



VERAGALA AVALOKITEŚVARA
BODHISATTVA: AN INQUIRY INTO ITS
STYLE & PERIOD

(The Mahāyāna Buddhist Bronze Statue from Colombo Museum)

SARATH CHANDRAJEEWA

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“To the unknown and unrecognized sculptor par excellence, who expresses the idiom of Mahāyāna in divine quintessence and immeasurable compassion with graceful stance and synthesis of the majestic appearance through his sculpture.”

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Prologue and Acknowledgement | 07 |
| Introduction | 09 |
| Visual Language | 11 |
| International Art Review | 15 |
| Archeological and Historical Views | 23 |
| Worship of Avalokiteśvara in Island of Lanka | 29 |
| Artistic and Compositional Aspects | 63 |
| Technological facts | 87 |
| Perception | 93 |
| Bibliography | 95 |

Abbreviations

| | |
|---------------|-------------|
| Chi. | Chinese |
| Ed. | Edition |
| Fre. | French |
| Gre. | Greek |
| P. | Pali |
| Sinh. | Sinhalese |
| Sk. | Sanskrit |
| Tam. | Tamil |
| Trans. | Translation |

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The responsibility for any resulting issues is fully with the author.

List of Plates

- 01 - **Veragala Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva**. National Museum, Colombo.
- 02 - **Belvedere Apollo**. God of ancient Greece. Vatican Museum.
- 03 - **Tārā**. The British Museum, London.
- 04 - Detail of **Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva**
- 05 - Detail of **Belvedere Apollo** (330 BC- 01AD)
- 06 - **A Chakravartin** (1st centuryBC/AD) Andhra Pradesh, Musee Guimet
- 07 - **The Arnolfini marriage**- Jan Van Eyck (1390-1441) National Gallery, London
- 08 - **Jewish Bride** - Rembrant Harmenszoon Van Rijn (1606-1669) Rijks Museum
- 09 - **Pieta** - Michelangelo (1475-1564) St.Peter's Basilica
- 10 - **Isenheim Altrapiece** - Matthias Grünewald (1470-1528) Unterlinden Museum
- 11 - **Easter Island stone sculptures**. Moai or Mo'ai, monolithic human figures
- 12 - **King Tut's Golden Casket**. (c. 1332–1323 BC.) Cairo Mesuem Egypt.
- 13 - **Winged Victory** - Hellenistic Greece (190 B.C.) Louvre Museum.
- 14 - **Sunrise** - Claude Monet (1840-1926) Musee Marmottan Monet
- 15 - **Jacob wrestling with the Angel** - Paul Gauguin (1847-1903) Scottish National Gallery
- 16 - **Ecstasy of Theresa** - Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680) Cornaro Chapel, Rome
- 17 - **Simhanāda Lōkeshvara** (India 11 A.D.) Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery
- 18 - **Samanthabadra Bodhisattva**, Kyoto
- 19 - **Avalokiteśvara image from inside the Nātha Devale at Kandy**.
- 20 - **Chālukya Rāvana Phadi cave** at Aihole (Inside view)
- 21 - **Avalokiteśvara. Mathura style** (2nd century)
- 22 - **Avalokiteśvara Mathura style** (2nd 3rd centuries)
- 23 - **Avalokiteśvara as Mahā kārunika, Gandhara style**, Museum Für Völkerkunde, Berlin.
- 24 - **Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, Gandhara** (2nd 3rd centuries) Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
- 25 - **Inscribed Stele, Gandhara Style** (3rd century) De Marteau collection, Brussels
- 26 - **Avalokiteśvara** (8th - 10th centuries) Abhayagiri Museum, Anuradhapura
- 27 - **Avalokiteśvara as Akshyamathi Lokesvara**. Abhayagiri Museum, Anuradhapura
- 28 - **Neak Pean**, Angkor, Cambodia (12th century)
- 29 - **Statue of Balaha the horse**, Neak Pean, Angkor, Cambodia
- 30 - **Map of Neak Pean**, Angkor, Cambodia
- 31 - **The Location of Neak Pean in Cambodia**
- 32 - **Three Rock carved standing images of Bodhisattva Maithreeya, Buddha and Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara at Budupatunna**. Ampara District.
- 33 - **Avalokiteśvara as Asiatic form**. Abhayagiri Museum, Anurādhapura
- 34 - **Rock Sculpture of the 'Man with a Horse'** at Isurumuniya, Anurādhapura. (6th century)
- 35 - **Isurumuni temple**
- 36 - **Kudiramalai point**. Map
- 37 - **Kudiramalai Point**. Wilpattu National park.
- 38 - **Kudiramalai Point**. Wilpattu National park.
- 39 - **Recent Photos of Kudiramalai (2016)**
- 40 - **Avalokiteśvara, Dambegoda Vihara, near Okkampitiya**, (750-800 A.D.) Monarāgala District
- 41 - **Kushtaraja Avalokiteśvara**, Natha Devale, Weligama Matara District (09th -10th Century)
- 42 - **Left group at Buduruwagala Sudhana kumara, Avalokiteśvara & Tārā** (850-950 A.D.)
- 43 - **Right group at Buduruwagala Avalokiteśvara, Maithreeya & Vajrapāni** (850-950 A.D.)
- 44 - **Headless gneiss image of a Bodhisattva Maithreeya, Right side gneiss image of Avalokiteśvara** at Situlpahuva Hambantota District. (700-750 A.D.)
- 45 - **Damaged Dolomite marble image of an Avalokiteśvara at Mangala Rajamaha Vihara**, Seruwila. Trincomalee District. (07th centuray)
- 46 - **Dolomite marble image of an Avalokiteśvara at Mudumahā Vihara**, Pothuwil. Ampara District. (08th ,09th centuray)

- 47 - **Damaged Dolomite marble image of an Avalokiteśvara at Girihandu vihara**
Ambalanthota, Hambanthota District. (07th century)
- 48 - **Dolomite Avalokiteśvara from Budumuttāva, Rajamaha Vihara Nikawaratiya,**
Kurunegala District. (650-750 A.D.)
- 49 - **Dolomite marble Avalokiteśvara.** Timbirivava, Kobeigane. Kurunegala District.
- 50 - **Dolomite marble Avalokiteśvara torso.** Archaeological Museum,
Polonnaruwa (07th 08th century)
- 51 - **Hollow cast Bronze Avalokiteśvara** from Thiriyaya. (07th 08th century)
- 52 - **Hollow cast Bronze Avalokiteśvara** from Thiriyaya (07th 08th century)
- 53 - **Dolomite marble Avalokiteśvara seated in lalitāsana** Plonnaruwa. (08th century)
- 54 - **Hollow cast Bronze Avalokiteśvara from Girikandaka Vihara,**Thiriyaya.
Trincomalee District (07th 08th century)
- 55 - **Solid cast bronze Avalokiteśvara is Seated in combination of Lalithāsana and**
Rājaleelāsana. (08th 09th century)
- 56 - **Gilt Bronze hollow cast with intact clay core Avalokiteśvara**
- 57 - **Solid cast bronze Avalokiteśvara is Seated in Rājaleelāsana.** Girikandaka vihara,
Tiriyaya. Trincomalee District. (08th 09th century)
- 58 - **Massive head of Avalokiteśvara, Dambegoda Vihāra, near Okkampitiya,** Monarāgala
District. (late Anurādhapura period 750-800 AD)
- 59 - **Detail study of divisions in the figure** (face lengths) Veragala Avalokiteśvara
- 60 - **Study of Citrakarmasāstra clarification .**
- 61 - **Vitruvian Man,** ca. 1409 (Leonardo da Vinci)
- 62 - **Detail study of divisions in the Face**
- 63 - **Detail of Veragala Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva**
- 64 - **Detail of Veragala Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva**
- 65 - **Space divisions study,** measuring from circle (*Cakra*) system
- 66 - **Proportion divisions study,** measuring from grid (*Bhūpura*) system
- 67 - **Left side of the statue of Avalokiteśvara**
- 68 - **Detail of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva**
- 69 - **Movement divisions study**
- 70 - **Golden Rectangle method I**
- 71 - **Golden Rectangle method II**
- 72 - **Right side of the statue of Avalokiteśvara**
- 73 - **Back side of the statue of Avalokiteśvara**
- 74 - **Samādhi Buddha.** National Museum, Colombo
- 75 - **Standing Buddha.** National Museum, Colombo
- 76 - **Painted plaster surface of Avalokiteśvara at Buduruwagala**
- 77 - **Detail of Veragala standing Buddha**
- 78 - **Detail of one of the Sigiri frescoes**
- 79 - **Detail of one of the Sigiri frescoes**
- 80 - **Detail of Tārā – British Museum**
- 81 - **Detail of Veragala Seated Buddha**
- 82 - **Detail of one of the Sigiri frescoes**
- 83 - **Detail of one of the Sigiri frescoes**
- 84 - **Detail of Veragala Avalokiteśvara**
- 85 - **Gold earring from Sigiriya.** National Museum, Colombo.
- 86 - **Siraspatha, Flame ornament.** National Museum, Colombo.
- 87 - **Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, Padmapani,** Ajantha
- 88 - **Door handle.** National Museum, Colombo.
- 89 - **Bodhisattva Feet.** National Museum, Colombo.
- 90 - **Sigiriya Terracotta Sculptures**
- 91 - **The pattern of decoration** (Avalokiteśvara, Tara, Sigiriya frescos and other statues
and objects from Veragala show its own identity)
- 92 - **Flow cast moulding system.**
- 93 - **Gravity cast moulding system**
- 94 - **Solid cast gilt bronze Statue of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva**
- 95 - **Eleven headed Avalokiteśvara.** (10th century) Kashmir

Prologue and Acknowledgement

My first acquaintance with the Veragala Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara statue was in 1979. I was working as a youth services officer at the National Youth Services Council in the District of Vavuniya at that time. It was Janaki Ranmuthugala, working as an artist at the museum, who took me to the National Museum in Colombo and showed me the statue, which soon attracted my attention. It was on the table of Mr. Prabath Wijesekere, the chief designer of the National Museum, who allowed me to peruse it. I had no sufficient knowledge of Mahāyāna Buddhism or Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva at that time, but I found in it an excellent sculpture.

When I was asked to read for a Doctor of Philosophy Degree after completing the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) Degree at the State Academic Art Institute (Surikov) in Moscow Russia, in 1995, I decided to research the Veragala Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara statue, which won my attention 16 years ago.

I started to write the synopsis required for my doctorate to be submitted to the State Art Research Institute of Moscow, while residing at the art studio of Prof. Lev. Kerbel (Supervisor of Master of Fine Arts Degree). The scholarly resources were not available to me and I had only a large poster of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara in my room printed by the Rietberg Museum of Zurich in Switzerland. This image was taken in 1991, when 52 bronze sculptures were sent abroad for exhibition. Presented to me by Mr. Albert Dharmasiri, I took this poster with me from Sri Lanka when I left for Moscow.

I made an attempt to study the sculpture and compose my synopsis according to the visual reading. It was an enigmatic experience. I was convinced that a dialogue with a work of art would reveal a lot about the said work. More concentration was given to find how the composition of this sculpture was created, which would express certain meanings and concepts through three dimensional shapes. Aksana, a daughter-in-law of Prof. Lev Kerbel and Rupasiri, a Sri Lankan friend living in Moscow helped me in finding the needed books on the concept of Avalokiteśvara from the Lenin Library in Moscow.

The synopsis titled 'Veheragala Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara: An analysis of the Mahāyāna Buddhist Image from Colombo Museum' consisting of 10 typed pages was presented to the Department of Asian African Art studies of the Faculty of Oriental Art Studies at the State Institute of Art Research in Moscow and was sent to Prof. Irina Igerevna Septunova, Directress of the Museum of Oriental Arts, Moscow for assessment on the decision of the board of post graduate studies. Subsequently, Prof. Septunova, an Indologist and Prof. Ganyeshkavaya, an expert in Mahāyāna Buddhism and related arts were appointed as my supervisors. It took me three years to complete the research work but it was a rare and important experience for me to work with these two professors as supervisors.

The first draft was in English and a Russian translation was added to the final dissertation.

When in Sri Lanka on vacation, the books I found from Mr. Harold Peiris' personal library and the editing of Mr. Albert Dharmasiri were of much use. The books made available to me by Ven. Prof. Bellanwila Wimalarathana, Nihal Fernando of Studio Times and 'The Iconography of Avalokiteśvara in Mainland South East Asia' by Prof. Nandana Chutiwongs, a professor at Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden written for her doctoral thesis, which was presented to me by Dr. Roland Silva, former Director General of the Department of Archaeology and Cultural Triangle, provided much information about the subject. Professor Senaka Banadaranayake encouraged me to investigate the style of the Sigiriya paintings and the style of the Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva from Veragala and to make comparisons between the two mediums.

The Doctor of Philosophy degree was awarded to me in 1999 on the unanimous decision of the doctorate conferring jury of the State Institute of Art Research in Moscow.

In 2013, I presented an abstract of about 250 words on 'Veheragala Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva: Style and Perception' (sinhala) at the Research Symposium of the University of the Visual and Performing Arts as an example for post graduate students for a research discourse. Prof. E.W. Marasinghe then invited me to write a research article for the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka, which was published in 2016. This work is an expanded version of that publication with more visuals.

I intentionally refrained from adding the introduction, literary survey, historical background and classical era, Bodhisattva doctrine and characteristics of the Avalokiteśvara statue and the concept of Avalokiteśvara in sculpture in the classical era of my first dissertation which was written in 1999 in this text. However some findings in the original dissertation, written on special characteristics of the Veheragala Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara statue and its technology are included in this book. This article has been newly written based on the assumptions of the original. In addition, two major sites, Isurumuniya and Kudiramalai are discussed in this article to prove my theory. In this regard, Kudiramalai was pointed out to me by Mr. Charitha Ratwatte who had asked me to examine the horse sculpture at the shores of Kudiramalai.

As an example on how to write a research paper on visual arts, this article is limited to the artistic style of the statue, time period and technology. The limits are set to emphasize that the knowledge gained by reading a work of art is of prime importance in research on visual arts. The time definitions by scholars to the statue are being subjected to question and a new theory is built to the effect that the sculpture belongs to the style of the Sigiriya Tradition of Paintings. Those assumptions were included in my doctoral dissertation but some new findings have been added. On Visual Arts, it is imperative to make discussion in historical and political background, religious concepts, cultural content and some other important aspects through art works.

I am grateful to those who have kindly helped me in various ways during this research. Among them are Anoma Jayasinghe, Professor Theodore Warnakulasooriya, Professor Kusuma Karunaratne, Professor T.G. Kulathunga, Prof. Dr. Gisa Jähnichen, Dr. Arjuna Thanthilage, Dr. Achala Abeykoon, Dr. Priyantha Udagedara, Sumudu Ambogama, Pemil Jayawardene, Kanishka Wijayapura, Neil Christopher and Anu Wickramasuriya (Studio Times). I sincerely thank them all.

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Introduction

01

Among the collection of various artifacts exhibited at the National Museum of Colombo, Sri Lanka, there is a gilded solid cast bronze statue of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva listed under No. V.03. This statue, which is a creation of ancient sculpture tradition, bears very high artistic characteristics. Found from Sri Lanka, this valuable work of art can be assessed as a masterpiece among world religious art.

The Veragala Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva sculpture was found from Veragala (Veheragala)¹ Sirisañgabo Vihāra premises in 1968. Veragala is situated in Āllavāva Thulāna, in Kanadarā Kōrale, which is 17 miles away from Anurādhapura, the main city in the North Central Province of Sri Lanka along the Anurādhapura-Trincomalee Road. Several bronze sculptures and artifacts of various sizes have been found at different times from the same premises. All these treasures were gold gilded. According to folklore, there had been about 600 goldsmiths living around this area. Since the area was famous for making 'gold leaves' (*rampath*), the place was called '*Rampathvila*' in the past. H.C.P. Bell in his Seventh Progress Report of the Archeological Survey of Ceylon, AIC.p.56, No. 116 has made a brief note on Rampathvila².

Scattered ruins found from the same area prove that the premises had belonged to an ancient Buddhist sacred site. The artifacts including the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara Sculpture were unearthed by the then chief incumbent of the temple, Mahamessalave Rathanapāla Thero. There is no doubt that they were buried there to keep them safe from invaders who came to the ancient capital of Anurādhapura³. These were then taken over by the Department of Archaeology. Subsequently, our subject matter, the sculpture of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva, was handed over to the National Museum of Colombo by Dr. Roland Silva, the then Director General of the Department of Archaeology, Sri Lanka. This statue is called as Veragala Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva because it was found from Veragala.

1. Spoken as Veheragala, texts refer the same place as Veragala.

2. Ranawella, G.S.(Ed)(2004) *Inscription of Ceylon*. p.85. (ĀLLAVĀVA' PILLAR INSCRIPTION- E.Muller, was originally found at Spill Water tank now called Āllavāva' at Rampathvila)

3. *Cūlavamsa* states that the South Indian king Srimāra Srivallabha (831-861 AD) landed with his army and sacked the city of Anurādhapura;

'The Pāndu King took away all the valuables in the treasure house of the king and plundered what was there to be plundered in vihara and town. In the Ratnapasada the golden image of Buddha..... and the golden images here and there in the monasteries- all these he took and made the island of Lanka deprived of her valuables.....'

Geiger, W. (Trans & Ed) (1953) *Cūlavamsa*. 50,33-36.



Pl. 01 – Veragala Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva. No.V.03. National Museum of Colombo.
www.asianartnewspaper.com

Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara is seated as a royal personage. His right knee is lifted and placed on the throne closer to the body while the left leg comfortably hangs down. This posture is called 'Royal Easy Posture' (*Rājalilāsana*), which is a combination of the majestic pose of *Mahārājalilāsana* and the relaxation pose of *lalitāsana*. The right arm rests on the right thigh with fingers of the same hand showing the 'Crab Symbol' (*Katakahasta*). There may have been a lotus flower between his fingers in this same hand to depict his 'spiritual clan' (*padma-kula*)⁴ and also to symbolize his spiritual purity.

The left palm is placed heavily on the throne. Due to the force of the palm, the right shoulder is bent downwards while the left shoulder is slightly straightened upwards. The muscles on the right midriff are curled because of the slight bent of the right shoulder. The head leans a little to the right. His hair is in loose locks piled high up on his head. The head-dress resembles a crown of matted hair (*jatāmakuta*). Valuable gems have been inserted into the head dress. It can be assumed that there might have been a small figure, made separately, of celestial Buddha Amitābha, the spiritual father of Avalokiteśvara, placed in the cavity at the middle of the head dress. *Citrakarmasāstra* mentions thus, 'Lokanatha is hundred-eyed ... is commendable. He has [the figure of] *Amitābha-tatāgata* in the middle of the *jatā-makuta*, wears a necklace and armllets, a shawl of antelope skin, gentle and is of white complexion and adorned with all [princely] ornaments'⁵.

The iron nail at the back of the head proves that there had been a wheel fixed to the head as well. This symbolizes the aura of the Bodhisattva. Long curls of his hair fall softly snake-like from the back of his head and behind the long ears (*lambakarana*) on both sides parallel to the *Jatāmakuta*. The head and facial expression of this sculpture represents an imaginary heavenly illumination. This can be equaled to the creation of a God in ancient Greece⁶.



Pl. 02- **Belvedere Apollo**. God of ancient Greece. (330 BC- 01 AD) Vatican Museum.
http://mv.vatican.va/3_EN/pages/x-Schede/MPCs/MPCs_Sala02_01.html

4. According to Mahāyāna *Guhyāsamājantra* written about 300 AD Mahāyāna Buddha and Bodhisattva were categorized into three clans.

- i. *Tatāgatakula* (Buddha clan)
 - ii. *Padmakula* (lotus clan)
 - iii. *Vajrakula* (thunderbolt clan).
- Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva represents *Padmakula*.

Wayman, A. (Ed) (1977) *Guhyāsamājantra*. Delhi.

5. Marasinghe, E.W. (Trans) (1991) *The Citrakarma Sāstra ascribed to Manjusri*. p. xvi, 16-17.

6. The Olympian deity in classical Greek and Roman religion and mythology. God of music, poetry, art, oracles, archery, plague, medicine, sun, light and knowledge.



Pl. 03 - **Tārā**. Gilt Bronze solid cast in one piece. Discovered on the east coast of Sri Lanka, between Trincomalee & Batticaloe. The British Museum, London. Presented by wife of Sir Robert Brownrigg in 1830. (Dated, late Anurādhapura period 700-750 AD. but stylistically very close to Sigiriya frescoes and Veragala Avalokiteśvara.)
http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?partid=1&assetid=167678001&objectid=251954

As is the identity of the bronze sculptures found from Sri Lanka belonging to the historical eras, two transparent rock crystals have been inserted into the open cavities of the eyes in this sculpture too. Precious stones have been inserted into the *jatāmakuta*. The face, eyes looking downwards, represents calmness and compassion. The basic form of the face is square-shaped, identical to the male anatomy. With broad shoulders and a narrow hip, his body is muscular.

When creating this sculpture, the upper body has been left bare so that the sharp concentration given to build-up the chest and stomach areas realistically, can be clearly seen. A simple shawl has fallen from the left shoulder to flow down the wrist of the right hand. This is not a *yajnopavita*, the sacred thread⁷. Two simple bracelets can be seen on the wrists.

The cloth covering the lower body flows downwards between his legs. Through the flow of this cloth, the frontal edge of the throne on which he is seated is clearly visible. There are no curves on places of the body where the cloth is firmly fitted; hence the anatomy of the figure is much highlighted in these areas⁸.

The realistic approach on the folds of this cloth that flow down from the throne is a special feature of this sculpture. This attitude is similar to ancient Greek sculptors' way of carving folds of cloths. A beautifully decorated belt has been tightened around the waist to keep the lower garment in place. Except for the headdress formed by the matted hair (*jatāmakuta/kiritamakuta*), this statue is an 'unadorned' (*nirbhushana*) sculpture.

