

The Sinhala *Mayimataya*

A Translation by Bonnie G. MacDougall

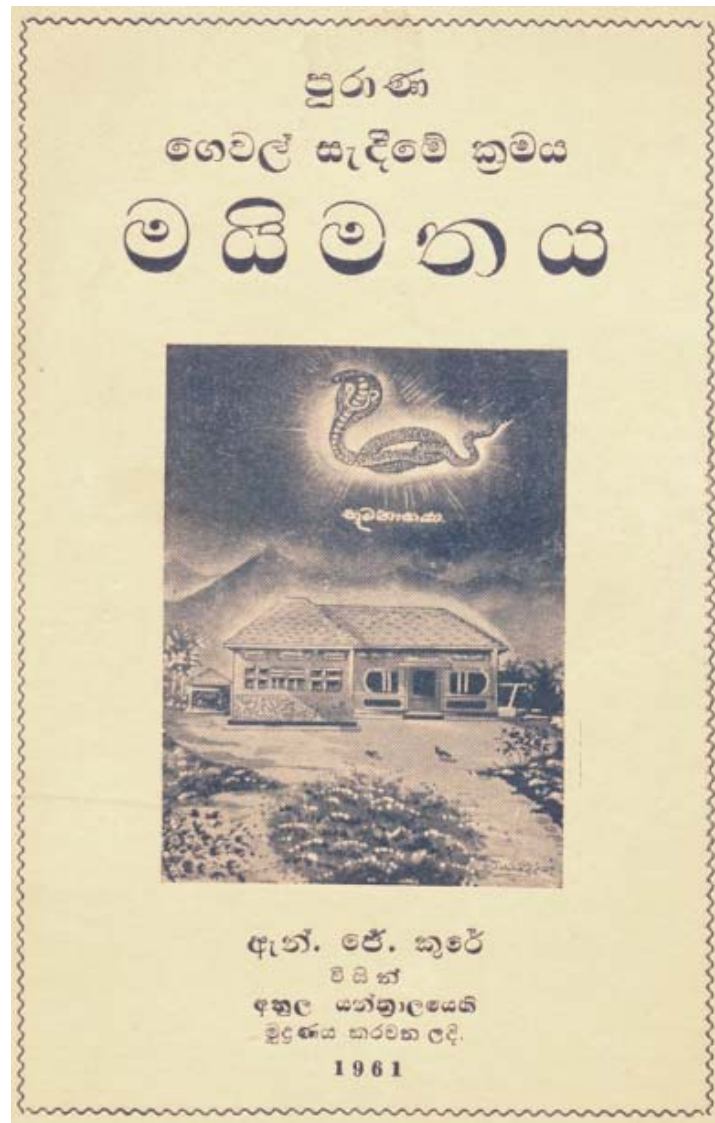




Figure 41. Standing Buddha, Gal Viharaya, Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka.
12th century.

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THE SINHALA MAYIMATAYA¹

1. I worship thee with love O *munindu* (The Sage, an appellation of the Buddha). You, like a sun (*divasuru*) transcended the dark side of this life (*bawa duka*), spread your six rays over this world (*sawana sataraes paeturu*), and flooded it with your glorious light.²

2. I worship the teachings (*dahama*) of the Buddha which are like the moon (*nisayuru*) whose light makes the *konda* (*Nymphaea esculenta*) flowers bloom.³ Like moonbeams coming from behind a cloud, his teachings break through the darkness of wrong views (*misadiTu*).

3. With everlasting devotion, I worship the *maha sanga* (the holy order of Buddhist monks) which, like Mount Meru, gave lustre to the four continents.⁴

¹ The translations which appear in the text are based primarily on Carter (1965). For Sanskrit borrowings, I have consulted Monier-Williams (1899). Some botanical information has been taken from Lewis (1902), as noted. As for the transliteration here, I have identified the Sinhala letters with their nearest Romanized equivalents. The sequence ae is intended to represent the vowel sound in English cat. Lower case t and d transliterate dental consonants; upper case T and D, retroflex ones.

² It is said that the Buddha emanated glorious rays of six colors. According to Buddhist legends, whenever the Buddha preached, he dispersed the darkness of a thousand worlds (*sakwala*) with his rays.

³ The *konda* is a species of jasmine that blooms by moonlight.

⁴ In Buddhism, the world has Mount Meru at its center. Meru is said to be more than two million miles high, one half of which is below the Earth. On its top is the heaven of the gods and at its base the abode of the anti-gods, the Asuras. Meru lies in the center of a *chakkawala* (*sakwala*), which is the complete set or system of worlds including the Earth. The entire system is girded by a rock wall (*sakwalagala*). Between the rock wall and the seven ranges of mountains that surround Mount Meru lie the four continents; the inhabitants of which have faces of the same shape as the continent to which they belong. They are (1) *purvvidehe*, the eastern continent shaped like a half moon and 7,000 *yojanas* in extent, (2) *aparagoyane*, the western continent, shaped like a round mirror and 7,000 *yojanas* in extent, (3) *jambudvīpa*, India within the Ganges where Buddha founded Buddhism, triangular in shape and 10,000 *yojanas* in extent, and, (4) *uturukurudivayina*, the northern continent shaped like a square seat and 8,000 *yojanas* in extent (cf. Hardy, *passim*).

It is bathed by an ocean (*sayura*) of loving kindness (*met*) and steady in the storm of wrong views (*kudivu*).

4. In devotion, I have thrice invoked the Eminent Sage, His teachings and His holy order. May we all be filled with loving kindness. Herewith are verses I composed according to my own humble understanding.

5. May the following deities always protect us: the god Kataragama or Skanda, that six-faced lord who was the son of Siva; the serpent king Ananta⁵ who graces the Earth; Venus, Mars and Siva, the three-eyed one; Moon who is cooling (*sisara kara*) and Visnu (*narayana*).

6. Mindful of the words of the Sage, I venerate the Four Sublime States of Consciousness (*satara man nandana*),⁶ the Four Requisites (*satara pasa*),⁷ and His blessed goodness.

7. I venerate the Four Sublime States of Consciousness. Herein I present you with four-line poems I got from the ancient sages. Know about sites and build houses for all four of the castes.

8. There are months, days, sites, directions, and asterisms that are suitable for the pursuit of housebuilding by discerning builders.

9. How can one who does not know Sanskrit understand the convoluted meanings in the high flown verses composed by the ancient sages?

10. The language is illustrious, but no one can traverse this thicket. If we had the insight of our own language (*siya basa*), we too could dwell in the forest of poetry.

⁵ The great serpent on whom Visnu is often depicted asleep. Ananta means endless or infinite. At the end of each cosmic age when the universe is destroyed, only Ananta remains (cf. Stutley and Stutley, 12).

⁶ In Buddhism, loving kindness (*metta*), boundless compassion (*karuna*), joy (*mudita*), and equanimity (*upekka*).

⁷ The four requisites for monks are food, robes, lodging, and medicine, all to be obtained through austerities.

11. Verses composed in our own language would be useful since everyone who knew Sinhala could read the verses.
12. In this book there is incomparably valuable instruction for skillful housebuilding that anyone can see in our own language for the welfare of mankind.
13. If you want to be showered with blessings (*savsi*), then learn what has been said by our learned forebears (*peruduru*) and seek beneficial moments and lunar mansions for breaking ground for houses and wells.
14. I shall now tell what I have seen written in the *Mayamata* about proper housebuilding and suitable pieces of land, orientations, months (for construction), and methods of felling timber.
15. When the sun is in Pisces, do not build houses. What kinds of misfortune (*dos*) will ensue? Expect disease, crippling, and illness.
16. As for the month in which the sun enters Sagittarius, thieves will plunder the property and impoverish the owners.
17. When you go to prepare the house site or to cut down the timber, the following are evil omens:
18. Persons carrying swords (*kaDu*), knives (*kaeti*), spades (*udalu*), firewood (*mala danDu*), wood eaten by vermin (*siduru liya*), and persons wearing ropes round their necks or those who come with their hands on their shoulders.⁸
19. Beware of persons carrying grass or those who curse you with profane language. If you see them as you go along, it is an evil omen. Do not build the house.

