

When we see from the inscription itself that the Tamil states were left undisturbed, the inclusion of even distant Simhala (Ceylon) and all other islands in this category raises great doubts about this interpretation, and we shall hardly be justified in taking the words of the Court-poet in their literal sense without corroborative evidence.⁴³⁶ But the question arises that was the conquest of Tāmraparṇī (Simhala) by Aśoka in his Rock Edict II also a simple boast of this kind?⁴³⁷

So far as Ceylon is concerned, we have fortunately an independent evidence of its political relation with Samudragupta.

We know that after the death of king Mahāsenā (A.D. 334—62) of the Lambakarna clan his son Sumeghavarṇa (*chī-mi-kia-po-mo*="cloud of merit") became king of Ceylon who was a contemporary of Samudragupta (*San-meou-to-lo-kin-to*).⁴³⁸ He, according to a Chinese text, sent two monks to Bodh-Gayā to visit the sacred spots, but they were put to great inconvenience for want of suitable accommodation. To remove this difficulty for future pilgrims to the holy place, Meghavarṇa decided to found a monastery there. He accordingly sent a mission to Samudragupta with rich presents and asked for permission, and the Ceylonese king built a splendid monastery to the north of the Bodhi tree.⁴³⁹

By the time of Hiuen Tsang it had developed into a magnificent establishment, with more than 1,000 priests, and the pilgrim has described the rich decorations and massive grandeur of the buildings. Referring to the old history of its foundation Hiuen Tsang says that the Ceylonese king 'gave in tribute to the king of India all the jewels of his country'. 'It is likely that Samudragupta's courtier also regarded the rich presents as a tribute, and construed the Ceylonese king's prayer for permission to build a monastery into an 'application for charter confirming him in the enjoyment of his territories', one of the forms of homage paid by the category of states into which Simhala is included".⁴⁴⁰

Simhala is generally identified with Laṅkā. But Varāhamihira⁴⁴¹ mentions both of them separately as situated in the South.

Laṅkā has been identified differently by various scholars with Laṅkā of Madhyadeśa,⁴⁴² with Maldives,⁴⁴³ with the