuge in the Buddha's compassion and the Dharma, invoking loving-kindness for all beings: "Maitriyē mūla mantrē desū lōka nāthayāṇō - Mandirē mē penennē metanayi vimukti sthānē... Maitriyē raśmi vihidā midevvā mē dharma mæñduren - Kō mē mulā vū magiyā palayan læbēvi sænasum... Sav sata dukin midēvā..." (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 55). Similarly, in another song (first-person plural POV), the singers affirm that only Buddhism alone can end suffering, emphasizing filial devotion and the power of the Triple Gem. They stress obedience to one's parents and seek divine protection: Pūrva dēvatā demavpiyō veta kīkaru vī vesēvā - Siripā van dim guṇē utum vū udāra piyautumā Nivan sæpā dev sæpā læbēvā... Gnānālōkē væḍī prabōdē ræka dēvā deviyō - Jīvita saṭanē mahā āyudhē sambudu Sri Saddharmē (65).

These devotional characters embody the Buddhist ideals of mettā (loving-kindness), moral discipline, and reverence for the Dhamma, illustrating how the faith of commoners functions as a moral compass in everyday life.

Commoners as Philosophers: Voices of Moral Reflection

Some narrators act as philosophers, interpreting worldly experience through Buddhist reasoning. In one song (first-person POV), a beggar reflects on life's impermanence, stating that both pleasure and pain arise from karma: "Kærakēvī ratha rōdē vāgē... Pina pava dekamayi apa gena yannē" (Ariyaratne, 2018, p. 130). This portrayal transforms a social outcast into a moral thinker who grasps the essence of Buddhist ethics. Similarly, in another song (third-person critical POV), the Maha Paduma Jātaka is cited to critique human attachment: "Urē palā lē povā pipāsē - Nivā damālat koṭekuṭa rahasē pem bændā bisovak pera kālē..." (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 195).

Here, Buddhist wisdom emerges through reflective social criticism, illustrating how lyricists embedded ethical discourse in everyday voices. These reflective lyrics demonstrate that even marginalized individuals possess the capacity for profound insight, embodying *anicca* (impermanence) and *kamma* (moral causation) through lived experience.

Housewives and Domestic Voices

As a reflection of these songs, female narrators often ask the Buddha for help with their daily problems. In one song (first-person POV), a repentant woman recalls her past life of sin and expresses devotion to the Buddha: “Pera ātmēhī mā pavkāri - Ē karmen mā vuṇābhisārī...” (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 56). In another, a wife pleads for divine protection over her husband and child: “Ræka gannaṭa puñci putā - Vælapemi obē pihiṭa patā...” (pp. 222-223). A further song depicts a woman’s grief for her missing husband: “Sōken mā hada yayi pæḷī - Næta sāminē ivasum ḷayē...” (p. 245), while yet another shows a wife praying for deliverance from her husband’s drunkenness: “Tilōguru budu piyē kimada maṭa mē unē, mē kaṛra lōkē - Sita māge pærunā sæmi mā surā pānē...” (p. 279).

These domestic voices embody *saddhā* (faith), repentance, and perseverance-core aspects of lay Buddhist devotion (Dixit, 2004)-while highlighting the moral and emotional dimensions of women’s lives within the household.

Lovers and Suffering Beings

Themes of love and loss are reinterpreted through Buddhist insight. In one song (first-person POV), a grieving lover mourns death but acknowledges

impermanence “Pini biṃdu vagē biṇḍilā yanavā... Saṃsāra dukin mirikīma tamā Lōkēhi sobā dahamē niyame” (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 62). In another, a mother’s sorrow echoes the Kalandaka and Vessantara Jātakas: “Īpadī bōsat lēna kulēhi... Patā eбудu bæv sēsī” (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 262). Similarly, another song presents Andare’s wife accepting her suffering as a karmic result, quoting the Vasala Sutta (Sutta Nīpāta): “Na jaccā vasalo hoti, na jaccā hoti brāhmaṇo; kammanā vasalo hoti, kammanā hoti brāhmaṇo,” (p. 287) means one’s status depends on deeds, not birth (Coomaraswamy, 1874). This use of canonical teaching links her suffering to ethical causation and reflects the Buddhist view of moral responsibility. Through these intimate monologues, the characters transform pain into moral insight, embodying the Buddhist awareness of dukkha and kamma in the context of human relationships.

Pilgrims and Sacred Devotees

Pilgrimage to sacred sites forms another layer of Buddhist identity in these songs and is a major aspect of Sinhala Buddhist culture (Holt, 1982; Stoddard, 1988; Jayawardena, 2012). The Sri Pada Pilgrimage is a prominent example; historically a multi-religious site, it became predominantly Buddhist with the rise of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism in the post-colonial era (De Silva, 2013). In one song (first-person POV), a pilgrim describes his ascent to Sri Pada with devotion: “Tun saraṇē kavi kiyalā dharmarāja gala nēgalā... Tisaraṇa saraṇin Devi rækavaraṇin jīvanayē sēpa pēdē...” (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 139). Another song (first-person plural POV) depicts collective worship at Seetha Gangula: “Sīta gaṅgule sīta himē sītala mē nil diyē... Tunsaraṇayi devi piḥṭayi sumana saman deviṇḍunī” (p. 140), while a dialogue between two sisters likens the flight of butterflies to the soul’s journey toward Nirvana: “Akkā: Pun vesak pohōdā saman aḍaviyaṭa... un kaḷa pin balayē mahimen un yanavā nivanāṭa etānin” (Ariyaratne, 2018, p. 135).

Bodhi tree worship in Sri Lanka is another long-standing devotional practice, symbolizing reverence for the Buddha's enlightenment and the continuity of Buddhist faith (Jayawardhana, 1990; Sumanasuriya, 1986; Seneviratne, 1980). In one song (first-person plural POV), pilgrims praise the Bodhi tree as the source of liberation: "Yassa mūlē nisinnōvā sabbari vijayaṃ akā... Bōdhi mulē sīta sevaṇē sāra nivanē suva dānē..." (Ariyaratne, 2008, pp. 329-330). These narratives highlight the communal and emotional dimensions of Buddhist worship, where devotion is intertwined with sacred geography and ritual practice.

