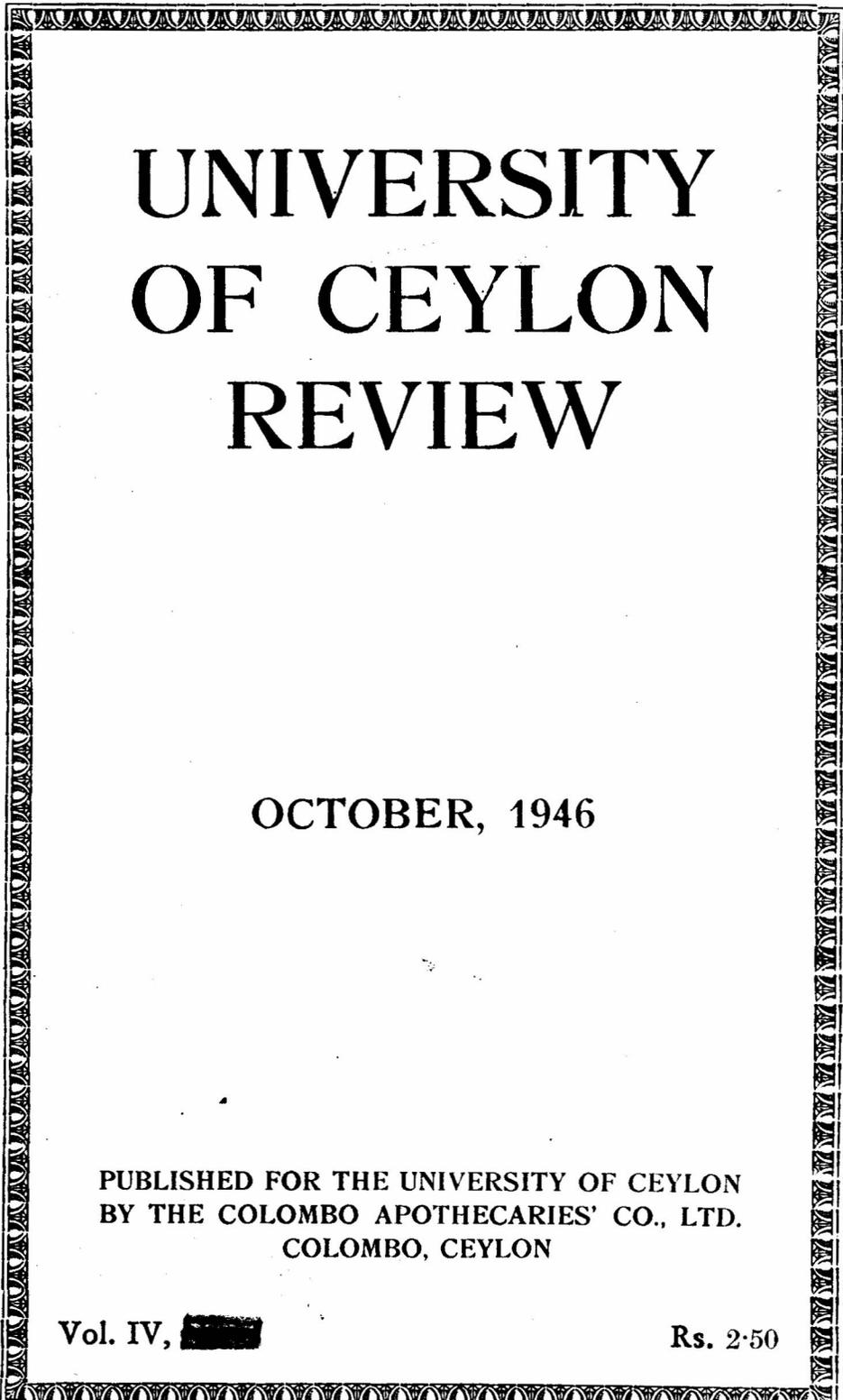


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UNIVERSITY OF CEYLON REVIEW

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The Pāli Chronicles of Ceylon

An Examination of the Opinions expressed about them since 1879

THE three Pāli works, the *Dīpavaṃsa*, the chronicle of the island, the Introduction to the *Samantapāsādikā*, the commentary to the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, and the *Mahāvamsa*, the great chronicle, which enshrine the ancient historical tradition of Ceylon, are still available to the student of Ceylon history. All these three are closely related to one another, and it is not possible to study one independently of the other two. In addition to these there is the *Vamsatthappakāsinī*, the *ṭīkā* or commentary to the *Mahāvamsa*, which sheds considerable light on its main source, the *Sīhalaṭṭhakathā Mahāvamsa*.¹

Few Pāli works have attracted so much attention as the Dv, the Sp and the Mv. This was mainly due to the fact that they contain some traditions of the early history of Buddhism. Hermann Oldenberg edited the Dv, and published it with an English translation in 1879,² and in his Pāli edition of the *Vinaya Piṭaka* he included the historical introduction to the Sp.³ In 1905 Wilhelm Geiger made a critical examination of the Dv and the Mv and of other works which dealt with the early history of Ceylon.⁴ In 1907 still another German scholar, Otto Franke, criticized some of the conclusions arrived at by Geiger in this work,⁵ and Geiger replied to him in the same year.⁶ In 1908 Geiger brought out his edition of the Pāli text of the Mv,⁷ and his English translation of the same made with the assistance of Mabel H. Bode was

1. These five works will be referred to hereafter by the abbreviations Dv, Sp, Mv, Vap and SAKMv. Sp will refer to the Introduction alone and not to the whole *Samantapāsādikā*.

2. The *Dīpavaṃsa*. Ed. and Tr. by Hermann Oldenberg. London, 1879.

3. Oldenberg: *Vinaya Piṭakam*, Vol. III, pp. 283-343. London, 1881.

4. *Dīpavaṃsa und Mahāvamsa und die geschichtliche Überlieferung in Ceylon*. Leipzig, 1905. The references in this work are to the English translation by Ethel M. Coomaraswamy. Colombo, 1908.

5. *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, Vol. XXI, pp. 203 and 307.

6. *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Vol. LXIII, p. 540.

7. The *Mahāvamsa*. Ed. by Wilhelm Geiger. Pali Text Society. London, 1908.

published in 1912.⁸ In the Introduction to the latter work Geiger once more summed up his views on the Mv, but a few of them were modified in his English translation of the *Cūlavamsa*, published in 1930.⁹

Since then two other contributions have added to our knowledge of the subject. In 1933 E. W. Adikaram submitted a thesis to the University of London on "State of Buddhism in Ceylon as revealed by the Pāli Commentaries of the Fifth Century."¹⁰ This was followed by the publication in 1935 of the *Vamsatthappakāsinī*, edited by G. P. Malalasekera.¹¹

The object of this article is to examine the views expressed by these writers with regard to these four works, the Dv, the Sp, the Mv and the Vap in the light of evidence now available. One of the chief points that will be considered is whether the view maintained or accepted by most of them that the Dv was based on the SAKMv of the Mahāvihāra is tenable.

Much of what is stated in the works referred to centred round the question of the sources of the Dv, the Sp and the Mv. Oldenberg in his Introduction to his edition of the Dv pointed out that according to the Vap¹² there was an *Atthakathā* (a commentary on Buddhist canonical writings) "handed down and probably also composed in the Mahāvihāra,¹³ written in Sinhalese, the introductory stanzas of which allude to a historical account of Buddha's visits to Ceylon, of the Councils, of Mahinda, etc., intended to be given in that very *Atthakathā*." This *Atthakathā* was the same as the *Porāṇatthakathā* and was also called the *Sīhaḷatthakathā Mahāvamsa*.¹⁴

Oldenberg did not consider the last two works identical but that the latter was only a part of the former. "It is not difficult" he continued, "to account for this expression where the two at first sight contradictory elements of a (theological) commentary (*Atthakathā*) and of an extensive historical narrative, (*Mahāvamsa*) are combined together. If we look at Buddhaghosa's *Atthakathā* on the Vinaya, we find that the author has there prefixed to his explanations of the sacred texts a detailed historical account of the origin of

8. The *Mahāvamsa*. Eng. Trs. by W. Geiger. P.T.S. London, 1912.

9. The *Cūlavamsa*. Eng. Trs. by W. Geiger and C. M. Rickmers. P.T.S., 1930.

10. *Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon* by E. W. Adikaram. Ceylon, 1946. This was preceded by a thesis entitled "An Historical Criticism of the *Mahāvamsa*" submitted to the University of London by the writer of this article. Much of what is stated here is based on that thesis.

