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Cambridge Human Geography

THE CITY AS TEXT: THE POLITICS OF LANDSCAPE
INTERPRETATION IN THE KANDYAN KINGDOM

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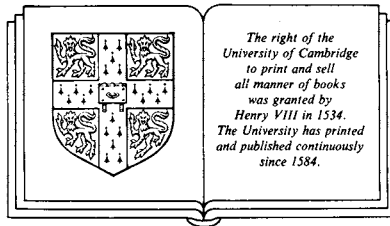
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Preface

It was nearly six years ago that my family and I arrived in Sri Lanka, where I was to spend a year collecting material for a book. Our plane arrived at the Colombo airport at 12.30 in the morning and I was exhausted after the thirty-hour flight. I knew that we had another three-hour drive ahead of us until we reached the guest house in Kandy where we were to live. None the less, I was immensely pleased to have arrived. Now, six years later, I have finally come to the end of my book and once again I am immensely pleased to have arrived.

My journey was made easier and more pleasant because of the help and encouragement provided by a number of people both in North America and in Sri Lanka. I would like to take this opportunity to record my appreciation to them. My first debt is to the late David Sopher, who introduced me to cultural geography, landscape interpretation, South Asia, and the geography of religion. Although I did not undertake this study until long after I had left the stimulating atmosphere of his seminars, it is safe to say that I could not have conceived of such a study were it not for his enduring influence on me. I hope he would not be too displeased with the results.

My first and closest friend while I was in Kandy was M. Majid. The guest house which he and his wife run in Ampitiya in the suburbs of Kandy was an ideal environment in which to live while conducting my research. He helped me and my family in countless ways, and I shall always look back fondly upon my time there.

I am indebted to Gerald Pieris, head of the Department of Geography, University of Peradeniya, for inviting me to be a visiting research fellow in his department during 1983. The kindness shown to me and my family by Dr Pieris and his colleagues made our stay there a great pleasure. I am grateful to Shantha and Nalani Hennayake, for their help with the translation of Sinhalese documents and for their friendship during my stay in Kandy in 1983 and 1985. I benefited greatly from conversations with Anuradha Seneviratne of Peradeniya University and with Mr S. Panawatta, Director of the Kandy Museum, who graciously allowed me to use the Museum's facilities and gave me access to document, maps, and illustrations. Messrs. Karunaratna and Ratnayaka, librarians in the Ceylon Room of the University of Peradeniya library, were also extremely helpful.

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Preface

I am indebted to three former colleagues at the University of British Columbia: David Ley, who shared my interest in landscape and culture theory, Shelagh Lindsey, who introduced me to semiotics and to whom I must still seem like a doubting Thomas, and Trevor Barnes, who encouraged my interest in textual analysis. I sorely miss the stimulating conversation of our weekly reading group at the Faculty Club.

Since my arrival at Syracuse University in the autumn of 1985, Jonathan Smith has exerted a great influence over my thinking. It was primarily through him that I became interested in literary theory and began to see the promise that it held for landscape analysis. He has read and reread several drafts of this manuscript and has greatly improved it. I am also grateful to Brian Stock for generously giving advice on the application of textual analysis to historical materials, and to Maruja Jackman for reading an earlier draft of this book in its entirety.

Two old friends at Syracuse, John Agnew and David Robinson, undoubtedly delayed the completion of this book by at least six months. Were it not for their good company I would have taken shorter lunches and many fewer coffee breaks. Nevertheless, I would like to thank John Agnew for reading the manuscript and David Robinson for procuring Sir A.C. Lawrie's *Kandyan Law and History* from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Library in London. I am also grateful to Michael Kirchoff of the Syracuse University Cartographics Laboratory for drafting the maps and diagrams for this volume.

My final and greatest debt of gratitude is to Nancy Duncan. Few geographers are fortunate enough to be married to someone who is also their closest colleague. Nancy's influence upon this work has been strong, as it has been upon everything that I have written. She has been involved in every stage of the research and her input was especially great in chapter 2. Her editorial skills have also proved invaluable.

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council provided me with a Faculty Leave Fellowship in 1983 and the University of British Columbia offered me a Summer Travel Grant in 1985. Without their assistance my research in Sri Lanka would not have been possible.