National and Theistic Voices

Certain songs extend Buddhist devotion into national and theistic dimensions. In one song (first-person POV), the narrator venerates Buddhist heroes from Sri Lankan history: "Sūra vīra putu māṇiyō hindā Eḍitara vehera mahā dēvī-Jātiyē apē itihāsē vīra lalaniyan sarasāvī" (Ariyaratne, 2008, pp. 211-212). In another (first-person female POV), a devotee expresses faith in Viśnu's future Buddhahood: "Budu vē budu vē oba anāgatē budu vē - Maṭa piḥiṭa venna suriṇḍē..." (p. 329). These voices demonstrate how Buddhist cultural imagination encompassed divine reverence and patriotic consciousness alongside personal piety, blending faith with cultural identity and mythic vision.

Through multiple points of view—first-person, second-person, plural, and dialogic—these songs portray Buddhist cultural characters as reflections of ordinary Sinhala Buddhist life. Devotees, moral thinkers, housewives, lovers, and pilgrims embody faith, ethical awareness, and emotional depth. Each lyrical voice transforms personal experience into a spiritual statement, collectively constructing the Buddhist cultural personality in early Sinhala

song literature.

3.5 The Use of Historical Figures as an Indicator of Contemporary Buddhist Cultural Consciousness

Historians classify Sri Lankan kingdoms under several periods (Fujimoto, 2006; Fujimoto, 2007). This naming is based on the cities that were the center of each kingdom. Accordingly, several major city-kingdoms can be identified from the Anuradhapura period to the Kandy period. From this analysis, we identify several ideal figures who affiliate to some of these city kingdoms.

Many of these songs mention royal or non-royal historic figures from the Buddhist cultural history of Sri Lanka. Sometimes they are nominal statements, and sometimes they provide information about the cultural conditions that influenced those royal and noble figures. The songs composed between 1947 and 1970 reflect a period that had a decisive influence on modern Sri Lankan Buddhism. Key historical events, such as the country's independence in 1948 and the transfer of political power to the Freedom Party in 1956, played a particularly significant role in shaping this context (Swearer, *Lay Buddhism and the Buddhist Revival in Ceylon*, 1970; Bates, 1974).

3.5.1 Buddhist Monkhood: Monks and priests are integral figures within Sri Lankan Buddhist culture

In Sri Lankan Buddhist culture, monks are regarded not only as religious preachers but also as influential figures in regulating society (Berkwitz, 2012; Kemper, 1984). Literary and folkloric traditions often connect later historical figures with ancient priestly or ascetic ones. Agasthi Rishi reflects this link, symbolically tying Buddhist royalty to Sri

Lankan Buddhist patriotism. One song says that Agasthi wished for the development of the country ("Rāvana, agatisa, pañḍuvas, saṅgabō ē oba daruvō pæraṇī - Pætuvō, pætuvō, oba diyuṇuva pætuvō" (Ariyaratne, 2008a, p. 74)).

The beginning of Sri Lankan Buddhist culture and Buddhist Monkhood occurred with the arrival of the great Mahinda Thero to Sri Lanka (Mahinda, 2024). The state has long provided strong support for Buddhism and Buddhist monks (wickremeratne, 2006; Berkwitz, 2012). Historically, they have served as scholars and have played central roles in religious, political, and cultural affairs.

During the Anuradhapura period, Mahā Mahinda Thēra's arrival (Mahindagamana) is recognized as a remarkable event in Sri Lankan Saṅgha history, highlighting his pivotal role in establishing Buddhism on the island (Mahinda, 2024; Tyagi, 2023).

The arrival of Arahant Mahinda is celebrated as a pivotal moment in Sri Lankan Buddhist history: "Mihintalāvayī dham amāvayī sānta anubudu nāmayayī - Kāṭakāṭat mē kiyannē śāsanē itihāsayay" (Ariyaratne, 2018, p. 395). This verse commemorates the establishment of Buddhism on the island, marking the beginning of its sacred cultural heritage. Similarly, the veneration of historical and religious figures continues in later periods.

During the Kotte era, Totagamuvē Rāhula Thēra was renowned as the greatest poet of his time and is revered alongside kings Dutugemunu and

Parakramabahu as national heroes embodying religious devotion and cultural pride: “Rāhula gāmiṇi vīra parākrama - Ē heḷa vīra putungē pā siṃba Ā pudamuraṅga pālā ā... - Dē amara sæpa śrī laṅkā bhūmi Jātika abhimānē niti pāmi” (Ariyaratne, 2018, pp. 97-98).

3.5.2 Ideal Masculinity: Kings and Heroes

When considering Sri Lankan Buddhist culture, the term of 'Ideal Masculinity' can be referred for Buddhist state leadership and Buddhist heroes. Such characters are found in many early film song lyrics. As noted by Nagal (2019), there is an interrelationship between nationalism and masculinity.

Early film songs composed within a Buddhist cultural context contain numerous references to historical kings. State patronage is essential for the survival of any religion. Accordingly, the intervention of Buddhist kings in the establishment of Buddhism in Sri Lanka can be particularly recognized (Coningham, 1995). These representations highlight themes of nation building and Buddhist devotion, focusing on kings who promoted Buddhism during the Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa periods. Historical chronicles such as the Mahāvamsa (Geiger, 1912), Cūlawamsa and the Dīpawamsa record information about these kings. Notably, figures such as Dutugemunu, Walagamba, Sirisangabo, Mahsen and Parakramabahu are identified in historical sources as exemplary Buddhist rulers (Pathmanathan, 1976).

