

A Historical Study On The Distribution Of Modern Pirivena Education In The Mātale District

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Introduction

Although there has been extensive discussion on the spread of modern Sri Lankan Pirivena education, the discussion on the history of Pirivena education regional is silent. The focus here is on discussing the spread of modern pirivena education in the Mātale District. It is said that parallel to the cultural revival movement in the late nineteenth century, there was an advancement in Bhikkhu education centred on the Paramadhammachēthiya Pirivena at Ratmalāna and the Vidyālamkāra Pirivena at Paliyagoda, Vidyodaya Pirivena at Māligākanda. It should be noted that the phenomenon's impact was also felt in the Mātale area, which is far from the capital.

How did the modern Pirivena Bhikkhu education originate and spread in the Mātale District? This research will be conducted on that issue. One of the main objectives of this research is to identify the origin and spread of modern Pirivena education in the Mātale District and to build its history. The book 'Aitihāsika Mātale' was also important in the literature review. That book contains a collection of information compiled under various themes. It also pays some attention to the educational history of the Mātale District. However, it does not pay much attention to Pirivena education. Abayaratne Adhikāri's book in Sinhala 'Sri Lankan Classical Education and Maha Sangana' can be considered a significant book on Pirivena education. This book is significant in studying ancient Pirivena education's history and modern Pirivena education's national distribution.

Although these books are essential sources for basic reading, they do not pay much attention to the history of modern pirivena education in the Mātale district. In such a background, one has to face the problem of obtaining the standard document to examine the history of Pirivena education in the district. The history of modern Pirivena education in the district will be studied by filling this gap.

Research Methodology

This research aims to critically evaluate the historical establishment and

development of modern pirivena education in the Mātale District. As it cannot find a comprehensive evaluation regarding this historical event, this research would be a valuable attempt to drag out hidden historical details to the current society. This qualitative research incorporates two data collection methods: literature survey and field survey. According to the literature survey, both primary and secondary sources were used. Among that, primary sources were prominent. Field investigations were conducted in Kaikāwala Sudharūanārāmaya, Ukuwela Nigrodhārāmaya, Mātale Dharmarāja Pirivena and Kumbiyangoda Vidyāsēkara Pirivena. In-depth interviews were conducted with selected key informants. Twelve respondents participated in interviews. Collected historical data were analyzed based on the content analysis method.

Results and Discussion

By the end of the nineteenth century, a Buddhist revival had begun on the island. Simultaneously, traditional Buddhist education began to expand in a new guise. The Vidyodaya and Vidyālamkāra Pirivenās those were formed accordingly were able to expand the Pirivenās throughout the island. As a result, pirivenās in the Mātale district also began to be established in the first decade of the twentieth century. Accordingly, several Pirivenās spread out in the Mātale District can be identified based on the primary intention of imparting education to the monks.

Aluvihāra Buddhaghosha Pirivena can be considered the first Pirivena established in the Matale District. Its first head of the Pirivena was Ven. Gammullē Chandajōthi Thero. The 'Buddhaghōsha Pirivena Aid Society was established to provide the necessary facilities for maintaining the Pirivena. It was significant for the patronage of the philanthropists in the area. Later, Bernard Aluvihāre, the Minister of Education, became interested in establishing a high-level Buddhist faculty centred on the Aluvihāra. Although SWRD Bandaranaike laid the foundation stone in 1953 with his intervention, the work failed.

Ven. Gammullē Chandajōthi Thero, the first head of the Aluvihāra Buddhaghōsha Pirivena, inaugurated the Mātale Sri Dharmarāja Pirivena Vihāra Road. Boralessgamuwa Paramadhamma Nivēsa Pirivena was a center in the expansion of the Mātale District Pirivena.

He was educated there, Ven. Gammullē Chandajōthi Thero worked as an assistant teacher in the Pirivena from 1921 to 1926 and gained experience before the work at Aluvihāra Buddhaghōsha pirivena. Mātale Dharmarāja Pirivena founded on 22 July, 1935, with thirteen students with the participation of the Head of the Vidyodaya Pirivena, Ven Kalukondayāve Pannāsēkara Thero and Head of the Boralessgamuwa Paramadhamma Nivēsa Pirivena Ven Lenadora Siri Dhammarakkhita Thero. From 25 January 1939, it was registered as a Pirivena with the assistance of the Department of Public Instruction. According to the

Pirivena Act of 1949, it has become a maximum Pirivena under the Pirivena Act of 1959. It became a senior level in 1964. The Vidyodaya University has become an approved institution. Dharmarāja Pirivena used to be an institution affiliated with Vidyodaya University for up to the final year of external degrees.

Walagambā Pirivena of Rangiri Dambulla Rajamahā Vihāraya was established on 19th May 1933 by Ven. Ulpathagama Chandajōthi Thero. He was an alumnus of the Paramadhamma Nivēsa Pirivena in Boralesgamuwa and received great encouragement from the monks to start the Pirivena. The then Chief Incumbent of the Sixteenth Theras, the Chief Leader of the Asgiriya Chapter. The Pirivena was created by ten students and was upgraded to senior status in 1965.

Sri Sudarshana Pirivena in Kaikāwala was the well-known Pirivena in the Rattota area. Ven Mayilapitiye Mēdhānanda, a student of the Sri Lanka Vidyāla Pirivena in Maradāna at the time of the bombing of Colombo by the Japanese during World War II, accompanied by the head of the Pirivena, Ven Baddēgama Wimalawamsa, to the Sudarshanārāmaya in Kaikāwala. Sri Sudarshana Vidyālaya was started by ten students. Although Ven Baddēgama Wimalawamsa later returned to Maradāna, Sudarshana Vidyālaya remained a reputed institution for a long time. On May 12, 1964, the Pirivena was upgraded to a Senior Pirivena. A large number of lay clerics could be educated in it. Today it is a Primary pirivena

Kūmbiyangoda Vidyāsēkara Pirivena was established around 1906 with the establishment of the Vidyāsēkara Pirivena Aid Society under the leadership of several eminent contributors.

Ukuwela Nāgolla Jinavachanōdaya Pirivena was also one of old pirivenās among the pirivenās in Mātale district. The Jinavachanōdaya Pirivena was established in 1912 as a branch of the Paramadhammachēthīya Pirivena in Ratmalāna and the Paramadhamma Nivēsa Pirivena in Boralesgamuwa based at the Nāgolla Nigrōdhārāma Temple. Ven. Daramitipola Rathanasāra Thero was its first Parivenādhipati. Although education was provided to a large number of people in the area, only the name of this pirivena remains today due to various reasons.

By the 1960s, there were five Pirivenas in the Mātale District. There were two junior pirivenās, two senior pirivenās, and one university pirivena. At that time, according to the average attendance of students, ten students had the opportunity to appoint a full-time graduate teacher. If the Director approves the teacher, the salary shall be paid directly by the Government following the Constitution of the Aided English Schools Act. Parallel to this situation, more pirivenās were starting in the Mātale district in the next decade.

Conclusion

Several modern Pirivenās were established in the Mātale District in the early twentieth century to coincide with the dawn of Vidyōdaya and Vidyālamkāra Pirivenās. These Institutes were started amid great difficulties during the colonial period. The patronage received from local donors when there was no state sponsorship was remarkable. Pirivenās in the Mātale District gradually received state patronage. By the middle of the twentieth century, about five major high-quality pirivenās were operating in the Mātale district. Later it is observed that the number has increased numerically.

Keywords: Bhikkhu Education, Buddhist education, Buddhist Revival, Mātale, Pirivena

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