7. Yajnopavita - Sacred thread, emblem of the second, the spiritual birth, conferred in an initiatory ceremony upon members of the three upper casts.
Boner A. (1990) *Principles of Composition of Hindu Sculpture*. p.259

8. Compare the Sri Lankan Statue of Tārā at British Museum London.



Pl. 04- Detail of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva



Pl. 05- Detail of Belvedere Apollo (330 BC- 01AD)

As this sculpture has been embodied with high human qualities its characteristics can be likened to a 'Universal Sovereign' (*chakravartin*), who rules the world with ten 'kingly virtues' (*dasarāja-dharma*) according to the *Digha-nikāya* of the Pali *Tripitaka*⁹.

9. Rhys David, T.W. & Rhys David, C.A.F. (Trans)(1889-1911) *Digha Nikāya commentary ii*, p.635

The Universal monarch and Buddha. *Laukika - chakkavatti / Lokottara Buddha*

Reynolds, Frank E. (1972) *The Two wheels of Dhamma: A Study of Early Buddhism* (Ed.) Bardwell, L. Smith. Chambersburg, Pa: American Academy of Religion. P. 06. 30

Tambiah, S.J. (1976) *The World conqueror and the world renouncer.*

Wimalarathna, B. (1995) *Concept of Great Man (Mahāpurisa)* iii chapter.



Pl. 06 - **A Chakravartin** (1st century BC/AD) Andhra Pradesh, Amaravati. Preserved at Musee Guimet <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chakravartin>

Taken as a whole, this valuable sculpture of the Bodhisattva represents a royal personality with full of spiritual qualities. But it definitely symbolizes Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, of Mahāyāna Buddhism, who is praised in *sutras* written in Sanskrit as all powerful and boundlessly compassionate¹⁰.

In Mahāyāna Buddhism, the Buddha is looked upon as an anointed king (*abhiseka-rāja*) and the Bodhisattvas are iconographically depicted as princes' with their bare bodies decorated with princely ornaments and the lower part of the body dressed in *dhotis*. They all wear diadems, sometimes *jatāmakutas* (crowns of matted hair) or *karandamakutas* (basket-shaped crowns).

10. Muller, F.M. (Trans)(1894) *Mahā Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* (larger sutra of amitayus) in R.Dt.Clare (Ed).

Takakusu, J. (Trans)(1969) *Amithayūrdhyāna Sūtra,*

Vaydya, P.L. (Ed)(1960) *Saddharamapundarika Sūtra: The Lotus of the true Law.*

Vaydya, P.L. (Trans)(1961) *Avalokiteśvaragunakarandvyūha Sūtra.*

The statue of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, along with some other 51 valuable ancient religious bronze sculptures belonging to classical eras of this country were taken away from the Colombo Museum to be exhibited around the world. The first exhibition was held at Musee Guimet in Paris from 23rd October 1991 to 22nd February, 1992. Then they were exhibited at Rietberg Museum in Zurich from 10th May 1992 to 13th September 1992. Thereafter, these works were taken to the Gallery of Arthur M. Shackler at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington in which the exhibition was held from 01st November 1992 to 26th September, 1993. Next, they were exhibited at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney till the end of 1993¹¹. Afterwards Veragala Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva was exhibited along with 150 works of Buddhist and Hindu Statuary, Jewelry and National treasures of Sri Lanka at the Tokyo National Museum from 17th September to 30th November 2008¹².

During these exhibitions around the world, the bronze statue of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara has been highly praised among all the other bronze sculptures from Sri Lanka by world famous art critiques. C. Bolon, a specialist of South Asian Art and a curator in charge of preparing exhibitions at the Smithsonian Institution selected this sculpture for the cover page of their quarterly magazine '*Asian Art*' published in the summer of 1993. Explaining reasons for his selection, he stated that the Veragala Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara is a Masterpiece among other Sri Lankan religious bronze Sculptures¹³.

Similarly, Carter Brown, who had held the post of Director of the National Gallery of Smithsonian Institution for 23 years, was so overjoyed after viewing the Sri Lankan bronze exhibition that he proposed to hold an Olympic Art Exhibition naming a few world renowned works of art. These art works were; the painting 'The Arnolfini Marriage' by Van Eyck or 'Jewish Bride' by Rembrandt depicting love, Sculpture of 'Pieta' by Michaelangelo symbolising deep sorrow, painting of Jesus' crucifixion 'Isenheim Alterpiece' by Gruenewald depicting anguish, 'King Tut's Golden Casket' or 'Easter Island stone Head Sculptures' with vast landscapes to represent awe, 'Winged victory' at Louver Museum for triumph, 'Impressionists paintings or abstractions which delight in pure colour' for joy, 'Ecstasy of Theresa' by Gianlorenzo Bernini and 'Rising Golden Bodhisattva or Veragala Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara' which has been unearthed from Sri Lanka for spiritual calmness¹⁴.

11. *Sacred images of Sri Lanka.*
Exhibition Catalogue. (1994) p.07.

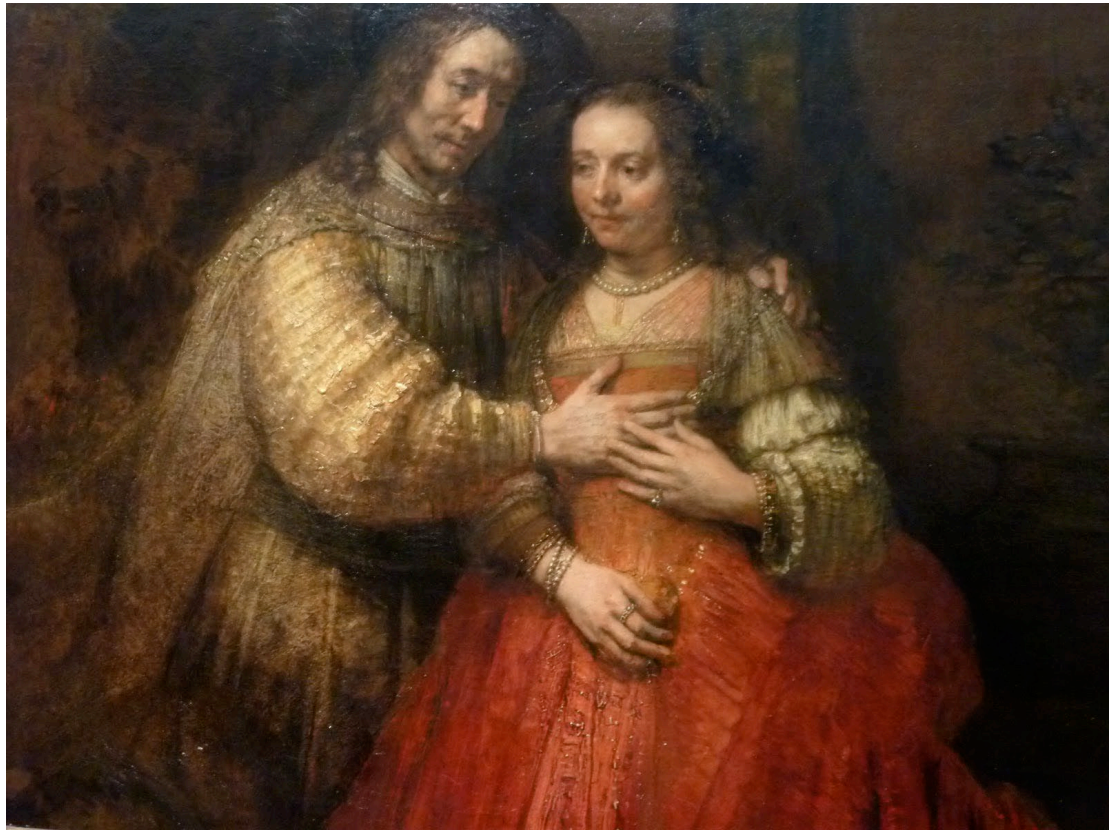
12. *Cultural Heritage of Sri Lanka: The land of Serendipity* (2008)

13. Muthukumar, N.
(January 19th 1994) *Daily News*.

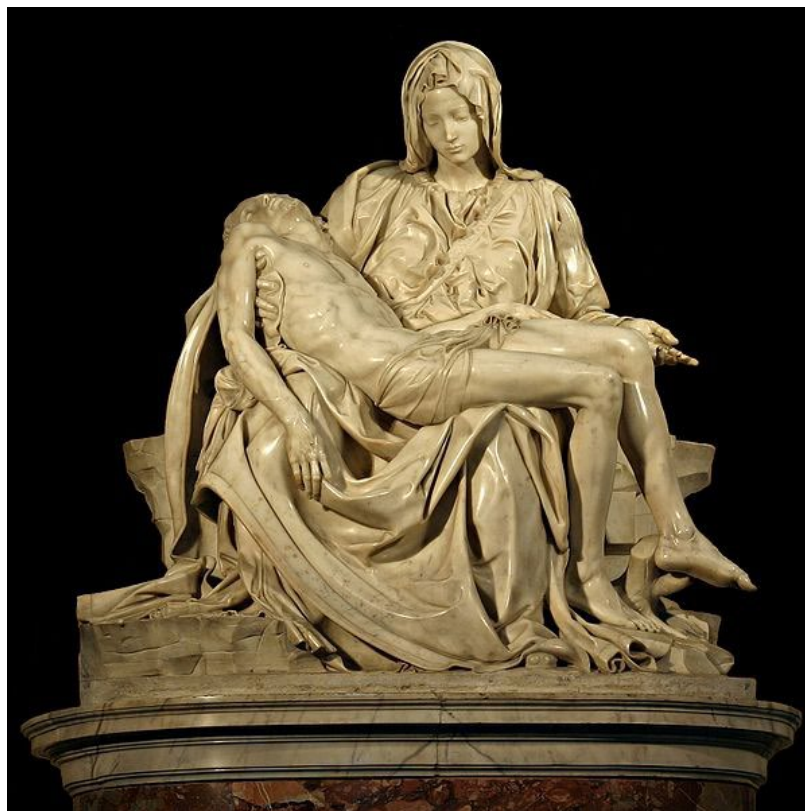
14. (March 29th 1994)
The Washington Post.



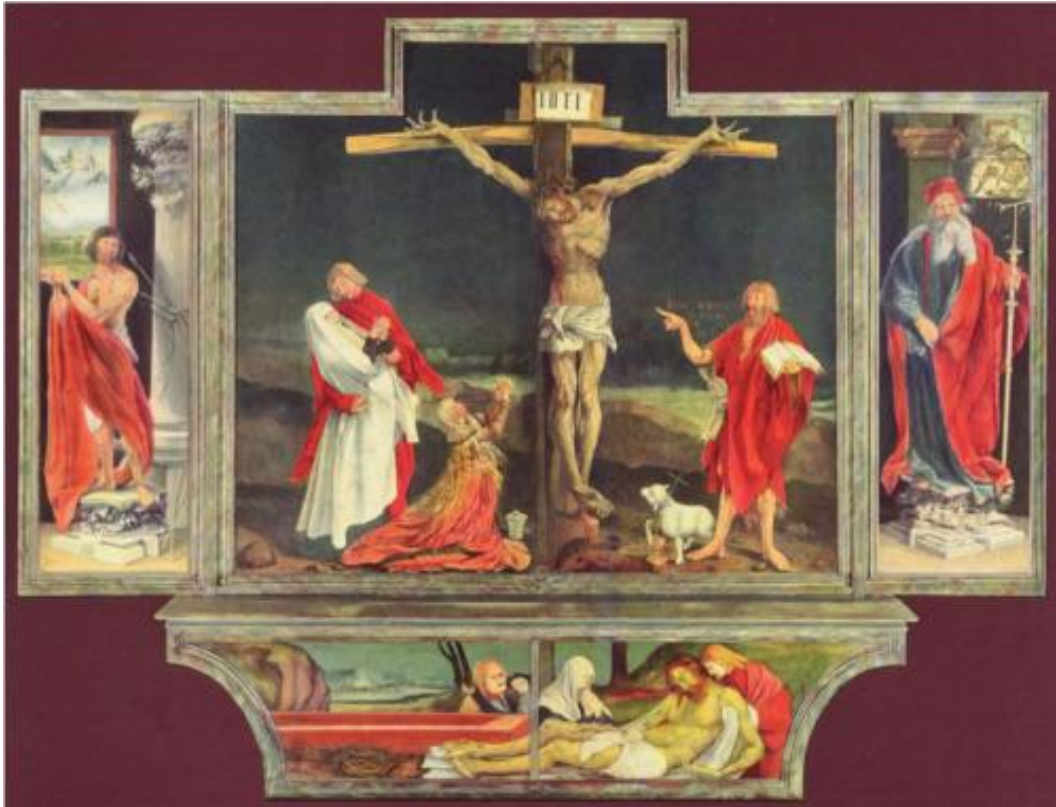
Pl. 07- **The Arnolfini marriage**- Jan Van Eyck (1390-1441) National Gallery, London.
<https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/jan-van-eyck-the-arnolfini-portrait>



Pl. 08- **Jewish Bride** - Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606-1669) Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.
<http://www.rembrandthuis.nl/en/rembrandt-2/rembrandt-the-artist/most-important-works/the-jewish-bride/>



Pl. 09 – **Pietà** - Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni (1475-1564)
St. Peter's Basilica, Rome.
<http://www.italianrenaissance.org/michelangelos-pieta/>



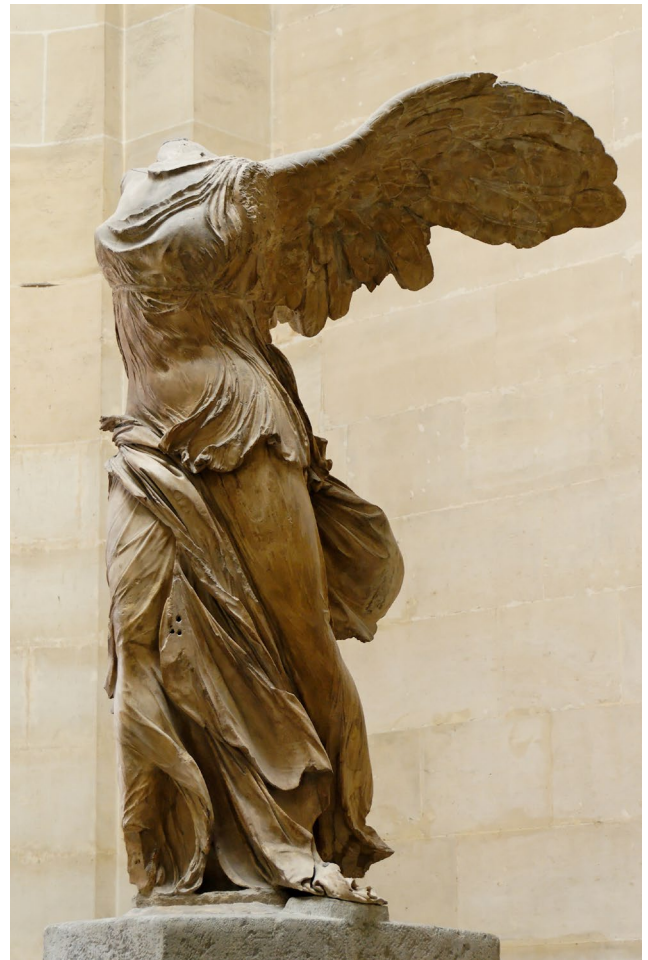
Pl. 10- **Isenheim Altarpiece** - Matthias Grünewald (1470-1528) Unterlinden Museum, Colmar, Alsace, France.
<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/renaissance-reformation/northern/england-france-tyrol/a/grnewald-isenheim-altarpiece>



Pl. 11 - **Easter Island stone sculptures.** (Moai or Mo'ai, are monolithic human figures carved by the Rapa Nui people on Easter Island in eastern Polynesia between the years 1250 and 1500 CE)
<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/easter-island-head-bodies-293799>



Pl. 12 - **King Tut's Golden Casket**
 Cairo Museum Egypt.
 (Tutankhamun was an Egyptian pharaoh of the 18th dynasty ruled c. 1332–1323 BC in the conventional chronology),
<http://www.historyembalmed.org/tomb-of-king-tut/king-tut-coffin.htm>



Pl. 13- **Winged Victory** - (Hellenistic Greece 190 B.C. The Winged Victory of Samothrace, also called the Nike of Samothrace, is a 2nd century BC marble sculpture of the Greek goddess Nike (Victory). Since 1884, it has been prominently displayed at the Louvre and is one of the most celebrated sculptures in the world or the greatest masterpiece of Hellenistic sculpture).
http://musee.louvre.fr/oal/victoiredesamothrace/victoiredesamothrace_acc_en.html

G.M. Beach, the Director of Arthur M. Shackler Gallery at the Smithsonian Institution says thus, 'Bathed in gold, Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara gleams in the low lighting, entrancing the viewers crowding around him. He is magnificent taking our breath away. He is but one gem of a sculpture in a collection of the most beautiful, spiritual and powerful images made anywhere in Asia'¹⁵.

E. Gibson, art critique of Washington Times, appreciating this sculpture says that 'The Golden Age of Sculpture from Sri Lanka, sounds a little out of our orbit, it is worth making the effort to see it if for one object only. This is a gild bronze seated figure, a so called Bodhisattva. It is far and away the most remarkable exhibit in the entire show and, no exaggeration, one of the most extraordinary works of sculpture produced at any time by any culture'¹⁶.

15. Wang VS FILE display Utility version 7-20.42; 10/30/42 08: 18 page 1 & 2 Consfile 00144002 in Smithsonian Library.ENVILD.

16. (March 29th 1994)
The Washington Times.



Pl. 14 - **Sunrise** - Claude Monet (1840-1926) Musée Marmottan Monet.
<http://totallyhistory.com/impression-sunrise/>



Pl. 15- **Jacob wrestling with the Angel** - Paul Gauguin (1847-1903) Scottish National Gallery.
<http://www.artbible.info/art/large/603.html>



Pl. 16 - **Ecstasy of Theresa** - Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680) the central sculptural feature in white marble set in an elevated aedicule in the Cornaro Chapel, Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome
<http://www.learner.org/courses/globalart/work/98/>

C.R. Bohlen, Assistant Curator of South and South East Asian Art at the Arthur M. Shackler Museum says that 'Gazing at the soft, smoldering glow of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara,Isn't it beautiful? He is called the Mona-Lisa of Sri Lanka. A gild bronze Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, considered to be a masterpiece of world art'¹⁷.

17. *Serendib*. (July-August 1994)
A Golden Age. vol.xxiino.4.

P. Richard, in his review in the Washington Post says that 'The skin of 'enlightened one' is polished yellow gold. The pupils of his downcast eyes are insets of rock crystals. His right knee is upraised in a pose called *rājalilāsana*, 'the attitude of royal ease'. His wealth is regal too. (this can be noted from the emeralds glinting in his head dress), but his riches are not of our world. His curling snake like stresses suggest the self-imposed improvement of some fierce Buddhist monk, some wondering ascetic. His body a dancer's athletic, lithe; his expression is a sage's. He is part human being, part God'¹⁸.

18. (November 28th 1992)
The Washington Post.

A sculptor at all times must be free to materialize his ideas into concrete form. Sculpture is a three dimensional form in the round or the relief. The explanation of a sculpture is an almost impossible task because any attempt inevitably becomes an academic discussion of idioms and materials. The sculpture of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara is ideal for this type of discussion. When identifying art conceptually, three of the most widely accepted criteria for determining whether or not something is a work of art, are, that the object or event is made by an artist, that the object or event is intended to be a work of art by its maker and that recognized 'experts' on the field agree that it is a work of art'¹⁹.

19. Maritin, F.D., & Jacobus, Lee A.
(1983) *The Humanities through the Arts*. p.19.

All sculptural objects have form. They are bound by the space and they have large and small structural elements that bear distinguishable relationships to one another. Form is the interrelationship of a part to part and a part to the whole. To say something has 'form' may mean no more than that some object is identifiable because it has some degree of perceptible unity.

There are numerous views, comments and assessments by archeologists and historians regarding the statue of Veragala Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. Various opinions have also been expressed on the time period of the sculpture. Hence, it is evident that an attempt has been made to find the origin, concept and evolution of the development of ancient three dimensional arts in Sri Lanka.

S. Paranavithana in '*Art of the Ancient Sinhalese*', compares the seated posture of this sculpture to '*Simhanādalōkesvara*' and dates it to the 06th century AD²⁰.

20. Paranavithana, S. (1971) *Art of the Ancient Sinhalese*. p.139.



Pl. 17 - *Simhanāda Lōkeshvara* (India 11 AD) Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery
<http://www.bmagic.org.uk/objects/1885A1472.1/images/143084>



Pl. 18 - **Samantabdra Bodhisattva**
 (Fugen atop elephant 13 AD. Sanjūsangendō in Kyoto)
<http://www.onmarkproductions.com/html/fugen.shtml>

Siri Gunasinghe in his article 'Buddhist Sculpture of Ceylon' written for the 'Art in Asia' magazine says that this Bodhisattva sculpture belongs to the 09th or 10th century AD²¹.

Writing to the Annual Report of 1968-69 *Archaeological Survey of Ceylon*, H.R.D. Silva states that this statue represents a Bodhisattva figure but does not mention its definite time period²².

J.E. Van Lohuizen de Leeuw in '*Sri Lanka: Ancient Art*' states that this statue represents Bodhisattva Samantabdra and that it may belong to a period of 08th to 10th century AD²³.

21. Gunasinghe, S. (January-February 1973) 'Buddhist Sculpture of Ceylon'. *Art of Asia*. Vol.III No.1.p.29.

22. Silva, H.R. (1980) *Archaeological Survey of Ceylon*. Annual report, Pp.81-82.

23. De Leeuw, J.E.V.L. (1981) *Sri Lanka: Ancient Arts*. No.16.p.29.

N. Mudiyanse, in an article titled 'Icons of Avalokiteśvara from Nātha Devale in Kandy' written to the '*Kalyāni*' magazine, the publication of the University of Kelaniya, says that he believes this sculpture represents Avalokiteśvara and that it belongs to the 09th or 10th century AD²⁴.