⁸ All represent death. Firewood is used for funeral pyres, 'hands on the shoulders' suggests the funeral wailing position, for example.

20. Carpenters who cut the first post (*magul kapa*) for the house should proceed in this manner and then go to the foot of tree and clean up the area around the base.
21. Draw the Diagram of Eight (*aTa magula*) and place pots at the four corners. Offer flowers and sprinkle sandalwood milk (*haendun kiri paen*) over the area.
22. Go back on the following day and say, "Will the deity who is living in this tree leave it for the benefit of this house?"⁹
23. When you have petitioned the deity in this manner, cut off a branch from the tree, pull it along the ground and place it under a second tree.
24. Now, clean and sweep the base of the second tree and scatter flowers, betel leaves, and sandalwood over the area. Then say, "O deity, dwell in this tree and be good enough to give me your own."
25. So, you invoke the deity in this manner and cut down the tree of your choosing. Now, how should you take the tree and what kind of fellow should cut it down?
26. His skin should be clear, fair, and smooth. He should be neither lanky nor squat, and the hair flowing from his head should remind you of the tail of a peacock.
27. This work should be undertaken by persons who are straight and erect, who have whiskers on both sides of their cheeks and hair on their chests.

⁹ Buddhist beliefs about tree spirits are detailed sensitively by Coomaraswamy with examples from the Buddhist Jataka tales (122-123). In art, according to Coomaraswamy, "often a face is drawn amidst the branches to suggest rather than to show the indwelling deva, whose life is, in a strange way, the tree's life, or bound up with it, yet is not the tree itself. At other times, the tree deva is represented as dwelling in a mansion . . . which is not ordinarily visible to human beings . . . 'the invisible house'" (122).

28. Now for how this tree is to be felled by such a good specimen. Suppose the trunk is covered with vines and suppose it is bent at the top.

29. If a tree is like that, even if it is adorned with flowers and leaves, and even if you can cut off all the bad parts, it is still not suitable, not even if it is a good Jak (*Artocarpus integrifolia*).¹⁰

30. A tree that is thick near the base is called a female tree by the sages. A tree that is thick in the midsection of the trunk is called neuter.

31. A tree whose trunk is of a single dimension from bottom to top is a male tree.¹¹

32. A tree that is thick at the top and the abode of a wicked and destructive she-demon (*yakiniya*) should not be used for the auspicious post.

33. Timber taken from a tree whose trunk is like a long drum (*bera*) is suitable for the auspicious post.

34. If you use wormy wood (=with holes) for the auspicious post, the occupants will suffer from misery, sorrow, and fear. It will bring harm (*avvæDa*) and more to the house.

35. (Uses a different word for ‘thick’, but otherwise the same as 32.)

36. Our learned forebears have told us that if wood eaten by worms is used for the auspicious post, the owner of the house will suffer from stomach ailments (*udara roga*).

¹⁰ A tree cultivated widely in gardens. Said to be one of the few trees in Sri Lanka in which “no part is lost, or need be” (Lewis, 237). Used as a timber tree in housebuilding. The fruits and seeds are eaten. A dye is made from the wood for coloring the robes of Buddhist priests. Tamil: *pilar*.

¹¹ According to the Tamil texts ascribed to Maya, male trees are good for pillars, female trees for wall plates, beams and capitals and hermaphrodite (=neuter) trees for cross joists, joists and rafters (Kearns, 233).

37. If too thin a tree is used for the auspicious post, the women of the house will have to work in everlasting servitude.
38. The *mi* tree (*Bassia longifolia*)¹² is suitable for the auspicious posts for the following types of structures: Buddhist monasteries, shrines, and the palaces of reigning kings. Those who do good carpentry know it.
39. There are dangers associated with the direction in which the tree for the auspicious post is felled. A good builder must know the portents so he can decide whether to fell it in one direction or another.
40. If the tree falls to the east, the owner will become very wise. If it falls to the south, he will live a long time, and if it falls to the west, he will be moody (*sitivili kara*).
41. If the tree falls to the north, whether Venus is risen or set, illness and death will plague the house. Lives will be lost and swept away.
42. After you cut the auspicious post, this is how you take the measure of the carpenter's cubit (*waDu riyana*). Starting from the right hand side, measure off one cubit (*riyana*), one span, (*viyata*) and four fingers. This is how you measure it.
43. Now, using the carpenter's cubit, measure off a length of five cubits and a breadth of three. If the length of the house is to be six and a half cubits, then make the breadth three and a half.¹³

¹² A large deciduous tree prized for a medicinal oil made from the seeds. The wood of the tree is hard and unusually heavy. Tamil: *iluppai* (Lewis, 191).

¹³ According to Pillai, Hindu artisans applied formulas to derive length and breadth from the perimeter. From the *Silpa Vignana Samgraha* and *Manushalaya Chandrika*, two treatises from the Malabar coast, he reports the following derivational formula: "Take half the perimeter, divide it by any number from 8-32 inclusive, then take four parts of these for the breadth, and the remainder for length" (70). Thus, the divisors yield proportions of 1:1 (if the divisor is 8) up to 1:7 (if the divisor is 32). Although all divisors are theoretically in the field, some (11, 15, 19, 23, and 27) are excluded as inappropriate. The numbers 8, 9, and 10 are said to be appropriate for temples, shrines, audience halls and pleasure halls and the others for general purposes" (72). There is also a formula to derive the perimeter from the length.

44. For a house that is seven cubits long, measure off a breadth of four cubits. For a house that is nine cubits long, take a breadth of five cubits. If you take measurements like this, good fortune will come to the house.
45. For a house with a length of ten and a half cubits, take a breadth of six and a half. For a length of eleven cubits, take one of seven and a half.
46. If the length is too great, the wife of the house will die. If the house is too wide, then the husband. If the house has proper proportions, its occupants will be prosperous and happy. So do not make the dimensions too long or too short.
47. The way in which you set the auspicious post will determine how the people in the house fare ever after. So pay attention to digging the hole.
48. Keep an eye on the places where the man who digs the hole scratches. If he scratches his hands, it foretells death for the owner and his family.
49. If he scratches his head, it foretells death for the owner. If he scratches his back, the house will be plundered by thieves and kings.
50. If he scratches his stomach when he sits down to dig the hole, the women of the house will be happy.
51. So, now you know how to dig the hole and set the auspicious post. You should make offerings of sandalwood, boiled rice, flowers, lamps, and a young coconut.
52. Arrange these offerings near the auspicious post and then put a monetary offering (*panDuru*) in the hole.
53. If this is placed before the feet of the Site Spirit, it is inauspicious for the house and all the wealth in it will be dissipated.¹⁴

¹⁴ In the Sinhala text, this being is referred to as *vasu devi*.

54. If it is done on the mouth¹⁵ or the navel,¹⁶ the occupants will live for a hundred years with all kinds of good fortune.

55. Since the words of our learned forebears uttered for the benefit of mankind are eternal, do not make trouble for yourself. Construct houses in this manner.

56. In the three months in which the sun is in the houses of Aries, Taurus, and Gemini, the Earth Serpent (*bumanaga*) lies with its tail in the west, its head in the east, its back to the north, and its belly to the south.¹⁷

57. In the three months in which the sun is in the houses of Cancer, Leo, and Virgo, the tail is in the north, the head in the south, the back is in the east, and the belly in the west. This is how it lies during these three months.¹⁸

58. In the three months in which the sun is in Libra, Scorpio, and Sagittarius, the tail is to the east, the head to the west, the back to the south, and the belly to the north. This is how the serpent lies during these three months.

