

# Maitreya Bodhisattva in the *Anāgatavaṃśaya* and Sinhala Buddhist Classics

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## Abstract

The idea of a bodhisattva was in early Buddhist literature later developed in Theravada Buddhist literature written in Pali and local languages under the influence of the Mahayana tradition. Through the use of its local Sinhala language and a few stories written in Pali, Sri Lanka contributed to the growth of the Maitreya myth. It also enhanced the Buddhist art and beliefs in the island. Based on the Pali *Anāgatavaṃsa* and its commentary *Samantabuddhikā*, Vilgammula Thera created the principal work about the next Buddha, the Sinhala *Anāgatavaṃśaya* during the Kurunegala era. The aim of this study is to comprehend the nature of the Maitreya myth's genesis and growth in classical Buddhist literature written in the Sinhala language. The research takes a qualitative methodology approach and incorporates documentary analysis. The pioneering work on the subject in Sinhala, the *Anāgatavaṃśaya*, is the key source used for research, with other Sinhala texts *Dharmapradīpikāva*, *Saddharmaratnākaraya*, *Saddharmālaṅkāraya*, and *Saddharmaratnāvaliya* are also used appropriately. Several Sinhala and Pali legends published in Sri Lanka predict that King Kākavaṇṇatissa and Queen Vihāramahādevī, the great King Duṭṭhagāminī's parents will be the parents of the next Buddha, with Duṭṭhagāminī serving as the great disciple. Maitreya's Bodhi tree will be the ironwood tree, which is already the national tree of Sri Lanka. Furthermore, the Buddhists postponed the main objective till the time of the next Buddha without taking into account lay or monastic status, despite the early teachings of Buddhism emphasising the significance of obtaining *nibbāna* in this life. The essential components of Maitreya's myth were developed by Buddhists in Sri Lanka merging their practices and beliefs in the island.

**Keywords:** Maitreya, *Anāgatavaṃśaya*, Sinhala Classical literature, Duṭṭhagāminī

## Introduction

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## 弥勒菩萨在《未来记》和斯里兰卡佛教经典中的地位

### 摘 要

菩萨概念早已出现在早期佛教文献中，后来受到大乘佛教传统的影响，在南传佛教国家逐渐发展壮大。通过使用当地的僧伽罗语以及巴利语编写的故事，斯里兰卡等南传佛教传统对弥勒佛神话的发展做出了贡献，加强了岛上的佛教艺术和信仰。基于巴利文的《未来记》（*Anāgatavaṃsa*）及其注释*Samantabuddhikā*，Vilgammula Thera 在13世纪末和14世纪初的库鲁内加拉王国，创作了未来佛的著作，即僧伽罗语的《未来记》。本研究的目的在于理解弥勒佛神话在僧伽罗语古典佛教文学中的起源和发展。研究采用定性方法，并结合文献分析。本篇研究仅限于僧伽罗语版《未来记》这一主要著作，并充分参考利用其他僧伽罗语文献，如*Dharmapradīpikāva*，*Saddharmaratnākaraya*，*Saddharmālaṅkāraya*，和*Saddharmaratnāvaliya*等。從這些作品中可見，弥勒故事的基本元素是由斯里兰卡佛教徒融合他們在該岛上的习俗和信仰而发展起来的。

**關鍵詞：**弥勒（Maitreya）、梅特耶（Metteyya）、《未来记》（*Anāgatavaṃśaya*）