11. P.T.S. London, 1935.

12. Oldenberg and Geiger usually refer to this work as the *Mahāvamsa Tikā*. Malalasekera has pointed out that its author never calls it by this name, but by the title *Vamsatthappakāsinī*. Vap. p. cvii.

13. This was the chief vihāra of the Theravādins in Anurādhapura.

14. The *Dīpavamsa*. p. 3.

the Tipiṭaka, its redaction in the three Councils, and its propagation to Ceylon by Mahinda and his companions. Buddhaghosa's commentary is based, as is well known, on that very Sinhalese *Atthakathā* of the Mahāvihāra, which we are discussing, and we may assume with almost certainty, that to this *Atthakathā* a similar introduction was prefixed which may have been of greater extent than that of Buddhaghosa."¹⁵

After drawing this inference about the relationship of the SAKMv to the *Porāṇatthakathā* from the analogy of the *Samantaṭṭhādikā*, and incidentally suggesting that the Sp too was based on the *Sīhaḷatthakathā* of the Mahāvihāra, Oldenberg concluded that the SAKMv was in prose intermixed with a considerable number of stanzas in Pāli,¹⁶ and was the source on which the Dv and the Mv were based. He drew the inference with regard to the Dv not from any actual statement to that effect as in the case of the Mv, but because the proem of the Dv as well as five passages in Pāli verse, ascribed to the *Porāṇā* in the Sp and the Vap, were common to the Dv,¹⁷ and both the Dv and the Mv finished their record at the same point. He expressed the view that the author of the Dv borrowed from the *Atthakathā* sometimes the mode of expression and even whole lines, word for word.¹⁸ He added further that the Dv and the Mv are "indeed in the main nothing but two versions of the same substance, both being based on the historical introduction to the Great Commentary of the Mahāvihāra. Each work represented, of course, their common subject in its own way, the *Dīpavamsa* followed step by step and almost word for word the traces of the original, the *Mahāvamsa* proceeding with much greater independence and perfect literary mastership."¹⁹

Finally Oldenberg suggested that the *Mahāvamsa* of the ancients referred to in the proem of the Mv may mean the Dv itself, as it contains the defects attributed to the old work.²⁰

Geiger in *The Dīpavamsa and Mahāvamsa* agreed with Oldenberg with regard to the relationship between the Sp and the Mv on the one hand and their connection with the SAKMv on the other.²¹ "Our M." he wrote, "as far as the contents are concerned, was a fairly correct translation of the AkM. It supplements the Sinhalese of the latter by Pāli verse and avoids certain deficiencies in the original, viz., its frequent repetitions and the uneven

15. *Ibid.* pp. 3-4.

16. *Ibid.* p. 4.

17. *Ibid.* p. 5.

18. *Ibid.* pp. 6-8.

19. *Ibid.* p. 7.

20. *Ibid.* p. 9.

21. Geiger: *The Dīpavamsa and Mahāvamsa*, p. 53.

character of its account, which is sometimes too short, sometimes too diffuse."²² He stated further: "The contents of the Smp. run very closely parallel with the M. We see so much verbal agreement between them that there can be no question of mere coincidence. This may be explained by the fact that the two works, the Smp. as well as the M., are both derived from the same source, the *Aṭṭhakathā*, and both reflect their source with fair exactness."²³

Geiger also agreed with Oldenberg that the Dv like the Mv was based on the SAKMv. "As there is no doubt that the M. is younger than the D.," he wrote, "two suppositions only are possible: either the M. has borrowed its material and arrangement from the D., or else both the M. and the D. have borrowed from the same sources, either directly or indirectly. The latter supposition is, as we shall see, the correct one."²⁴

But Geiger did not accept the suggestion of Oldenberg that the proem of the Mv referred to the Dv. "One might be inclined to think," he wrote, "that the proem of the M. refers directly to the D., in which, it is true, the fault complained of, that of irregular representation appears. The words 'free from faults' would look like a slight mockery of the self-conscious saying, 'without faults,' which is found in the proem of the D. 3. In reality our M. means, as we shall see, by the 'Mahāvamsa of the ancients,' the original work, upon which it, as well as the D., is founded. And therefore the reproach raised against it applies to the D. as well, because it (the D.) reproduces the original work with more slavish faithfulness, and its proem is also taken word for word from it."²⁵

Geiger also did not fall in fully with the view of Oldenberg that the SAKMv was a mere introduction to the *Porāṇaṭṭhakathā*. He admitted the possibility that it could have been so at first, but believed that it ceased to be so after some time.²⁶ "There are many reasons," he wrote, "to be put against this supposition. Everything seems to suggest that the old M. had very considerable proportions, and contained an enormous amount of detail. We certainly are not mistaken if we estimate it at least as extensive as our MT."²⁷ One has only to think of the repetitions so strongly condemned. This seems to be

22. *Ibid.* p. 63. D. = *Dīpavamsa*. M. = *Mahāvamsa*. Smp. = *Samanatapaṣādīkā* Introduction. AkM. = *Aṭṭhakathā Mahāvamsa*.

23. D. and M. (*The Dīpavamsa and Mahāvamsa*), p. 70.

24. *Ibid.* p. 14.

25. D. and M., p. 17.

26. Thus Geiger did not entirely disagree with the view of Oldenberg as Malalasekera states in Vap p. lviii. Malalasekera himself says: "It is quite probable this chronicle formed a sort of historical introduction to the Canonical Commentary and dealt only with the 13 subjects mentioned in the proem of the *Dīpavamsa*." It is, however, not clear whether he is expressing his own view or merely re-stating Geiger's view.

27. M.T. = *Mahāvamsa Tikā* = Vap.

somewhat large for an "historical introduction." No doubt it can be shown that the Ak. was extraordinarily comprehensive, and therefore that even the introduction may have been a long one. But another consideration seems to me of more importance. An introduction of the kind that Oldenberg imagines would hardly embrace the whole range of Sinhalese kings as far as Mahāsena. A transition from this prince to the Tipiṭaka does not seem to be very probable. It is much more likely that such an introduction would have finished with the coming of Buddhism into Ceylon, and with Mahinda, who brought the Tipiṭaka to the Island. According to my idea the "Mahāvamsa of the ancients" was an independent chronicle, which the monks of the Mahāvihāra carried on to Mahāsena, and certainly would have continued still further had they not been disturbed in their peaceable work in some violent manner.

"The analogy of the chronicles of our medieval monasteries lies extraordinarily near; but it may be correct that the base of that chronicle was such an introduction to the Tipiṭaka. The proem of the D. speaks at all events in favour of that. This proem was, as can be seen from the MT. QS. a, simply the proem of the old M. The subjects were mentioned in it which were to be represented. These are without exception those which belong to the period before Mahinda. There is no account of later times, not even of the great deeds of Duṭṭhagāmaṇi. The proem thus belongs to an epoch in which the extent of the work was smaller than at the time when Mahānāma developed the material into a poem, or when the D. was written. The old framework had burst, and out of the "historical introduction" of the Ak., the "Mahāvamsa of the ancients," the extensive monastery chronicle of the Mahāvihāra developed."²⁸

Rhys Davids, reviewing *Dīpavamsa und Mahāvamsa*, referred to "its great and permanent value as the most complete work which we have on the many important subjects it treats with scholarship so thorough (often indeed unique) and with judgment so sober and sound."²⁹ But Otto Franke did not consider Geiger's work in the same light. After a detailed examination of the Dv text he came to the conviction that the Dv was an original work and was not based on any other work as pointed out by Oldenberg and Geiger.³⁰

Franke pointed out that the main topics of the Dv were composed out of verses and pieces of verse of the canonical literature and was in language and ideas influenced above all by the *Buddhavamsa*, the *Cariyāpiṭaka*, and

28. D. and M., p. 64.

29. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*. 1905. p. 391.

