

The Authorship of *Saṅgharājasādhucariyāva*

THE authorship of *Saṅgharājasādhucariyāva*, a short biography in Sinhalese of the Saṅgharāja Vāliviṭṭa Saraṇankara, is generally attributed to Ayittāliyāddē Muhandirama, though the name of the author of this work is not mentioned anywhere in the body of the book or in a colophon. Hēnpiṭagedara Piyananda Sthavira in his edition of this work says that this biography was written by Ayittāliyāddē Muhandiramarāla who was one of the ambassadors sent to Siam to fetch the *upasampadā* to Ceylon. He further says that Ayittāliyāddē Muhandirama had closely associated himself with the Saṅgharāja.¹ Nāhalle Paññāsēna and Puñcibaṇḍāra Sannasgala, who brought out an edition of this work in 1947, say that the author of this work would have remained unknown but for a monk named Īriminnē Vipassī who mentions the author of *Saṅgharājasādhucariyāva* in his *Ādāhanavata*. They further state that it is now finally settled that the author of this work was Ayittāliyāddē Muhandirama, who was one of the five envoys sent to Siam in the last embassy sent to that country.² In a foot note the editors state that they have not seen the book called *Ādāhanavata*. It is, however, difficult to understand how these three editors came to the conclusion that Ayittāliyāddē Muhandirama, who had gone to Siam to fetch the *upasampadā* to Ceylon was the author of the *Saṅgharājasādhucariyāva*. The editor of the 1954 edition does not tell us on what authority he attributes the work to Ayittāliyāddē, while the other two editors refer to some evidence said to be found in a book that they have had no opportunity of examining. Nor do these two editors quote any other authority.

Possibly their statements are based on a remark appearing in the introduction to an edition of the *Saṅgharājasādhucariyāva* published in 1916. K. Srī Sumaṅgala Sthavira, who brought out this edition, states that he learnt that this book was written by Ayittāliyāddē Muhandirama from a work called *Saṅgharāja-ādāhanavata* written by the Mahāthera Īriminnē Vipassī.³ This work does not appear to have been ever printed, and, as far as the writer is aware, manuscript copies of this work are not known

1. *Saṅgharājasādhucariyāva* edited by Hēnpiṭagedara Piyananda Sthavira, 1954, p. iv.

2. *Saṅgharājasādhucariyāva* edited by Nāhalle Paññāsēna and Puñcibaṇḍāra Sannasgala, Colombo 1947, p. xxvi.

3. *Saṅgharājasādhucariyāva* edited by Kataluvē Srī Sumaṅgala Sthavira, Galle, 1916, p. i.

to exist anywhere either in Ceylon or abroad. Thus it is difficult to ascertain to what extent this editor's statement is trustworthy. There is, however, one passage in the *Saṅgharājasādhucariyāva* itself which casts considerable doubt on the veracity of the information that is said to be found in the *Saṅgharāja-ādāhanavata*. This passage is as follows :—

නැවත කුන්වෙති වාරෙන් එම විල්බාගෙදර මුහන්දිරම්මරාලන් ආසින්නාලියද්දේ මුහන්දිරම්මරාලන් පට්ටපොල රවේරාලන් ඇල්ලේපොල වෙඩිකාර මොහොව්වරාලන් යටිනුවර ඊරියගම නිලමෙන් යන මේ නිලමකාර පස්දෙනා සමග බොහෝ පමුරු පරිවාර ජන සහිත සැකැපනු සියාම දේශයට යවා පුවර උපාලි මහාසථවිරසාමීන් ප්‍රමුඛ භික්ෂු සංඝයා වැඩිමවාගෙන ඇවිත් ඒ අවනාසවරු නිරිකුණාමලෙන් ගොඩ බැසපු තැනේදී⁴.....

This statement that the five envoys who had gone to Siam arrived in Trincomalee with the Siamese monks is factually untrue in two respects. First, of the five envoys who had been sent to Siam, Paṭṭapoḷa Mohoṭṭāla died there and therefore only four envoys eventually returned to Ceylon. Secondly, only Vilbāgedara Muhandirama together with the Siamese monks and the Siamese envoys arrived in Trincomalee. The other three envoys, namely Āllēpoḷa Mohoṭṭāla, Īriyagama Muhandirama and Ayittāliyāddē Muhandirama, and their entourage arrived in Colombo a few months before Vilbāgedara arrived in Trincomalee. When the Siamese monks, the Siamese envoys and the Sinhalese envoys and their entourage left Siam, they travelled in two ships. Āllēpoḷa Mohoṭṭāla, Īriyagama, Muhandirama, Ayittāliyāddē Muhandirama and their entourage travelled in a Dutch ship, while Vilbāgedara Muhandirama, at the request of the King of Siam, travelled with the monks and the envoys from Siam in a Siamese ship. Soon after leaving Siam, the Siamese ship foundered off a place called Muan Lakok. The Dutch ship sailed on without knowing what had happened to the other ship and ultimately arrived in Colombo, having stopped at Malacca for some considerable time to get news of the other ship. Later Vilbāgedara Muhandirama and the monks and envoys from Siam arrived in Trincomalee.⁵ Assuming that Ayittāliyāddē was the author of *Saṅgharājasādhucariyāva*, as is stated in the three editions of this work mentioned above, it is very strange that he has failed to mention, in the section devoted to the mission sent to Siam in 1750, the death of Paṭṭapoḷa Mohoṭṭāla in Siam and the misfortunes that befell Vilbāgedara

4. *Saṅgharājasādhucariyāva* edited by H. Piyananda, pp. 14-15.
 5. Peiris, P. E., An Account of King Kīrti Sri's Embassy to Siam, in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Ceylon Branch, Vol. XVIII, pp. 17-44. Vilbāgedara Muhandirama also has written an account of the mission sent by King Kīrti Sri Rājasimha to Siam in 1750. A manuscript copy of this work is in the Library of the University of Ceylon.

and his fellow passengers at Muan Lakok, particularly when it is remembered that he has given such details in discussing the two missions sent to Siam in the reign of King Sri Vijaya Rājasimha.⁶

If Ayittāliyāddē was the author of this work, the only motive that may have prompted him to deliberately distort the truth would have been a desire to obtain a share of the credit for successfully bringing the Siamese monks to Ceylon. It has, however, to be borne in mind that Ayittāliyāddē was a trusted officer engaged in the service of the King as a *muhandirama* of the *veḍikkāra lēkama* in charge of the district of Dumbara. When he returned from Siam he appears to have been appointed to a post in the royal palace, where his duties were to receive representatives of the Dutch Government and to conduct them to and from the various frontiers of the Kandyan Kingdom.⁷ Thus as a well-trusted and experienced official Ayittāliyāddē would have known that a distortion of the facts concerning a well-known event would, instead of bringing credit to him, even imperil the official position he was occupying at the time. Incidentally it is worth recalling that the *Saṅgharājasādhucariyāva*⁸ was written in the year 1779, one year after the death of the Saṅgharāja and that King Kīrti Sri Rājasimha, under whose direction the Siamese monks were invited to Ceylon, died in the year 1782.

In view of the reasons adduced above it can be stated that Ayittāliyāddē Muhandirama was not the author of *Saṅgharājasādhucariyāva*.

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6. *Saṅgharājasādhucariyāva*, edited by H. Piyananda, pp. 13-14.
 7. Secret Minutes of the Dutch Political Council 1762, edited and translated by J. H. O. Paulusz Colombo, 1954, pp. 36, 62 and 65.
 8. *Saṅgharājasādhucariyāva*, edited by H. Piyananda, p. 1.