

A STUDY OF THE CREATIVE BACKGROUND OF THE PANDUKABHAYA LEGEND

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Introduction

The Mahawamsa is the earliest chronicle containing information about Prince Pandukabhaya's kingdom in Anuradhapura. It was the main source of most scholars who described Sri Lankan history, but there have been some problems about the historical value of certain issues in the *Mahawamsa*. For instance, Prince Pandukabhaya's legend which has been used by the author of the *Mahawamsa* to confirm the heritage of the ancient Anuradhapura kingdom appears to be highly doubtful when considered in terms of historical value.

Objectives and methodology

There are two aims in the structural study of this legend. First, this isolated legend can be studied in relation to various sociological, geographic, economic and cosmological factors. Second, different versions of the legend can be compared to finding a common meaning among them. Although there is a similarity in the various legends, it is difficult to identify this because of variations in beliefs, languages, races, etc. Therefore, the aim of this study is to uncover the creative background of the pandukabhaya legend. The primary sources include the *Mahawamsa*, *Deepawamsa* and *Wamsathappakasini* which will be compared with the Jathaka stories, Jathaka Atuwa, Jathaka Pali, Mahabharatha and Hariwamsa, including also some folklore theories. Moreover, articles and e-journals will also be referred to wherever necessary.

Discussion

It can be seen that there is a similarity between the 'Gatha Panditha Jathakaya' and the legend of Pandukabhaya of the *Mahawamsa* in respect of the characters and

events of the narrative. The Gathe Panditha Jathaka story was written a few centuries after the *Mahawamsa* had been compiled, but it can also be noted that this story is briefly recorded in Jathaka Atuwa – composed about the same time as the *Mahawamsa*.

Therefore, it is highly likely that there might have been an influence from the oral tradition of the Jathaka stories. Krishna's genesis in the *Mahabharatha* is similar to Pandukabhaya's legend to a certain extent. Therefore, according to the theory of diffusion of folklore, it is difficult to describe the legend of Pandukabhaya as belonging to the real history of Sri Lanka.

Results

The results of this study will prove that there is a misconception of the myth and legends. It will be argued that it is not true that Chittharaja or the caste of Yaksha is the origin of Sinhalese race. At the same time, evidence about the historical value of the *Mahawamsa* will be confirmed

Conclusion

In this research, certain issues of Sri Lankan history are analyzed in order to explore the historical value of the *Mahawamsa*. It also includes a discussion of how this chronicle can be understood from a historical point of view. Finally, this study discusses the conformity and conflict between the *Mahawamsa* and the Sinhalese race.

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