Ulrich von Schroeder, in his books '*Buddhist Sculpture in Sri Lanka*' and '*The Golden age of Sculpture in Sri Lanka*', states that this sculpture belongs to Avalokiteśvara of late Anurādhapura period of 08th and 09th centuries AD²⁵.

24. Mudiyanse, N. (1985) 'Icons of Avalokiteśvara from Natha Devale in Kandy'. *Kalyāni*. Vol.III-IV. p.106.

25. Shroder, U.V. (1990) *Buddhist Sculpture of Sri Lanka*. Pp.286-287
(1992) *The Golden Age of Sculptures of Sri Lanka*. p.82.



Pl. 19 - Avalokiteśvara image from inside the Natha Devale at Kandy. (late Anurādhapura period 08th century) (U.V. Schroeder, (1990) *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, p.286.)



Pl. 20 - Chalukya Ravana Phadi cave at Aihole - 6th Century (Inside view)
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aihole>

In *'The Heritage of Sri Lankan Bronze Sculpture'* a catalogue of National Museum, Colombo, Nandana Chutiwong states that this sculpture belongs to a period of 07th to 09th centuries AD and it depicts more of the South Indian Chalukya characteristics²⁶.

26. Chutiwongs, N. (1995)
The Heritage of Sri Lankan Bronze Sculptures. p.16.

All these scholars but Paranavithana relates the statue of Veragala Avalokitesvara to the late Anurādhapura period. It was about the same period that Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna arose in countries such as Nepal, Tibet and China. The main ground on which to conclude that this sculpture belongs to the late Anurādhapura period could have been the notion that the same arising might have taken place in Sri Lanka at this time too. But when considered carefully, this would be belied by facts. Pāli was the main language of the monks of historical Mahāvihāra. Therefore Pāli became the language of Theravāda Buddhism. Since the Sri Lankan chronicle Mahāvamsa is of Mahāvihāra origin and written in Pāli, and most of the historical incidents and information regarding Theravāda Buddhism are recorded in Pāli, incidents relating to Mahāyāna Buddhism, whose medium was Sanskrit and the activities of the Abhayagiri Vihāra were eschewed from them. Abhayagiri was the center of Mahāyānism in ancient Sri Lanka. But when assessing written and historical information, it can be seen that Mahāyāna Buddhism, which sprang from India had spread to Sri Lanka in a very short time before spreading to other countries such as Nepal, Tibet and China.

Teravāda Buddhism swelled during the reign of Emperor Asōka (268 - 233) in the 3rd century BC. Similarly, the fact that the spreading of Mahāyāna Buddhism during the reign of Emperor Kanishka (128– 151) in the 2nd century AD had made a huge impression in Sri Lanka cannot be overlooked. It is interesting to note that no records can be found to prove that any monk from Sri Lanka was invited to the 3rd Buddhist Council held under the patronage of Kanishka. It may not have been included in Teravāda texts because it was a Mahāyāna event. The main center of Teravāda Buddhism, Mahāvihāra, was founded under royal patronage, 150 years before Abhayagiri, the main Vihāra of Mahāyāna. Subsequently, Mahāyāna Buddhism spread around the country. The destruction of the 500 year old Mahāvihāra by King Mahāsenā (274-301 AD) proves the strength Mahāyāna Buddhist ideology had gained in the kingdom of Anurādhapura during the 3rd century AD²⁷.

It can be ascertained that the long acquaintance King Mahāsenā had with his spiritual adviser (*dharmopadeshaka*) Sangamitta Tero, who had arrived from Āndra Pradesh in India and was living at Abhayagiri monastery at that time, may have helped to stabilize Mahāyāna with the help of royal patronage in this country. Likewise, the religious and political relationship between India and Sri Lanka during the Gupta Period from 4th century to 6th century AD is proved by the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta and Chinese records²⁸.

Asanga and Vāsubandhu, two theoreticians of Mahāyāna, who became active basing the Nālanda Buddhist Center in India during 4th century AD, were mainly adherents of the Bodhisattva cult. Considering the long relationship Sri Lanka had with India, it cannot be believed that this Bodhisattva veneration may not have influenced Sri Lanka in the same century.

During the 5th century AD, many monasteries in Sri Lanka including the Monastery of Mihintale (*Mihintale Sangārāmaya*) had become active under Abhayagiri. Abhayagiri at that time was an internationally recognized famous Buddhist center. It was visited by many learned foreign monks including the Chinese monk, Faxian (337-422 AD), intending to study Buddhist Philosophy. Thus, it is evident that the kingdom of Anurādhapura was the repository of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The Bodhisattva worship is a salient feature of Mahāyānism. It is recorded that Monk Faxian who lived for two years (411-412 AD) in this country centering Abhayagiri, venerated Avalokiteśvara (Kuān-yin) Bodhisattva²⁹.

It may thus be concluded that Mahāyāna ideology had been established strongly in this country from the 2nd century AD to the last centuries of the Anurādhapura period. It can also be believed that the veneration of Avalokiteśvara had spread throughout the country by the 4th and 5th centuries.

27. Geiger, W. (Trans) *Mahāvamsa*. xxxvii chapter. verse 31.

Rahula, W (1956) *History of Buddhism in Ceylon*. Pp.82-85.

28. Gunasinghe, S. (2008) *Sigiriya Kassapa's Homage to Beauty*. p.90.

29. Legge, J. (Ed) *A record of Buddhistic Kingdoms Fashien in his travels in India and Ceylon. (399-414 AD) In search of Buddhist Books of Discipline*. XL Chapter and XVI chapter. footnote 23.

Ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/f/fazhien/fl51

There is no doubt that there may have been statues of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara used for religious performances during this period. This is proved by several statues of Avalokiteśvara found from many places around the country. According to religious and political facts and investigations of art analysis in history, this statue of Avalokiteśvara, can be dated to the middle period of the Anurādhapura Kingdom (300-600 AD). The shining age of Gupta Art in India had also belonged to the same period. The international relationship between the two countries was harmonious at that time. Royal envoys, traders, spiritual masters, artisans, scholars and pilgrims freely travelled between these two countries. Mahāyāna criteria of *vāsthū* (architecture) and many *śilpasāstra* (treatises) were practiced in the middle period of the Anurādhapura reign. The *Citrakarmasāstra* is definitely a Mahāyāna *śilpa* text written between the 5th and 7th century AD. The *astamangala* (eight auspicious) described in several places in this text also belongs to the early and mid-Anurādhapura periods. The text also mentions the creation of images made out of gold (*haima*), silver (*rūpya*), bronze (*arakuta?*), copper (*tāmra*) and wood. It further says that metal or stone images should not be used for household worship³⁰.

30. Marasinghe, E.W. (Trans) (1991)
Citrakarmasāstra, xvi, 138-144

Worship of Avalokiteśvara in the Island of Lanka 05

When Buddha was alive, his teachings were mirrored as a way of spiritual living, and it was not regarded as a religion. No evidence can be found from old Buddhist teachings for practicing Painting, Sculpture, Dance, and Music in relevance to Buddhism. But after the passing away of Buddha, a religious art emerged based on Buddha's life, incidents and previous birth stories. With the arising of Mahāyānism, a great development could be seen in art and crafts based on Buddhist concepts. Accordingly, the concept of Bodhisattva, created in Mahāyāna has become a special feature in Buddhist sculptures.



Pl. 21- **Avalokiteśvara. Mathura style,**
Front view of a railing pillar, Kusana period 2nd century
AD. State Museum. Lucknow. No.B 82.
(N. Chutiwongs (1994) *The Iconography of
Avalokiteśvara in Mainland South East Asia.*
PhD.Dissertation, Rijksuniversiteit. Leiden. pl.01.)



Pl. 22- **Avalokiteśvara Mathura style**, Kusana period. 2nd 3rd century AD.
Archeological Museum, Mathura. No. 56.4237
(N. Chutiwongs (1994) *The Iconography of Avalokiteśvara in Mainland South East Asia*. PhD.Dissertation, Rijksuniversiteit. Leiden. pl.03.)

The concept of Bodhisattva primarily appears in the olden Buddhist teachings. When Buddha was relating his life events before enlightenment and past lives to others, he introduced himself as 'Bodhisattva' or 'Compassionate Being' (Buddha-to-be). After his enlightenment, he used the word 'Enlightened one' (*Tatāgata*) to introduce himself. Maitreya Bodhisattva, who would appear at the end of the current world cycle, is the only Bodhisattva identified in Theravāda tradition. But in Northern Buddhism or Mahāyāna there can be seen a development of many forms of Bodhisattvas.



Pl. 23- **Avalokiteśvara as Mahā kārunika, Gandhara style, 2nd 3rd century AD.** Museum Für Völkerkunde, Berlin.
(N. Chutiwongs (1994) *The Iconography of Avalokiteśvara in Mainland South East Asia*. PhD. Dissertation, Rijksuniversiteit. Leiden. pl.08.)



Pl. 24 - **Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, Gandhara style, 2-3 century.** Ashmolean museum, Oxford.
(*Ancient Kashmir.* Marg publications. p.84.)

Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva is the most prominent concept in the Complex of Mahāyāna Bodhisattvas. This Bodhisattva first appears in the *Mahā Sukhāvātyūha Sūtra* which was written in Sanskrit and later translated to Chinese in the 2nd century AD³¹. The qualities of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara are praised in most *sūtras* of Mahāyāna written afterwards. Among these *Sūtras*, *Saddharmapundarīka Sūtra* takes the foremost place³².

31. Muller, F. M. (Trans) (1894) *Mahā Sukhāvātyūha Sūtra* (larger sutra of amitayus) in R.Dt. Clare (Ed)(Verse 13... 'there rises the Buddha-sun , glorious, he indeed the mighty Avalokiteśvara' ...Verse 34'O Ananda is the noble – minded Bodisattva Avalokiteśvara ...') <http://huntingtonarchive.osu.edu/resources/downloads/sutras/04amitabhaPureland/SV%20Long.doc.pdf>
32. Vaidya, P. L. (Trans)(1960) *Saddharmapundarika sūtra* (*The lotus of true law*) xxiv chapter.



Pl. 25- **Inscribed Stele, Gandhara Style, 3rd century AD.** (Avalokiteśvara appears in the right side of the relief.) De Marteau collection, Brussels.
(N. Chutiwongs (1994) *The Iconography of Avalokiteśvara in Mainland South East Asia*. PhD.Dissertation, Rijksuniversiteit. Leiden. pl.11.)



Pl. 26 - **Avalokiteśvara** (right side of the relief.) Height 27cm, Width 22cm, Thickness 5.6cm. Red Marble. (STOB 723) Abhayagiri Museum, Anuradhapura. This was found when conserving the dome (*garba*) of Abhayagiri Stupa. It was placed inside a pocket 0.75 m deep from the surface. The height from the court yard was 29.3 m. in North Western side. Imported and North Indian style; this can be dated to the 8th – 10th centuries. Found by research excavation officer Chaminda Premawansa.

33. Chutiwong, N. (1984)
Iconography of Avalokiteśvara in Mainland southeast Asia.

According to Tay, the religious veneration of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva from the Hindu kush in central Asia and widespread in to Half of Asia.....

Tay, C.N. (1976)'Kuan-yin': *The cult of Half Asia History of Religions.* 16:147-177

34. Battacharya, D.C. (1986)
Iconography of composite images.

The worship of Avalokiteśvara which arose from India, migrated to many other countries in Asia. The form of Avalokiteśvara was created according to the cultural identity of each country³³. According to Buddhist iconography, 108 forms of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara have been identified³⁴.



Pl. 27- **Avalokiteśvara as Akshyamati Lokesvara**. 7.2 cm height decayed lime stone. (STOB 01) Abhayagiri Museum , Anurādhapura. This sculpture was found when excavating the first layer of the sand court yard of Ruwanvelisaya. Found by research excavation officer Lalinda Sirisena.

A small headless statue of Avalokiteśvara, 7.2 cm in height, made from decayed lime stone was found when excavating Ruwanveli Stūpa, a strong symbol of Teravāda in Anurādhapura. T.G. Kulatunga states that this statue differs from the other 108 forms of Avalokiteśvara mentioned above, and that it is slightly similar to the characteristics of Akshyamati Lokeśvara³⁵.

Many scholars contributed to the study of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva by engaging in translations and scholarly discussions about it's origin, concept and evolution³⁶.

Avalokiteśvara was introduced as 'Lokesvara' in India, as 'Kannon' or 'Kanzeon' in Japan, as 'Guanyin' and 'Guanshiyin' in China, 'sryan-rasgign' in Tibet, 'Nidubarusheckchi' in Mongolia, 'Quan-am' in Vietnam and as 'Avalokiteśvara Nātha' in Sri Lanka. Sanskrit literature and art creations prove that there had been a connection between Bodhisattva Veneration and the ancient island of Lanka.

35. Kulatunga, T. G. (2000) Ruwanveli Sayen Hamuvu Avalokiteśvara Prathimāva. *Sanskruithikapurānaya* 3rd volume 3rd issue (in Sinhala)

36. 1844- Bournouf, E.
1882- Mitra, Rajendralal
1894- Max Muller, F.
1896- Kern, H.
1900-1905- Foucher Alfred
1919- Vajradatta
1921- Rhys David, T.W. & Rhys David, C.A.F.
1924- Bhattacharya, Behoytosh
1927- Winternitz Maurice
1933- Thomas, E.S.
1948- Mallman, M. Theresa de.
1948- Tucci, Giuseppe.
1956- Jones, J.J.
1967- Nanayakkara, S.K.
1969- J. Takakusu,
1970- Dayal Har
1976- Hurvitz Leon
1977- Dohanian Diran K.
1984- Nandana Chutiwong
1985- Mukhopadhyay, S.P.
1991- John Clifford Holt,

Among Buddhist frescoes in Mathurā, India, there is a relief on the side of a column depicting the story of a flying horse which carries people. This flying horse is supposed to be Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. The story depicts the *Valāhassa Jātaka*³⁷.

37. Anderson, J. (1883) *Catalogue and hand book of the Archaeological collections in the Indian Museum*. p.189

The story of the voyage of a Siṃhala leader of merchants from the Island of Lanka, cannibalistic celestial nymphs and the rescue of the Siṃhala leader by Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara who comes in the form of a flying horse and the stabilizing of the Buddhist Doctrine in the island by Siṃhala (one of the previous lives of Sakya-muni Buddha) is depicted in the 17th cave of the cave complex of Ajanthā in India³⁸.

38. Behl, B.K. (1998) *The Ajanthā Caves: Ancient Paintings of Buddhist India*.

The same narration regarding the flying white horse saving the saintly leader of the merchants is depicted in a bas-relief in Boro-Boudour temple complex in Java, Jakarta, Indonesia³⁹.

39. Leemans, C. & Frans, Carel, W. (1874) *Boro-Boudour dans l'île de Java*. Vol.4.p.389.



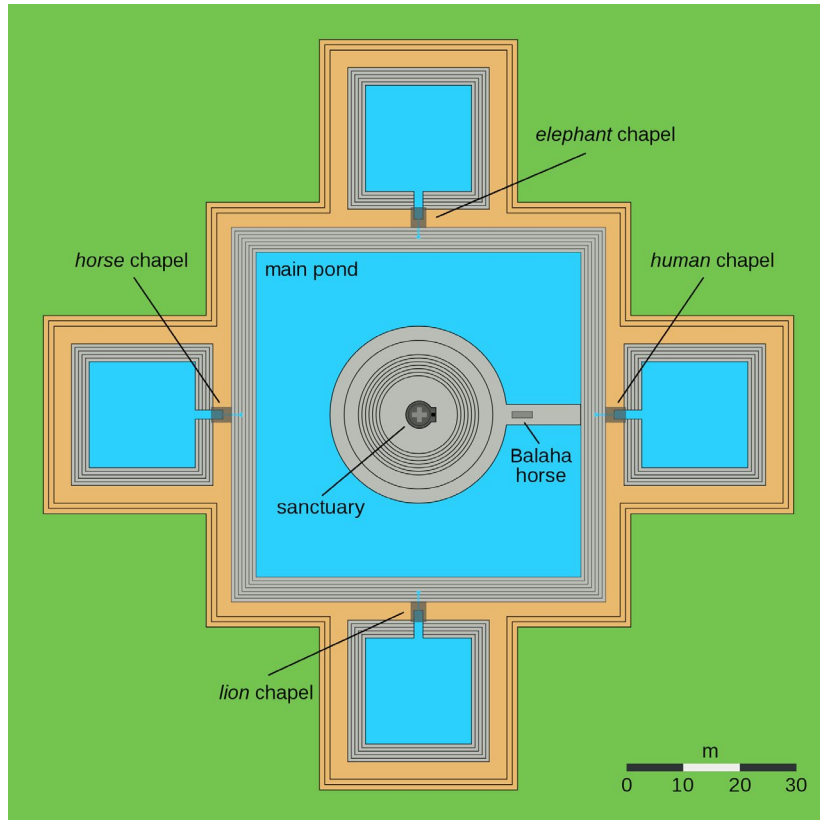
Pl. 28- **Neak Pean**, The central Pond, Angkor, Cambodia. 12th century
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neak_Pean



Pl. 29- **Statue of Balaha the horse**, Neak Pean . 12th century Bayon Style.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neak_Pean

There was a belief among worshippers that their ailments would be healed by bathing from a pond (Neak-Pean) at the center of a small abode inside the Angkor temple complex in Cambodia. This pond symbolizes Anavatapta (*anotatta-vila*) and the pond is dedicated to Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. Among the ruined art works of this complex, a softly carved bas-relief depicting a flying horse with several figures hanging on to it and to its tail has been found at the entrance. The same creation has been found on a stone sculpture in the middle of the pond. This has been identified as a part of a scene from *Valāhassa Jātaka* and the story is related to the Island of Lanka⁴⁰.

40. Goloubew, V. (1927) *Lackevel Balaha* BEFEO Tome, XXVII.
 Charles, H.M. (1994) Classical study of the Balaha bas relief at Neak-pean to the east of Angkor. *Asiatic Mythology*. Pp.204/205.



Pl. 30- **Map of Neak Pean**
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neak_Pean



Pl. 31- **The Location of Neak Pean in Cambodia**
 See: Freeman, M. & Jacques, C. (2013) *Ancient Angkor*. Pp.178, 179.

The miracles of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, connecting with the Island of Lanka have been recorded in *Avalokiteśvara Gunakārandavyūha Sūtra*⁴¹ and *Saddharmapundarīka Sūtra*⁴² both from Mahāyāna sūtras written in Sanskrit. The story mentioned below also conveys how this island gained the name of *Simhaladīpa*.

“In one of his previous births, Gautama Buddha was born as Simhala, son of Simha. He was a merchant in the capital of Simhakaḷpa. Simhala led a crew of 500 sailors on a sea venture in search of precious stones. His ship was taken by storm and wrecked off the coast of the island called ‘Tāmrādīpa’ (Copper Island/Tambapanni/Island of Lanka) which was inhabited by *Rāksasis* (celestial nymphs). Simhala and his crew were warmly embraced by troops of *rāksasis* and invited to become their husbands. On the second night, the lamp in Simhala’s room began to talk. The light warned Simhala that he and his comrades were in imminent danger and that there was only one possible means by which they could be saved. A white winged horse named Balaha (Avalokiteśvara) was ready to take him and his 500 comrades away to safety but that no one should open their eyes until Balaha had safely landed on a further shore. Simhala quickly assembled his followers and informed them of the advice that had been given by the lamp.

They then scurried down to the shore and mounted the waiting Balaha, who then rose majestically into the sky. The *rāksasis*, seeing that their prey was escaping called out in loud lamentation. The sailors, all except Simhala, opened their eyes to look down, and fell in to the ocean, where they were immediately devoured. Simhala alone escaped and went back to Simhakaḷpa.

However, the leader of *rāksasis*, who had become Simhala’s lover on Tāmrādīpa appeared at his house in all of her bewitching beauty. Simhala appealed to his father and succeeded in convincing of the real truth. But the *rāksasi* proceeded to gain an audience with the king of the country, Simha Kesari, to proffer her complaint. The king was not only convinced by her tale but was so enamored with her beauty, that after asking Simhala if he still refused the woman, took her as his own queen. In time, the new queen arranged to bring her *rāksasi* companions from Tāmrādīpa to live in the palace of the king of Simhakaḷpa. In a short time, they plotted and succeeded in devouring the king and his family. With this turn of events, Simhala intervened and explained to the people of the country why the king and his family had disappeared. The people unanimously proclaimed Simhala as their new king, while Simhala took a vow to defeat the *rāksasis* in order to assure that the dharma (teaching of true law) would be spread throughout the kingdom. The *rāksasis* were then banished to the forest. As a result of this outcome, the kingdom of Simhakaḷpa was saved. As a result, the Island of Tāmrādīpa was also saved and renamed as Simhaladīpa⁴³. On this account we can assume on what basis the veneration of Avalokiteśvara was established throughout the country in ancient Lanka.

41. Mallmann, M.T. De (1948) *Introduction I Elud’ Avalokiteśvara*. Musee Guimet Tome Cinquante-Septieme. p.43. Mitra, R. (1971) *The Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal*. p.95
42. Kern, H. (Trans)(1963) *Saddharmapundarika Sūtra: Sacred books of the East*. Pp.406-413.

43. Malalasekara, G.P. (1966) *Encyclopedia of Buddhism in Ceylon*. p.410. Holt, J.C. (1991) *Buddha in the Crown: Avalokiteśvara in the Buddhist tradition of Sri Lanka*. Pp.49-50.