59. In the three months in which the sun is in Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces, the tail is to the south, the head to the north, the back to the east, and the belly to the west. This is how the serpent spends the twelve months.

60. So when you place the auspicious post consider the direction in which the royal serpent lies and the trouble it can cause. When you have oriented the house site to the cardinal points, make offerings (*balipuda*) at the eight directions that are occupied by demons

¹⁵ The northeast, or according to Dagens (1985), the east, generally auspicious directions.

¹⁶ The center of the site, an area associated with Brahma, the Creator. In an 81 square building site, the inner nine squares are assigned to Brahma, and in a 64 square site, the inner four.

¹⁷ The template for the 27 (sometimes 28 to include an addition made later of Abhijit, the twenty second) lunar asterisms in the heavens is a segmented snake called the Bhumanaga. He is also described as encircling the house site. In a ground plan of 64 squares, 28 are in the outer rim.

¹⁸ The image here is of a being lying on his side across the bowl of the sky and rotating as if on a pivot. Appuhamy (1937) says he is lying on his left side as does Bose (1932).

61. Take the following: ghee, milk rice (*kiri bat*), sugar cane jaggery (*uk sakuru*), Idda flowers (*idda mal*, *Wrightia zeylanica*), oil lamps, sandalwood, red Ixora flowers (*rat mal*, *Ixora coccinea*), betel, and camphor. Make offerings at the cardinal points inside the foundation line.
62. Learn about the demons who are the masters of each direction and make the prescribed offerings for each one. If you get the help of a good carpenter, you can avoid misfortunes associated with the directions in this way.
63. A cruel demon lives in the east. He stays there for an hour and then goes to another place. If he sees a house there, he will destroy it. Now pray to the southeast too.
64. When you look at the southeast, you will see a demon standing there with a flaming torch in his hand. It is said that he will burn a house down. Leave that direction and go to the south.
65. The demon in the south has a club in his hand. He stays there for a while and brings bad luck. A site in the southern direction is not good. Now, look at the site in the southwest.
66. Manimekala who protects the sea, will demolish your house there with her weapon. So how can you construct a house in the southwest? So go look for another direction.
67. So go to the west and examine another house site. Alas, a demon is there. He eats human bones in the evening.
68. Go to the northwest and look at another site. You will see a cobra who lives in an anthill. If you build a house there, you will not be able to drive him away.
69. Leave that spot and go to the north to examine a place for the building. If you build a house there, it will burn down. So leave the spot in the north.

70. So leave the north and go to the northeast. When you look for a site there, you will find a black demon with long arms who shoots poisoned arrows.
71. So the experienced housebuilder knows that from the east, right round to the northeast, there are cruel demons in every direction. So my friend, tell me if you can show me a better site.
72. When you erect the auspicious post, this is what you have to do to get rid of the demons. Appease them by giving them offerings (*dola*) of rice and curries (*batut malu*) on the house site at dusk.
73. They say that the lord of the east is the serpent king Ananta. You can ward off evil from the east by offering him sandalwood and milk rice.
74. My friend, the lord of the southeast is a cobra named Basuki. You can get rid of the evil from this direction by serving up three plates of offerings together with coconut water (*kasa paen*).
75. A cobra named Ahiraja is the lord of the south. Spare yourself troubles from the south and give him an offering of fried rice in sour gruel.
76. Two cobras named Arohana and Karkota are the lords of the southwest. This is what you should prepare for them:
77. Cook rice with meat to give it a red color, place it in a black pot (*koraha*) and cover it. Then, someone with five auspicious marks should face this direction and make the offering.
78. A cobra named Paduma is the lord of the west. Call the cobra by name and make an offering in a white pot.
79. The cobra king Patma is the lord of the northwest. Its offering is fried grain. Mix it with breast milk and honey.

80. My friend, a cobra named Sanka is the lord of the north. The offering for him is rice mixed with ghee. Light lamps and make the offering in a hole in a tree.

81. A cobra king called Gulika is the lord of the northeast. His offering is gruel prepared from *amu sal* (a grain, *paspalum scrobiculatum*). Mix it with a cup of gingelly oil.

82. You should know the sites which are suitable for the ruling caste, Brahmins, traders, and Sudras, i.e., for the four castes. Now I shall describe the characteristics so that you may know them. Build the houses accordingly.

83. Now you ask about the characteristic marks of the sites such as those for the gods. The Lord of the Earth rules from a place with red and white temples (*sudu ratu devolin*).¹⁹ That place is suitable only for places of worship for Lord Buddha.

84. Now you ask me about the characteristics for sites for the Brahmins. A site that is good for village temples and for Brahmins has arrow grass (*itana*, *Andropogon contortus*) growing on it.

85. If the ground slopes to the west and if *kalanduru* grass (*Cyperus rotundus*) grows there, then the site is suitable for the Sudra caste.

86. A site shaped like an elephant with the ichneumon plant growing on it and covered with thick vegetation from one end to the other is suitable for rulers.

87. You can recognize the musical (*gandarva*) site, because a paddy field weed called pig grass (*urutana*, *Oryza fufipogon* or *Oryza derennis moench*) grows there. It is suitable for those of low caste.

¹⁹ Possibly an allusion to the red and white vertical stripes found on the walls of Hindu sacred precincts.

88. The house post placed in the southeast is called king (*bupati*). The one in the southwest is called commander-in-chief (*senadipati*). The one in the northwest is ascetic (*tapas*). The one in the northeast is woman (*gaeni*).

89. The four posts of four colors to be placed at the four minor directions should be placed at exactly the same time. If they are placed under two or three Zodiac signs destruction results. So says the *Mayamata*.

90. Divide the carpenter's cubit (*waDu riyana*) into four equal parts. Each of them is called a foot (*padaya*). Take eight feet for the height of the door and four and a half for the width.

91. Do not take soil from the east for the house. If you do, termites will build their nests there. If you use soil from the south, you will lose your livestock.

92. Do not take soil from the west for the house. If you do, the owner of the house will fall sick. Do not use soil brought from the northwest. If you do, the children will die.

93. My friend, if soil is brought from the north for the house, the owner will suffer mental anguish. If soil is brought from the northeast, the occupants will be blessed with long life and prosperity.

94. When you site the well, examine all eight directions. Do not put a well in the southeast. If you do, there will be fever.

95. If you dig a well in the northwest, there will be children but also arguments. If the well is dug in the southwest, after children are born, fire will destroy the house.

96. Do not dig a well in the west, because it will only bring on misfortune. If you dig the well in the northeast, the house will be blessed.

97. The four months April-May (*bak*) May-June (*vesak*), January-February (*durutu*), and August-September (*nikini*) are good for building a house and

the occupants will be blessed with happiness. As for days, choose a Sunday, Monday, Thursday, or Friday. The following are auspicious lunar asterisms (*naekat*): Hasta,²⁰ the thirteenth, Chitra,²¹ the fourteenth, Svati, the fifteenth,²² Satabhishak, the twenty-fourth,²³ Revati, the twenty-seventh,²⁴ and Rohini, the fourth.²⁵

98. Build houses under the asterisms of Sravana, the twenty-third,²⁶ Svati, the fifteenth, Anuradha, the seventeenth,²⁷ Mrigasiras, the fifth,²⁸ and within the houses of Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius, Aquarius, Pisces, and Leo. Build on days such as the second, tenth, and the seventh in the lunar cycle.

99. Never have doubts about building a house in the south or the west. These verses are composed according to the *Mayamata*, so do not be skeptical.

100. Take paddy from the hand of a virgin, have pregnant woman pound and cook it, invite Buddhist priests, then take your possessions into the house at an auspicious time.

101. After you move into the house, to build a cattle shed or barn, start it under auspicious asterisms, astrological houses and days.

102. Svati, the fifteenth asterism, Uttaraphalguni, the twelfth,²⁹ the two houses Taurus, and Leo and the two days Thursday and Friday are lucky for cattle sheds.