30. Franke first expressed his view in *Literarisches Centralblatt*, 1906, No. 37, Column 1,275. He made a closer examination of the Dv and its relations to the Sp and the Mv in 1907, in the *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, XXI, pp. 203 and 307.

the *Jātaka*. Thus it was a clumsy bungling work, a mere botched compilation of Pāli quotations from these and other works of the Canon. From that he concluded that the Dv was not based on any source and must be considered as standing on its own tottering feet.³¹ He further compared the Dv with the Sp and the Mv and rushed to the conclusion that the authors of the Sp and the Mv merely rewrote the Dv.

Geiger accepted some of the minor conclusions of Franke.³² That the Dv was a clumsy bungling work had already been declared both by Oldenberg and himself.³³ He admitted that Franke had shed further light on the manner of composition of the author of the Dv, and that the evidence produced showed that the author of the Dv was strongly influenced by the ideas of the *Buddhavaṃsa*, the *Cariyāpīṭaka* and the *Jātaka*, the metrical diction of which was familiar to his feelings.³⁴ Earlier he had expressed the view that the author of the Dv had confined himself especially to the material that was already in Pāli in the Ak, viz. the verses interspersed throughout.³⁵ He now concluded that the SAKMv had probably far less Pāli verses than he originally imagined.

But the main contention of Franke that the Dv, the Sp, and the Mv were not based on another source Geiger refused to accept. The indebtedness of the Dv for its forms of expression to the Pāli Canon was not sufficient proof to conclude that the Dv was independent of the SAKMv. Such verses and pieces of verses which Franke quoted covered only a small part of the Dv. The authors of the Sp and the Mv could not have merely rewritten the Dv, as both the Sp and the Mv contained considerable fresh material, both new matter on old topics as well as entirely new episodes. The Sp made it clear that it was based on a Sinhalese work.³⁶ The Vap was definite that the Mv was based on the SAKMv compiled by the dwellers of the Mahāvihāra.³⁷ The Dv in arrangement and subject matter was closely related to these two works, while the Dv and the Mv covered the same period of Ceylon history.

In 1912 Geiger expressed once more the views he held with regard to the ancient historical tradition of Ceylon.³⁸ There was at the close of the fourth

31. Journal of the Pali Text Society, 1908, p. 1.

32. *Noch einmal Dīpavaṃsa und Mahāvaṃsa. Zeitschrift D. Morgenl. Gesellsch.* Vol. LXIII, p. 540.

33. D. and M., p. 66.

34. *Zweifellos lebte der Dīp-Verfasser sehr in den Ideenkreisen dieser Werke, und deren Melrische Diktion war seinem Empfinden etwas sehr Vertrautes.* *Wiener Zeitschrift* XXI, p. 233.

35. D. and M., p. 69. See also p. 64.

36. *Samantapāsādikā.* Ed. by J. Takakusu. London. P.T.S., 1924. p. 2.

37. Vap, p. 42.

38. *The Mahāvaṃsa.* Eng. Trs., p. x

century A.D. a sort of chronicle of the history of the island from its legendary beginnings onwards. It constituted a part of the *Aṭṭhakathā* or the old commentary literature on the Buddhist canonical writings, which formed the basis of the later Pāli commentaries. It was, like the *Aṭṭhakathā*, composed in old-Sinhalese prose probably mingled with verses in the Pāli language. Recensions of this *Aṭṭhakathā*, differing only in details, existed in the Mahāvihāra and in other monasteries.³⁹ It originally came down only to the arrival of Mahinda in Ceylon, and was continued most probably down to the time of Mahāsena, with whose reign both the Dv and the Mv came to an end. The Dv, composed at the close of the fourth century, presented the first clumsy redaction in Pāli verse. It is the *Mahāvaṃsa* of the ancients referred to at the beginning of the Mv. The Mv is a new treatment of the subject, but shows greater skill in the employment of the Pāli language. It is a more artistic composition and makes a more liberal use of the material contained in the original work.

It is clear that in this summary Geiger's views differ to some extent from the conclusions he gave in *The Dīpavaṃsa and Mahāvaṃsa*. Though he does not deny the indebtedness of the author of the Sp and the Mv to the SAKMv, he regards here the Mv "as a conscious and intentional rearrangement of the Dv, as a sort of commentary to this latter"; and thinks that "the quotation of the Mahāvaṃsa of the ancients in the proemium of our Mah. refers precisely to the Dīp." Further he expresses the view that the Sp is based on the Dv.⁴⁰

These are up to a point the views expressed by Franke. But Geiger seems to have come to these conclusions from an article written by Fleet in which he translated the passage in the *Cūlavāṃsa* xxxviii, 59, *datvā saḥassam dīpetum Dīpavaṃsam samādisi* as "he (King Dhātusena) bestowed a thousand (pieces of gold) and gave orders to write a dīpikā on the *Dīpavaṃsa*," and inferred that the *dīpikā* meant the *Mahāvaṃsa*.⁴¹ Geiger, however, found later that he had made a mistake in accepting this conclusion. "I was myself (Mhvs. trsl. p. xif) inclined to follow him," he wrote. "But I have since had scruples. Verses 58-59⁴² belong in construction most closely together. Consequently *dīpetum Dīpavaṃsam* must refer to an action which took place within the framework of a festival. That, however, can only have been

39. E.g. *The Uttavāvihāra Aṭṭhakathā.*

40. *The Mahāvaṃsa.* Eng. Trs., p. xi.

41. J. R. A. S., 1909, p. 5.

42. "After having made an image of the great Thera Mahinda he brought it to the spot where the Thera's body had been burnt, to organize there at great cost a sacrificial festival. He gave orders, with the outlay of thousand gold pieces, for the interpretation of the *Dīpavaṃsa* and commanded sugar to be distributed among the bhikkhus dwelling there."

a reading of the *Dīpavaṃsa*, perhaps with historical and legendary explanations, but not the composition of so voluminous a work as the *Mahāvāṃsa*.⁴³ Thus we have to go back once more to his original view expressed in *The Dīpavaṃsa and Mahāvāṃsa* that the Sp and the Mv were based not on the Dv but on the SAKMv.

Adikaram adds considerably to our knowledge of the Sinhalese commentaries of which the SAKMv formed a part. Though his subject is "State of Buddhism in Ceylon as revealed by the Pāli Commentaries of the Fifth Century A.D.", he supplies his readers with much information on the sources of these Pāli works, the Sinhalese commentaries, their nature and contents. His work clarifies certain obscure points and enables one to draw a few conclusions different from those that have been expressed so far with regard to the early historical tradition of Ceylon.⁴⁴

Dealing with the nature of the Sinhalese commentaries, Adikaram points out that Buddhaghosa mentions that a part of his work of translation consisted of the removal of errors and of repetitions.⁴⁵ He draws attention also to the fact that these commentaries though written in Sinhalese contained Pāli verses.⁴⁶ Thus the defect of repetition and the practice of the inclusion of Pāli verses were not features peculiar to the SAKMv.

Adikaram agrees with Oldenberg and Geiger that the term *Porāṇā* referred to the *Porāṇatthakathā*.⁴⁷ He examines in detail the numerous references to the *Porāṇā* in the Commentaries and comes to the conclusion that it is a definite commentary. This means he accepts the view of Oldenberg and Geiger that the SAKMv was at first really a part of the *Porāṇatthakathā* till probably, as Geiger suggests, it broke its bounds and developed into an independent work.⁴⁸

According to Adikaram the *Sīhala Mahāṭṭhakathā* contained expositions on the entire *Tiṭṭhaka*. There were in addition separate commentaries on the different sections such as the *Vinaya*.⁴⁹ From this one may conclude

43. The *Cūlavāṃsa*, I., p. 35, n. 2.

44. One may not always agree with Adikaram's conclusions on matters of Ceylon history, but one cannot help noticing the patient and thorough manner he had examined his material and the extent of the fresh light he has shed on the ancient commentaries.