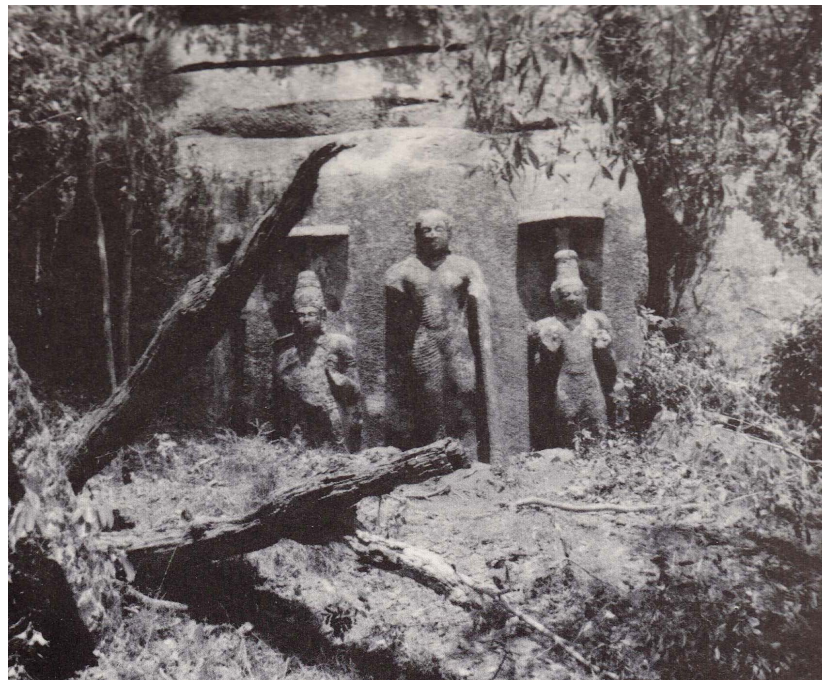
44. Lienhard, S. (June 1985)
A Nepales Painted Scroll
Illustrating the Simhalavadan,
Heritage of Kathmandu valley.
Lewis, T.T. (November 1993)
'Tibetan Trade and the
Domestication of
Simhalasarthabahu Avadana',
*Chicago Journal – History of
Religion* vol. xxxiii No.2
pp.135-160.
45. Geiger, W. (Trans) *Mahāvamsa*.
i chapter. Pp.01-84.
46. Rouse, W.H.D. (Trans) (1895)
Valāhassa Jāthaka. No.196.
www.sacred-texts.com/bud/jj2/
j2049.htm
47. Jones, J.J. (Trans)(1956) *The
Mahāvastu:
Sacred books of Buddhists*,
vol.ii-70-79.
48. 'King Mahānaga conquered the
Pundra country and gave his
daughter Tisya to the son of
the Pundra King, named Simhala
Gupta; Simhala-gupta was the son
of Simhala-gupta; Simhala-gupta
was the son of Simhala-padma;
Simhala-padma was the son of
Simhala-ratna; Simhala-ratna was
the son of Simhala-padma; Simh
hala-padma was the son of Simh
hala-raksya; Simhala-raksya was
the son of Simhala-suhma;
Simhala-suhma was the son of
Simhala-raksya; Simhala-raksya
was the son of Simhala. Simhala
came to the Pundra country from
the region near the mouth of the
Sindhu river, remained there
and died in course of time. His son
Murunda Siva came to the island
of Tāmrparni and become the
founder of the Simhala kingdom
(while Simhala-raksya remained
in the Pundra country) there is no
truth in the statement that the
Pundra kingdom was founded by
the son of Simhala merchant'
Paranavithana, S. (1972, reprint
2000) *The Story of Sigiriya*. The
Desent of Dhatusena. p.3
49. This story is based on *Mahāvastu
in Mahāsangika of Avalokitasūtra*.
Battacharyya strongly states that
this sutra belongs to the 3rd
century BC. See Battacharya, B.
(1924) *The Indian Buddhist
Iconography*. p.143
'Mahāvamsa which was
composed in 05th century AD,
includes the story of Vijaya and
Kuveni somewhat similar to the
account of Simhala's landing in
ancient Thāmradvipa or
Simhaladvipa. When comparing
it can be seen that Sanskrit sutra
Mahāvasthu has been written 07
centuries earlier than
Mahāvamsa'.

Though there are slight discrepancies in names and stories of Avalokiteśvara in relation to the Island of Lanka, it is evident that similar jātaka stories too from India, Tibet, China, Japan, Vietnam, Cambodia and Indonesia narrate this same story from *Valāhassa Jātaka*⁴⁴.

This story also resembles the account of the landing of Prince Wijaya in Lanka in the *Mahāvamsa*⁴⁵ and the story of 500 merchants narrated in the *Valāhassa Jātaka*⁴⁶ and the *Lōkōttaramahāsāngika Mahāvasthu*⁴⁷. This legend blends with myths but it can also be seen that there is an underlying story of migration. There is a similar story in India saying that the Pundra Kingdom was founded by a son of a Simhala merchant. Paranavithana refuses this but he describes that there were many simhala descendants in India, Pundra kingdom and that one of them propagated Simhaladvipa⁴⁸. However Mahāyānists and Teravadiyans both connected the ancient people in this country to the Lion race or Lion king.

These accounts reveal the competitive interest shown on ancient Lanka by Pāli speaking Teravadians and Sanskrit speaking Mahāyānists and also the connection the Mahāyānists had with the ancient Island of Lanka⁴⁹. At the completion of the Mahāvamsa, in the 5th century AD, Mahāyānism was well established in India, lankadipa (present Sri Lanka) and other neighboring countries.

Pāli and Sanskrit were religious languages at that time but royal commands imposed were recorded in the ancient Sinhala language with oriental Brahmi calligraphy. Although the Sanskrit stone inscriptions regarding Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva were first found from Sri Lanka in the 7th century AD⁵⁰, there are number of factors to believe that the practice of worshipping Avalokiteśvara had been in this country long before that.



Pl. 32 - Three Rock carved standing images of Bodhisattva Maithreya, Buddha and Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara at Budupatunna, Wilaoya, Ampara District. (late Anurādhapura period 650-750 AD) (U.V. Schroeder, (1990) *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, p.256.)



Pl. 33 - **Avalokiteśvara as Asiatic form**. 18.5 cm height. Bronze. (not dated) (BROB 19) Abhayagiri Museum, Anurādhapura. This sculpture was found during excavation on the outer cover of the dome (*garba*) of Abhayagiri Stupa 48 feet above the courtyard level. Found by E.D. Ramyalatha, research excavation officer in 20.02.2008.

50. Thiriyaya Stone inscriptions, *Epigraphic Zeylanica* (1904 – 1912) vol. iv Pt. 03. Pp.151-160 & 312-319.

'A considerable number of Avalokiteśvara images both in stone and metal have been found on various parts of Sri Lanka from very early time. In the Sanskrit inscription at Thiriyaya which is dated to 7th century AD it is recorded that the Stupa at that spot was abode of Avalokiteśvara.'

Lakdusinghe, S. (1986) 'A note on an icon of Avalokiteśvara', *Ancient Ceylon* Pp.169, 176.

51. 1900 - W.H. Cave, mentioned this sculpture several times in his literature.

The Ruined Cities of Ceylon
(1900) (2nd Ed.) p. 63

1909 – H. Parker, described The sculpture: 'A seated warrior wearing a helmet which from its shape appears to be made of metal. A thick Plume forms a crest on the top and hangs down the soldier's back. The horse's head appearing out of the rock behind him shows that the person was a cavalry soldier. The date of the carving is uncertain '.

'An account of the Aborigines and of part of the early civilization', *Ancient Ceylon* (1909) p.545 and p.548

1909- Ananda, K. Coomaraswamy, discussed the sculpture to be the representation of Kapila Muni of Indian Sage mentioned in the Balakanda of the Ramayana dated to about 7th century AD.

'Figure of kapila at Isurumuni Vihara, Anuradhapura,' *Spolia Zeylanica* (1909) Vol. VI Pp. 132,133

1911 – Vincent, A. Smith, discussed the relief and agreed with Coomaraswamy's identification and Kapila Muni holding halter of his horse and he described the relief as 'of uncertain date' or perhaps the close of the 5th century.

A history of fine Art in India and Ceylon from the earliest time to the present day.
(1911) (1st Ed.) Pp.94-95 and Pl.XXIII on p. 93;
(2nd Ed) (1930) Pp.148-149 and Pl. 102A;
(3rd Ed.) (no dated) p.133 and Pl. 145A

1922 – William Cohen, who dated the sculpture into 12th century and expressed his doubts with regard to the identification of Kapila Muni, According to him, the figure is a secular personality holding the reins of his horse.

Indische Plastik; (1922)
Pp. 50,80. Pl.131

1930- A.M. Hocart , pointed out the resemblance with this sculpture and a rock-cut image at Andiyagala

Archeological Summary, *The Ceylon Journal of Science* (1930) Section G – Archeology, Ethnology, etc. vol.II, Pt.2, Pp.77,78, Pl.XLVII, B.

'The Man and Horse' sculpture at Isurumuni Vihāra in Anurādhapura has been discussed by many scholars and the observations they have made have contributed to the belief that the cult of Avalokiteśvara worship had been established in the ancient Kingdom of Anurādhapura⁵¹.

This sculpture is carved on a living rock next to the main Buddha image. No artist would carve a sculpture that has no relevant meaning to the main context, here the Buddha image. The seated figure with the horse has no armour. He does not wear a helmet or a *Jatāmakuta* nor a *Kiritamakuta*. There is no cavity in the headgear to show that there had been a small image of Buddha Amitābha in it. Hence, the seated figure definitely could not be Avalokiteśvara. Hayagriva, the horse associated with Avalokiteśvara is a minor character of Mahāyāna Art and not visible in the medium of sculpture.

This cannot be Aiyānāyar either (local adaptation of Aiyānāyar was *Aiyānāyaka Deviyo*. It is still a folk belief with rituals or liturgy) No records can be found to believe that Aiyānāyar was worshipped in ancient Buddhist shrines. Aiyānāyar is considered to be a minor God when compared to other Hindu Gods like Vishnu, Shiva, Skanda and Ganesh. It is questionable whether the Kings worshipped this God. Even today, high cast Tamils do not worship Aiyānāyar. The main believers of this God are the villagers of Chilaw, Puttlam and Anurādhapura areas. He is worshipped as the protector from forest dangers. A small branch of leaves is always hung outside the forest before entering and worshipping Aiyānāyar. The seated figure also cannot be a shrine of Vedic Gods representing *Parjanya* and *Agni*.

Paranavithana identified the headgear of the seated figure as *jatabahra*. It can be assumed as a headgear worn by noble men or wealthy persons at that time. The Bodhisattva Siddharta generally appears in sculptures with high (*ushnisha*) and curly tresses flowing down over shoulders. He can be identified as a rich person by the heavy earrings, one or many necklaces, a ring on his right upper arm (*nagabharana*-snake shape band), bracelets on his wrists and anklets that he wore. The figure is seated on the ground with no sign of a throne. The figure is not in a spiritual mood, his head is turned to the left looking over his shoulder. He is not a lord looking down. So most probably this figure can be assumed as Simhala (previous birth of Goutama Buddha) and Horse *Balaha/Valaha* a form of Avalokiteśvara.

In 'Rock art sculpture at Isurumuni', published in the *Ancient Ceylon* (1979), Journal of the Archaeological Survey Department of Sri Lanka, Pgs. 321-341, J.E. Van Lohuizen de Leeuw says that Paranavithana rejects the statue of Man and Horse, as Siddharta and Kantaka, and also as Simhala and Valaha, as there is no sign to direct the mind to a religious conception familiar to the people when it was created. (p. 325) (S. Paranavithana (1953) The sculpture of Man and Horse near Tisavava at Anurādhapura, Ceylon. *Artibus Asiae*, Vol.XVI, P.176.) But this story of Simhala and Valaha was considered a famous subject matter in this region in the past.



Pl. 34- **Rock Sculpture of the 'Man with a Horse'** at Isurumuniya, Anurādhapura. 7th century. The sculpture is less than life size, measuring about 2 ft. and 7.5 1nchs from the waist to the top of the headgear, is inside a shallow arched and unfinished cavity.

Paranvithana and Van Lohuizen both had neglected to give thought to the composition of the statue. It could be the scene where Siṃhala crosses to the other shore and looks on as his comrades perish. His facial expression is calm⁵², abstract⁵³ and not unconscious⁵⁴. It's as if he realizes the tragedy that he had just witnessed. Hence this statue of Man and Horse can be the famous Siṃhala and Balaha found in the Mahāyāna story of that era. Probably the pond was turned into a symbolical representation of the mythical heavenly healing pond of *Anavathapta*. No argument can be found to prove that this site is a Mahāyāna shrine.

The veneration of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara was mostly spread by sailors or seafarers and caravan travellers of ancient times. Avalokiteśvara was popular as the savior of seamen. They venerated him to be protected from dangers on sea voyages. It can be believed that the *Valahassa Jāthaka* or the story of the navigator merchant Siṃhala, previous birth of Buddha and horse Balaha, a form of Avalokiteśvara, had been a famous legend among the sailors in ancient times.

1936- J.ph. Vogel, who attributed the relief to the pallava period felt that 'the presence of the horse seems hardly to supply sufficient justification for identifying the figure as Kapila Muni'

Buddhist Art in India, Ceylon and Java (1936) P.48, n.l.

1937 – Longhurst dated the relief in to Pallava period, but agreed with those who believed that the seated figure represented *Kapila Muni*

Longhurst, H.A. (1937) *Annual report Archeological survey of Ceylon* 1936, Pt. IV, Education, Science and Art. Pp J.18-19.

1953- Senarath Paranavithana, has identified it as the *Parjanya* and *Agni*. The Vedic God of the Rain - cloud and thunderbolt or Fire.

'The sculpture of Man & Horse near Tisavava at Anuradhapura Ceylon,' *Artibus Asiae* (1953) vol. XVI, part 3

1962 – N. Wijesekara described the relief as a man holding the halter of a horse, dated the sculpture between 700-800 AD.

Early Sinhalese Sculpture. Pp76 & 237

1969 – Attempts have been made to identify the sculpture as 'Alexander and his horse Bucephalus' and also the Hindu Love-God 'Ananga – kama and his horse vahana'

D.T. Devendra, *Classical Sinhalese sculpture.* P.30.
L.T.P. Manjusri (?), *Ceylon Observer* magazine.

1969- J.E. Van Lohuizen-De Leeuw, Discussing in her long essay suggested that the figure at Isurumuni represents South Indian Hindu God Aiyanaar and his vahana

The Rock- cut Sculpture at Isurumuni, *Ancient Ceylon* (1979) Pp.321-341.Pl.01-19

1969 – A.D.T.E. Perera, identified this as the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara and his companion horse, Hayagriva

'A possible identification of a man and horse's sculpture at the Isurumuni temple Anuradhapura'. *Ancient Ceylon* (1979) Pp. 243-254.

52. 53. 54. Vincent, A. Smith's words



Pl. 35 - Isurumuni Temple before 1896 (Trautz, *Ceylon*, Pl.83)

55. R.L. Brohier. (1934) (reprint 1949, 1979) *Ancient Irrigation works in Ceylon*.

Sir Mortimer Wheeler (1955) *Rome Beyond the imperial frontiers*. chapter 9-11.

Brohier, R.L. (1973) (1st ed. 1982 3rd ed. 2002) *Discovering Ceylon*. chapter II. Pp.20-29.

same article published in *The Golden Plains* by Deloraine Brohier in 1992

Arasarathnam Sinnappa (1975) (trans.) *Francois Valentijn's Description of Ceylon*, P.125.

(mention as Coedremale) Place mentioned in the Dutch map as Condramale: Baldaeus, Philip. (1996) *Description of the Great and most Famous isle of Ceylon*. (trans. from the high Dutch, printed Amsterdam 1672)

Weerakkodi, D.P.M. (1997) *Ancient Sri Lanka as known to Greeks and Romans*. Pp. 14, 56.

Sebastian, Anton (2013) *A Complete Illustrated History of Sri Lanka*. Pp.79,276,279,369,395.

Historical records⁵⁵, archeological findings⁵⁶ and expedition reports⁵⁷ prove that Horse Mountain (in Tamil *Kudiramalai*/in sinhala *Ashela*/ in Greek *Hippuros*) is a very old great harbour of the island of Lanka. It is situated between the Northern most point of Puttlam and the Southern part of Mannar.

The Taprobane Map of Ptolemy (100-170 AD) shows the ancient coastal towns and harbours in the Kudiramalai area with co-ordinates. Using this map as a primary source, A. Denis N. Fernando (1987) has written an article 'Ancient Maps of Sri Lanka - as a Primary Source of information for the study of human settlements and Political Boundaries' in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic society Sri Lanka Branch*. – New Series. Vol.XXXI. P.101.

Margana Civitas (Mannar) - The township of pearls, where the pearl merchants gathered.

Igona Civitas (Pomparippu) - The township of foreigners. It was here that the foreigners assembled and where they dived for pearls.

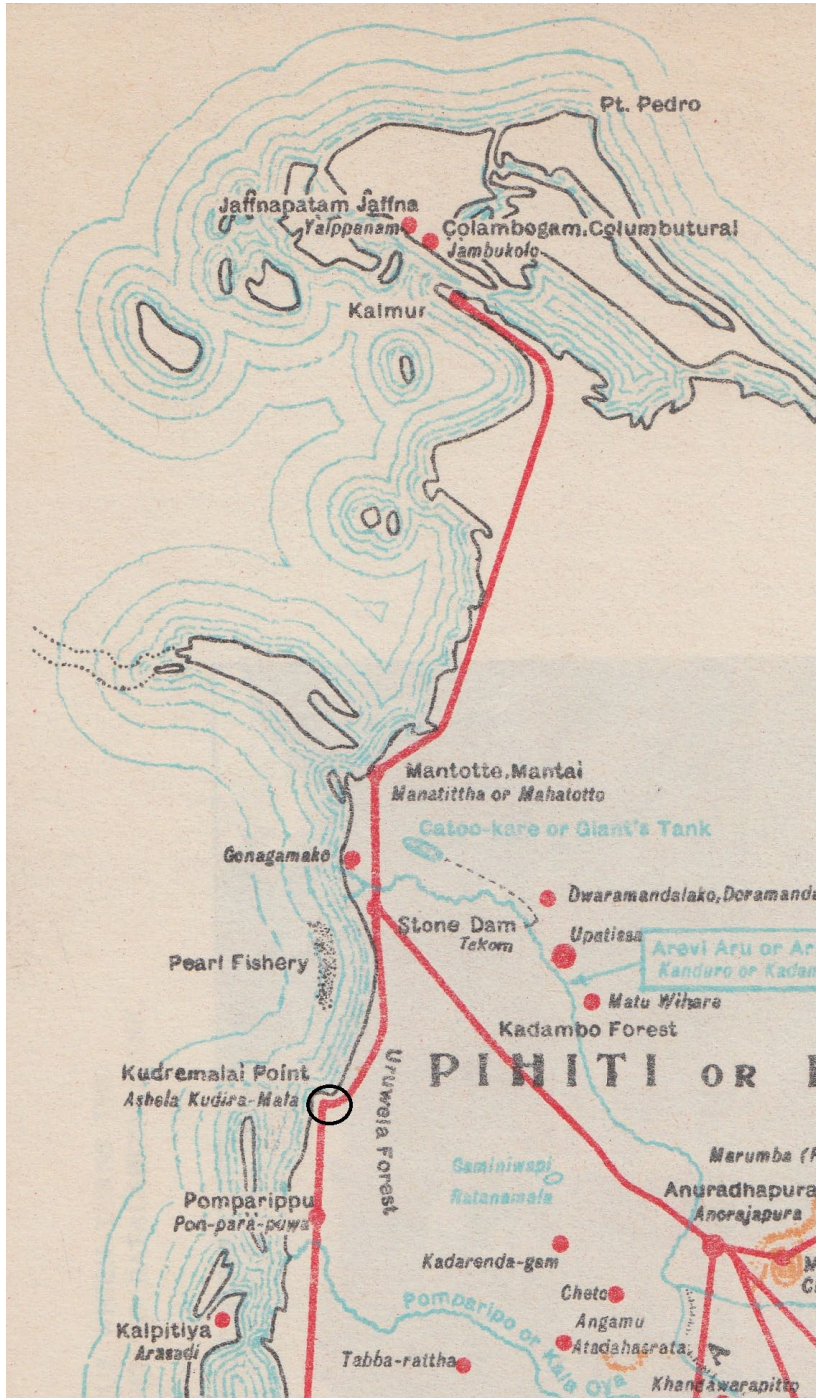
Sinde Canda Civitas (Chilaw)- The township of the Sinds a settlement of people of Sind.

Roman historian Pliny referred to Kudiramalai as Hippalus. Hippalus is a slave who was driven to Kudiramalai by the winds in the time of Emperor Claudius of Rome (10 BC- 54 AD). Kudiramalai port was known as Hipporus (galloping horse) by the Ancient Greece and is mentioned by Ptolamy in Periplus of the Erythraean Sea.⁵⁸

In ancient times, horse trading was done by Persians and Arabs in most ports of the world. It is doubtful that the name 'Horse Mountain' was given to this place in Kudiramalai because of this trading. Although there were famous horse trading ports in the world, no relevant monuments were made at these ports in ancient times. Legends, religious beliefs and heroes were the only subjects taken to make monuments in those times.



Kudiramalai



Pl. 36 - Kudiramalai point. Ashela, kudiramala. Map by Sir J. Emerson Tennet & E. Wijesekara R.L. Brohier. (1934, Reprint-1979) *Ancient Irrigation works in Ceylon*. Government press, Colombo.