²⁰ The names of the asterisms here and throughout this translation are given in Sanskrit. The Sinhala terms appear in the footnotes. Hasta (*hata*) is in the shape of a hand and contains five stars.

²¹ The constellation Chitra (*sita*) is shaped like a pearl and contains one star.

²² Svati (*sa*) is the star Arcturus contained in the shape of a sword.

²³ Satabhisak (*siyaswasa*) contains 110 stars and is in the shape of a gem.

²⁴ Revati (*revati*) contains 27 stars and is in the shape of a drum.

²⁵ Rohini (*rehena*) contains four stars at the corners of a carriage.

²⁶ Sravana (*suvana*) contains three stars representing three feet.

²⁷ Anuradha (*anura*) is the equivalent of the constellation Libra. It contains four stars arranged within a triangle.

²⁸ Mrigasiras (*muwahis*) contains two stars representing a goat.

²⁹ Uttaraphalguni (*turapal*) contains two stars in the shape of a bed.

103. These ideas are those of the sage who wrote the *Mayamata*. Another sage says that these things are lies. He says if you use Thursday, Uttaraphalguni and Taurus to build a cattle shed, thieves will steal the cows.

104. The north is good for stables. It is also suitable for dunghills. Use the northeast for cattle and buffalo sheds. Build the kitchen in the southwest.

105. A temple for the gods (*devale*) is good in the west, as is the coppersmith's workshop. The shrine (*kovila*) for the god Siva (*baraDi*) is good in the north. The one for Ganesh should go in the northeast.

106. Now as for the directions suitable for the houses of workers, for the blacksmith's forge, ironworkers, copper and goldsmiths, these are the suitable ones.

107. Build the houses for wedding ceremonies (*manamala getwal*) in the east.³⁰ For the blacksmiths, the southeast is good. Build the house for the goldsmith in the south. Build the house for the tom-tom beater in the south.

108. Northeast is good for the washermen. The east is good for the potters. The flower supplier's house should be in the north. So says the *Mayamata* of the sages.

109. Build a Buddhist vihara in the north. Northeast is good for a temple (*kovila*). Now the following is what the sages have had to say about ordinary houses.

110. From the inside of the fence around the house, measure off a space sixty cubits long and wide. From the house measure it in four directions.

111. From east to west measure off sixty cubits with a string. From north to south do the same.

³⁰ Some Tamil texts say that the east is the proper conjugal abode of the householder (Kearns, 232). Thus, one interpretation of this passage might be that that bedroom should be in the east.

112. From southeast to northwest fix a string on the diagonal, and another from southwest to northeast.³¹

113. If the sheds for cattle, buffalo, goats and sheep, the well or the temples are along these axes, it is inauspicious according to the *Mayamata*.

114. Children and livestock will die. There will be disease and fear. This is the misfortune that will come your way. Believe in the words of the sages.

115. If you build a city, it will be exceedingly prosperous and famous if you follow these instructions. If you do not, misfortune will come to the king and the city.

116. If the line to the south (from the north) falls on wells and cattle sheds, that city will be destroyed. So say the ancient sages.

117. If it is the line draw in the south, someone will certainly die in six months. If it is the one in the west, the mother of the house will die.

118. If the line runs inside, the cattle will die. If the line falls on the ditch, you will die. If the line falls in the northeast, the cattle will die. So says the *Mayamata*.

119. The builder who constructs houses in this way will be reborn as a king. Artisans who make images in the same way will be reborn as nobles.

120. Even though those skillful and clever housebuilders who have become my friends may die, they will be reborn as royalty and nobles. So say the ancient sages.

121. Some housebuilders do not do their work in the proper way. They take money from work that was done wrongly to support their own families while the occupants of the house go through hard times.

³¹ These refer to diagonal lines drawn across the site .

122. When these builders die, they will fall into hell and suffer. So says the *Mayamata*. O housebuilders, what do you think of this?

123. Some people who claim to be artisans make images of Lord Buddha without knowing the proper proportions. They will be reborn dumb and blind.

124. Builders and artists who take money for work without knowing the proportions, grab it and run home.

125. Even if they have a good income, there will be nothing to eat in their houses and nothing to wear. These woes arise from their spiritual nature (*at baev*).

126. These people will die and go to hell. They will suffer there till the end of the world. When they arise from hell, they will be ugly as sin and penniless too.

127. If such a builder is reborn as a man, he will be born poor. Bad artists will have crossed eyes (*aes dekama mula*). What will they be good for then, pray tell?

128. The good builder who knows carpentry will be reborn as a king with bounties aplenty. Good artists will likewise become nobles.

129. Our learned forebears have told us that builders and artists who cheat others and take their money will turn out to be poor.

130. Do not be skeptical of the words of the ancient sages found in the *Mayamata*. O builders and artists, work in good faith and study the *Mayamata*.

131. So the Sanskrit verses have told us of the trouble that can arise in this life and lives that will follow. The way in which the work is done can make the builder and artist suffer right here on earth.

132. O learned and skillful builder, build a Buddhist temple (*buddale*) or a temple for the gods (*devale*) in May-June (*vesak*). Do it as Visvakarma would have.

133. In the same way artist, make images of gods or of the Buddha in January-February (*durutu*). Do it with devotion.

134. Make houses for those of the warrior caste (*kaet kulaya*) in March-April (*maedin*), for the Brahmins (*bamunu kula*) in April-May (*bak*) and for the merchants in May-June (*vesak*).

135. June-July (*poson*) is the month for building houses the castes which are not as high as these three. So said our learned forebears.

136. In the opinion of another sage, the images of gods and the Buddha should be made in December-January (*unduwap*) or January-February (*durutu*). The teachings of the *Mayamata* are different.

137. The days from the eighth after the new moon till the seventh after the full moon are good for the construction of balconies. So says the *Mayamata*.

138. The days from the eighth day of the waning moon till the seventh day of the waxing moon belong to the dark half (fortnight) of the lunar cycle.

139. Start putting clay on the walls of the house under the twenty-fifth asterism, Purvabhadra.³² If you do so the house will be blessed and free of woes.

140. Thatch the roof of an image house for a deity or Lord Buddha before noon. It is inauspicious to do it after the sun has passed its zenith. Know this and act accordingly.

141. Thatch the roof under the following asterisms: Hasta, the thirteenth, Magha, the tenth³³ and Anuradha, the seventeenth. Take the five additional

³² Purvabhadra (*puvapuTupe*) contains two stars in the shape of a bed.

³³ Magha (*ma*) contains five stars and is the shape of a gem.

ones up to and including Dhanistha, the twenty-fourth³⁴ and Uttaraphalguni. Add Rohini, the fourth and take these ten asterisms for digging wells.

142. According to the sages, if the well is four cubits away from the house, the earth will yield gems. If the ground is dug at a distance of twelve cubits, the owner will lose his cattle.

143. If the distance is sixty-nine cubits, or thirteen, fifteen, twenty-nine, twenty-two or forty-two, there will be good times and bad.

144. Whoever drinks from a well dug four cubits away from the house will die. If at a distance, of five, eleven or twenty cubits, ones own wife will die. If at a distance of forty-three or forty-eight cubits, the owner will die. If at a distance of twelve or forty-six cubits, the sons will die.

145. You will obtain good results with distances of seven, thirteen, fifteen, twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty seven or forty cubits. Measure the distance and dig the well.

146. If the owner of the house suffers from poor health, dig out a pit one cubit deep under his bed. This may have been a place where meat was cut in the past. If you remove the earth, you can get rid of the malevolent influences.

147. If the beasts of burden are given to dying, measure off an area two paces long in the southwest, make the width the same, then dig a pit that is one cubit and four inches deep.

148. Why should you dig a pit like this in the house? The sages tell us that this was a place a thunderbolt struck a menstrual house and killed a woman. So remove that polluted earth.