45. Adikaram: *Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon* p. 11.

46. *Ibid.* p. 14.

47. *Ibid.* pp. 16, 22 and xvii.

48. D. and M., p. 64.

49. Adikaram, p. 13. This probably explains how the Pāli Commentaries were able to refer to one another. This could not have been possible had they not been based on earlier Sinhalese Commentaries.

that the Sp is a translation not of the SAKMv as Geiger imagined but of the introduction to the Sinhalese *Vinayattakathā*.⁵⁰

Other available evidence supports this view. The Vap mentions a few instances where the *Vinayattakathā* either differed from, or gave information not contained in, the SAKMv. The account of Asoka's benefactions is said to have been drawn not from the SAKMv but from the VAK. It is also given in the Sp.⁵¹ The VAK is said to have used the word *rohitamiga* for the word *gokanna* in the Mv. So does the Sp.⁵² The VAK says that in Suvannabhūmi after the preaching of the *Brahmajāla Suttanta* 1,500 daughters of noble families received the *pabbajjā* while the SAKMv gave the number as 1,350. The Sp also gives the number as 1,500.⁵³

Besides, as Adikaram points out,⁵⁴ the Sp appears at least in one part to be a literal translation of its original Sinhalese text. It gives a list of teachers who handed down the *Vinaya* from the time of Mahinda "up to the present day" (*yāva ajjatanā*).⁵⁵ None of these teachers belongs to the period after the first century A.D. It is the Sinhalese commentaries that were put into writing during the first century A.D., and not the Sp which Buddhaghosa wrote in the fifth century A.D. And if we are to draw any inference from the list of teachers who handed down the *Vinaya*, the original work on which the Sp was based appears to be no other than the *Vinayattakathā*.

Malalasekera helped the study of the Mv further by the publication of a critical edition with an introduction and notes of the Pāli text of the *Vamsatthapakāsinī*, which not only gives some idea of its main source, the SAKMv, but also refers to many other works which give us an insight into the growth of the early historical tradition of Ceylon.⁵⁶

50. Malalasekera who owes much to Adikaram's work also suggests this as a probability. Vap lxviii.

51. D. and M., p. 48. Sp I., p. 52. Vap, p. 207. Mv V, 83. VAK = *Vinayattakathā*.

52. D. and M., p. 49. Sp I., p. 73. Vap, p. 329. Mv xiv, 3.

53. Mv xii., 53. Sp I., p. 69. Vap, p. 319. D. and M., p. 48.

54. Adikaram, p. 3.

55. Sp I., p. 62.

56. Malalasekera sheds little fresh light on the sources and the contents of the Vap or on its authorship either in his Introduction or Notes to the Vap. He ignores the controversy between Geiger and Franke which brought out much new information on the manner of the construction of the Dv. He does not show how far the views of scholars like Geiger need revision in the light of the new material that has been collected in works like Przyluski's *Le Concile de Rājagṛha* and *La Légende de l'Empereur Asoka*. He does not go sufficiently into the implications of the detailed comparisons of the Mv accounts with those in the Sp and the Dv that were given in the Thesis on which this article is based. These drawbacks, however, do not take away the merits of his edition of the Pāli Text with its variant readings and comments on them which make a valuable contribution to the study of the Mv.

In his Introduction to the Vap Malalasekera deals with many of the problems discussed by Oldenberg, Geiger and Adikaram. He rejects their view that the *Porāṇā* were a definite commentary. He prefers to hold on to the view he expressed many years ago⁵⁷ that they are merely sayings of the ancients quoted by different writers. There is undoubtedly some ground for his view. The quotations from the *Porāṇā* clearly deal with a large variety of subjects. He could have added that in the *Saddhamma Saṅgaha*⁵⁸ even verses which occur in the *Cūlavamsa* dealing with events of the fifth century A.D. are called sayings of the ancients. But this and the arguments he puts forward do not express anything more than a contrary view. They do not prove that the commentary called the *Porāṇatthakathā* did not include the older sayings of the ancients.⁵⁹

Malalasekera disagrees with Geiger to some extent also in regard to the relationship between the SAKMv and the Mv. "Mahānāma," wrote Geiger who appears to have based his view on the evidence of the Vap, "could not yet rise quite above his material. He confined himself to his source to the best of his power. It is clear that certain sections in the M. are merely versifications of the corresponding passage in the original work. Often Mahānāma adopted the Pāli verses of the original unchanged into his work, especially if they bore an authoritative character. That is the case, for example, where the D. and M. agree word for word. Mahānāma is no genius, and his work is not a literary performance of the first rank; nevertheless the M. signifies in comparison with the D., a great aesthetic advance."⁶⁰ But says Malalasekera, "The Tikā would also have us believe that the translation (into Pāli) followed the original in its subject matter, if not word for word, at least very closely, and that only the style was changed. This, however, is not quite the case, as will appear in the sequel, and the Mv. should be considered rather as an adaptation, a work of an eclectic character, the author having obtained his material from diverse sources, sifted them with great care and attention to accuracy of detail, according to his own lights."⁶¹

57. *Pāli Literature of Ceylon*, p. 92. This work will be referred to hereafter by the abbreviation P.L.C.

58. *Journal of the Pāli Society* 1890, p. 57.

59. Malalasekera repeats exhaustively but briefly what Adikaram says on the subject, (Vap, p. lxi); but he does not meet adequately the arguments put forward by Geiger and Adikaram for their view. He sees a contradiction in Geiger who believed the SAKMv was an independent work and also identified it with the *Porāṇatthakathā* which contained matter other than historical. It has been shown already that this contradiction is only apparent and not real. Under these circumstances one cannot help preferring the view of Oldenberg, Geiger and Adikaram who appear to have made a more thorough study of the subject. See also Adikaram (p. 22) for his reasons for disagreement with Malalasekera.

60. D. and M., p. 69. See also p. 63.

61. Vap, p. lvii.

The last phrase 'according to his own lights' may cover much. The author of the Mv no doubt attempted to give a complete account lacking nothing. He avoided in his statements diffuseness, over-condensation, and repetitions and sometimes used other sources to correct and amplify his account.⁶² But a close examination of his work makes it clear that he did not sift his material with such great care and attention to accuracy of detail⁶³ and, as Geiger has shown, that he did not deviate much from his original.

One of the causes that led Malalasekera to come to his view appears to have been the assumption that the double versions given in the Dv were both derived from the SAKMv.⁶⁴ That he took this for granted is not surprising as both Oldenberg and Geiger did not think such an assumption unjustifiable. But they were guarded in their statements. "A great part of the *Dīpavamsa*," said Oldenberg, "has the appearance not of an independent continuous work, but of a composition of such single stanzas extracted from a work or works like that *Aṭṭhakathā*."⁶⁵ "We may assume," wrote Geiger, "that the original work may have already contained different recensions, which were indebted for their origin to oral tradition, and that they had been placed directly side by side in order to give the whole content of the tradition; but there remains the other possibility that the compiler of the Dv as well as the Ak M. of the Mahāvihāra from which Mahānāma's work was produced, also made use of a second source."⁶⁶

Thus according to Geiger it is possible that a considerable amount of the adaptation, which Malalasekera attributes to the author of the Mv, was the work of the authors of the SAKMv themselves. This seems to have been the case, as the Vap does not seem to refer to such double versions in the SAKMv. The repetitions there seem to have been of a different type. "We are able from the MT. to form an idea," wrote Geiger, "of the way in which such repetitions came occasionally to be made. Messages were given most probably in the same words at the sending of the order as at the delivery of the message. Thus, e.g. in M. 31, 15 Sonuttara was sent by the monastery to fetch from the Nāga king the relics of the Buddha that had been guarded by him. It is said that this corresponded with a prophecy of the Buddha, who at his death ordered that a *doṇa* should be deposited in Lankā in the Mahāthupa with his

62. Mv I, pp. 1-4. Vap, p. 319.

63. A close examination of the Mv shows that its author has put together accounts which do not always agree in matters of detail.