56. Administration report of the Archaeological Commissioner for the years 1970-1977. Pp.41,42.
Daraniyagala, S.U. (2004) *The Prehistoric of Sri Lanka*, 3.3 Iranamadu and Redish earth formation. Pp. 82, 86, 87
57. Baldaeus, Philip. (1672) *Description of the Great and most Famous isle of Ceylon*. (trans) (1996) from the high Dutch,
Gunawardane, A.T.W. (2010.06.10) 'Kudiramalai and the buried city' *Daily Mirror*
<http://www.dailymirror.lk/110746/kudiramalai-and-the-buried-city->
(2016.07.03) 'Kudiramalai: Mistory of the buried city' *Sunday Times*
<http://www.sundaytimes.lk/160703/plus/kudiramalai-mystery-of-a-buried-city-199151.html>
58. Vincent Willam, D.D. (1800) (trans.) *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, containing, an account of the Navigation of the Ancients*. Pp. 448,469.
<https://archive.org/details/peripluserythre01vincgoog>
Forbes, J. & Turnour, G. (1841) *Eleven Years in Ceylon*. Pp.262-268
https://books.google.lk/books?id=tMYNAAAQAAJ&pg=PA242&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q&f=false



Details of Balaha, Neak Pean
<http://flickrhivemind.net/Tags/horse,indochina>

59. Beal, S. (1958) *Chinese Accounts of India*, Indian edition. Vol. IV, P. 439, n. 14, P. 441

That the name of 'Horse Mountain' was given because there was a massive monument of a horse and rider is plausible.

Avalokiteśvara himself is at times identified as a divine horse⁵⁹. The horse at Neak Pean in Cambodia was also created in this pose. The bended front legs of the horse can still be seen there. As it was carved out of stones, the sculptor was unable to erect the sculpture with the hind legs. The limitations of a sculpture are determined by the medium of the sculpture. When examining the remaining ruins, old and recent photographs and historical evidence, it is clear that there had been a building complex with a massive monument of a horse in Kudiramali. This sculpture is slowly disappearing with most of its parts being washed out to the sea. Bricks are also being removed by people who are unaware of the historical value of the monument. A plaque erected at this place says that the ruins of a sculpture of a man holding a horse by the collar had been here. The horse's front legs are lifted. Legends also say that there had been a sculpture with a horse rider at this place. The monument was erected on a high place, like on top of a mountain, at the end of the shore. The sculpture can be seen on this mountain when viewed from the sea. By the form of this sculpture, this creation can be taken as a horse taking a leap to the sky to fly across the sea. There are lots of facts to think that this sculpture is a creation of a horse flying with Simhala across the sea.



Pl. 37 - **Kudiramalai Point**. Wilpattu National park. Photo: Anu Weerasuriya (11 Aug 2011) Studio Times Ltd.
 No. 1 hoof of the rear foot. 2, tail of the horse.



Pl. 38 - **Kudiramalai Point.** Wilpattu National park. Photo: Nihal Fernando (1970) Studio Times Ltd. *Eloquence in Stone, The lithic saga of Sri Lanka* P. 54. **1 & 2**, hoofs of the rear feet. **3**, tail mark. **4**, most probably foundation of the supporting construction underneath the horse monument.

'It would appear that the horse was built to face the open sea. My diary, dated April 8, 1982, notes – that its tail was almost 1 foot 5 inches in height, 10 inches across and ridged: the gap between the tail and rear foot, being approximately 2 feet 4 inches. What was left exposed for measurement of this one leg is about 2 feet 8 inches, broken at the calf height, 2 feet 3 inches across, the width of the hoof is 2 feet 11 inches. Half buried in the earth, a round bowl of plaster could have been the hoof of the right foot. This is all that was left for us to see, of what might have once been an immense animal. Imagination can picture the enormous sculptured monument – the horse rearing up, its head thrown back and fore-legs poised in a beautiful posture of motion, set against a clear blue sky, and so seen by approaching mariners.'

Deloraine Brohier, from *The Golden Plains* by R.L. Brohier, 1992 (Studio Times)

The traditional occupation of this area dates back to antiquity, even before the legendary landing of Wijaya (circa 600 BC). Kudremalai or Horse Mountain makes reference to the horse. The horse was traditionally associated with the Persians and Arabs, who imported them to Sri Lanka in their sailing ships from the Persian Gulf, as well as the Greeks. We see the ruins of an ancient monument, that of a rearing Horse of enormous height, nearly 35 ft tall facing the sea at Kudremalai point. This indicates its association with Hipporus, the name of the ancient sea port referred to by former writers of Sri Lanka. According to Hugh Neville in his *Taprobanian*, Acha Nagara is Horse city.

A Denis N. Fernando, from *The Golden Plains* by R.L. Brohier, 1992 (Studio Times)



Pl. 39 - Recent Photos of Kudiramalai (2016)

The process of making a galloping horse is technically the most difficult task anywhere in the world. Hence, it can be strongly concluded that Kudiramali was a Port with a Mahāyāna monument of a merchant called Simhala and Avalokiteśvara in the form of a horse named Balaha. The sculpture was created with bricks and stucco. It can be believed that this monument may have influenced the recent product of a horse statue at the roadside shrine in Madampe, called *Thanivelle Devālaya*, a shrine that is dedicated to a local God (Thaniya Vallabha) riding a white horse. This can even be taken as the original concept of Balaha (A white horse on a sea shore).

The Mahāyāna text of *Dhamma Datu* was introduced to the island during the reign of King Silākāla (522-535 AD). A.D.T.E. Perera in his article 'A possible identification of a man and horse's sculpture at Isurumuni temple, Anurādhapura' on *Ancient Ceylon*. 1979, (p.243-254) says that according to *Culavamsa*, this same king made a beautiful statue of a horse in his time (p. 252). This statement could not be found in *Culavamsa*, Geigher's translation. If it is correct, it is an interesting fact for this discussion. (see further: C.W. Nicholas and S. Paranavithana, *A Concise History of Ceylon*. Pp.130f. and A.D.T.E. Perera, (1973) Sukhavatilokesvara in early Sinhala stone carvings, *The Buddhist*. Vol.XLIV, No.1, P.17f : note14.)

The worship of Avalokiteśvara has gradually disappeared from Sri Lanka and it is no longer practiced today in the country. Chilaw and Puttlam are regarded as regions belonging to God *Aiyyarnāyaka* and even today the worship of *Aiyyarnāyaka* is practiced in these places. There is no worship as such in Kudiramali or recorded as legend. Kudiramalai is free from any kind of worship and people do not go there on pilgrimages like they go to Tirukethiswaram or Munneshwaram. According to this, 'Man and Horse' cannot be ascertained as a statue of Aiyyarnāyar and his vahana, horse. The close navel connection the island had with South Indian shores and the use of Tamil as the trade language may have been the reasons for this place to get the name of Kudiramalai⁶⁰.

In ancient Ceylon, massive monuments were erected through Mahāyāna concepts. Examples are the monuments of the Abhayagiri Stupa, Jethavana Stupa, Buduruwagala, Kushtarājagala, Dambegoda, etc. It cannot be believed that a huge monument of a horse could be erected following Teravāda concepts. It is also difficult to think that this monument is a creation based on some other religion. Mahāyāna is the only concept that can be attributed to this sculpture.

It is interesting to note that there is an ancient temple in the Luoyan, a city located on the Southern bank of the Yellow river in the Henan Province in China, dedicated to a 'White horse' (Chi.)(*Pi-Ma-Sai*). According to folk etymology, two Indian Buddhist Monks (Kasyapa Mātānga and Dharmāraksa) believed to be the first Buddhist Monks to come to China, carried Buddhist scriptures riding on a White Horse⁶¹.



Conceptual design for Kudiramalai Monument.

When creating a sculpture of galloping Horse with the medium of bricks and stucco, it needs a support underneath the sculpture for the front leg or legs to get the weight.

60. '..... Sri Lanka played the role of an important for trade between the East and the West. The excellent natural harbours of Mantai in Mannar, Trincomalee in the Eastern coast and Godavaya in the South encourage the world mariners to position their trading vessels in these safe harbours. This island was also rich in spices, Elephants and Ivory, Pearls and varieties of priceless Gems. Such commodities attracted the Greco-Romans of the West and the Chinese of the East from very early time. The South Indian neighbours where great navigators from pre-Christian time and they were in constant contact with Sri Lanka.....'

Premathilaka, Leelananda (2008) *Cultural Heritage of Sri Lanka. The Land of Serendipity*. p. 224.

61. Bao, Yuheng. Qing, Tian & Letitia, Lane (2004) *Buddhist Art and Architecture of China*. pp. 84,172.

Sebastian, Anton (2013) *A Complete Illustrated History of Sri Lanka*. P.464.



White Horse Temple
<http://www.chinamaps.info/White%20Horse%20Temple/>

The stone sculpture of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva, at Dambegoda Vihāra Complex, near Okkampitiya in the district of Monarāgala is the biggest free standing stone sculpture in Sri Lanka. The height of this sculpture with the lotus form pedestal (*padmāsana*) is 10.4 meters. There are two more similar massive sculptures at Kushtarājagala and Buduruwagala.



Pl. 40 - **Avalokiteśvara, Dambegoda Vihāra, near Okkampitiya**, Monarāgala District (late Anurādhapura period 750-800 AD) <http://www.angelfire.com/in4/visits/cities/maligawila/maligawila.htm> Nimal De Silva identified this sculpture as Maitriya Bodhisattva from 8th century AD. see - *Roland Silva Felicitation Volume* (2008) Pl.08.



Pl. 41 - **Kushtaraja Avalokitesvara**, Nātha Devāle, Weligama Matara District
(late Anurādhapura period 09th -10th Century)
<http://amazinglanka.com/wp/kushtaraja-gala/>



Pl. 42 - Left group at Buduruwagala - Sudhana kumara, Avalokiteśvara & Tārā
 (late Anurādhapura period 850-950 AD)
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Standing_Buddha_Statue_Buduruwagala.jpg

Apart from these, a large number of medium and small scale sculptures of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara had been found from various archaeological excavations carried out across the country. Medium sized sculptures may have been created for image houses (*prathimāghara*) dedicated to public worship and the small scale ones for shrines in mansions for personal worshipping purposes.

When investigating the practical evolution of any form of cult, firstly, concepts and art works are created, and then the rituals and performances relative to the image are built up, and lastly, the relevant records are written. Therefore, utmost care should be taken when dating the images. It should be taken into account that these art works have been vandalized by both local and foreign invaders. Stone inscriptions may have been harmed by language and religious extremists and these stones also could have been taken away for other purposes without knowing their true value.



Pl. 43 - Right group at Buduruwagala - Avalokiteśvara, Maithreeya & Vajrapāni
 (late Anurādhapura period 850-950 AD)
<http://amazinglanka.com/wp/buduruwagala/>

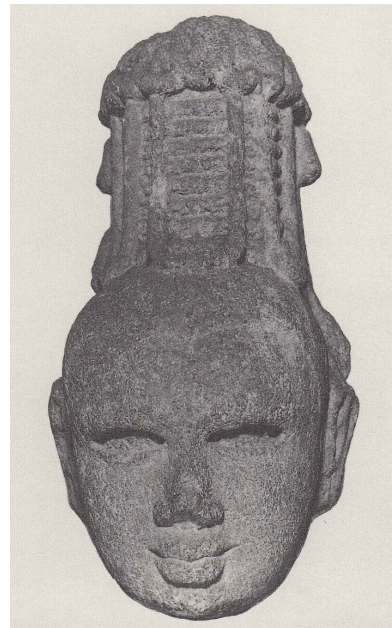
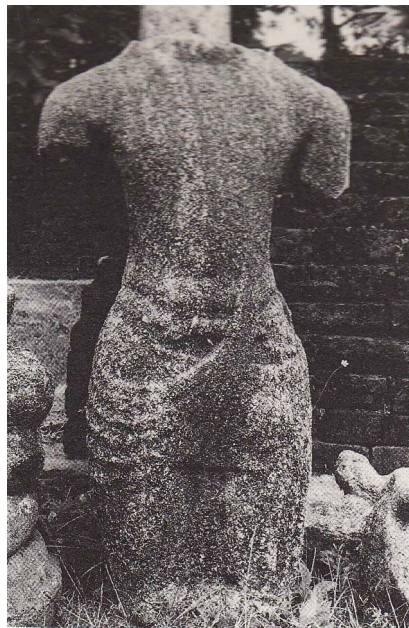
According to Mahāyānism the consort (spiritual female energy) of this Bodhisattva is Tārā. It also says that this 'world cycle' (*kalpa*), that is, from the passing away of Gautama Buddha to the birth of Maitreya Buddha is dedicated to Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara.

There are two accompanying Bodhisattvas to Buddha Amithāba belonging to Mahāyāna celestial Buddha Mandala⁶². One is Mahasthamaprāpta Bodhisattva and the other is Avalokiteśvara.

62. The five celestial buddhas
 (*Panchatatāgata*) in Mahāyāna
1. Akshōbaya
 2. Vairocana
 3. Ratnasambāva
 4. Amithāba
 5. Amōghasiddi



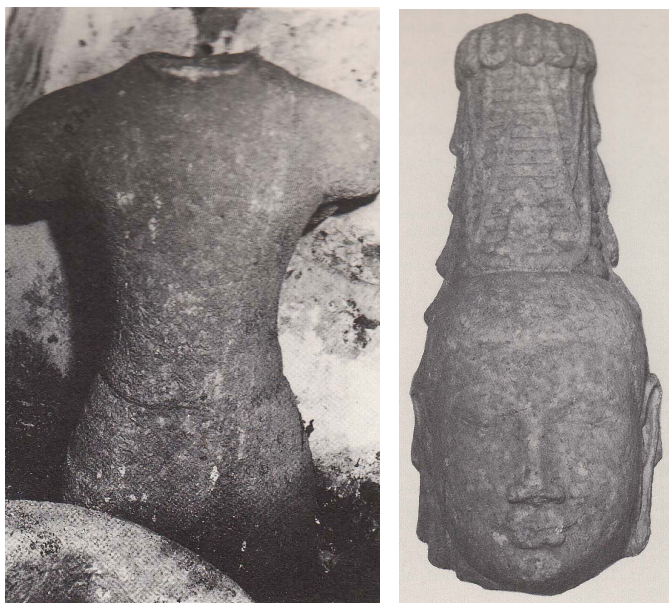
Pl. 44 - Headless gneiss image of a Bodhisattva Maithreeya, Right side gneiss image of Avalokiteśvara at Situlpahuva National park, Hambantota District. (late Anurādhapura period 700-750 AD) (U.V. Schroeder, (1990) *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, p.268.)



Pl. 45 - Damaged Dolomite marble image of Avalokiteśvara at Mangala Rajamaha Vihāra, Seruwila. Trincomalee District. (late Anurādhapura period 07th century) (U.V. Schroeder, (1990) *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, Pp.248,249.)



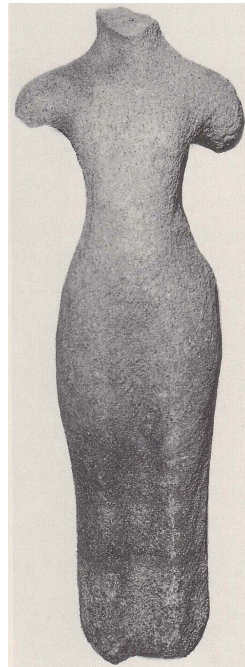
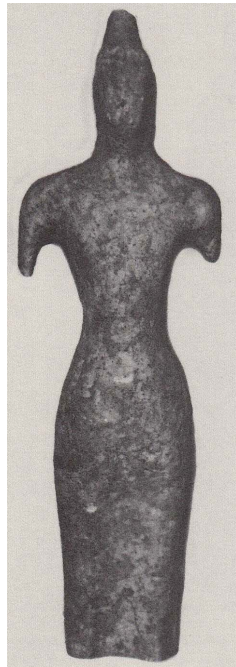
Pl. 46 - Dolomite marble image of Avalokiteśvara at Mudumaha Vihāra, Pothuwil. Ampara District. (late Anurādhapura period 08th, 09th century) (U.V. Schroeder, (1990) *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, Pp.270,271)



Pl. 47 - Damaged Dolomite marble image of Avalokiteśvara at Girihandu Vihāra Ambalanthota, Hambanthota District. (late Anurādhapura period 07th century) (U.V. Schroeder, (1990) *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, pp.248,249.)

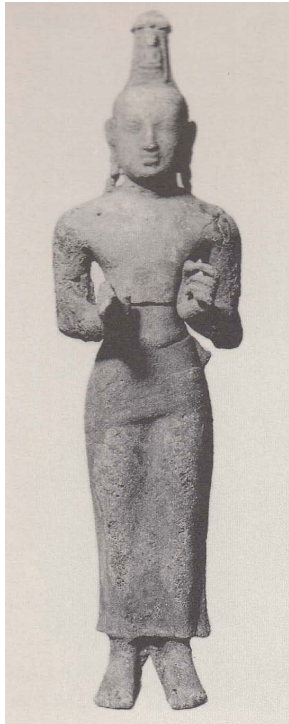


Pl. 48 - Dolomite Avalokiteśvara from Budumuttava, Rajamaha Vihāra Nikawaratiya, Kurunegala District. (late Anurādhapura period 650-750 AD) (U.V. Schroeder, (1990) *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, p.257.)

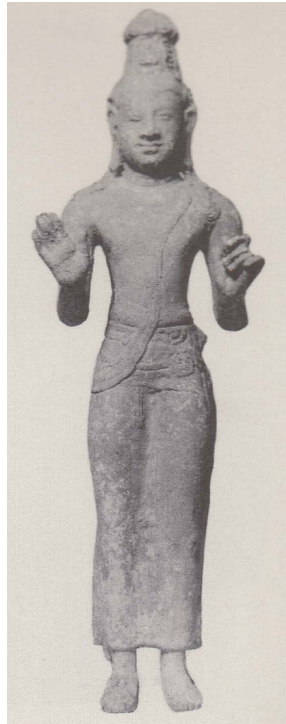


Pl. 49 - Dolomite marble Avalokiteśvara. Timbirivava, Kobeigane. Kurunegala District. (late Anurādhapura period 07th, 08th century) (U.V. Schroeder, (1990) *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, p.252.)

Pl. 50 - Dolomite marble Avalokiteśvara torso. The place of origin was not recorded. Archaeological Museum, Polonnaruwa. (late Anurādhapura period 07th, 08th century) (U.V. Schroeder, (1990) *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, p.252.)



Pl. 51 - **Hollow cast Bronze**
Avalokiteśvara from Thiriyaya.
(late Anurādhapura period
07th, 08th century)
(U.V. Schroeder, (1990)
*Buddhist Sculptures of Sri
Lanka*, p.253.)



Pl. 52 - **Hollow cast Bronze**
Avalokiteśvara from
Thiriyaya (late Anurādhapura
period 07th, 08th century)
(U.V. Schroeder, (1990)
*Buddhist Sculptures of Sri
Lanka*, p.253.)



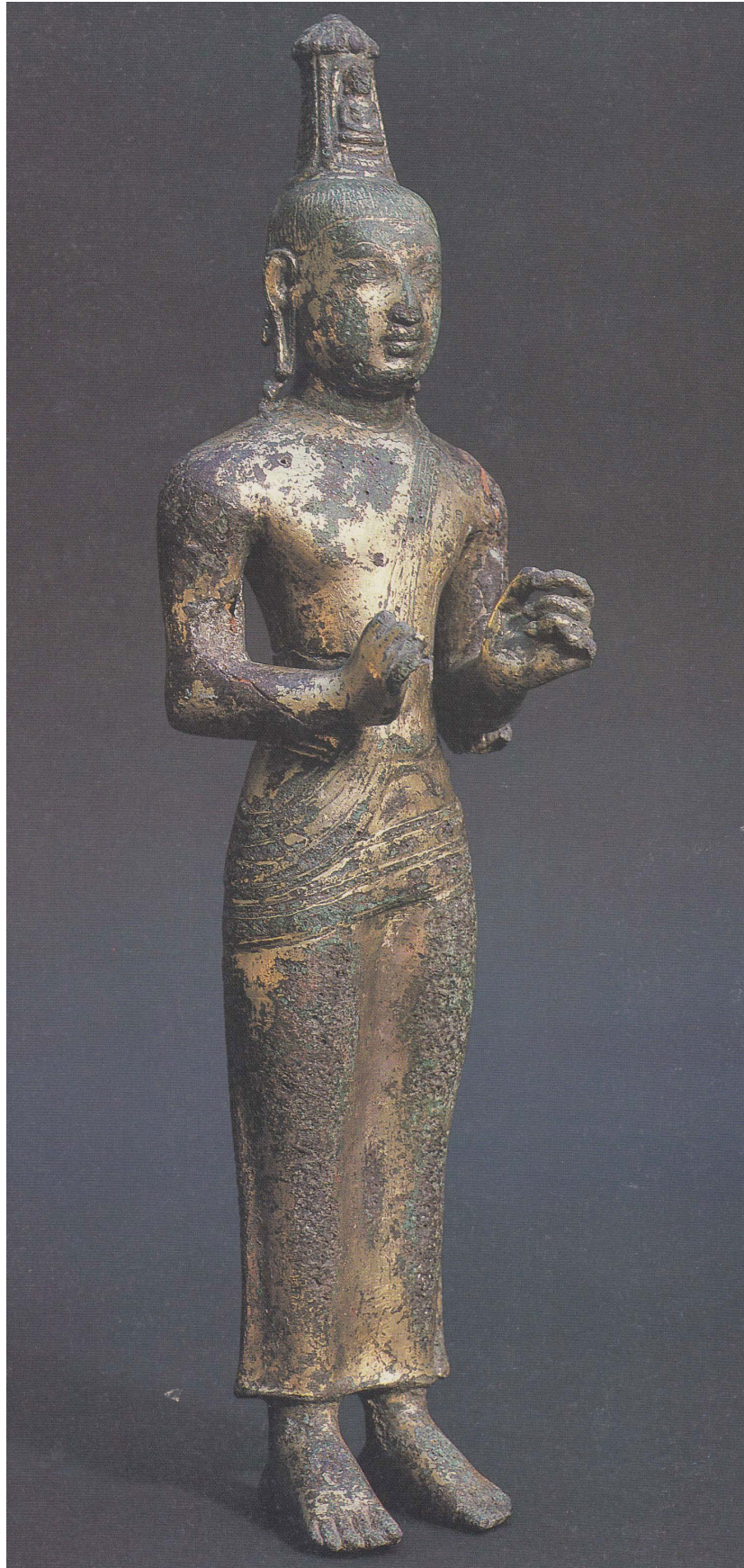
Pl. 53 - **Dolomite marble Avalokiteśvara seated in lalitasana Polonnaruwa.**
(late Anurādhapura period 08th century)
(U.V. Schroeder, (1990) *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, p.230.)