149. If there is a house in which there is incessant quarreling, dig a pit in the northwest corner with the same dimensions given above and remove the polluted earth to stop the trouble.

³⁴ In a scheme of 27 asterisms, this is the twenty-third. In one of twenty-eight, the twenty-fourth. Dhanistha contains four stars and is the shape of a drum.

150. If the quarreling keeps up, dig another pit in the center of the house and remove the earth. This should put an end to any evil influence still in the house. Now I'll let you know what the problem is.

151. It seems there were two leopards struck and killed here by a bolt from the heavens while they were in the act, so to speak.

152. The following are the calculations for the house which has dimensions of five cubits. The income (*aya*) is eight.³⁵ The expenditure (*waeya*) is five. The asterism is the first Phalguni. The origin (*yoni*) is that of the lion.³⁶ The regent (*himiya*) is Jupiter. Such are the calculations for the house of five cubits.

153. These are the calculations for the house of nine cubits. The income is twelve. The expenditure is five. The origin is that of the cobra. The asterism is Aslesha, the ninth.³⁷ The angle (*ansaka*) is Venus in Cancer.

154. Now you ask about the dimensions of the house of five cubits. The income is eight and the expenditure is five. The origin is that of the lion. The asterism is Magha, the tenth. The angle is that of the bird Garuda (the vehicle of Visnu).

155. As for the house of eleven cubits, both the income and the expenditure are five. The origin is that of the cobra. The regent is Jupiter. The asterism is Pushya, the eighth.³⁸ According to the angle, the house is Taurus.

156. For the house of thirteen cubits, the income is four. The expenditure is five. The origin is either that of the cobra or that of the lion. The asterism is Punarvasu,³⁹ the seventh, in Cancer. The angle is that of Mercury.

³⁵ These verses and the ones that follow refer to the six (sometimes seven or more) formulas that are applied to dimensions in order to determine whether they are conforming/auspicious or not.

³⁶ The yonis are the hawk Garuda (associated with the east), the lion (south), the serpent (west), the elephant (north), the cat (southeast), the dog (southwest), the rat (northwest) and the rabbit (northeast).

³⁷ Aslesha (*allisa*) contains five stars in the shape of a house.

³⁸ Pushya (*puse*) contains three stars in the shape of an arrow.

³⁹ Punarvasu (*punavasaya*) contains four stars in the shape of a house.

157. For the house of fifteen cubits, the income is twelve. The expenditure is five. The origin is that of the goat. The asterism is that of Ardhra, the sixth.⁴⁰ The house is Pisces. The angle is Mars.

158. For the house of seventeen cubits, the income is eight. The expenditure is five. The origin is that of the bird Garuda. The asterism is Bharani, the second.⁴¹ The moment (*vara mohota*) is that of Venus.

159. For the house of nineteen cubits, the income is seven. The expenditure is five. The asterism is Bharani, the second, in the angle of Aries. The origin is that of the bird Garuda. The regent is Mercury. The moment is called *gaeba*. So say the ancient sages.

160. For the house of twenty-one cubits, the income is twelve. The expenditure is five. The asterism is Kritika, the third.⁴² The origin is that of the lion. The house is Taurus. The moment is of Jupiter. According to the angle, it is neuter. So say the sages.

161. For the house of twenty-three cubits, the income is eight. The expenditure is five. The origin is that of the bird Garuda. The asterism is Bharani, the second. The moment and the angle belong to Venus. Now in the following verse, hear the characteristics of the house of twenty-five cubits.

162. The income is seven. The expenditure is five. The origin is that of the cobra. According to the angle the house in is Cancer and the regent is Mars. The asterism is Aslesha, the ninth. For the house of twenty-seven cubits, the income is twelve. The expenditure is five. The origin is that of the cobra. The asterism is Revati, the twenty-seventh.

163. For that house, the house is in Pisces. It is ruled by the regent the Sun. The moment is within Venus.

⁴⁰ Ardhra (*adaya*) is star shaped and contains one star.

⁴¹ Bharani (*berana*) contains three stars in the shape of a pudendum.

⁴² Kritika (*kaetirika*) is the Pleiades.

164. As for days, take a Sunday, Thursday or Friday. Among houses, Leo and Aquarius are the best. Know Pisces and Virgo as moderate ones. Understand these things when you build a house.

165. Compare the asterism under which you plan to build with that of its owner. If it is compatible, use it. Otherwise, give it up.

166. If the income (*aya*) is reduced or the expenditure (*waeya*) is increased the house will be unlucky. So even if the asterism is suitable, the results will be bad.

167. If you choose any of the three ecliptic asterisms (*gahana naekat*),⁴³ or the four on either hand, the house will not prosper at all. If you take the four on the two feet, all will be well. The four on the left side will bring poverty.⁴⁴

168. Riches come from the four asterisms on the right. The five on the back do the same. The three of the tail bring death to the owner. Take the asterism in which the sun is located as the starting point and count.

169. For the first entering of a house, the following are the good asterisms: Dhanistha, the twenty-third, Satabhisak, the twenty-fourth, Chitra, the fourteenth, Punarvasu, the seventh, Magha, the tenth, Sravana, the twenty-second, Asvini,⁴⁵ the first and Pushya, the eighth.

170. Of the houses, Taurus, Aquarius, Capricorn, Gemini, Virgo and Libra are good, and among the days, Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Enter using one of these houses and one of these days.

171. If the floor bar of the door is two cubits and three inches, and the top bar of the door is two cubits minus three inches, the income and expenditure are both five. If the door fits these specifications, there will be no misfortune caused by dimensions.

⁴³ *gahana naekat* could also mean the 'asterisms on the nose'.

⁴⁴ This verse refers to the placement of the asterisms in the body of the Bhumanaga.

⁴⁵ Asvini contains three stars in the shape of a horse.

172. Illness will befall the house that is built in March-April (*maedin*). The house built in June-July (*poson*) will burn. The one built in September-October (*binara*) will be plagued by poverty. Thieves and enemies will set upon the one built in December-January (*unduwap*).

173. These four are bad months. Do not be disobedient and start building houses then. Do not move into a house at this time. Avoid all work on the four corners.

174. The asterisms from Magha, the tenth up to Sravana the twenty-second are inauspicious (*palinga*) except for the east and north. Those from Dhanistha, the twenty-third, up to Asvini, the first, are inauspicious except for the west and south.

175. Identify the inauspicious asterisms for all the work you do on the house. Reject the inauspicious ones for all construction work. If you go ahead anyway, bad luck will come to the house, and the owner will perish.

176. As for the prospects for a house built in July-August (*aesala*), it will change hands after three years, three months and three days. So says the *Mayamata*.

177. As for the house which is built in October-November (*wap*), it will be inhabited for five years, five months and five days. As for the house built in January-February (*durutu*), after seven days and seven months are out, the house will remain in the same hands for seven years.

178. Beginning from the sun, take the first asterism as the one on the mouth. Know that the thirteenth and the fourth will destroy the house. The four in the feet bring long life. If one of the four in the stomach is used, poverty will result.

179. The four asterisms on the right side make you poor. The asterisms on the back make you rich. The three in the tail will cause three deaths. The wheel of the Earth Serpent should be counted from the starting point.

180. The auspicious post should be fixed in the ascendancy (*hora*) of the moon. The wattle should be woven in the ascendancy of Mercury. The roof should be thatched in the ascendancy of Venus. The clay should be spread in the ascendancy of the sun.

181. Move into the house in the ascendancy of Jupiter. The ten great misfortunes can be avoided by choosing an auspicious moment. If you select asterisms according to these directions, prosperity will come to the owner.