64. Vap, p. lx.

65. The *Dīpavamsa*, p. 6. The italics are not in the original.

66. D. and M., p. 68. Rhys Davids wrote of the Dv in J.R.A.S., 1905, p. 391: "It is the outcome of a fairly large number of previous works."

relics. When Soṇuttara came to the Nāga king, it says in M. 31, 48 merely *vatvādhikāram*, that he executed the order. But in the T. (413, 22)⁶⁷ the words were again repeated: *devinda, mama atthasū sarīradhātudomesu ekaṃ donaṃ Lankādīpē Mahāthūpē nidhānāya bhavissati*.

"The following is another example. As Duṭṭhagāmaṇi felt his end drawing near, he ordered that his bed should be carried out, so that he could once more see the masterpieces of his life, the Lohapāsāda and the Mahāthūpa. Many monks came there in order to get news of the condition of the sick man. Among them the king missed the Thera Puttābhaya. The MT. (424, 3 to M. 32, 11) relates the following story with reference to this. He had been one of the ten heroes of Duṭṭhagāmaṇi and after the defeat of the Damiḷa had become a monk, in order to fight against a still worse foe, against 'desire.' This is merely a repetition of the story already related in M. 26, 2, 4. Such a repetition may also have been found in the Ak.

"In a similar way, the history of Bhātiya and his visit to the relic chamber of the Mahāthūpa is anticipated (MT. 401, 11)⁶⁹ with reference to its description (according to M. 30, 97), and recurs in M. 34, 49 in the history of the reign of this king."⁷⁰

All this tends to show that there is no definite evidence for assuming that these double versions of the Dv were derived from the SAKMv, and it seems better to accept with Geiger the judgment of the Vap that the author of the Mv followed the original very closely in its subject matter and that only the style was changed.

What then can we conclude about the origins of the Dv, the Sp, the Mv, and the SAKMv? That the Mv was based on a Sinhalese chronicle is beyond doubt in spite of the assertion of Franke. The author of the Vap says that the Sinhalese chronicle, the SAKMv, also called the *Porāṇatthakathā*, belonged to the Mahāvihāra, and was a prose work in the Sinhalese dialect.⁷¹ He makes it clear that the *Mahāvamsa* of the ancients referred to in the Pāli Mv is this work and that it contained the faults of over-condensation, prolixity and repetition.⁷²

Similarly the Sp too was based on a Sinhalese work. Its author says that its chief source was the *Mahātthakathā*.⁷³ He wrote this Pāli work as the

67. Vap, p. 570.

68. Vap, p. 586.

69. Vap, p. 548.

70. D. and M., p. 67.

71. Vap, pp. 36, 42, 48.

72. *Ibid.* p. 46.

73. Sp, p. 2.

explanations in the language of the Sihaladīpa were of no avail to the bhikkhus outside the island. The section of the *Mahātthakathā* on which it was based, as already shown, appears to have been the *Vinayatthakathā*.

The sources of the Sp and the Mv, though different, handed down the same tradition as they both belonged to the Mahāvihāra.⁷⁴ In fact a close examination of these two Pāli works shows that the two accounts are very similar and rarely contradict each other. The Mv certainly gives more information about most matters dealt with in the Sp, but its accounts are as a rule only expanded versions of the material in the latter work. There is also sometimes verbal agreement between the Sp and the Mv, and in more than one case Pāli verses in the Sp, which form a definite part of the story and cannot be excluded, are incorporated in the Mv even without a verbal change.⁷⁵

Was the Dv similarly based on a Sinhalese work? The Dv itself says nothing about its source. But Oldenberg and Geiger, as we have seen, believed that it was based on the SAKMv of the Mahāvihāra, though both of them admitted the possibility that the Dv may owe some of its material to other sources. On the other hand Franke, though he did not question the view that the Dv belonged to the Mahāvihāra, believed it to be an independent work based on no other written source.

Does Franke in fact contradict Oldenberg and Geiger? Oldenberg was of opinion that the Dv was not a continuous work but a composition of single stanzas extracted from a work or works like the *Atthakathā*. He also attributed the repetitions and omissions to this peculiar method of compilation.⁷⁶ Geiger thought that the author of the Dv confined himself especially to the material that was already in Pāli in the *Atthakathā*, interspersed throughout. Thus in their opinion the Dv was not an independent work but a stringing together of fragments from the SAKMv. In other words the sections thus strung together could have been original compositions.⁷⁷

These, according to Geiger, seem to have formed the oldest part of the SAKMv and a part of the oral tradition. "The oldest part," says Geiger, "reaches back to monastic tradition, which originally was carried on from mouth to mouth. Oral tradition without doubt played an important part in the history of ancient Buddhism in Ceylon. Each tradition may have been composed of legends, following particular events and personalities: thus, for example, the visit of Buddha to the Island, the mission of Mahinda, the arrival of the sacred Bo-tree. A part of these legends were written in Pāli verse;

74. D. and M., pp. 49 and 70.

75. *Ibid.* pp. 70-73.

76. The *Dīpavamsa*, p. 6.

77. D. and M., p. 5.

they form the backbone of the whole story ; the reciter would thus with their help retain in his memory the whole course of the action. The verses were bound together by independent prose, in the ancient Sinhalese tongue."⁷⁸ Thus the disagreement between Franke on the one hand and Oldenberg and Geiger on the other on this point seems to be more apparent than real.

But were all these Pāli verses in the Dv, as Oldenberg and Geiger imagined, extracted from the SAKMv ? Geiger himself, as noticed earlier, admitted the possibility that the SAKMv had fewer Pāli verses than he originally imagined. But cannot one go further and ask whether the Dv was based on the SAKMv at all ? Is it not possible that it, or at least most of it, was based on oral tradition and not on the SAKMv ?

There is no doubt, as Oldenberg and Geiger have shown, that there is a great similarity between the Dv on the one hand and the Sp and the Mv on the other. The Mv in its material is similar to the Dv and generally follows the order of the Dv, though its accounts are much longer and fuller. The Sp, the earlier work, is even closer to the Dv in language and at times in the arrangement of matter. Further some of the verses found interspersed in the Sp and the Vap as well as some verses in the Mv are identical with, or almost the same as, some in the Dv, the differences of those in the Sp being due to improvements in language and metre. Besides the Dv covers the same period of time, and like the Mv ends with Mahāsena in whose reign the persecution of the bhikkhus of the Mahāvihāra and the destruction of some of its buildings probably led to the conclusion of the first part of the Mv.

But does it necessarily follow from all this that the Dv too was based on the SAKMv ? The *Aṭṭhakathā Mahāvamsa* of the Uttaravihāra,⁷⁹ as Geiger has shown from the evidence drawn from the Vap, does not seem to have been very different from the SAKMv except in matters of detail.⁸⁰ Hence could not the Dv have been a chronicle of some other *vihāra* like the Thūpārāma, which was closely associated with the Mahāvihāra and probably suffered equally from the persecution of Mahāsena ? In fact the Dv seems to attach greater importance to the Thūpārāma than the Mahāvihāra.⁸¹

The similarity of many verses in the Dv and the Mv is natural as both the Dv and the SAKMv seem to have followed a common oral tradition at least to the coming of Mahinda.⁸² But to judge from the *Uttaravihāra*

78. D. and M., p. 65.

79. The Abhayagiri Vihāra.

80. D. and M., p. 50.

81. Cf. Dv xv, 34; xvii, 1 (also Sp, p. 99) with Mv xv, 51. Malalasekera quotes an extract from Nevill who suggests that the Dv was a work of the nuns and not of the Mahāvihāra. P.L.C., p. 135. See also *Epigraphia Zeylanica* iv. p. 278.