Pl. 54 - Hollow cast Bronze Avalokiteśvara from Girikandaka Vihāra, Thiriyaya.
Trincomalee District (late Anurādhapura period 07th, 08th century)
(U.V. Schroeder, (1992) *The Golden age of Sculpture of Sri Lanka*, Pp.70,71.)



Pl. 55 - Solid cast bronze Avalokiteśvara is Seated in combination of Lalithasana and Rajaleelasana. Allegedly discovered in the Galewela area, near Dambulla, Matale District (late Anurādhapura period 08th, 09th century) (U.V. Schroeder, (1992) *The Golden age of Sculpture of Sri Lanka*, Pp.84,85.)



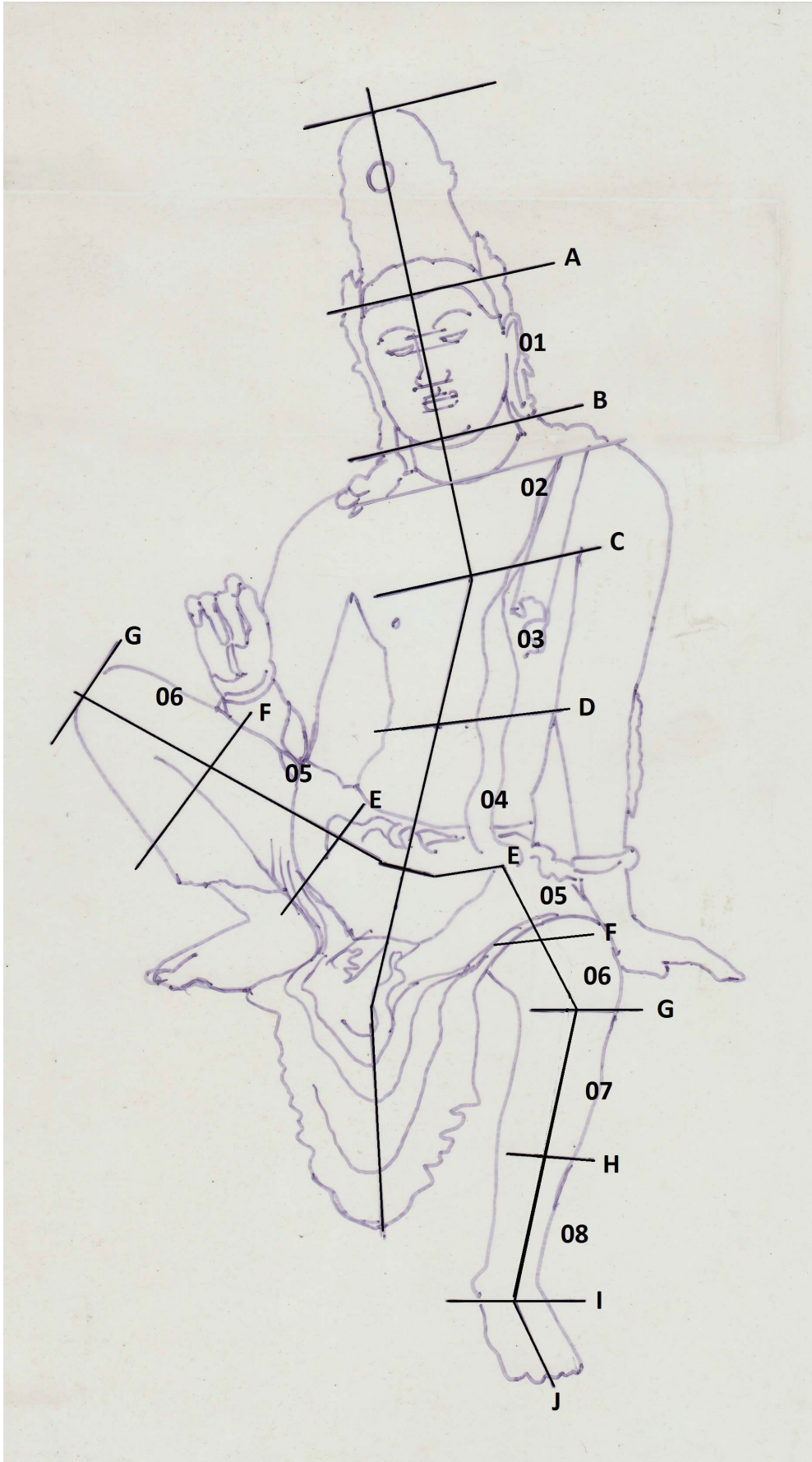
Pl. 56 - Gilt Bronze hollow cast with intact clay core Avalokitesvara
(late Anurādhapura period 07th, 08th century)
(U.V. Schroeder, (1990) *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, p.67.)



Pl. 57 - Solid cast bronze Avalokiteśvara is Seated in Rājaleelasana. Girikandaka Vihāra, Tiriyaya. Trincomalee District. (late Anurādhapura period 08th, 09th century) (U.V. Schroeder, (1990) *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, p.287)



Pl. 58 - Massive head of Avalokiteśvara, Dambegoda Vihāra, near Okkampitiya, Monarāgala District. The head of Bodhisattva measuring above 2.1m. (for full figure pls see Pl no 40.) (late Anurādhapura period 750-800 AD) Discovered in 1934. Photograph: during the restoration in 1988.(U.V. Schroeder, (1990) *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*, p.68.)



Pl. 59 - Detail study of divisions in the figure (face lengths)

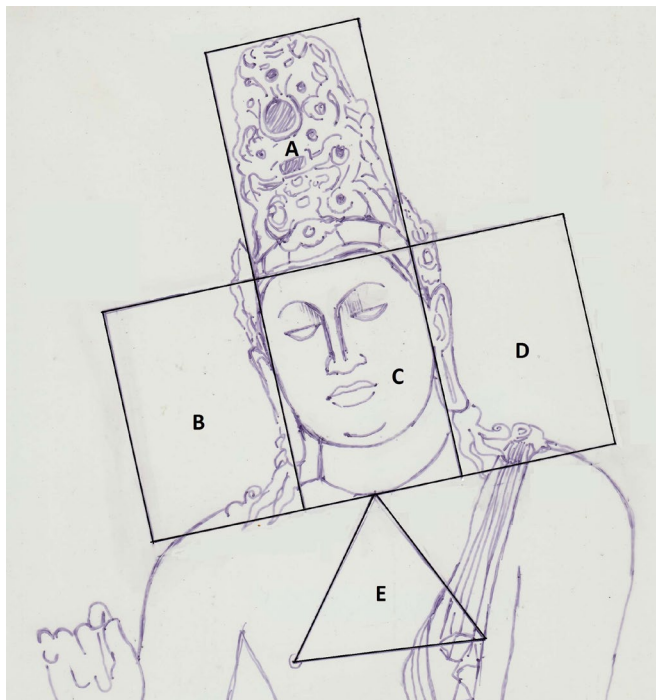
When arguing the artistic quality of the plastic art composition of Veragala Avalokiteśvara, it is difficult to compare it with other art traditions except with the tradition of other group of sculptures found from Veragala at the same premises⁶³.

To analyze the art tradition of this sculpture which boasts of classical characteristics, it can be compared to the world renowned statue of Tārā, which was taken from Sri Lanka and now is exhibited at the British Museum⁶⁴.

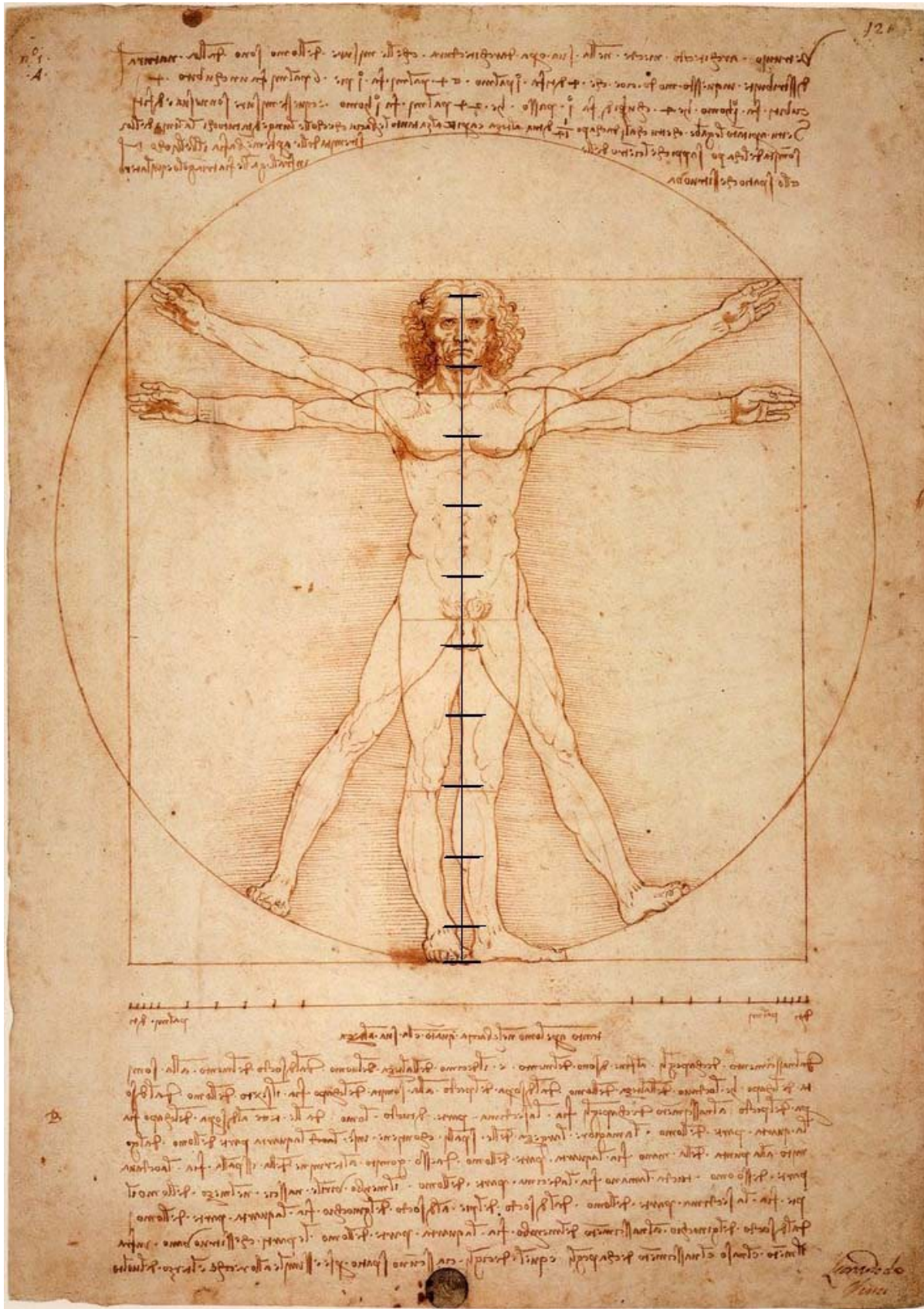
Iconometry, which is used to measure the height, length, width and distance of paintings and sculptures belonging to historical periods in this country, or any other traditional canonical guidance, cannot be applied strictly to the sculpture of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. It is clear that the creator of the sculpture may have had the knowledge of canonical guidance, but that he had gone beyond that traditional frame work to complete this statue. Except for the height and length, some *tala* given in cannons, match with the statue. This whole figure is $8\frac{1}{4}$ of the face length. (see pl. 59) It is interesting to note that western iconometric system (Renaissance) also gives $9\frac{1}{2}$ face lengths as the height of the human figure. (see pl. 61) According to western theory of the ratio, for the full body, head size to its body size is in the proportion of 1:8 $\frac{1}{2}$. When the figure is closely observed, it can be seen that the body is disproportionate, but this does not harm the beauty of the composition in any way. This disproportionate factor is also visible in the Sigiriya paintings.

63. Chandrajeewa, S. (1999) *Veragala Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara : An analysis of Mahāyāna Buddhist image from Colombo Museum*. p.67.

64. *ibid* 1999 Pp.67-69.



Pl. 60 - Study of Citrakarmasāstra clarification .
 B,C,D equal width, C & A equal height, E, the three lines joining the hiccups and the two breasts to form an equilateral triangle,

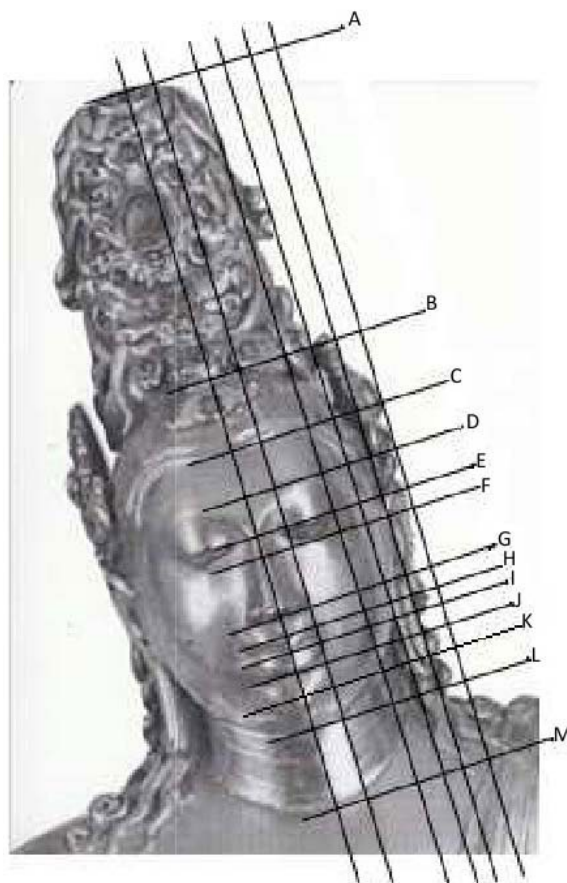


Pl. 61 - Vitruvian Man, ca. 1409 (Leonardo da Vinci)
face length calculation from western style.
<https://www.artsy.net/artwork/leonardo-da-vinci-vitruvian-man>

According to *Citrakarmasastra*, the iconometric system applied to Buddha images is the *Uttama-dasa-tala* (consisting of 124 units), while Bodhisattva images are to be measured in terms of the *Madhyama-dasa-tala* (consisting of 120 units), For divine beings, its *adahama-dasa-tala* (consisting of 116 units). The distance between the shoulders should consist of three face widths measured from ear to ear and the three lines joining the hiccup and the two breasts should form an equilateral triangle. For Bodhisattva images, the height of the seated image should consist of 60 units from the hair limit to the seat. As a general rule, the total height of the standing image of the *dasatala* variety should measure in 9 face lengths (distance from the hair limit to the jaw limit). The *dasatala* respectively consists of $9\frac{1}{2}$, $9\frac{3}{4}$ and 9 face lengths, approximately for standing images⁶⁵.

65. Marasinghe, E.W. (Trans) (1991) *The Citrakarmasāstra ascribed to Manjusri*. Intro. xxxiii, chapter viii.

It is reasonable to assume that the sculptor of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva had used a fine measurement system guided by the canon (*citrakarmasāstra*) such as *angula* (1 inch), *yava* (size of Barley corne), *yuka* (louse), *likhya* (nits) and *valagraha* (thickness of a tail hair's end) to develop proportions in his work.



Pl. 62 - **Detail study of division in the Face.** The length of A to C unit is equal to C to M. (The height of Jatāmakuta is similar to the length of hair limit to the hiccup level.)

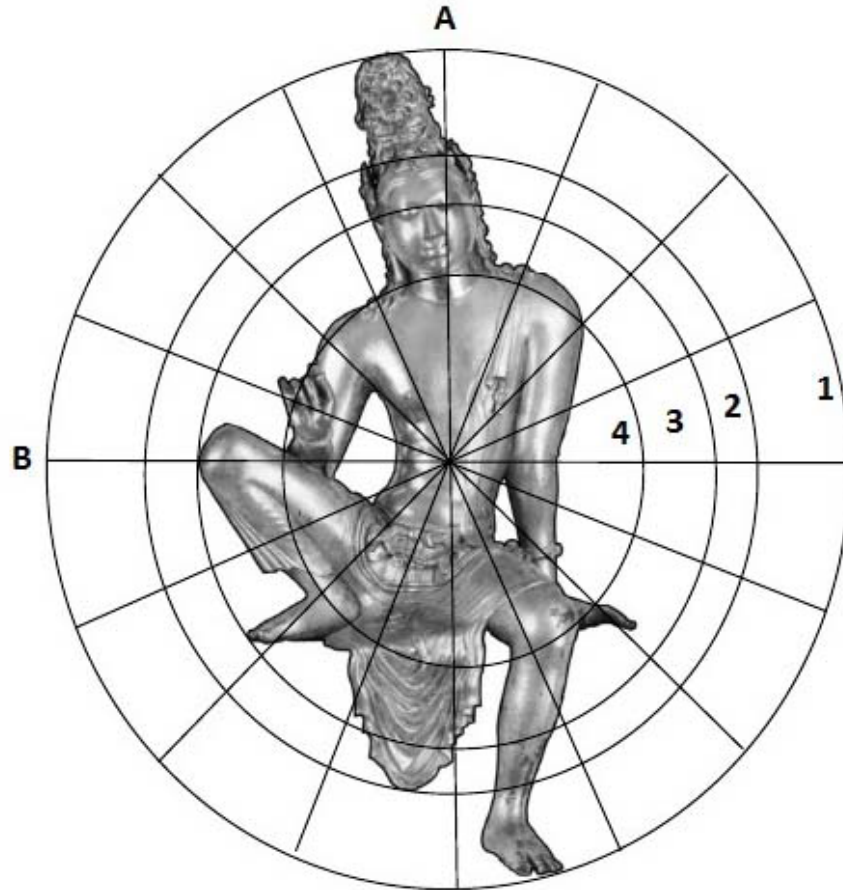
The basic schemes of composition are judged using several methods such as the overlapping projection, study on space divisions, proportion divisions and movement divisions of the Veragala Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva statue.



Pl. 63 - Detail of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva
Cultural Heritage of Sri Lanka The land of Serendipity. (2008) Tokyo National Museum. P.56



Pl. 64 - Detail of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva
Cultural Heritage of Sri Lanka The land of Serendipity. (2008) Tokyo National Museum. P.55



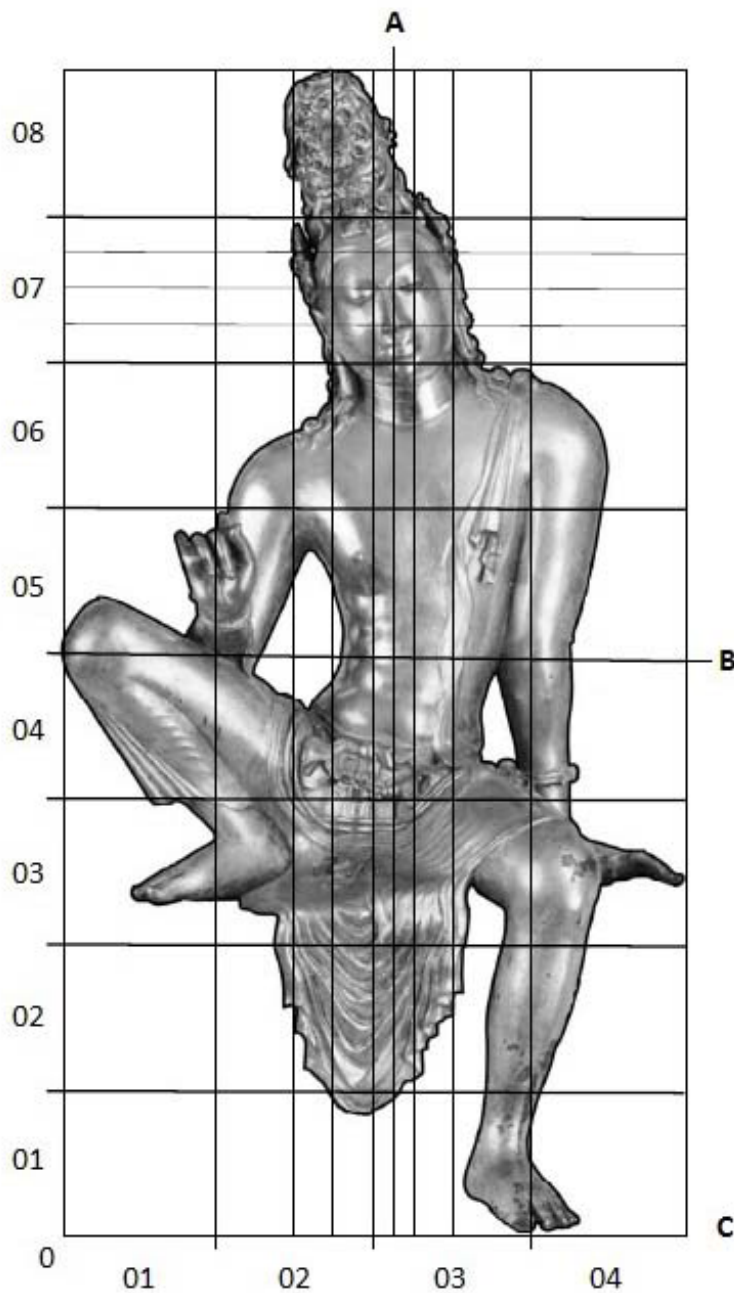
Pl. 65 - Space division study. Measuring from circle (Cakra) system

Space Division Study :

There are four circles (1,2,3 and 4) projected on this sculpture to identify the space relationship with the 3- dimensional form (cakra method). The central cardinal point lies at the middle point of the stomach (*madhya bindu*). The circles are formed based on this point. 16 lines are also spread out into the space from the same point. The first line is always the central vertical line, A (*madhya sutra*) and the second line or middle horizontal line is B (*madhya prastha*). All diameters cross the *madya bindu* and spread into outer space directions. The circle can further be divided into many segments (six, eight, twelve or sixteen diameters etc.) This network helps us to understand the relationship between form elements of composition and space. The top of the *jatamakuta* and the toes of the left leg positions well at the 1st circle. *Jatamakuta* is placed inside the 1st and 2nd circle. The top of the head and the edge of the fallen cloth are positioned at the 2nd circle. The toes of the right foot, bended right knee and eyes are positioned at the 3rd circle. Shoulders and two hands fit into the 4th circle. The top most part, face including *jatamakuta* and the bottom longest part, the left leg, is positioned at opposite triangles filling the space. The figure activates with the space, well balanced inside the triangles of the circles.