In one song, figures such as Ravana and Panduvasdev are depicted as symbolic representatives of Sri Lanka's early rulers, embodying their aspirations for the nation's prosperity. Ravana-depicted as a figure who is simultaneously

historical, mythical, and legendary-is shown expressing his wish for the country's well-being: "Rāvana, agatisa, pañduvas, saṅgabō ē oba daruvō pæraṇī / Pætuvō, pætuvō, oba diyuṇuva pætuvō" (Ariyaratne, 2008a, p. 74). He continues to be regarded as a heroic figure within the Sinhala Buddhist cultural context, even in the twenty-first century (Sanmugeswaran, 2019; Henry, 2022). Similarly, Vijaya is depicted as having "cultivated (Sri) Lankan land" (Ariyaratne, 2008, pp. 211-212), while Panduvasdev is also portrayed as wishing for the country's well-being together emphasizing themes of national prosperity and Buddhist cultural continuity.

During the Anuradhapura Period, the songs commemorate several heroic rulers who played pivotal roles in shaping the Sinhala-Buddhist civilization. During the early twentieth-century Buddhist Revival, Anuradhapura became the symbolic center of Buddhist nationalism. After the fall of the Kandyan Kingdom, rising low-country elites redefined Sinhala Buddhist identity by shifting its cultural and political focus from Kandy and Colombo to Anuradhapura, envisioned as the spiritual heart of the nation (Sangapala & Perera, 2023; Nissan, 1989; Sivasundaram, 2007). In this context, the ideas expressed in these songs about the kings of Anuradhapura- alongside those shaped through folk consciousness- reflect and reinforce this Anuradhapura-centered form of Buddhist nationalism.

As recorded in ancient sources such as the Mahavamsa, King Pandukabhaya systematically developed the city of Anuradhapura and established his kingdom there (Geiger, 1912). He is celebrated as a valiant leader whose name symbolizes courage and virtue, as expressed in "Vīra jātiyaka vīra puruṣa vīriyen edā sīhalē - Dhīra sāra guṇa dhāri

paṇḍukābhayage nāme sudilē” (Ariyaratne, 2008, pp. 211-212).

Among these rulers, **King Dutugemunu or Gāmini (Dutta Gāmini Abhaya)** holds a central place in both history and cultural memory. His reign marks the unification of Sri Lanka under one sovereignty, described as establishing “**a single umbrella or canopy over the entirety of Sri Lanka**”, symbolizing the emergence of the island as a Sinhala-Buddhist nation (Obeyesekere, 2017).

Numerous songs provide varied portrayals of his life and achievements (Table 3). Song Phrase 3.1 emphasizes his efforts to protect the **country, nation, and Buddhism**, while 3.2 presents accounts of his reign alongside three other kings 'Mahsen, Valagamba and Pærakumba', highlighting their collective contributions to the **development of agriculture**. Song phrase 3.3 venerates his name together with those of **Rahula** and **Parakramabahu**, honoring them as heroes in Sri Lankan history. Song phrase 3.4 proclaims that **great kings like Dutugemunu were born in this land**, celebrating the continuity of heroic lineage. The **heroism of Prince Gāmini** is particularly appreciated in phrase 3.5, which also recounts his **early childhood** 3.6 and the **heroic battles** that define his legendary status (3.7). His **service to the Buddha Sāsana** and his **sacred relationship with God Kataragama** are depicted in phrase 3.8, reflecting the intertwining of royal authority and religious devotion. Furthermore, phrase 3.9 references the **Ruvanveliseya**, the grand stupa built by King Dutugemunu, symbolizing his enduring contribution to the preservation and glorification of Buddhism. Collectively, these songs present a multifaceted image of Dutugemunu as both a warrior-king and a devout protector of the Buddhist faith, embodying the ideals of the Sinhala-Buddhist cultural tradition.

Table 3: *The representation of King Gāmini: Quated from the source*

Song	The representation of Kings: Quated from the source
3.1	Rāja nāda pāe sūra gāmiṇī tedæti vīra puteki - Jātiya āgama hā raṭa kæpa vū mā hæŋgi pirimiyeki (Ariyaratne, 2008, pp. 211-212)
3.2	Mahasen vaḷagambā gāmiṇī pærakumbā - Sēsæt næŋgū edā sirilak bimayi mē Æḷaṭa doḷaṭa kavuru bæŋdevvō - Gaŋgehi jalaya ketāṭa hærevvō Goḍa maḍa deka eka vagē - Tunsiya hæṭapas dvasē yalaṭa maḥaṭa saru sāreṭa govitæn keruvō (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 351)
3.3	Rāhula gāmiṇī vīra parākrama - Ē heḷa vīra putungē pā siṃba Ā.... pudamuraŋga pālā ā..... - Dē amara sæpa śrī lamkā bhūmi Jātika abhimānē niti pāmi (Ariyaratne, 2018, pp. 97-98)
3.4	Mahāsēna gāmiṇī pærakumbā rajū væni - Narapatiyā bihivuṇē da mē lassana poḷovehi (Ariyaratne, 2018, pp. 172-173)
3.5	Pāe abimānē sihipat vēvī gāmiṇī kumarāgē - balē pāe siṃhalayāgē (Ariyaratne, 2018, p. 236)
3.6	Mahavæli gaṃgā tera hæḍi demaḷuyi dakuṇu pætte sæḍa goḷu muhudayi atapaya hakuḷā innē ekayi - apagē gāmiṇī vīra putāgē vīrakathā sihiveyi (Ariyaratne, 2018, p. 236)
3.7	Notabā rupu dap rudhiraya vagurā - Heḷa vismaya pā Heḷa avi lelavā teda pāe gāmiṇī vīra putāgē - Vīra kathā sihiveyi Jaya pānaya piṭa balakoṭu biṇdavā - Jaya rāvaya dī jaya dada naṃvā teda pāe gāmiṇī vīra putāgē Vīra kathā sihivey (Ariyaratne, 2018, p. 236)
3.8	Budu sasunaṭa heḷa satahaṭa seta suvē - Sædu gāmiṇī rajū vara lada ema bavē (Ariyaratne, 2018, p. 367)
3.9	Ratnamālī sē radun mē dev baṃbun pūjā labayi- Mē mahā gal mul kiyannē ē utum abhimānayayi (Ariyaratne, 2018, p. 395)