82. D. and M., p. 64.

Aṭṭhakathā there is no reason why there should not be similarity in verses in later accounts too.⁸³ The only verses that need be considered are those which are identical or very similar.⁸⁴ The author of the Sp, or more probably the author of the *Vinayaṭṭhakathā*, knew the Dv as he quotes from it.⁸⁵ Hence it is not strange if he borrowed any verses from the Dv, even if it is assumed for the moment that he did not obtain the verses from oral tradition common to the many *vihāras*. All the verses common to the Dv and the Mv in the earlier chapters are also common to the Sp.⁸⁶ Since the author of the Mv knew the *Vinayaṭṭhakathā* and made use of it even to correct the SAKMv, he could have borrowed them from the VAK or the Sp, if it is again assumed that the SAKMv did not obtain the common verses from oral tradition. Two such verses, not common to the Sp, in a later chapter deal with the writing down of the Pāli Canon and the Commentaries. These, as Geiger points out, along with two other verses give "the impression that they were officially stamped by tradition, and therefore the words were fixed in the same way for the author of the Dv as for the author of the M."⁸⁷ The other verses common to the Dv and the Mv occur in one chapter of the Dv in a second version which appears to have been borrowed along with other second versions in the Dv from another source.⁸⁸ These second versions appear to be closer to the Mv than the rest, and may have been borrowed from the Mahāvihāra itself or from some other *vihāra* of the Theravādins.

In fact the Sp (or the Vak) seems to look upon the Dv as a work distinct from the *Porāṇaṭṭhakathā*. The Sp has three quotations from the *Porāṇā*. The first of these gives a list of the theras of Ceylon who handed down the *Vinaya*.⁸⁹ The second and the third deal with the coming of Mahinda⁹⁰ and these are also found in the Dv.⁹¹ There are some more quotations in the Sp, but they are said to be from the Dv.⁹² They deal with the relations between Asoka and Devānaṃpiya Tissa, a subject not included in the contents

83. *Ibid.* pp. 50, 51, 63.

84. Geiger believed the verses common to the Dv and the Mv were borrowed by each from the SAKMv.

85. Sp, p. 75.

86. Mv iv, 57, 58. xi, 28, 29. xi, 31b. xi, 34. xiv, 8.

Dv iv, 49. v, 22. xi, 33. xii, 1. xii, 4a. xii, 5. xii, 51.

Sp, pp. 33-35. p. 75. p. 76. p. 76. p. 74.

87. D. and M., p. 16.

88. Dv xxi, 21b, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 and 33, 51, 56a, 66.

Mv xxxvi, 4a. xxxv, 115, 123. xxxvi, 1, 6, 18 and 19, 57, 105. xxxvii, 1.

89. Sp, p. 62. This list appears also in the *Parivāra* (p. 2), but not in the Dv though it seems to have formed a part of it once. See Dv, p. 204.

90. Sp, pp. 70, 71.

91. Dv xii, pp. 12-13 and 33-37.

92. Sp, pp. 75-76.

recorded in the first three lines of the Dv, which are common to the *Porāṇā*. If the Dv merely gave extracts from or reproduced in Pāli what was already in the *Porāṇāṭṭhakathā*, it is strange that the Sp should give the *Porāṇā* as the source for two passages contained also in the Dv and attribute the other quotations to the Dv.

The *Kathāvatthupakarana* also quotes once from the Dv, but what it extracts is the passage about the heretical schools which finds no mention in the Sp or the Mv and thus probably formed no part of the SAKMv or the other works of the Mahāvihāra.⁹³

There is still another reason for thinking that the Dv originally was not based on the Sinhalese works on which the Sp and the Mv depended. It clearly belongs to an earlier stratum of tradition. Almost all the accounts in it are much shorter, and it does not refer at all to some of the episodes related in the Sp and the Mv. It mentions fewer places as visited by the Buddha. It makes no reference to Tissa, the brother of Asoka, and says that Asoka killed all his brothers. It knows of a western route from India to Ceylon, but not an eastern route like the Sp and the Mv. It refers to buildings not mentioned in the Mv, and sometimes credits a building to a king other than the one mentioned in the Mv.

The Dv has also traditions about the death of the Buddha and of the Third Buddhist Council which appear to show that it assumed dates for the death of the Buddha and Asoka's consecration different from those of the Sp and the Mv according to which Buddha died on the full-moon day of Vesākḥā and Asoka was consecrated 218 years after the Parinibbāṇa. The statement in the Dv that Mahinda arrived 236 years after the death of the Buddha⁹⁴ does not agree with another that the first consecration of Devānampiya Tissa took place also in the 237th year.⁹⁵ These two statements can be reconciled only if it is assumed that the Buddha died not on the full-moon day of Vesākḥā, but on some other date like the 8th day of the second half of Kattika (September-October), which the Sārvastivādins considered to be the date of the Parinibbāṇa.⁹⁶ The Dv traditions that the Third Buddhist Council took place 118 years after the death of the Buddha⁹⁷ seem to assume that Asoka was consecrated only a hundred years later. This again is a view held in the Sārvastivādin works, the *Dīvyāvadāna* and the *Avadāna Sataka*.⁹⁸ Do these dates too belong to an earlier stratum of tradition?

93. J.P.T.S., 1909, p. 3; Dv v, 30-33; *Kathāvatthu Aṭṭhakathā*, p. 123.

94. Dv xv, 71; xii, 44; xvii, 88.

95. *Ibid.* xxvii, 78.

96. J.R.A.S., 1909, p. 1. Mv Eng. Trs., p. xxxi.

97. Dv I, 24, 25; V, 55-59.

98. E. J. Thomas: *Theravādin and Sārvastivādin Dates of the Nirvāṇa*. B. C. Law Volume, pp. 18-20.

The Dv was probably not even a work of the Mahāvihāra. The author of the Vap takes great pains to note differences between the Mv and other works such as the *Aṭṭhakathā*. He points out, for instance, that the Uttara-vihāra *Aṭṭhakathā* leaves out King Cetiya from the genealogy of the Buddha.⁹⁹ The *Aṭṭhakathā* says that Paṇḍukābhaya sojourned on the Dolapabbata five years and on the Ariṭṭhapabbata six years whereas the Mv gives four and seven years.¹⁰⁰ He even refers to verbal differences. He says for the phrase *divam gato* the *Aṭṭhakathā* has *kālam akāsi devalokam gato*.¹⁰¹ The *Vinayaṭṭhakathā* uses *visajjesi* in place of *adāsi*.¹⁰² But the author of the Vap never refers to the differences between the Dv and the Mv. He mentions a *Dīpavamsa Aṭṭhakathā*,¹⁰³ but, like the author of the Mv,¹⁰⁴ never refers to the Dv itself. If the Dv was based on even an older tradition of the Mahāvihāra it is likely that the author of the Vap would have made some reference to it.

Thus the Dv seems to be an independent work with little or no direct connection with the SAKMv. But it does not follow, as Franke assumed, that it stands on its own tottering feet. Similarly all the accounts in the SAKMv need not necessarily be inventions of its authors. As Franke himself pointed out the language of the Dv clearly show the influence of the *Jātaka*, *Cariyāpīṭaka* and the *Buddhavamsa*. A close examination of the Dv, the Sp and the Mv show that some of the episodes and stories in them such as those of Vijaya, Paṇḍukābhaya and Nigrodha are based on Jātakas while certain other accounts show that they have been amplified or embellished with details from these tales.

The ancient historical tradition of Ceylon reveals also the influence of many other Pāli works. The chief of them are the *Mahāvagga* and the *Cullavagga* of the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, the Mahāparinibbāṇa Suttanta of the *Dīgha Nikāya* and the Pāli Commentaries.

Another work that contains some of the traditions common to the chronicles of Ceylon is the *Aśokāvadāna*. A considerable portion of the material in the Dv, the Sp and the Mv appears to have been borrowed from it or from other sources utilized by the authors of this work. The *Aśokāvadāna* is also a work which has grown with time. The original accounts in it have been amplified

99. Mv ii, 3; Vap, p. 125.

100. Mv x, 45; Vap, pp. 287 and 290.

101. Mv viii, 3; Vap, p. 268.

102. Mv v, 83; Vap, p. 207.

103. This is clearly not the Dv as the references are not to its contents.

104. Geiger believed that the author of the Mv was familiar with the Dv. "That the Dv was known to the author of the Mv is quite certain, and it is not at all unlikely that he, here and there, borrowed from it, considering the Indian's way of working in such cases." D. and M., p. 16. There is no conclusive evidence for such an assumption.

and new episodes have been added to it. The Sp and the Mv show that some of the legends included in the later forms of this work were known in Ceylon.