182. The three asterisms called *uturu*, i.e., Uttaraphalguni, the twelfth, Uttarashadha, the twenty-first,⁴⁶ and Uttarabhadra, the twenty-fifth,⁴⁷ as well as Revati, the twenty-seventh, Mrigasiras, the fifth, Hasta, the thirteenth, Magha, the tenth, Rohini, the fourth, Purvaphalguni, the eleventh, Anuradha, the seventeenth, Jyestha, the eighteenth,⁴⁸ and Mula, the nineteenth,⁴⁹ are the twelve asterisms that are suitable for the first entering of the house.

183. Start work on the fence and drains on a Tuesday under the asterism Purvashadha, the twentieth.⁵⁰ So say the ancient sages. If you understand this and act accordingly, you will be blessed.

184. These are the good and bad consequences of starting work on houses, fences and drains in the months of June-July (*poson*), September-October (*binara*), December-January (*unduwap*), and March-April (*maedin*).

185. The house built in June-July will burn. September-October brings poverty. Thieves plunder the house built in December-January. Illness comes to the one built in March-April.

186. East and south are inauspicious directions from Dhanistha, the twenty-second up to Asvini, the first. So says a Sanskrit *sloka*. I have put it into a Sinhala *kavi* to make it easy for you.

⁴⁶ Uttarashadha contains two stars in the shape of a couch.

⁴⁷ Uttarabhadra contains two stars in the shape of conjoined twins.

⁴⁸ Jyestha (*deTa*) contains three stars in the shape of a ring.

⁴⁹ Mula contains eleven stars in the shape of a lion's tail.

⁵⁰ Purvashadha contains two stars and is in the shape of an elephant's tooth.

187. It is better to avoid inauspicious conditions for breaking ground and fixing the first post. You will prosper if you select auspicious ones.
188. If the house is begun in Cancer, it will last three years, three months and three days. If in Libra, it will last five years, five months and five days.
189. If the house is built under Capricorn, after seven months and seven days have passed, it will not change hands for seven years. So say the *slokas* in the *Mayamata*. Should you doubt the words of the sages?
190. The astrologer should determine the conditions for a house entering ceremony in this manner: Mercury, Jupiter and Venus should be in the first house, the sun and Saturn should be in the eighth house, and the eighth house should not contain any maleficent planets.
191. As for the construction of moats, ramparts and reservoirs, use Purvashadha, the twenty-fifth asterism, Virgo and Tuesday. These prescriptions are suitable for houses, wells and cattle sheds too. Believe in them, bless the owners and do some good in this world.
192. Now I shall tell you in Sinhala what the ancient sages had to say about the seven lines (*sira*) and house sites. I shall discuss them separately. Read on and see how I have put it into verse.
193. One (of the lines) is called *girakulaya* and another is called *walamkaya*. *Mahat duwa* is the name of one more, and *mahat siraya* still another.
194. The other names of the lines are *kappa siraya*, *manda siraya* and *uwa siraya*. These are the seven lines.⁵¹
195. Know the evils of the seven lines and avoid them. You should do this for the benefit of towns as well as for houses occupied by all castes.

⁵¹ The term *sira* means line and generally refers to the orthogonal lines drawn on the Site Spirit square. The names of the lines in these verses refer to something else, possibly to the Seven Sages, the Big Dipper.

196. These are the characteristics of the site known as *aiytana*. It is equal in length and breadth. That is how you recognize such a site.⁵²

197. If you see a site that is oriented to the four directions, know that site by the name *sataraes* (four sided).⁵³

198. The site called *tunraes* (three sided) is in the shape of a triangle. That is how you recognize the *tunraes* site.

199. What kinds of traits has *parnika*⁵⁴ land? It is round like a threshing floor (*kalaviTa*). Discerning people recognize it in this way.

200. When you see a plot of land that is oval, it is the *ayitana-parnika* type. If you build a house, you most certainly cannot do it without knowing these signs.

201. Now look at the traits of the site called *ivan*.⁵⁵ It looks like a mountain water course. This is how you will recognize the site called *ivan*.

202. Now consider the good qualities and the bad ones of the various sites, and you will learn which ones have auspicious qualities and which inauspicious ones.

203. If you build the house on the *ayitana* site, you will be prosperous. If on a *sataraes* site, blessed with offspring. The same can be said of the *parnika* site. If you build on *ayitana-parnika*, you will be prosperous and happy.

⁵² In authoritative texts, this name applies to a rectangular site (Appuhamy, 127).

⁵³ In authoritative texts, the 'four sided' site is square (Appuhamy, 127).

⁵⁴ This word from verses 199 and 200 appears also as *paratika*, *paranika* and *parkana* in various printed editions of the text. The shapes of the letters ka, ta, and na are similar in Sinhala, and one guesses that one or more of the letters may have been obliterated in the original manuscript. None of the alternants is entered in Carter 1965. The word for this type of site that appears in *Sanskrit* sources is *vrta* (Appuhamy, 127).

⁵⁵ In the various printed versions of the *Mayimataya*, this type of site appears variously as *ivan*, *ivat* and *ivak*.

204. The house built on a site called *ivan* will be terrorized by kings. The other consequence is destruction by fire. So look into the portents and build houses on suitable pieces of land.

205. If you do not remove the stones and roots from the *ayitana* site, I kid you not, someone will die in five years. If you do not remove the stones and roots from the *sataraes* site, someone will die in forty-seven years.

206. If you do not remove the stones and roots from the butterfly (*samanala*)⁵⁶ site, the owner will either die or go mad in ten years, and the house will go to ruin.

207. If you do not remove the stones and roots from a *parnika* site, the house will be plundered by thieves and enemies. They will rob the house and make you poor. So says a verse in the *Mayamata*.

208. If you do not remove the stones and roots from the site called *ivan*, and go ahead and build a house without heeding the *Mayamata*, someone will up and die in a year.

209. It is said that stones and roots should be removed. Which stones and roots they are, I do not know. From here on I will reveal these things in verse, and present them as eloquently as I can through the power of poetry.

210. Stones and roots should be removed from the soil down to a depth of one carpenter's cubit and one inch. If you clear the site in this manner, happiness and blessings will follow.

211. The word stone here means stones, pebbles and broken earthen utensils, and the word root means the roots of poisonous and evil trees, woods and such.

212. If you build without removing them, life will be hard, and it will be bleak. The occupants will be troubled by illness and suffering, and hardship will lead to the city of death.

⁵⁶ This could be a misprint for *samatala* (flat).

213. If the house is oriented to the east, the husband will be rich and famous. If it faces north, wealthy and serene.

214. If a house is built on a site sloping to the south, there will be poverty unabated by the passage of time. Illness and suffering will afflict the house built on a site to the northeast.

215. There is a site called *nanda* (joyous), one called *bhaddra* (prosperous), one called *jaya* (victorious) and one called *rikta* (empty). Together with the one called *purna* (full), they make five.⁵⁷

216. We divide each one of these five into three parts so that we have fifteen in all. So, with the example of the five divisions of *nanda* in mind, divide up the house site into feet.

217. The Vedas tell us that the first, sixth and eleventh feet belong to the *nanda titi*, and that the second, seventh and twelfth belong to the *bhaddra titi*.

218. The sages say that the second,⁵⁸ eighth and thirteenth feet are the *jaya titi*. The fourth, ninth and fourteenth are the province of the *rikta titi*.

219. The three that belong to the *purna titi* are the fifth, tenth and the fifteenth. So by dividing every one by three, you get fifteen. This is how you divide and get the fifteen *titis*.

220. If the site falls into the *nanda titi*, the owner will be depressed. If the house is sited on the *bhaddra titi*, the owner will be happy and free from cares.

⁵⁷ This section pertains to the *titi* (*tithi*) test on the area of the site. The formula given in the *Vastu Vidya* is $\text{area} \times 8 \div 15$. The remainder yields the *titi*. According to the Sinhala *Mayimataya*, remainders of 4, 9 and 14 fall into the *rikta titi* and are especially inauspicious. Remainders of 1, 6, and 11 fall into the *nanda titi* and also yield undesirable results. The Tamil *Sri Lalitha Navarathnam Manaiadi Sastiram* gives a different formula for testing the area: $\text{area} \times 4 \div 30$, but generally agrees on the inauspicious remainders. Remainders of 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 12, 13 and 15 are said to be the best. 1, 4, 6, 8, and 11 are said to be not bad. 9 and 14 are said to be inauspicious.