Source: Compiled by Author

In addition to King Dutugemunu, several songs also reference other rulers such as Kings Mahasen (Ariyaratne, 2008a, p. 74; Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 351), Valagamba (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 351), and Sirisangabo (Ariyaratne, 2008a, p. 74; Ariyaratne, 2008, pp. 211-212), who reigned in Anuradhapura. In these instances, the emphasis is primarily placed on their contributions to Buddhism and the nation, particularly their roles in advancing irrigation, agriculture, and related forms of development.

During the Polonnaruwa period, King Parakramabahu is portrayed in the songs as one of the most illustrious rulers in Sri Lankan history, celebrated for his immense contributions to statecraft, irrigation, and the prosperity of the nation. One song specifically refers to his monumental achievement in constructing the Topa Tank (Parakrama Samudra), symbolizing his vision for agricultural self-sufficiency: “Minnēriya hā tōpā- jalayen sædu ket sārā-mahasen hā parakumbā” (Ariyaratne, 2008a, p. 74). Another song presents details about his reign alongside three other kings, highlighting their collective efforts in advancing agricultural development and ensuring the welfare of the people: "Mahasen vaḷagambā-gāmiṇi pærakumbā- sēsāt næṅgū edā sirilak bimayi mē - æḷaṭa doḷaṭa kavuru bæṅdevvō- gaṅgē jalaya ketāṭa hærevvō- Goḍa maḍa deka eka vagē.....-yalāṭa mahāṭa saru sāreṭa govitæn keruvō" (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 351).

One song reveres Parakramabahu together with Rahula and Gamini (Dutugemunu) as national heroes, whose names are venerated in Sri Lankan history, emphasizing their enduring legacy of heroism and leadership (Table 3:3.3). Another song asserts that great kings such as Mahasen and Parākramabāhu were born in this land, celebrating the continuity of the island’s royal lineage and the flourishing of its Buddhist civilization (Table

3:3.4). Collectively, these references depict King Parakramabahu as an exemplary monarch whose reign epitomized the ideals of wisdom, strength, and devotion to the prosperity of the Sinhalese Buddhist nation.

From the early 1900s onward, figures such as Anagarika Dharmapala and his contemporaries emerged as central characters in Sri Lanka's Buddhist revival movement, which sought to reassert Buddhist values and Sinhala cultural identity in response to colonial influence. These individuals are portrayed in the songs as heroic figures within the Buddhist consciousness, embodying the spirit of national and religious resurgence (Field, 2017; Amunugama, 1985; Kemper, 2015). A song vividly captures their contributions, stating as follows:

“Dharmapāla himi hariscandra putu migetṭuvattē guṇa utu nāṇa yutu
Tibeṭ mihiṅdu himi māeti jayatilakayi piyadas sirisen kumāratuṅgayi
Pohora damā vāḍu mē heḷa jātika poḷovē- Vividha vijātika saṁkara val pāḷa
pāḷavē

Irahaṅda pāyana turu pāvattennaṭa deraṅē- Desa basa rāsa rāka ganiv varev
siṁhalunē” (Ariyaratne, 2021, p. 51).

Anagarika Dharmapala played a pivotal role in the Buddhist Revival movement of the early twentieth century (Amunugama, 1985; Hewage, 2022). Walisinghe Harischandra similarly contributed to the formation of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism, using the Ruwanweli Seya and the sacred city of Anuradhapura as its symbolic center (Sangapala & Perera, 2023; Nissan, 1989; Sivasundaram, 2007). Migettuwattē Gunānanda Thēro emerged as a powerful preacher whose eloquent debates and sermons helped popularize Buddhism and the Buddhist Revival movement both locally and internationally (Hewage, 2022). S. Mahinda Thero, Piyadasa Sirisena, and Munidasa Kumaratunga further advanced the vision of a nation grounded in

Buddhist nationalist ideals (Bartholomeusz, 1999; Coperahewa, 2012). From the political sphere, leaders such as D. B. Jayatilaka provided crucial guidance and organizational leadership for the movement (Bartholomeusz, 1999).

This verse highlights how Ven. Dharmapala, Harischandra, Ven. Migettuvatte Gunananda, Ven. S. Mahinda, D. B. Jayatilake, Piyadasa Sirisena, and Munidasa Kumaratunga worked collectively to preserve Buddhism, Sinhala language, and national identity, opposing foreign cultural influences. Their inclusion in the songs symbolizes the transformation of early twentieth-century Buddhist reformers into idealized national heroes, embodying the moral, cultural, and patriotic aspirations of modern Sri Lankan Buddhist nationalism.

3.5.3 Ideal Femininity: Female Figures related to Buddhist Culture

From the very beginning of Sri Lankan history, women have held a special place in Sri Lankan culture (Iriyagolle, 1989). Special female characters from Buddhist scriptures have been the themes for some early Sinhala film songs such as Suppadevi, viharamadhadevi, somadevi and Ahalepola kumarihami. These characters, which are derived from the historical Buddhist cultural background, have been utilized to promote Buddhist nationalism and patriotism.

During the Early Anuradhapura or Early Historic Period, Suppadevi, the heir of the Simharāja caste and the spouse of the Lion King in the myth of Sinhalese origin, is portrayed as an ancestral figure associated with the founding of the Sinhalese race (Geiger, 1912). This is reflected in the verse, “**Simha rāja tēja**

darāpu suppādēvi nāme rækenā - Vijaya kumaru hā pirivarinā- sirilaka dæ keta vagā kaḷā- Tilova tilaka himi dayā jalen temū - Siṁhala jātiya lova bæbaḷe” (Ariyaratne, 2008, pp. 211-212).