Proportion Division Study :

Vertical and horizontal grid (*Bhupura*) of the rectangle is the network that projects static qualities, calculation of the positions, sizes and proportions of all elements in the composition. It assigns places and positions and divides form complexes from one another. The *madya sutra* or central vertical line A, runs in the middle. The *madya prasatha* or central horizontal line B, runs across his belly and elbow. *Bhumi sutra* or ground line is C. The height of the sculpture is double the width. (4 x 8)



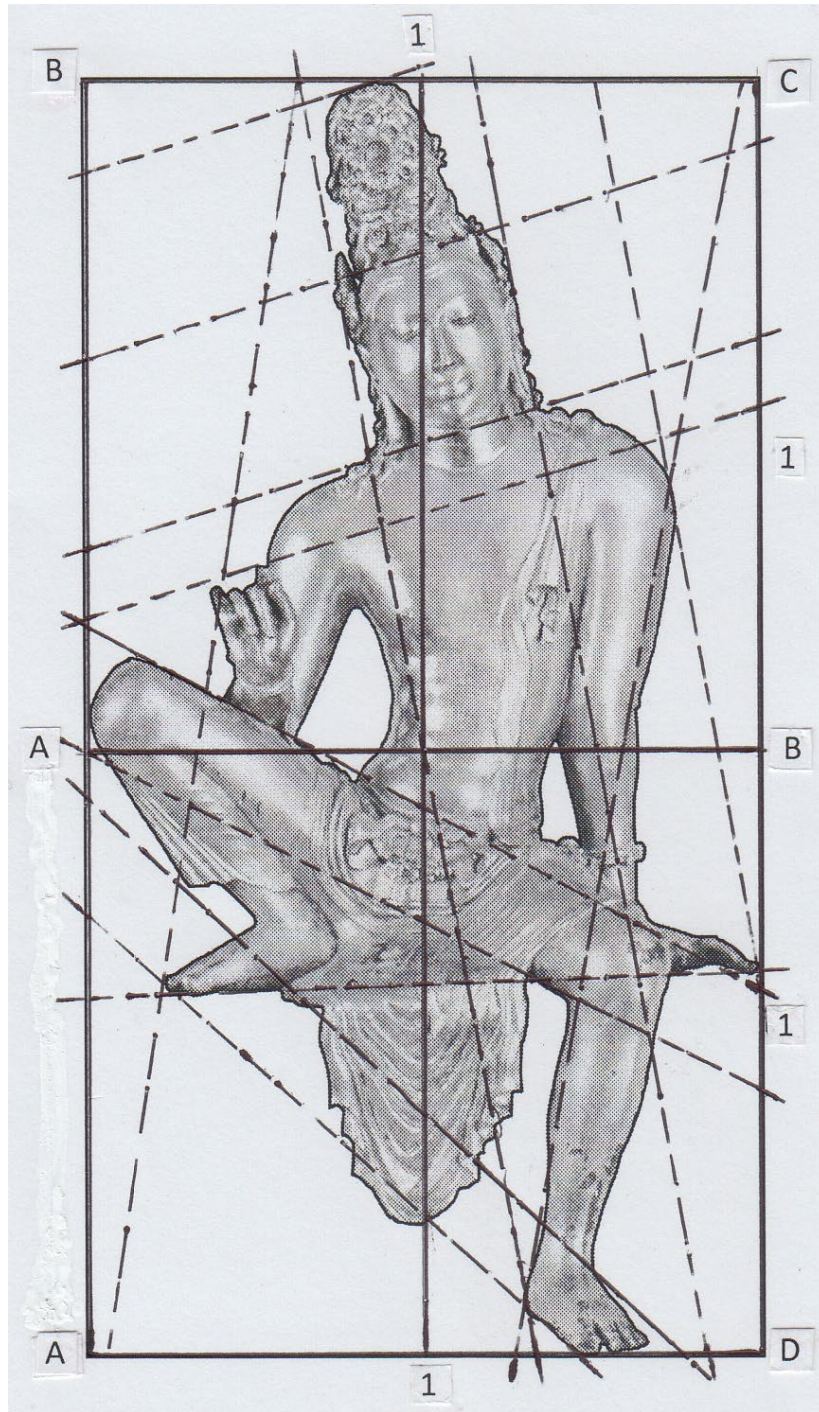
Pl. 66 - Proportion division study. Measuring from grid (*Bhūpura*) system



Pl. 67 - Left side of the statue of Veragala Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva
Photographic division National Museum, Colombo.



Pl. 68 - Detail of Veragala Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva
Cultural Heritage of Sri Lanka The land of Serendipity. (2008) Tokyo National Museum. P.55



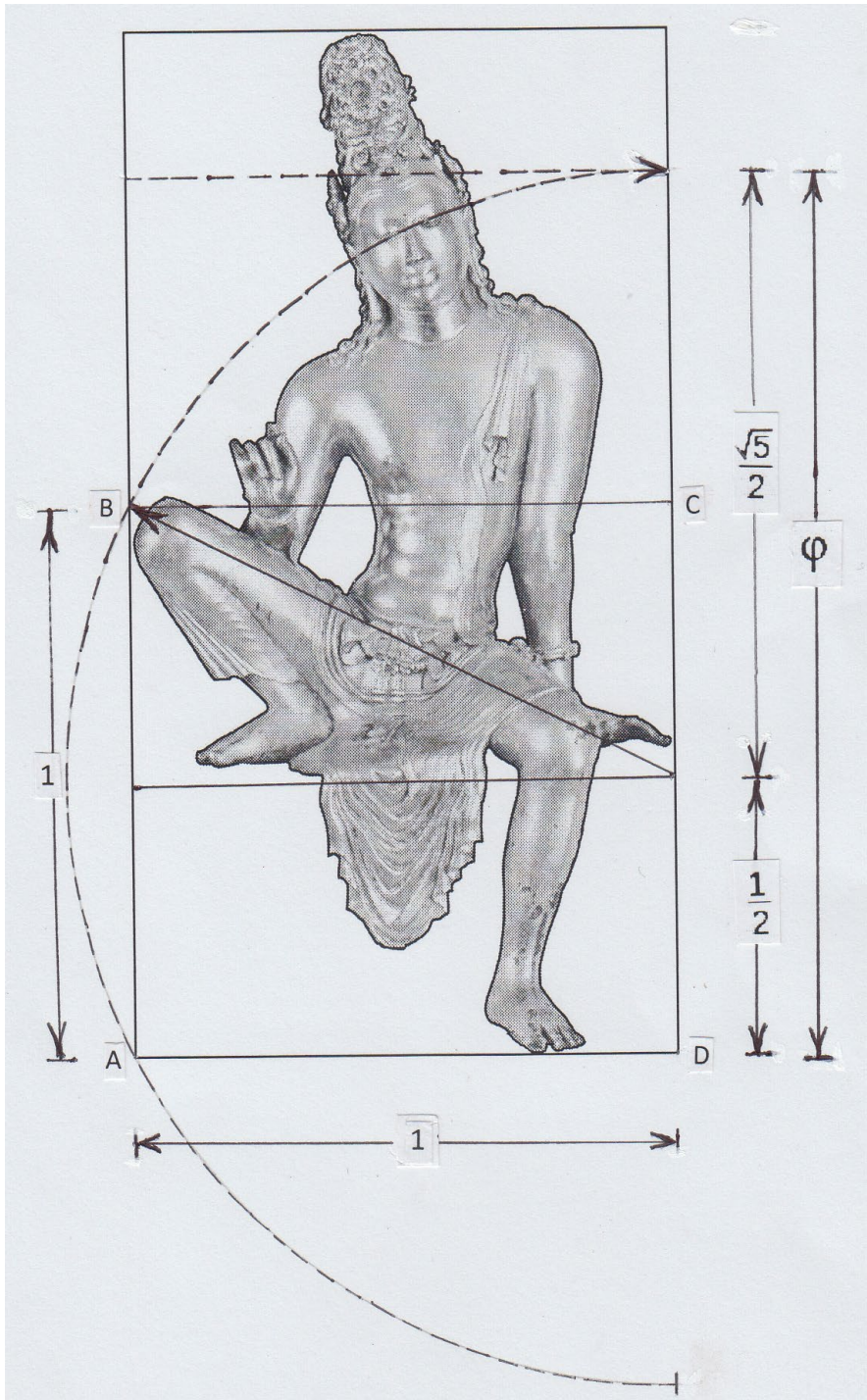
Pl. 69 - Movement division study

Movement Division Study :

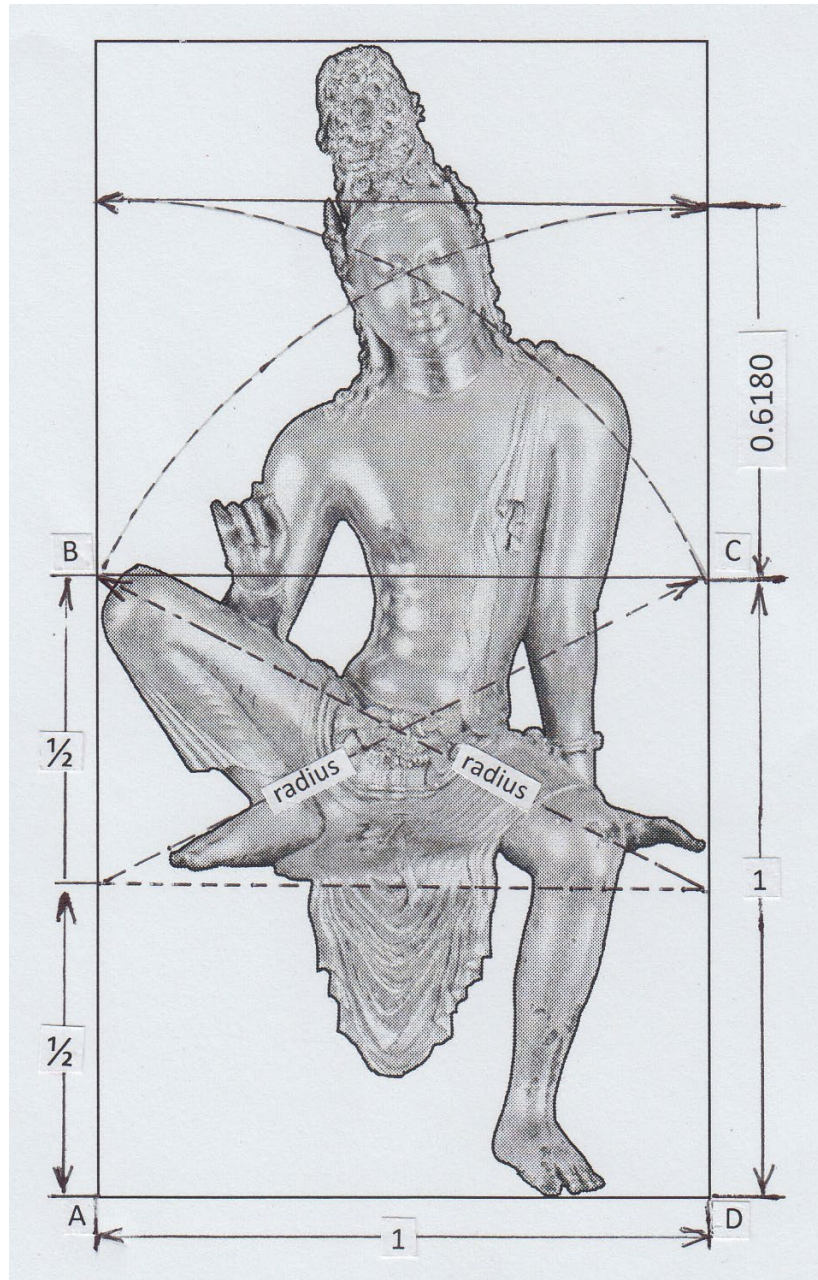
The lines or chords that spread out into certain angles and directions across the body give knowledge of its specific character in plastic art. They divide limbs into rhythmic proportion, give an ascent at a relevant point or give align of demarcation at the transition of one element or movement in to another. Integration of counter movements or form elements are spread across the whole composition in a uniform way, showing a balanced composition with high aesthetic appeal.

This sculpture was made according to the eastern oriental aesthetic criteria and it was investigated with western oriental aesthetic criteria, to assess how it reacts. The method is called 'Golden Rectangle'⁶⁶ (ancient Greek method of identifying ideal proportions. See pl. 70 & 71) and the sculpture was compatible to this method as well. It resembles the ancient calculation of proportions called as *Talamana* in art. (see pl. No. 62, 65 & 66)

66. <http://mathworld.wolfram.com/GoldenRectangle.html>
 Livio, Mario (2002) *The Golden Ratio: The Story of Phi, The World's most astonishing Number.*



Pl. 70 - Golden Rectangle method I



Pl. 71 - Golden Rectangle method II

When individually taken, some questions arise as to the size of the palms, arms and legs but taken as a whole, this sculpture is a beautifully created composition. The artist of this figure has paid special attention to the curves on the right side of the stomach. This feature cannot be seen in other Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara statues in the same posture. This attention to the curves on the stomach area can be seen in the Sigiriya frescoes as well. The creator of this sculpture has changed traditional Iconometry to suit the composition and has freely guided his expertise according to the subject matter. These same features are mirrored in the Sri Lankan Tārā at the British Museum.



Pl. 72 - Right side of the statue of Veragala Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva
Photographic division National Museum, Colombo.



Pl. 73 - Back side of the statue of Veragala Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva
Photographic division National Museum, Colombo.

The sculpture of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, the few Buddha statues and decorated ornaments found from Veragala and the Sri Lankan Tārā at the British Museum, all attribute to the same characteristics of one sculpture tradition of the ancient Anurādhapura period. Accordingly, this sculpture tradition is introduced as the 'Veragala Sculpture Tradition'. It can be believed that the same master sculptor had modeled the other two Buddha images (see Pl.74 & 75) discovered at the same site ⁶⁷. For this reason it is important to find the tradition of paintings parallel to the above tradition of sculptures found from Veragala.

67. *The Heritage of Sri Lankan Bronze Sculptures*. (1995) p. 33



Pl. 74 - **Samādhi Buddha**. Gilt Bronze with traces of red paint; solid cast in three parts with a hollow pedestal and separately cast flame ornament (*siraspata*)
<https://albinger.me/2014/12/16/colombos-national-museum-some-of-what-youll-see/>



Pl. 75 - **Standing Buddha.** Gilt Bronze with remains of red paint; solid cast.
Discovered in 1968 at Veragala Sirisañgabo Vihāra, Āllavāva
(Anurādhapura District) (U.V. Schroeder, (1992) *The Golden age of Sculpture of Sri Lanka*, p.52)



Pl. 76 - Painted plaster surface of Avalokiteśvara at Buduruwagala
(*Serendib*. (Jan- Feb 1988) pix. Gamini Jayasinghe. p.05)

The colours and plaster on stone sculptures decay with time but gilded bronze sculptures preserve their outward surface and texture taking us back to the actual period that they were made. When studying Art History, visual reading and methods of comparing art treasures are used to analyze art objects. This same procedure should be used to compare the painting traditions in the classical period and these gilded bronze sculptures belonging to Veheragala.

This sculpture motivates art critiques to compare and investigate special characteristics and related art methods with similarities between painting and plastic art compositions in the same era. The investigation should include facial expressions, proportions of body parts, sensitivity towards the anatomy of the human body, rhythmic quality of the body and aesthetic expression. It is also important to note the tradition this school has used for decorative patterns in their art works.



Pl. 77 - Detail of Veheragala standing Buddha



Pl. 78 - Detail of one of the Sigiri frescoes

It is a widely accepted common theory of the world that the painting styles or traditions always have a parallel tradition or style of sculpture. This characteristic can be seen in pre-historic sculptures parallel to pre-historic paintings, as well as in various civilizations in historical periods. The origin and visual style of painting and sculpture belonging to a certain school can be clearly identified by projecting the two mediums together. When searching for the artistic quality of the sculpture of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara in paintings of the classical period, Sigiriya is the only place that could be found to demonstrate identical characteristics. However, traditional Iconometry cannot be applied strictly to Sigiriya paintings too. The Sigiriya paintings take a different path from painting to painting. Among the lines of Sigiriya paintings, no preliminary lines can be found in the middle sequences from the top to the bottom of the body (*Brahma Sūtra*) or *Akshi Sūtra* which is drawn horizontally across the eyes, *Nāsagra Sūtra* (line drawn below the nose) and *Hanvagra Sūtra* (line drawn below the chin).



Pl. 79 - Detail of one of the Sigiri frescoes



Pl. 80 - Detail of Tārā – British Museum



Pl. 81 - Detail of Veragala Seated Buddha



Pl. 82 - Detail of one of the Sigiri frescoes



Pl. 83 - Detail of one of the Sigiri frescoes



Pl. 84 - Detail of Veragala Avalokiteśvara

(Similarities of facial expressions and Decorative pattern in 2D & 3D medium)



Pl. 85 - Gold earring from Sigiriya.
National Museum, Colombo.



Pl. 86 - Siraspatha Flame ornament.
Gilt Bronze Solid cast with a hollow base. Discovered from Veragala Sirisangabo Vihāra Āllavāva.



Pl. 87 - **Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, Padmapāni**
Wall painting in cave no. 01, Ajantha, Maharashtra, India. (5th century AD)
(contemporary to Sigiriya frescoes) *The Image of the Buddha*. Unesco. p.114.

Many lines have been used to create a form rather than one line. It is clear from the language of painting that the artist may have known about these sutras or preliminary lines but without being limited to those iconometric theories had drawn freely. These paintings exhibit a free style, changing the length and width of body parts from painting to painting. Also, the identical characteristics or the quality of portraiture in Sigiriya paintings, Veragala Avalokiteśvara and British Museum Tārā, all convey one fundamental principle in classical artistic style. These three art works strongly move towards the 05th and 06th century AD rather than the Polonnaruwa style of the 12th century AD.

Although a classic tradition of painting was proved from Sigiriya, a sensitively parallel tradition of sculpture is missing from the same Sigiriya style when analyzing the art history at that time.



Pl. 88 - **Door handle.** Gilt Bronze solid cast in two parts. Discovered from Veragala Sirisangabo Vihāra Āllavāva.

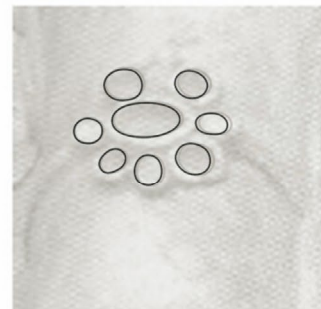
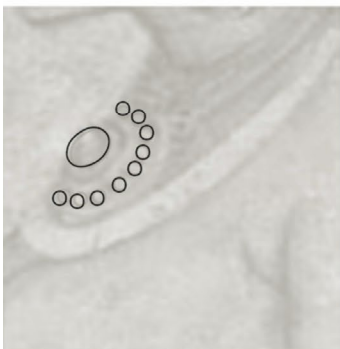
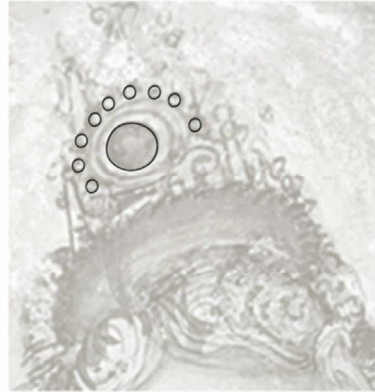
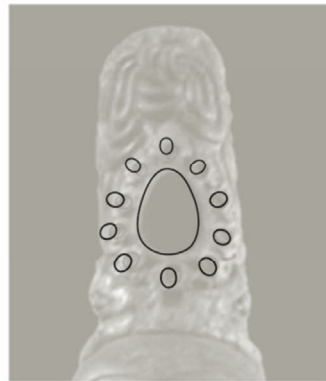


Pl. 89 - **Bodhisattva Feet.** Gilt Bronze each cast in two parts & joined together.
Discovered from Veragala Sirisangabo Vihāra Āllavāva

This vacuum can be strongly filled with the group of sculptures found from Veragala, prominently with Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva and Sri Lankan Tārā at British Museum. Small scaled terracotta sculptures found from Sigiriya are believed to have been made as souvenirs.



Pl. 90 - **Sigiriya Terracotta Sculptures**



Pl. 91 - The pattern of decoration
(Avalokiteśvara, Tārā, Sigiriya frescoes and other statues and objects from Veragala show its own identity)

No silpa text can be found dealing with metal casting techniques and ancient casting techniques of the lost wax process in Sri Lanka. Very few groups still use the sand casting technique for making traditional oil lamps in brass and casting bells in bronze. High quality copper alloy sculptures attributed to Sri Lankan history are widely appreciated technically and artistically. Sri Lankan Bodhisattva Tārā in British Museum, London and Veragala Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara from Colombo Museum are two remarkable examples that have used sophisticated technology to produce high quality, successful works of art.