What conclusions may we draw from all this about the growth of the ancient historical tradition of Ceylon?

The Dv undoubtedly contains the oldest form of the tradition. But it is not the work of one author or of a single century. As Oldenberg and Geiger point out it is clearly a compilation. The different parts have been composed by different persons at different times. This is evident from the variety in style. Some passages, if the interpolations are omitted, are free from irregularities in metre and mistakes in grammar. Some accounts have one part in one metre and another in another metre. Some, like the accounts of Vijaya give only a summary of the story. Others, like the visits of the Buddha and the bringing of the Bo-tree, are narrated in greater detail. Some passages give only the speeches without any mention of the speakers, while others, which give the speakers, seem to represent a more developed form of such speeches. The double accounts seem to be derived from two different sources. The first accounts probably belonged to the vihāra that produced the Dv, while the second accounts belonged to another. The memory verses¹⁰⁵ show how some of the stories were remembered before the ballads themselves were composed. Some parts, such as the account of the life of the Buddha, seem to have been based on Pāli prose passages of the Canon. It is often quite clear that couplets have been introduced to connect independent ballads or parts of ballads. Most of the sentences expressed in a single line, many lines occurring in sentences which are expressed in three lines, many lines either metrically or grammatically wrong, and many lines which obviously consist of commentarial matter may have been added to the original verses at the time of compilation or even later.¹⁰⁶

The Dv appears to have existed before the *Vinayaṭṭhakathā* was written in the first century A.D. But at that time the narrative is not likely to have extended much beyond the introduction of Buddhism to the island. Such a work could have been either made up from oral tradition or extracted, as Oldenberg and Geiger imagined, from one or more written sources. Obviously the rest must have been added to this nucleus either from time to time or about the fourth century in which the last king referred to in it lived. Even if the additions were made still later the material itself is not likely to have belonged to a period later than the fourth century.¹⁰⁷

105. D. and M., p. 8.

106. See also D. and M., pp. 5-26, 66.

107. For the views of Oldenberg and Geiger, see D. and M., p. 43.

The different parts of the Dv may be further apportioned to different centuries. Some sections, like the visits of the Buddha may belong to the first century B.C.¹⁰⁸ The predictions about the buildings of the Mahāvihāra by Mahinda may belong to the second half of the first century A.D. or even later as the account is fuller than that in the Sp which was based on the *Vinayaṭṭhakathā* probably written not earlier than the middle of the first century A.D. Perhaps the most that can be concluded at present is that the contents of the Dv range from the first century B.C. to the fourth century A.D.

The work that seems to come next to the Dv is the SAKMv. As Geiger points out, "This 'Mahāvamsa of the ancients' is certainly not a work completed at one time; it took the form in which Mahānāma found it, quite gradually in the course of generations. New episodes were always being added on, so that in time it assumed more and more the character of a chronicle."¹⁰⁹

If the view of Oldenberg, Geiger and Adikāram is accepted that that the term *Porāṇā* referred to a definite *Atthakathā*, it is clear that the SAKMv existed when the *Vinayaṭṭhakathā* was written. This, in its original form, may have dealt only with the topics mentioned in the proem of the Dv: the visits of the Buddha, the bringing of the relics and of the Bo-tree, of Buddhism and the Pāli Canon and the *Atthakathā* and the coming of Vijaya.¹¹⁰ But as far as it can be judged from the evidence in the Vap, which shows that the SAKMv did not differ much from the Mv, its author does not seem to have merely reproduced in Sinhalese the oral tradition in the form found in the Dv, though he often keeps to the original language and quotes Pāli verses, but appears to have revised and added to it in accordance with the new information that was available to him.

This first part was probably written down about the time of Vaṭṭagāmaṇi Abhaya in whose reign, according to the Dv and the Mv the Sinhalese Commentaries were written down.¹¹¹ According to the *Nikāya Saṅgraha*¹¹² the writing was done at Aluvihāre near Mātālē after the famine that followed the rebellion of the Brahmin Tissa. The rest of the Chronicle must have been written from time to time by different persons in the Mahāvihāra. The work of adding seems to have continued even after the Mv was composed.¹¹³

108. The fact that the language of some parts of the Dv has been influenced by the *Buddhāvamsa* and the *Cariyāpīṭaka* unfortunately is of no assistance to get at the earliest possible date of the earliest ballads as no serious attempt has yet been made to fix the dates of these works.

109. D. and M., p. 66; See also Vap, p. lix.

110. D. and M., p. 69. This can also be assumed from the fact that the Sp quotes from the Dv in dealing with a topic outside these contents. Buddhaghosa need not have done this. The author of the VAK was no doubt responsible for it.

111. Dv xx, 20-21; Mv xxxiii, 102b-104a.

112. Colombo, 1908, p. 10.

113. D. and M., p. 27.

The *Vinayaṭṭhakathā* comes next in order. Its author knew the *Porāṇā* as well as the *Dv.* He borrowed material either oral or written from other sources too.¹¹⁴ According to Adikaram this work appears to have been written in the latter half of the first century A.D. as the phrase *yāva ajjatanā* already referred to applies to about this period of time.¹¹⁵

The *Samantapāsādikā*,¹¹⁶ the Pāli Commentary, the introduction of which gives an account of the early history of Ceylon, seems to have been based on the *Vinayaṭṭhakathā*. It contains additional information not given in the *Mv.*¹¹⁷ According to Adikaram Buddhaghosa wrote it at the request of Buddhasiri having learnt the Sinhalese Commentaries from Buddhmitta while residing in the building erected to the east of the Mahāvihāra by the Minister Mahānigama.¹¹⁸ Buddhaghosa probably derived the additional information from the other commentaries he consulted. In addition to the *Mahāṭṭhakathā* he mentions two others by name, the *Mahāpaccarī* and the *Kurundi*. According to the *Sāratthadīpanī* and the *Vimativinodanī*, the others he consulted were the *Andhaka Aṭṭhakathā* and the *Sankhepa Aṭṭhakathā*, but according to the *Vajirabuddhi* they were the *Andhaka Aṭṭhakathā* and the *Cullapaccarī*.¹¹⁹

It is possible to fix more definitely the date of the *Samantapāsādikā*. According to Adikaram the writing of the Commentary was begun in the twentieth year and completed in the twenty-first year of King Sirinivāsa.¹²⁰ Sirinivāsa is an honorific applied at least to one other king.¹²¹ The king referred to here appears to be Mahānāma, who reigned from 409 to 431. Hence the date of the *Samantapāsādikā* may be said to be 430.

The *Mv* is undoubtedly a later work than the *Sp*, but there is no evidence in it to fix its date. In the *Vap*, though at times the names of other theras are given,¹²² the author of the *Mv* is always referred to as *ācariya*,¹²³ a term used for the writers of the Commentaries; but, in a colophon at the end of it, the author of the *Mv* is said to be Mahānāma of the *pariveṇa* built by the commander of the troops, Dīghasanda.¹²⁴ According to the *Mv* Dīghasanda

was the *senāpati* of Devānaṃpiya Tissa. He built a little *pāsāda* with eight great pillars for Mahinda, and this famous *pariveṇa*, the home of renowned men, was called the Dīghasandasenāpatipariveṇa.¹²⁵

. Who was this Mahānāma and when did he live? The only thera known to have lived in the Dīghasanda Pariveṇa is the uncle of King Dhātusena, but there is nothing to show that his name was Mahānāma.¹²⁶ A Mahānāma is mentioned in the *Cūlavamsa*,¹²⁷ but according to the readings given by Geiger he lived in the Dīghāṇa or Dīghāsana Vihāra. Therefore these two theras need not be the same person unless it can be proved that the Dīghāsana Vihāra and the Dīghasanda Pariveṇa are two different names for the same place.¹²⁸ Hence the evidence is insufficient to show that either of these was the author of the *Mv*.

Two questions arise from the foregoing. Was the statement in the colophon of the *Vap* based on a reliable tradition or was it a guess from the passages in the *Cūlavamsa* referred to in the previous paragraphs? If the latter is the case, the tradition is of no value. If the former is right, who was this Mahānāma? Is it valid to accept him, according to the Ceylon tradition, as the uncle of Dhātusena as well as the Mahānāma of the Dīghāsana Vihāra? This tradition seems to have no antiquity,¹²⁹ and only casts doubts on the authority of the statement in the colophon of the *Vap* itself.