During the Anuradhapura Period, Viharamaha Devi stands as one of the most revered female figures in Sri Lankan Buddhist culture, admired for her selflessness and heroism as the mother of King Dutugemunu, who unified the island under Sinhalese rule in the second century BCE (Rathnayake, 2024). One song highlights her valor, stating, **“Sūra vīra putu mæṇiyō hindā - Eḍḍitara vehera mahā dēvi Jātiyē apē itihāsē vīra lalaniyan sarasāvī”** (Ariyaratne, 2008, pp. 211-212). Similarly, Somadevi is celebrated for her devotion and sacrifice, as expressed in the verse, **“Sōmā dēvi giya rathayen bæsalā himi peramuṇaṭa yavā - Jīvitē eyā yayi situvā æ da Siṁhalē nama tæbuvā raṭaṭa dæyaṭa hita laṅḍun tamā niti”** (pp. 211-212), where she gives up her life to send her husband, King Walagamba, into battle (Geiger, 1912). The emotional suffering of Sanghabodhi’s wife following the king’s death is also noted (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 195), symbolizing loyalty and grief.

In the Kandy Period, Ahalepola Kumarihami is depicted as the ideal figure of Sri Lankan Buddhist womanhood (Senanayaka, 2014), remembered for her tragic yet noble sacrifice described in **“Bōgambara væva mæda tama divi pidu æhæḷēpola oaba diyaṇī”** (Ariyaratne, 2008a, p. 74). Collectively, these female figures embody the Buddhist virtues of devotion, courage, and sacrifice, shaping the idealized image of womanhood in Sri Lankan cultural history.

3.5.4 Supernatural Characters: Presentation of Gods in Buddhist Cultural context

Although early Buddhism discouraged the worship of gods and emphasized non-theistic principles, traditional Sinhala Buddhism continues to incorporate belief in deities (Gombrich R. &., 1988). This analysis identifies several deities such as God Viśnu, Saman and Kataragama from Buddhist culture that specifically featured in early film songs.

God Viśnu

Viśnu was first included in Sinhala kingship for political and social reasons. Later, he was linked to Buddhist teachings and identified with the local god Upulvan, which made his role last over time. In Sinhala Buddhist culture, he is seen as both a protector of the people (minister of defense) and a future bodhisattva, working for the safety and well-being of the Sinhala community (Holt, 2004).

Lord Viśnu is portrayed in the songs as the god who rules the world and is depicted as a Bodhisattva, or future Buddha. One song describes him saying, “Lō pālana śrī viṣṇu devīyanē - Æyidō net yomavā nobalannē ... Matu budu vē oba matu budu vēvā - Ē gætiyā ahō suvakara dēvā. Buddhāmkura vū oba budu vēvā” (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 54). Another song similarly emphasizes his future Buddhahood: “Budu vē budu vē budu vē oba anāgatē budu vē - Maṭa pihiṭa venna suriṇḍē... Oba nēda lova rakinnē oba nēda māva rækkē... Oba ē pinenma budu vē Śrī Viśnu dēva rajiṇḍē” (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 329). These passages highlight Viśnu’s dual role as both a world ruler and a future Bōdhisattva.

God Saman

God Saman, the lord of Adam's Peak, is a well-known deity in Buddhist culture (Paranavitana, 1958). The songs portray Lord Sumana Saman as the guardian deity of Samanala Mountain, emphasizing the practice of devotees bathing in the Seetha Gangula River at the Sri Pada site to seek his blessings, with the belief that the sanctified waters can cure ailments. One song describes, “Sumana saman devi piḥṭa laban - Muni siripādē buduræs vihidē samanta kūṭha rajāgē...” (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 139), while another highlights the ritual bathing and the protective power of the deity: “Sīta gaṅgule sīta himē sītala mē nil diyē - Nāmu gilī piḥṭa patā sumana saman devi piyē- Dēva piyē dēva balen dāeta depaya dī dirī - Kōḍu naḍē sēmaṭa apē pānu mænavi āsirī... - Mē diya hisa gēva sēṇin rō biya duk maṅga hærē - Mēka tamā sumana suriṅdu nāvana kiri sāgarē...” (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 140).

God Kataragama

The Kataragama god, of Dravidian origin, is a popular deity among both the Dravidian people and the Sinhala Buddhist population (Pfaffenberger, 1979). According to legend, he is associated with Buddhist kings such as Dutugemunu (Nissan, 1988) and is frequently mentioned in some literatures (Arunachalam, 1924). In the songs, God Kataragama is depicted as a powerful and multi-faceted deity within the Sinhala Buddhist cultural tradition. He is iconographically represented as having “six faces and twelve eyes” (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 212; Ariyaratne, 2018, p. 367), as expressed in verses such as “Met bara kataragama suriṅduni maduka gæna Net doḷasin ekak digu koṭa balanu mæna” (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 212) and “Saya muḥuṅaki net doḷasaki pæhuṅē” (Ariyaratne, 2018, p. 367). His divine power is further symbolized through his possession of various weapons held in his twelve hands, described in “Doḷasatakin raṇa avi dæru kaṅda radē...” (p. 367). The