Investigation of existing traditional techniques of metal casting in India (especially in South) and techniques of neighboring countries are useful in this regard. The Indian tradition in various technical aspects of lost wax casting is guided by three ancient works written in the Sanskrit language, dealing with step by step processes followed by ancient metal founders. These works are, *Manasollāsa* or *Aabilasirta Chintāmani*⁶⁸ (12th century AD), *Silparatana*⁶⁹ (16th century) and *Manasāra*⁷⁰ (not dated). The *Sāriputra*, the best known of the Sri Lanka silpa texts (09 AD ?) is an adaptation of the South Indian *Agama* Tradition and strictly forbids hollow casting⁷¹.

The height of the gilt bronze sculpture of Veragala Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva is 49.8 cm. It is made out of copper alloy using a lost-wax process. (Fre.)(*Cire-perdue*) (Sk.)(*Maduchchhistāvidhānam*).

The first step in creating a statue like this is to make the initial form with solid wax and then to finish the surface decorations and expressions with soft wax. Bees wax (Tam.)(*kalarpumez*) would have been used when making Avalokiteśvara. The second step is to fix runners (Tam.)(*Tālkatta*) (pipes for metal flow), rises (pipes removing pressured air from inside) and the funnel (sprue) connecting all runners together. All these are made from wax. The third step is to cover the wax statue using a soft clay slip (Sk.)(*mridutāra*) resistant to high temperature⁷². This first layer of soft clay should be transparent. Then the statue is left to dry in the shade. Afterwards the statue is covered with the second (Sk.)(*mridu*) and the third coating (Sk.)(*manda-katina*). When these layers are dry, the same composition of solid clay should be applied (Sk.)(*katina*) to a thickness of 4 to 6 inches from the surface. Again it is left to dry properly.

There are two techniques to cast bronze in foundry works. These techniques are known as Hollow Cast (Sk.)(*susira*) or Northern Tradition and Solid Cast (Sk.)(*gana*) or Southern Tradition⁷³. Bronze sculptures belonging to the historical period using these two casting methods have been found from Sri Lanka. The Avalokiteśvara sculpture belongs to the solid cast method.

68. Srigradekar, G.K. (Ed) (1925) *Somesvara Bhulokamalla Manasollāsa*.

Samasastri, R. (Ed) (1926) *Abilasirta chintāmani* (Manasollāsa).

69. Sastri, S. (Ed) (1929) *Silparatana*

70. Acharya, P.K.(Ed)(1914) *Manasāra*.

71. 'The Artists who want to attain blessedness by it must not make statue with a hollow body, be it out of gold, iron or any other material. If a statue is made with a hollow body, there will be, as a consequence, strife and quarrelling and the loss of possessions. Soon there will be famine, trade and traffic will subside and the king will be ousted. An offence against this rule results in the loss of all possessions and even life.'

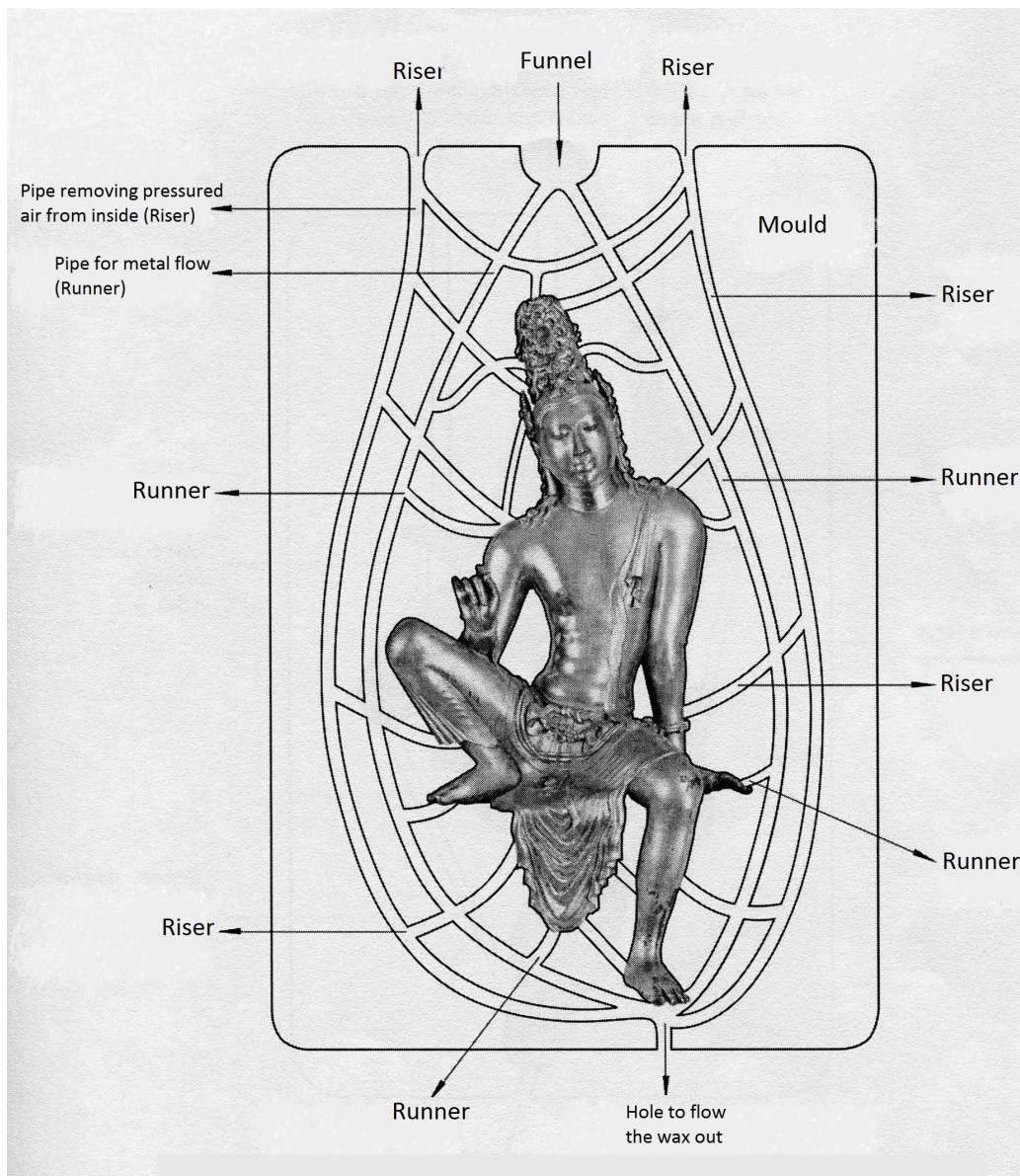
Ruclius, H. (Trans)(1974) *Śāriputra & Ālekhyalaksana*, verses 11-14.

72. Krishnan, M.V. (1976) *Cire - Perdue Casting in India*.

73. Acharya, P.K. (Ed)(1914) *Manasāra*. vol.III

All the statues found from Veragala have been made using the solid cast method and the Sri Lankan Tārā at the British Museum has also been completed using this method.

The fourth step is to make a small hole at the side of the bottom part of the mold to get the molten wax out of the mold (Tam.)(*karu*). The dried mold is then placed in a casting pit with coal around it. With the aid of a blower, air is pumped into the pit making coal burn. The mold gradually heats up and the wax inside flows out of the small hole. The wax image inside the mold, runners, risers and funnel become cavities by this procedure. Before casting, the coal around the hot mold is removed. The hole at the side which was made to get the wax out is tapped. The space of the mold in the casting pit is filled with powdered earth or dry sand. This is done to avoid cracks and blasts by the pressure released from inside the mold during casting. There are two techniques identified for making molds in ancient times. Flow casting mold and gravity casting mold.

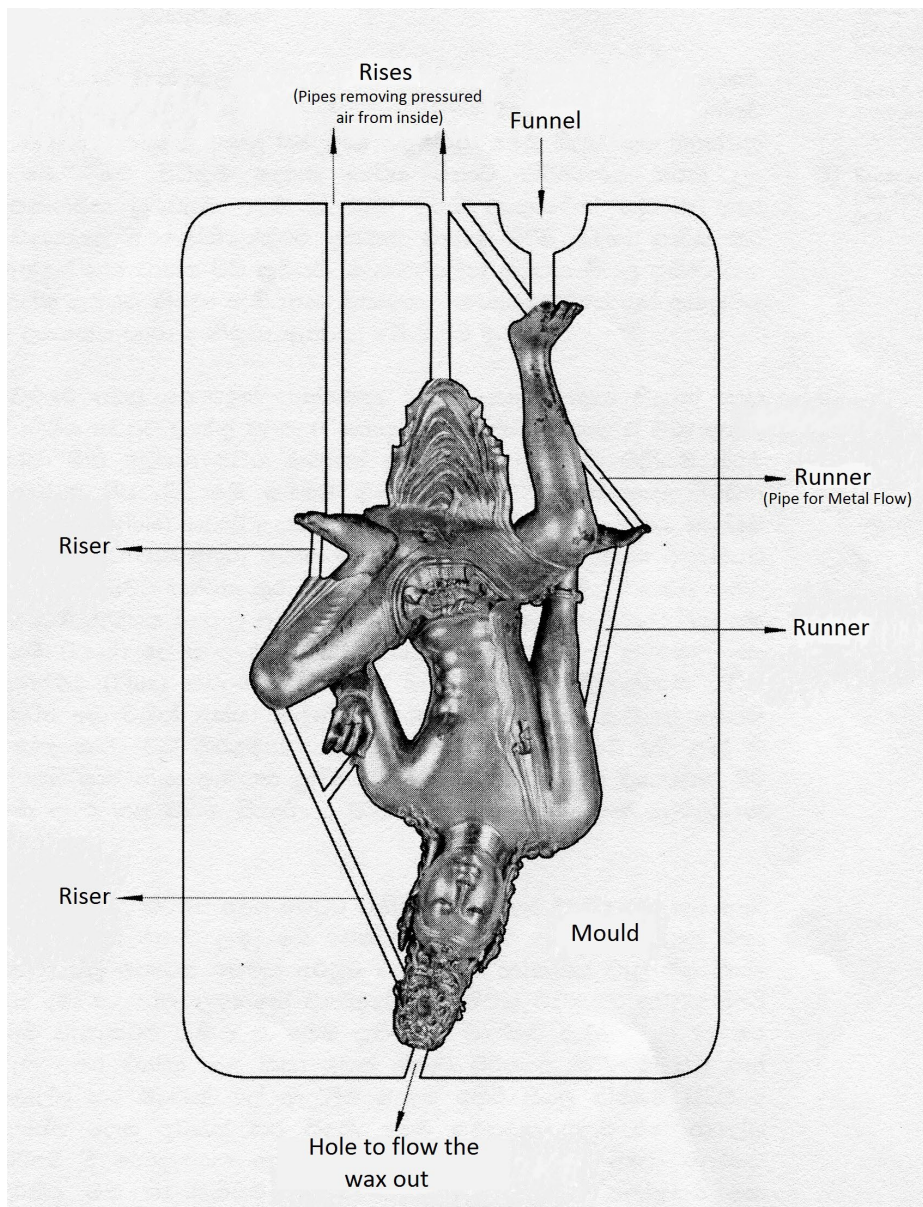


Pl. 92 - Flow cast moulding system.

One of these methods must have been used to cast Veragala Avalokiteśvara. Most probably it was made with the flow casting method.

The crucible (Tam.)(*kuvia*) made out of graphite and clay (Sk.) (*mushakarnamrid*) is kept in a pit furnace (Tam.)(*ulai*) filled with copper metal, ten times the weight of the wax used for the statue. The coal is placed around the crucible and fired. Air is blown continuously on the coal inside the pit to get the temperature to a high level.

When copper turns to liquid, zinc, tin and lead are added to the molten copper metal inside the crucible. After mixing it well, slag is removed. After adding flux, the crucible is lifted out of the pit with lifting tongs (Tam.)(*chulacorada*) and placed on a pouring shank (Tam.)(*sadasi*). The molten bronze inside the crucible is then poured through the cavity of the funnel. The empty cavities are filled with bronze by this pouring. The casting of this statue has been done skillfully.



Pl. 93 - Gravity cast moulding system

After cutting off runners, risers and the funnel, the statue is cleaned. After casting has been finished decorative features carved into the wax model prior to casting are usually further refined by chiseling, chasing and engraving. There are two gilt methods, 'mercury gilt' and 'cold gold'. Most probably the gold mercury gilt technique was used on Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. In this technique, ground gold mixed with mercury (Sk.)(*Pārada*) is pasted on to the surface of the statue. In high temperature gold melts and gets stuck on to the surface of the bronze. Holes were made as eyes identical to ancient Sri Lankan sculptures and translucent rock crystals were inserted into the holes. Precious stones were fixed on the decorative areas. This is the final stage of the process. This same method has been used in the group of sculptures found from Veragala and Tara of British Museum.

One of the suggestions that the Veragala Avalokiteśvara statue is an imported sculpture is denied after analyzing its artistic style and the technical process. From the following analysis it has been scientifically proven that the statue of Avalokiteśvara had been created in the historical period of Anurādhapura in Sri Lanka. The analysis of metal on bronze statues of the historical period in Sri Lanka was done by Dr. Arjuna Thanthilage⁷⁴.

Copper metal from the ancient copper mine in Seruwila had been used to cast this statue. The composition of metal is as follows⁷⁵:

Cu – 87.59%, Sn 5.28%, Zn - 0.68% Pb – 3.22% and Fe – 1.68%.

Lead isotope ratio

$Pb\ 207/206 = 0.84195 / Pb\ 208/206 = 2.08106 / Pb\ 206/204 = 18.569$

When analyzing the lost wax bronze sculptures belonging to ancient civilizations and great cultures, a common factor that can be seen is that the sculptures of early period were made in the solid cast technique. Hollow cast method, which is an advanced form of casting, has come secondary with the development of lost wax casting technology.

Veragala Avalokiteśvara belongs to the solid cast method, which was more in use during the first era of casting history. According to the research paper of Thanthilage 'Anurādhapura period bronzes of Sri Lanka: Schools and Resource-Utilization'⁷⁶ written in 2010, casting techniques of historical sculptures during the Anurādhapura period, have been classified into two categories. Veragala group of sculptures including Avalokiteśvara belongs to the first category of these two classifications.

The first category sculptures are made with solid cast technique. They are gilded and mostly inserted with precious stones. A low percentage of tin is present when making bronze. Copper for this bronze has been taken only from the Seruwila copper mine. These facts prove that Veragala Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva cannot be dated to the late period of Anurādhapura. In the second category, sculptures were made with hollow cast technique.

74. Thanthilage, A. (2008)
An archeo-metallurgical investigation of Sri Lankan Historical Bronzes,
Pp.113,163

75. Thanthilage, A. (2010)
'Anurādhapura period bronzes of Sri Lanka: Schools and Resource-Utilization'
www.archaeology.lk

76. Ibid

When making second category bronzes, a high percentage of tin is used and there is no gilding or inserting of precious stones. Copper that has been used in this category does not match with copper from Seruwila. The above technical differences clearly indicate that these two above categories belonged to two separate schools that produced images during the Anurādhapura period.



Pl. 94 - **Solid cast gild bronze Statue of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva**
Cultural Heritage of Sri Lanka The land of Serendipity. (2008)
Tokyo National Museum. P.54



Pl. 95 - **Eleven headed Avalokiteśvara**. Kashmir.(10th century) The Cleveland Museum of Art.*Ancient Kashmir*. Marg Publications. p.90.

This invaluable bronze sculpture invites both amateurs and experts to take notice of its artistic style, time period, history and the religious vision it represents. It also invites us to understand its ancient Sri Lankan identity, the skillfulness of ancient sculptors of the Anurādhapura period, the correlation the island had with India and the surrounding countries as well as to comprehend the significance of the location of Sri Lanka as a naval center in south Asia.

Learned art scholars as well as general audiences when assessing the Veragala Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara Sculpture, find it a great work of art without any doubt. It can be strongly ascertained that the creator of this statue is a great master of art and that this work is not of a common artist or of a student studying under a teacher (Sk.)(*Guru*) belonging to a certain school. Also, its characteristics demonstrate that this is a creation of an art studio rather than of a craft workshop. The plastic language of the sculpture of Avalokiteśvara is by no means a product of a craftsman's effort directed by canonical instructions. It is an expression of a creative genius boldly discarding canons of the religious sculpture making in order to ascend to the peaks of the exalted musical structure of his image. It is clear that the artist had been exposed to other outside art schools.

The inborn quality of a great work of art is to attract the spectator at first glance. An internal conversation then begins between the art work and the spectator. Even after thousands of years, a way could be opened to gain knowledge regarding the history of the relevant work of art, commencing a long dialogue between the art work and an intelligent spectator.

Details regarding this plastic art work could be revealed through studying this invaluable sculpture.

Veragala Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara statue is an art representation which transmits the splendor of the Kingdom of Anurādhapura, the royalty and the religious vision. It also conveys the connection that prevailed between politics and spirituality at that time. When comparing this statue with other Avalokiteśvara statues in various countries, it can be seen that those Avalokiteśvara statues had been composed with too many heads, hands, and eyes, characteristics beyond human proportions. This differs in this country, as statues sculpted according to the ideology of Abhayagiri foremost Mahāyānism had not created Bodhisattva statues with supernatural qualities. It can be concluded that since only a human master can gain Buddhahood according to the vision of Teravāda and also because kings at that time desired to attach the concept of Bodhisattva to themselves, there was no encouragement to create Bodhisattva art works with supernatural qualities. Avalokiteśvara statue is a great icon to a king or to a prince with high religious qualities.

Also this work symbolizes 'worldly' and 'beyond the world' (*laukika and lōkōttara*) (Chakravarti and Buddha) qualities.

Containing a compassionate character, this sculpture is in a meditative posture, listening to his conscience. His inner power is symbolized by the radiating light⁷⁷. Altogether, this art work symbolizes light and sound meditation taught in Mahāyāna Buddhism⁷⁸.

An analysis of data containing the historical, religious and political facts and investigation of ancient art and technological analysis of the statue of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara enables us to place this sculpture in the middle period of the Anurādhapura Kingdom⁷⁹.

The Mahāyāna ideal of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara was commonly recognized in Sri Lanka during the middle ages. It seems that it had started to mold into shape as far back as the early classical period of the 5th- 6th centuries. The period of 5th and 6th centuries reveal an artistic style conspicuous for its extraordinary freedom of expression and skill. This trend is represented by the strictly dated monuments - the Sigiriya rock frescoes. The group of small sculptures found from Veragala, Avalokiteśvara, Tārā and Sigiriya occupies a separate position of its own in the classical period of the Anurādhapura style bearing features of plastic realism, as characteristics of this style. These artifacts pose a peculiar lyrical feeling hidden deep under the cover of perfect form. Accordingly, we can declare quite confidently, that the sculpture of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara resembles the Sigiriya Fresco paintings, pointing that it could belong to the Sigiriya tradition of sculpture.

77. "According to Mahāyāna, Buddha Amitāba represents infinite light and Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara is born out of that light".

78. Chandrajeewa, S. (1999) *Veragala Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara: An analysis of Mahāyāna Buddhist image from Colombo Museum*. p.53.

79. Early Anurādhapura period - 500 BC- 300 AD
Middle Anurādhapura period - 300 AD - 600 AD
Late Anurādhapura period - 600 AD - 1000 AD
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- Wang VS FILE display Utility version 7-20.42; 10/30/42 08: 18 page 1 & 2
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Sarath Chandrajeewa, having received his early education at Ragala Sinhala Maha Vidyalaya, Nuwara - Eliya and Karawita Central College, Ratnapura. Followed a three year course in Drawing, Painting and Craft at the Government College of Arts and Crafts in Colombo. He received his Bachelors Degree of BFA in Sculpture from the Institute of Aesthetic Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. He obtained a Pg. Diploma in Bronze Casting from Royal College of the Arts, London. He gained his MFA Degree in Sculpture from the State Institute of the Academic Art in Moscow and his PhD from the State Institute of Art Research, Moscow. He was awarded the title 'Hon. Academician of the Russian Academy of Art' in 2001. He won the 'Bunka Award' at the first ceremony of the Japan - Sri Lanka Cultural Fund in 1993. He was a Youth Officer at the National Youth Council of Sri Lanka prior to joining University Academic service. He had held the positions of Director, Institute of Aesthetics Studies, University of Kelaniya, Head of Department of Ceramics, Faculty of Visual Arts, Dean of the Faculty of Visual Arts and the First Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of the Visual and Performing Arts. He is presently the Vice Chancellor of the University of the Visual and Performing Arts, Colombo.

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“Bathed in gold, Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara gleams in the low lighting, entrancing the viewers’ crowding around him. He is magnificent taking our breath away. He is but one gem of a sculpture in a collection of the most beautiful, spiritual and powerful images made anywhere in Asia.”

G.M. Beach

Director, Arthur Shackler Gallery,
Smithsonian Institution.

“The Golden Age of Sculpture from Sri Lanka, sounds a little out of our orbit, it is worth making the effort to see it if for one object only. This is a gild bronze seated figure, a so called Bodhisattva. It is far and away the most remarkable exhibit in the entire show and, no exaggeration, one of the most extra ordinary works of sculpture produced at any time by any culture.”

E.Gibson

Art critique, Washington Times.

“Gazing at the soft, smoldering glow of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, Isn't it beautiful? He is called the Mona-Lisa of Sri Lanka. A gild bronze Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara considered to be a masterpiece of world art”.

C.R.Bohlen

Assistant Curator of South and South East Asian Art
Arthur M. Shackler Museum