⁵⁸ This seems to be a misprint for 'third'.

221. If it falls into the *jaya titi*, things will be peaceful and the occupants will be rich and have many children just like Bandula.⁵⁹ Thieves and enemies will threaten the house under the *rikta titi*.

222. If you build a house in the area called *purna titi*, you will become rich and famous. As the days pass, life will become fuller and fuller, just like the waxing moon.

223. The ancient sages have told us about these divisions and the characteristics of each site. I have composed verses to tell you in the Sinhala language what I have seen in the Sanskrit verses.

224. If you build a house where arrowgrass (*itana*, *Andropogon contortus*) grows, there will be no drawbacks and everyone will be happy. The owner will enjoy a life of 120 years, and after death, he will be reborn.

225. If you build a house on a site where *kalanduru* grass (*Cyperus rotundus*) grows, there will be cattle aplenty. If you build a house on land where *iluk* grass (*imperata arundinacea*) grows, expect illness, poverty and misery.

226. If you build a house on a site where the soil is mixed with iron and stones, the result is death for the owner according to the sages. These are the words of the seers who wrote the *Mayamata*. Look at the verses for these eternal truths.

227. On the site called lily-shaped (*uppala kara*), there is danger from wild animals. The sages have also told us about a site that is shaped like a lotus leaf. So, you can identify the site called lotus-shaped (*pokuru kara*) from its form.

⁵⁹ According to Buddhist legend, the powerful warrior Bandula was the commander of the forces of the king of Kosala. He and his wife, a devout Buddhist as strong as five elephants, were blessed with two sons in each of sixteen successive years for a total of thirty-two (Hardy, 282-283)

228. There are seven other such sites including the one called bull-shaped (*nanda kara*), elephant-shaped (*gaja kara*), pot-shaped (*kumba kara*), scale-shaped (*tula kara*), lotus flower-shaped (*patma kara*), wheel-shaped (*cakra kara*), and hoof-shaped (*gokura kara*).

229. This is what the builder should know who builds a house on lion-shaped (*sinha kara*) land. It will yield children, fame and happiness. These are the qualities of lion-shaped land.

230. If you build a house on elephant-shaped land, you will have virtuous sons and daughters and other good luck. Such are the qualities of elephant-shaped land.

231. As for the qualities of the site which is called bull-shaped (*vrasaba kara*), the owner will have a wonderful life and cattle aplenty.

232. If you see a site that looks like the face of a demon, you can expect steady income. Such are the qualities of demon-shaped (*rakusu kara*) land.

233. If you build the house on high land shaped like the back of a tortoise, you will suffer from illness, death and terror, these three. Put your trust in what the sages have said. Even though this site may otherwise seem to be lucky, reject it.

234. If you build a house on a piece of land that looks like a winnowing basket that slopes low on one side, the house will be terrorized by thieves.

235. If you see a site that is round and reminds you of a jug, that site is known as jug-shaped (*kumba kara*). Do not choose this site. It will only bring on misfortune.

236. White soil and yellow soil are good for Brahmins and Buddhist monks. A site with red soil and brown soil is suitable for reigning kings.

237. If the soil is golden or tawny (*kimbulan paTa*=alligator colored), it is suitable for traders. If it is blue (*nilwan*) or black it is good for the workers and the lower castes.

238. If the soil is blue colored (*samawan*), there will be happiness. Former enemies will be friends. This site is suitable for everyone in the whole world.

239. Suppose a site has lumpy soil resembling the fruit of the yellow myrobalan (*aralu*, *Terminalia chebula*).⁶⁰ It will be blessed by kings and protected from enemies. If you build a house there, the occupants will be very happy.

240. What happens if you build a house on a site where the soil is the color of gold and plumbago? Coins of gold, silver, copper and iron will come your way. So says the sage of the *Mayamata*.

241. If there are no stones on the site you choose for the house, you will have cattle and good health. A site with these qualities is good for everyone. These then, are the characteristics of such a site.

242. If a site has black soil mixed with soil the color of blood, the occupants will suffer from disease. So say the sages.

243. If the soil on the site is wet, and there has been no rain to explain it, that site is not suitable. If you build a house on the site, there will be illness year in year out.

244. If you build a house where the soil is mixed with flint, the occupants will suffer because they have no money. The house will be plundered by thieves and beset by disease.

⁶⁰ The fruits are pendulous like olives with hard stones. They are used in ink manufacture, tanning, and medicine (Lewis, 172).

245. If you take a site where the soil has white stones and gravel, the parents will die after children are born. I am writing this here, because there are some contradictory Sanskrit verses.

246. Gardens will wither on sites where the stones are neither very big nor very small. There are no other drawbacks described for such sites.

247. Suppose there are ditches all over the house site. Such a site is unlucky. The *Mayamata* reports that the site is inauspicious. Know the consequences of choosing this site and abandon it.

248. Let's say you see a site with a rise in the south and a slope to the east whose soil is not mixed with water. Suppose it has round stones and grasses called *itana* (*Andropogon contortus*), *wammutu* (*Cyperus rotundus*), *baelatana* (=dog grass, *elusine indica*) and *karuwatana*. That site is called musical (*gandharva*).

249. One sage says that certain sites are suitable for low caste groups, and the *Mayamata* says that these lands are not suitable. So I got the help of an astrologer to write the following verses.

250. Suppose you see a site with a rise in the south, and with a slope to the north which is weighted in the west and northwest. The site is one on which storks build their nests and which smells like milk. There build a palace for a king.

251. If a site slopes to the north and has soil that smells like pipe clay (*makulu*),⁶¹ then it is suitable for Brahmins. Follow the teachings of the *Mayamata*, and relish your work.

252. If the site slopes to the southwest than it is good for the Oli caste⁶² and the Berawa.⁶³ This was said in good faith in the Sanskrit verse. Now I have put it in a *kavi* and said it in Elu.

⁶¹ Or perhaps, monkeys.

⁶² A Sinhala caste. Drummers and dancers.

⁶³ Also a Sinhala caste. Tom-tom beaters.

253. Suppose a site slopes to the east and northeast and then widens to the southwest, forming a triangle. It has golden soil mixed with gravel. That site is good for merchants.

254. Suppose a site slopes to the east, the northeastern portion is the highest, and the broad southern portion has golden soil. That site is good for the Goyigama (*handuru*) caste.

255. Suppose a site slopes to the southeast and has black soil which is mixed in places with gravel. That site is good for barbers (*karanaebi*). So goes a verse in the *Mayamata*.

256. When you build a house on any site, first remove the trees and creepers. The trees and creepers that are mentioned in the following verses should be taken away from the house site so that the results will be good.

257. They are the *kinihiri* (*Cochlospermum gossypium*), the tamarind (*siyembala*, *Tamarindus indicus*),⁶⁴ *margosa* (*kosamba*, *Azadirachta indica*),⁶⁵ *jamala* (*kolon*, *Garcinia xanthrochymus*), *haedawaka* (*Chaetocarpus castanocarpus*),⁶⁶ *kihiri* (*Acacia sundra*), satinwood (*buruta*, *Chloroxylon swietenia*),⁶⁷ ironwood (*na*, *Mesua ferria*),⁶⁸ *andara* (*Dichrostachys cinerea*),⁶⁹

⁶⁴ The wood is used for furniture. The dried seeds are made into a laxative medicine. Tamil: *puli*. (Lewis, 162-3).

⁶⁵ A cabinet or panel wood. The products of the tree are widely used in Sinhalese and Tamil medicine. The tree is best known for its foul smelling oil (called *veppeni* in Tamil) used medicinally and as an insecticide. Tamil: *vempu* (Lewis, 140).