peacock is portrayed as his vehicle (vāhana), as reflected in “Raṇamayurāsana nāṅgi raṇa sūrā” (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 54), “Abhimāna ramya svarṇa mayura vāhanē” (p. 212), “Nīla varṇa mayurā vāhana rāṅḍi” (Ariyaratne, 2018, p. 105), and “Kitu ræsa meni pil vihidenā vāhanē” (Ariyaratne, 2018, p. 367). His flag is adorned with the emblem of a fowl, symbolizing his divine identity: “Hisa mudunata Lela deyi sævuḷiṅḍu dadē” (p. 367). The god is venerated as the lord of Rohana, believed to reside on the Kataragama Vædahiti Mountain, as expressed in “Rōhaṇa adhipati kanda kumārā”, “Ruhuṇu dæsa sōbamāna māḷigē” (Ariyaratne, 2008, p. 212), and “Væḍiḥiṭi kandē vesena surindē - Æyi duka dennē piḥiṭa novannē...” (Ariyaratne, 2018, pp. 442–443). His divine parentage is mentioned in “Paśupatigē piya poḍi putu abimuvē” (p. 367), identifying him as the son of Paśupati (Shiva). Within Buddhist culture, God Kataragama is regarded as a guardian of the Buddha Sāsana in Sri Lanka, as stated in “Bæbaḷena lesa siri laṅkā sāsanē” (p. 367), and the songs further note that King Dutugemunu, renowned for his service to Buddhism, received the ‘Kanda Kumara Warama’ from him: “Budu sasunaṭa heḷa satahaṭa seta suvē - Sædu gāmiṇi raju vara lada ema bavē” (p. 367). Collectively, these verses present God Kataragama as a divine protector of the island and the Buddhist faith, blending Hindu mythological attributes with Buddhist devotional reverence.

4. Conclusion

The analysis of early Sinhala film songs demonstrates that lyricists drew on a wide range of Buddhist cultural characters, including the Buddha, figures from Jataka tales, historical kings, preachers, devotees, and even deities who affiliate to buddhist culture. These characters embody both religious and cultural values, reflecting the continuity of Buddhist traditions while also adapting them to contemporary social concerns. Through these depictions, film songs

became medium where philosophical teachings, devotional practices, and national identity converged, showing how early film song lyrics helped preserve and reimagine Buddhist culture in modern Sri Lanka.

Acknowledgment

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Priyantha Tilakasiri, my Ph.D. supervisor and Head of the Department of Music and Creative Technology, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, for his guidance and encouragement. I also extend my sincere thanks to Dr. H. H. A. Karunaratne, for his immense support of this study, and to Mr. Muditha Arumawadu, Senior Lecturer in the same department, for his help with the illustrations related to this research.

References

- Amaramoli, W. (1961). *Situvam Sahita Pansiya Panas Jātaka Pota*. Bandaragama: Sri Lanka Dharma Chakra Child Foundation.
- Amunugama, S. (1985). Anagarika Dharmapala (1864-1933) and the transformation of Sinhala Buddhist organization in a colonial setting. *Social Science Information*, 24(4), 697-730.
- Appleton, N. (2010). *Jataka Stories in Theravada Buddhism: Narrating the Bodhisatta Path (1st ed.)*. Routledge.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315590363>
- Ariyaratne, S. (2008). *Sinhala Chitrapata Gitavaliya 1957-1961*. Colombo 10: Godage.
- Ariyaratne, S. (2008a). *Sinhala Chitrapata Gitavaliya 1947-56*. Colombo 10: Godage.
- Ariyaratne, S. (2018). *Sinhala Chitrapata gitavaliya (1962-1966)*. Colombo 10: Godage.
- Ariyaratne, S. (2021). *Sinhala Chitrapata Gitavaliya 1967-1971*. Colombo 10: Godage Publishers.
- Arunachalam, P. (1924). THE WORSHIP OF MURUKA or Skanda (the Kataragam God) with an account of an ancient Tamil Lyric in His praise and Side-lights from Greek Religion and Literature. *The Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland*, 29(77), 234-264.
- Balodis, P. (2024). Preserving the Latvian Language Abroad: Personal Narratives and Institutional Support. *Languages*, 9(8), 279.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.3390/languages9080279>
- Bartholomeusz, T. (1999). First among equals: Buddhism and the Sri Lankan state. *Buddhism and politics in twentieth-century Asia*, 173-193. Retrieved from <https://digital.casalini.it/9781441167712>
- Bates, R. S. (1974). *Cultural Unity and Diversity: A Study in Religio-ethnic Group Relations in Ceylon (Sri Lanka)*. The University of Chicago.
- Berkwitz, S. (2012). Buddhism in Modern Sri Lanka. In *Buddhism in the Modern World* (p. 19). London: Routledge.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203139059>

- Bond, G. D. (1992). *The Buddhist revival in Sri Lanka: religious tradition, reinterpretation and response*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publ.. Retrieved from <https://books.google.lk/books?id=Q11ID2xfqD8C&lpg=PP15&ots=a3njTNjf14&dq=buddhist%20culture%20and%20beliefs%20in%20sri%20lanka&lr&pg=PP3#v=onepage&q&f=false>
- Coningham, R. (1995, October). Monks, Caves and Kings: A Reassessment of the Nature of Early Buddhism in Sri Lanka. *World Archaeology: Buddhist Archaeology*, 27(2), 222-242. Retrieved from <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0043-8243%28199510%2927%3A2%3C222%3AMCAKAR%3E2.0.CO%3B2-B>
- Coomaraswamy, M. (1874). *Sutta Nipāta: Or, Dialogues and Discourses of Gotama Buddha*. London: Trübner & Company.
- Coperahewa, S. (2012). Purifying the Sinhala Language: The Hela Movement of Munidasa Cumaratunga (1930s–1940s). *Modern Asian Studies*, 46(4), 857-891. doi:doi:10.1017/S0026749X11000291
- Cronk, L. (2019). *That complex whole: Culture and the evolution of human behavior*. Newyork: Routledge. doi:<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429496912>
- Dabukke, M. D. (2025). LITERARY AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF CONTEMPORARY SONG LYRICS. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SOCIETY REVIEWS*, 2(10), 1484-1495.
- Das, S. (2023). JĀTAKA STORIES AND THE BODHISATTVA'S QUEST FOR NIRVĀṆA. 82, pp. 93-100. Indian History Congress.
- Davids, C. A. (2013). *Stories of the Buddha: being selections from the Jataka*. Courier Corporation. Retrieved from <https://books.google.lk/books?id=YrHCAGAAQBAJ&lpg=PR11&ots=FmCrb7BNAJ&dq=Jataka%20Book%20&lr&pg=PR11#v=onepage&q=Jataka%20Book&f=false>
- De Silva, P. (2013). Reordering of Postcolonial Sri Pāda Temple in Sri Lanka: Buddhism, State and Nationalism. *History and Sociology of South Asia*, 7(2), 155-176. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/22308075134790>
- De Silva, S. (1988). *The place of women in Buddhism. A Talk given to the Midlands Buddhist Society (UK)*. Retrieved from <http://www.enabling.org/ia/vipassana/Archive/D/DeSilva/WomenInBuddhism/womenInBuddhismSwarnaDeSilva.html>
- Deegalle, M. (2007). *Popularizing Buddhism: preaching as performance in Sri Lanka*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