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Glossary of terms

- abhiṣēka*: Consecration (see *rajasuya*)
- adikar*: Chief officer of the state
- Āhās Gaṅgā*: The heavenly Ganges
- Amaravātī*: The city of Sakra on Mount Mandara
- amrita*: The potion of immortality
- Airāvata*: Sakra's white elephant
- Anōtatta*: Mythical lake in the Himalayas sacred to the Buddhists
- appuhāmi*: Gentleman in waiting
- asparasas*: Heavenly nymphs
- Āsala Perahāra*: Festival of the full moon of the month of Asala (July–August)
- Asōka*: The Mauryan emperor of the third century B.C. who came to be seen as the archetypal Buddhist monarch
- Asōkan kingship*: A model of kingship in which the king is mild-mannered, righteous, unfailingly protective of Buddhism and responsible for the welfare of his people
- asura*: Demon (see *yakkha*)
- aṭamagala*: Magical eight-sided diagram
- basnayāke nilamē*: Lay head of a *devale*
- bodhisattva*: A future Buddha
- Brahmā*: The creator in late Vedic works
- cakravarti*: A great king. A universal monarch
- Cakravāla*: The rock wall marking the edge of the universe
- chank*: A sea shell used in the consecration ceremony
- Cūlavamsa*: The second two volumes of the great chronicle of Lanka composed by monks
- dāgoba*: A solid hemispherical dome enshrining religious relics or the remains of kings
- Daḷadā Māligāva*: Temple of the Tooth Relic
- deṇiya*: Low, marshy land
- dēva*: God
- dēvāle*: A temple to the gods
- Dēva Sanhiṇde*: Abode of the gods. Northern part of the sacred rectangle in Kandy
- Dhamma*: The doctrine proclaimed by the Buddha
- disāva*: Governor of a province
- Disāvanē*: Province of the Kandyan Kingdom
- Diyavadhana Nilamē*: Lay chief of the Temple of the Tooth
- dooley*: An uncovered chair used to carry a person
- gandharva*: Gods who attend Sakra. Guardians of the East
- garuḍa*: Mythical bird who serves as the vehicle of Visnu
- goyigama*: The cultivator caste, the highest caste in Lanka
- hamsa*: Mythical water bird
- howdah*: A litter, usually with a canopy, for an elephant's back
- Indra*: The king of the gods in Hinduism
- Jātakas*: Tales of the prior lives of the Buddha
- kalpas*: The great ages of the world. At the end of a *kalpa* the world is destroyed, only to be created anew

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Glossary of terms

- Kande Uda Rata: Kandy. The kingdom in the mountains
- kapa*: Ritual pole
- kapruka*: A gift-giving tree
- kapurāla*: Priests of the *devala*
- karandūva*: Golden casket
- Kataragama: Son of Siva. One of the four guardian gods in Kandy
- Kautlīya Arthaśāstra*: A book of government written during Mauryan times
- Kiri Muhuda: The Ocean of Milk. Name of the lake in Kandy constructed by Sri Vikrama
- ksatriya*: The warrior caste from which kings were drawn
- lascarins*: Native militia
- Mahābhārata*: Epic religious poem in Hinduism
- Mahāvamsa*: The first volume of the great chronicle of Lanka composed by monks
- Mahaveli Gaṅgā: The river which flows around Kandy
- Mahāyāna: The so-called northern school of Buddhism, practiced primarily in Japan, and China. It places less emphasis upon monasticism and more upon the cult of images and *bodhisattvas* than does Theravāda Buddhism
- Maitreya: The future Buddha
- makara toraṇa*: Dragon gateway
- maṇḍala*: Circular cosmic diagram
- maṇḍapa*: Hall
- Mandara: The eastern peak of Mount Meru. Sakra's city is located here
- Manu: Mythical king of the Solar dynasty. The law giver
- Meru: The cosmic mountain at the center of the three worlds which serves as a cosmic axis and is the abode of Sakra and his thirty-two gods
- nāga*: Serpent
- Nandana: Sakra's park
- Nātha: One of the four guardian gods of Kandy
- Nāyakkars: A Tamil line of kings who ruled Kandy from 1739 until 1815
- nirvāna*: Extinction. Escape from rebirth
- nītiya*: Laws
- ola*: Manuscript
- pandole*: Ceremonial arch
- pan sil*: Five precepts of lay Buddhist life
- pārijāta*: The tree from the Ocean of Milk that grants wishes
- pasada*: Building with cells for monks
- pataha*: The pond ritual
- Pattini: One of the four guardian gods of Kandy
- Pāṭṭirippuwa*: Octagonal structure attached to the Temple of the Tooth
- perahāra*: Procession
- Purāṇas*: A collection of tales of ancient times
- radala*: A subcaste among the *goyigama* which constituted the aristocracy in Kandyan society
- rāja dharma*: The duty of kings
- rājakāriya*: *Corvée* labour due the king
- rājasūya*: Consecration (see *abhiseka*)
- raṭa*: District
- raṭē mahatmayā*: Governor of a district
- Ṛg Veda*: Early Hindu hymns
- Śakra: The king of the gods. A Buddhist transformation of the Hindu god Indra
- Śakran kingship: In this model of kingship the king views himself as a *cakravarti* who rules over his people just as Sakra ruled over the thirty-two gods in his heaven. Greater emphasis is placed upon the glorious and divine quality of the king than in the Asokan model
- saṅgha*: Buddhist clergy. Order of monks
- sannasa*: Royal grant, usually inscribed on copper

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- Sāsana*: The religion (Buddhism)
- semara*: Yak
- Señkaḍagala Sirivardhanapura: The city of Kandy
- sepoys*: Native troops in British employ
- sima*: A furrow demarcating a sacred area
- siriṭ*: Custom
- Śiva: One of the major gods of Hinduism
- soma*: Heavenly elixir (see *amrita*)
- sudharma*: Sakra's audience hall
- Tāvātimsa: Sakra's heaven on top of Mount Meru
- Theravāda: The school of Buddhism which is practiced in Lanka and throughout much of Southeast Asia. It places more emphasis upon monasticism than does the Mahayana school
- Tuṣita: Heaven above the Tāvātimsa heaven
- Uḍawattakellē: Sacred forest to the east of the palace/temple complex in Kandy
- Vaḍuga: A Tamil. In Kandy it was used as a derogatory term to stress the foreignness of the Nayakkar kings
- Veddas: A tribal group in Lanka
- Veḷḷayanta: Sakra's palace
- vihāre*: Buddhist temple
- Viśvakarma; The architect of the gods
- Viṣṇu: One of the major gods of Hinduism. One of the four guardian gods of Kandy
- yakkha*: Demon (see *asura*)