⁶⁶ A building timber (Lewis, 230).

⁶⁷ A valuable timber used to build the old one arch bridge at Peradeniya. Tamil: *mutirai* (Lewis, 142).

⁶⁸ A favorite tree for flowers offered at Buddhist shrines which is often found near temples. The flowers have large, white petals and a sweet smell. The seeds produce an oil used in the treatment of diseases of the skin. The wood is one of the hardest and most durable. Tamil: *nakka* (Lewis, 111-112).

⁶⁹ A small thorny hardwood. Most notable for its beautiful pale pink or yellow flowers resembling Japanese lanterns. Tamil: *vidattal* (Lewis, 165).

peepul (*bo*, *Ficus religiosa*),⁷⁰ and *nitol* trees. Dig up the ground and excise their roots.

258. After you cut the trees, fill up the holes with soil brought from elsewhere and level the site. After you finish, wait for one year and then build the house.

259. Take note of the following trees: *karanda* (*Pongamia glabra*), wood apple (*beli*, *Feronia elephantum* or *Aegle marmelos*),⁷¹ *midi* (*Premna serratifolia*),⁷² *mahari* (*Albizia lebbek* or *Adenathera paronia*), *palol* (*Stereospermum suaveolens*), *kumbuk* (*Terminalia glabra*),⁷³ *dimbul* (*Ficus glomerata*), *kiriwalla* (*Holarrehena mitis*),⁷⁴ bamboo, yellow myrobalan (*aralu*, *Terminalia chebula*), hog plum (*sarana*, *Spondias magnifera*), *aetteriya* (*Murraya exotica*), *piya* (*Sarcocephalus cordatus*), *kelinda* (*Wrightia zelanica*) and soapberry (*penala*, *Sapindus emarginatus*).⁷⁵

260. If these are on the house site when you start uprooting the trees, dig up the soil and put in soil from elsewhere. Wait until six months are out, and then build the house.

⁷⁰The tree under which the Buddha attained enlightenment, specimens of which grow in every temple compound and are venerated. The tree at Anuradhapura, said to have sprung from a branch of the original from India, is believed to be 2,000 years old.

⁷¹*Aegle marmelos* is a small cultivated tree whose large, smooth fruits and root bark are used in medicine as a remedy for dysentery. This tree is often confused with *feronia elephantum*, also known as *jivul* (Tamil: *vilatti*). The latter grows wild and has a large, round gray fruit with a hard shell of which elephants are said to be particularly fond (Lewis, 134-135). Ganesh, the elephant-headed god, is said to relish the wood apple.

⁷²A small, shrubby tree with yellow-green flowers and small fruits. The wood is used for paneling and the root in medicine for colic. Tamil: *erumaimulli* (Lewis 209-210).

⁷³An immense, water loving tree commonly found along river banks. Tamil: *marutu* (Lewis, 173-174).

⁷⁴A small, elegant and uncommon tree of no great economic importance. Its small, white flowers have a sweet smell. The wood is used for ornamental work, and the bark in medicine to treat fever and dysentery (Lewis, 203).

⁷⁵A large tree with greenish-white flowers with a durable wood used for cart frames. An oil derived from the seeds is made into a soap, and the bark of the root is used in medicine. Tamil: *panalai* (Lewis, 148).

261. He who builds his house in the middle of the village, will become the leader of his people, and he will also become very rich. People who do not put their faith in this have not seen the verses in the *Mayamata*.

262. If a house is built on a site that is lush with vegetation, the occupants will be loved by all of mankind. These people will want for nothing.

263. The verses in the *Mayamata* say that death will come to a house built on land where arrowgrass grows. Verily, these are the words of the ancient sages.

264. Wherever you see a site on which the trees, creepers, stones and flowers are the same color as the soil, the clay called *navanila* can be found under the ground.

265. Wherever there is a site like this, that place pleases everyone like the sweet taste of mangos. What better choice than to build a house here. For rulers, nay everyone, it is most beneficial.

266. On such a site, the following trees and plants that grow around the house and inside the garden are said to be very juicy: jak (*kos*, *Artocarpus integrefolia*), coconut, mango, pear (*damba*, *Eugenia jambos*), plantain (*ramba*, *Musa paradisiaca*), mandarin orange (*jamanaran*, *Citrus nobilis*), and sugarcane.

267. If you build a house on a site with the following trees: *demaTa* (*Gmelina asiatica*),⁷⁶ *andara* (*Dichrostachys cinera*), tulip tree (*suriya*, *Thespesia populnea*),⁷⁷ and *kaeTakaala* (*Bridelia retusa*),⁷⁸ cattle will thrive. You need not fear demons on such a site.

⁷⁶ A bush with large bright yellow flowers cultivated for its medicinal roots and bark. Tamil: *kumil* (Lewis, 211).

⁷⁷ A small hardwood known for its beautiful yellow flowers. Tamil: *puvaravu* (Lewis, 126).

⁷⁸ A small tree suitable for housebuilding whose hard wood is said to resist termites (Lewis, 224).

268. If you get rid of the following trees, you can put misery to flight: silk cotton (*imbul*, *Eriodendron anfractuosum*), may (*mara*, *Albizzia lebbek* or *Adenanthera paronia*), orange, *puvangu* (*Myristica horsfieldia*), wood apple (*beli*, *Feronia elephantum* or *Aegle marmelos*), *aesaTu* (*Ficus tsiela*), *erahaenda* (*Cassia fistula*), and mango. Verily, these are the sayings of our learned forebears.

269. If you build a house on a site where there are anthills, if the house is oriented to the east, southwest, northwest or northeast, it will be a fortunate place. So says the *Mayamata*.

270. The teaching of another sage contradicts the one given above. He says that sites with anthills are inauspicious, and specifically that the wife will be barren. So says a verse in the *Mayamata*.

271. So since various opinions appear in the Sanskrit, and we do not whether we should reject this site or not, avoid sites with anthills and choose others instead.

272. Suppose there is a mound in the center of the site, and you have to cut off the top of the mound and bring soil from elsewhere in order to level it. Do not build a house here. This site is unrewarding and will bring you misfortune aplenty.

273. As for a site that sinks into a depression (*mala*), remove the soil from the high side and level it with soil brought from the northeast. If you do it, blessings will multiply there.

274. If you build a house with stones that have been broken up and discarded, you will lose everything of value. If you build with new stones, you will enjoy happiness, prosperity and peace of mind.

275. If you build on a site where the anthills have been cut out, the wife of the house will up and die. So avoid sites like this.

276. Now as for building a house on a graveyard site, because of the bones, it is only suitable for the lowest caste. So do not build houses in graveyards. So said the sages of the *Mayamata*.

277. If arrowgrass, the *dan* bush (*Eugenia corymbosa*), the satinwood tree (*burata*, *Chloroxylon swietenia*), and the *undupiyali* plant (*Desmondium* or *Hedysarum* spp.) grow on the site, the house will be blessed.

278. This house will bring the owner gold, silver, cattle, buffaloes, a wife and children, servants and land. He will enjoy good health. So build houses on such sites according to the words of the *Mayamata*.

279. Those who live in houses on sites where there are bo trees and mara trees and the grass called *saevaendara* (*Andropogon squarrosus*) will live long. If there are a lot of jak or orange trees, there will be conflict.

280. A site that has *iluk* (*Imperata arundinacea*) and arrowgrass and slopes to the southeast is good for copper and goldsmiths. So say the verses in the *Mayamata*.

281. So, there are lucky and unlucky sites for houses and temples. Whether high-born or low-born, everyone can build suitably.

282. This day is in the year one thousand seven hundred and fifty-nine (1837 A.D.). The sun is in Libra, and it is the full moon day.

283. So, in this year did I take this Sanskrit book of old. I wrote 283 verses, and now I have finished this book. Amen.