- DeSilva, P. (2016). Anthropological studies on South Asian pilgrimage: case of Buddhist pilgrimage in Sri Lanka. *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*, 4(1), 17-33.
doi:doi:https://doi.org/10.21427/D7HT4N
- Dixit, S. &. (2004). Evolution of Bhakti in Early Buddhism: an Analysis. *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*. 65, pp. 139-146. Indian History Congress. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44144728>
- Dyer, R. (2012). *In The Space Of A Song: The Uses of Song in Film* (1 ed.). Oxon: Routledge. doi:https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203804629
- Field, G. (2013). *Music for the Majority: Sinhala Song and the 1956 Cultural Revolution of Sri Lanka*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University. doi:DOI:10.14418/wes01.3.10
- Field, G. (2017). *Modernizing Composition*. Oakland: University of California Press. doi:Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1525/luminos.27>
- Fujimoto, T. &. (2006). An Overview of Sri Lankan History (I). *福岡大学経済学論叢*, 51(1-2), 37-52.
- Fujimoto, T. &. (2007). An Overview of Sri Lankan History (II). *福岡大学経済学論叢*, 51(4), 317-329.
- Geiger, W. (1912). *THE MAHAVAMSA or THE GREAT CHRONICLE OF CEYLON*. London: THE PALI TEXT SOCIETY.
- Gombrich, R. &. (1988). *Buddhism Transformed: Religious Change in Sri Lanka*. NEW JERSEY: Princeton University Press.
doi:https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1c9hpzb
- Gombrich, R., & Obeyesekere, G. (1988). *Buddhism Transformed: Religious Change in Sri Lanka*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Guruge, A. W. (1997). *The Buddha's Encounters with Mara the Tempter. Their Representation in Literature and Art*. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society Publ.
- Harris, E. (2006). *Theravada Buddhism and the British encounter: religious, missionary and colonial experience in nineteenth century Sri Lanka*. New York: Routledge.
- Henry, J. W. (2022). *Ravana's kingdom: The Ramayana and Sri Lankan history from below*. Oxford University Press.
- Herath, S. (2013). Sinhala Film Song. *Handa, Radio Magazine*, 2(9), 83-87.

- Hewage, B. S. (2022). Polemical Publications and Socioeconomic Shake-Ups: Nineteenth-Century Ceylonese Buddhist Revivalism from Migettuwatte Gunananda to Anagarika Dharmapala. *Buddhist Studies Review*, 39(1), 49-65. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1558/bsrv.21041>
- Holt, J. C. (1982). Pilgrimage and the structure of Sinhalese Buddhism. *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist studies*, 23-40.
- Holt, J. C. (2004). *The Buddhist Visnu: religious transformation, politics, and culture*. Columbia University Press. doi:<https://doi.org/10.7312/holt13322-008>
- Iriyagolle, I. (1989). The unique position of Sinhala women: A historical perspective. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka*, 34, 78-101. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23731114>
- Jayawardena, R. G. (2012). The Concretization of Sinhalese into the Ethnic Identity by Buddhist Pilgrimages: A Historical Investigation. *Sri Lanka Journal of Advanced Social Studies*, 1(2), 69-84. doi:DOI: 10.4038/sljass.v1i2.4857
- Jayawardhana, S. (1990). A survey of literature on the sacred Bodhi tree at Anuradhapura. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka*, 35, 23-52.
- Karetzky, P. E. (1982). Māra, Buddhist Deity of Death and Desire. *East and West*, 32(1/4), 75-92. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29756628>
- Kemper, S. (1984). The Buddhist monkhood, the law, and the state in colonial Sri Lanka. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 26(3), 401-427. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417500011063>
- Kemper, S. (2015). *Rescued from the nation: Anagarika Dharmapala and the Buddhist world*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kennedy, V. (. (Ed.). (2017). *Ethnic and cultural identity in music and song lyrics*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Kennedy, V. (2017). *Ethnic and cultural identity in music and song lyrics*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Kumara, N. (2015). *Amaradeva, Gandharva Vibudhayano: Biography and Study*. Colombo 10: Surasa Publications.
- Mahinda, E. (2024, July 1). Arrival of Arhat Mahinda Thera (Mahindāgamana) as Reflected in Pāli Mahāvamsa. (H. Karunaratne, Ed.) *Nāgānanda International Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences*, 7(4).
- Malalasekera, G. (1937). *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*. London: Government of India. Retrieved from Digital Library of India Item 2015.281359

- Malalgodha, K. (1976). *Buddhism in Sinhalese society, 1750-1900: a study of religious revival and change*. London: University of California Press.
- Mangala, M. (2022). *The Evolution of the Concept of the Buddha within the Pāli Canon and Commentaries, PhD, Thesis*. Faculty of the Department of Religious Studies at University of the West.
- Mangala, M. (2022). *The Evolution of the Concept of the Buddha within the Pāli Canon and Commentaries, PhD, Thesis*. Faculty of the Department of Religious Studies at University of the West.
- Mangala, P. (1977). *Abhayagiri Sanskrutiya (Abhayagiri Culture)*. Colombo 12: Pradeepa.
- Mcintosh, I. (2019). TO THE TOP TOGETHER: PILGRIMAGE AND PEACE-BUILDING. In *Peace Journeys: A New Direction in Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage Research* (Vol. 1).
- Meddegoda, N. (2019). An Overview About Different Sources of Popular Sinhala Songs. An overview of different sources of popular Sinhala songs. *AEMR-EJ*, 27-35.
- Nagel, J. (2019). Masculinity and nationalism: Gender and sexuality in the making of nations. In *In Celebrating 40 Years of Ethnic and Racial Studies* (pp. 95-122). Routledge.
- Nanayakkara, G. (2019). The Sinhala Commercial Music Industry. In G. Nanayakkara, . *Performers' Rights in Sri Lanka*, 17-56.
- Nissan, E. (1988). Polity and Pilgrimage Centres in Sri Lanka. *Man*, 23(2), 253-274. doi:<https://doi.org/10.2307/2802805>
- Nissan, E. (1989). HISTORY IN THE MAKING: Anuradhapura and the Sinhala Buddhist nation. *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice*, 25, 64-77. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23163052>
- Obeyesekere, G. (1992). *Colonel Olcott's reforms of the 19th Century and their Cultural Significance*. Ralph Peiris Memorial Lecture 11 (1992).: unpublished.
- Obeyesekere, G. (2017). *The Buddha in Sri Lanka: Histories and Stories*. London: Routledge India. doi:<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315102504>
- Paranavitana, S. (1958). The god of Adam's Peak. In *Artibus Asiae. Supplementum* (Vol. 18, pp. 5-78). doi:<https://doi.org/10.2307/1522591>

- Pathmanathan, S. (1976). Historical Writings in Medieval Sri Lanka: The Reign of Parakramabahu I. *Journal of the Sri Lanka Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 20, 1-16. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23728446>
- Pemaratana, S. (2020). Reviving the Buddha: The Use of the Devotional Ritual of Buddha-Vandanā in the Modernization of Buddhism in Colonial Sri Lanka. *The Journal of Global Buddhism*, 21, 29-50. Retrieved from <https://zenodo.org/record/4030979/files/314-867-1-PB.pdf>
- Pfaffenberger, B. (1979). The Kataragama pilgrimage: Hindu-Buddhist interaction and its significance in Sri Lanka's polyethnic social system. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 38(2), 253-270. doi:doi.org/10.2307/2053418
- Powers, J. (2015). *The Buddhist World*. Routledge.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315688114>
- Premarathna, M. (2023). The Buddhist Revival and Social Change in Contemporary Sri Lanka. *SAARC Journal of Social Science*, 1(2), 93-113. Retrieved from URL: <http://www.pbjournals.com/sjss>
- Premarathna, M. (2023). The Buddhist Revival and Social Change in Contemporary Sri Lanka. *SAARC Journal of Social Science*, 1(2), 93-113. Retrieved from URL: <http://www.pbjournals.com/sjss>
- Pyysiäinen, I. (2003). BUDDHISM, RELIGION, AND THE CONCEPT OF "GOD". *Numen*, 50(2), 147-171.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1163/156852703321506141>
- Rahula, W. (1978). The bodhisattva ideal in Theravada and Mahayana. *Zen and the Taming of the Bull: towards a definition of Buddhist thought*.
- Rathnayake, U. N. (2024, September). The Role of Sri Lankan Women in Historical Battles: A Comprehensive Analysis. *TIJER – INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL*, 11(9), 590-597.
- Rodgers, S. (2017). Song and the Music of Poetry. *Music analysis*, 315-349. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/musa.12091>
- Sangapala, P., & Perera, N. (2023). Spatializing Nationalism and Religion: The Production of Sinhala-Buddhist Imagination and the Centrality of Anuradhapura. *Space and Culture*.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/12063312231210152>
- Sanmugeswaran, P. F. (2019). Reclaiming Ravana in Sri Lanka: Ravana's Sinhala Buddhist Apotheosis and Tamil Responses. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 42(4), 796-812.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2019.1631900>

- Senanayaka, L. (2014, April). Ehelepola Kumarihami. *Daily Mirror*.
- Seneviratne, H. L. (1980). Bodhipuja: collective representations of Sri Lanka youth. *American ethnologist*, 7(4), 734-743.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1525/ae.1980.7.4.02a00080>
- Sivasundaram, S. (2007). Buddhist kingship, British archaeology and historical narratives in Sri Lanka c. 1750–1850. *Past and Present*, 197(1), 111-142.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtm040>
- Stache-Rosen, V. (1975). *The Temptation of the Buddha: A Preliminary Comparison of some Chinese versions of an episode in the life of the Buddha*. Retrieved from repository.cam.ac.uk
- Stoddard, R. (1988). Characteristics of Buddhist pilgrimages in Sri Lanka. *Geography, Faculty Publication*, 11.
- Sumanasuriya, K. T. (1986). Some Beliefs and Practices Among the Sinhala People. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Sri Lanka Branch*, 31, 115-154.
- Swearer, D. (1970). Lay Buddhism and the Buddhist revival in Ceylon. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 38(3), 255-275.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/XXXVIII.3.255>
- Swearer, D. (1970, September). Lay Buddhism and the Buddhist Revival in Ceylon. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, XXXVIII(3), 255-275.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/XXXVIII.3.255>
- Tekell, H. (No Date). *The Power of Lyrics: Exploring Songwriting Craft*. Richards Education.
- Tyagi, M. (2023). MAHINDA: THE ROYAL AMBASSADOR OF BUDDHISM IN SRI LANKA. *RJPSSs 2023*, 49(1), 73-81.
doi:doi.org/10.31995/rjpss.2023v49i01.10
- wickremeratne, S. (2006). *Buddha in Sri Lanka : remembered yesterdays*. Albany: State University of New York Press.