Adikaram points out that a thera by the name of Mahānāma, while living in a vihāra built by the Minister Uttaramantī, wrote the *Saddhammappakāsini*, the Pāli Commentary on the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, in the third year after the death of Moggallāna I (*i.e.* about A.D. 516).¹³⁰ So far no one has connected this Mahānāma, who too lived in the sixth century A.D., with the authorship of the *Mv*.¹³¹

Geiger first placed the *Mv* in the last quarter of the fifth century on the ground that its author was the Mahānāma who lived in the reign of Moggallāna

114. *Ibid.* p. 48.

115. Adikaram, p. 87.

116. See D. and M., pp. 70-73, for a full analysis of this work. See also *Vap*, p. lxxvii.

117. *Vap*, pp. 146, 239 and lxxi.

118. Adikaram, p. 5.

119. J.R.A.S. Vol. V, p. 298. Adikaram p. 12.

120. Adikaram, p. 5. See also *Samantapāsādikā* (Sinhalese Edition) p. 427.

121. Adikaram, p. 9. The *Pāvakumbā Sirīta* of the fifteenth century refers to Mahānāma as Mahanam Sirinives (Mahānāma Sirinivāsa).

122. *Vap*, p. 47.

123. See D. and M., p. 32.

124. *Vap*, p. 687.

125. xv, 212-213.

126. *Cūlavamsa* xxxviii. 16.

127. *Ibid.* xxxix. 42.

128. For a discussion on this question, see D. and M., p. 41 and p. 140. In these it is assumed that Mahānāma lived in the Dīghasanda Pariveṇa and not in Dīghāṇa or Dīghāsana Vihāra. Geiger thinks that on grounds of age that these two cannot be the same but Malalasekera thinks otherwise. See also *Cūlavamsa*, Eng. Trs. I p. 48, n. 1. Geiger gives no reason for assuming that the Dīghasanda Pariveṇa and the Dīghāsana Vihāra are the same.

129. P.L.C., p. 140. *Vap*, p. civ.

130. Adikaram, p. 9.

131. Malalasekera in his P.L.C., p. 144, appears to identify this Mahānāma with the author of the *Vap*. It is not clear why he thinks that the two Mahānāmas mentioned in an inscription at Buddha Gayā are the authors of the *Mv* and *Vap* respectively.

in the Dighāsana Vihāra, which at that time was believed to be the Dighasanda Pariveṇa.¹³² Later he placed it in the sixth century depending on Fleet's translation of the passage in the *Cūlavamsa* referred to earlier.¹³³ Since he rejected later the view that this passage referred to the Mv, other evidence has to be sought to fix the date of the Mv.

The only piece of evidence available suggests that the Mv was composed some time after the visit of Fa Hsien to Ceylon at the beginning of the fifth century. There is no reference either in the Dv or the Sp to imply that the bowl of the Buddha was in Ceylon. According to Fa Hsien he learnt from an Indian in Ceylon that it was at first at Vaiśāli and then in Gandhāra. According to the Mv it was in Ceylon. Thus it is perhaps best to place the Mv in the sixth century, the date suggested by Geiger though on other grounds.¹³⁴

There is also no definite evidence to fix the date of the Vap. Geiger placed it between 1,000 and 1250. The author of the Vap lived after the reign of Dāṭhopa Tissa II (650-658), as he refers in his work to Dāṭhopa Tissa, the nephew.¹³⁵ The Vap was not later than the thirteenth century as its author does not seem to have known the later additions to the Mv while the author of the Pāli *Thūpavamsa*, which belongs to the thirteenth century, made use of the Vap. Geiger also took into account the possibility that the Vap was later than the *Mahābodhivamsa*. This made him place the Vap after 1000.¹³⁶

Malalasekera did not accept the view that the author of the Vap knew the *Mahābodhivamsa*.¹³⁷ This would place the Vap any time between 658 and 1250. But Malalasekera placed it at first in the seventh or eighth century on the belief that the Sinhalese sources on which the Vap was based disappeared not long after the Mv was written. He appears to have been influenced also by the Ceylon tradition which attributed the Vap too to Mahānāma, the author of the Mv. He did not agree that the same person was responsible for both these works, but he seems to have thought that the mistake was due to the fact that the Vap followed the Mv closely. But both these are assumptions which have yet to be established.

In the Vap Malalasekera places it in the eighth or ninth century,¹³⁸ since the author of the Mv is said to have lived in the sixth century and two centuries

132. D. and M., p. 42. The date is based on the reckoning that Buddha died in 544 B.C. and not 483 B.C.

133. xxxviii, 59. Mv Eng. Trs., p. xi.

134. D. and M., p. 32. *Indian Culture* I, p. 565, Louis Finot: Notes on the Sinhalese Tradition relating to Buddha's Relics.

135. Vap, p. 176.

136. D. and M., p. 32.

137. P.L.C., p. 143.

138. Vap, pp. civ-cix.

were sufficient for the development of the variant readings referred to in the Vap. He gives also additional arguments for placing it earlier than Geiger. He now thinks the fact that the author of the Mv was not the same as the author of the Vap does not preclude the possibility that the author of the Vap was also called Mahānāma. He then hints that the author of the Vap may be the second Mahānāma of the Buddha Gayā inscription, who is said to have been born in Ceylon.¹³⁹

Geiger pointed out that the name Sāmagalla mentioned in the Mv had changed into Moragalla when the Vap was written.¹⁴⁰ Earlier Malalasekera wrote: "It is clear that many years had elapsed between the original work and its *īkā*, sufficiently long to allow the name of a village to have undergone change."¹⁴¹ Now he says: "But this means nothing in point of time. We do not know the circumstances in which the change occurred; such a change may take place sometimes in one day, as happened, I believe, in the Great European War."¹⁴²

Malalasekera also points out that the *Mahābodhivamsa* attributed to the tenth century is in style more involved and more plentiful in ornamental epithets than the Vap, and therefore the Vap is likely to be older than the *Mahābodhivamsa*.¹⁴³

Malalasekera's attempt seems to be not so much to discover the date of the Vap as to maintain as far as possible the view taken earlier that it belonged to the seventh or eighth century. The fact that the author of the Mv was a person different from the author of the Vap certainly does not preclude the possibility of the author of the Vap being a Mahānāma. But what grounds are there to accept a tradition, first recorded by Turnour, that he was called Mahānāma? Can one connect the Mahānāmas of the Buddha Gayā inscription merely on the ground of the similarity of names and the fact that the second of them was born in Ceylon with the authorship of the Mv and the Vap? Could a name of a village have changed even in those times in a day? Can any other such instance be quoted? Does it necessarily follow that the Vap is older than the *Mahābodhivamsa* because the latter, a poem, is in style more involved and more plentiful in ornamental epithets?

Geiger, has shown that the first part of the *Cūlavamsa* was most probably composed not in the thirteenth century, as Malalasekera had suggested,¹⁴⁴ but at the end of the twelfth century or at the beginning of the

139. Vap, p. cv. *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* III, p. 274.

140. Mv xxxiii, 53; Vap, p. 616; D. and M. p. 33.

141. P.L.C., p. 143.

142. Vap, p. cv.

143. *Ibid.* p. cvii.

144. P.L.C., p. 215.

thirteenth.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, we may conclude that the Vap was probably written not earlier than the eighth century and not later than the twelfth century. Perhaps we may go further and say that in all probability it was written about the time of Parākramabāhu the Great (1153-1186) when the other *ṭikās* or sub-commentaries were written on the earlier commentaries of Buddhaghosa.¹⁴⁶ If we do that we shall have to go back closer to the view of Geiger rather than that of Malalasekera.

Thus we see that Geiger's *Dīpavaṃsa und Mahāvamsa* still continues to be the most complete and most reliable work on the subject of the ancient chronicles of Ceylon. The conclusions arrived at by Franke and Malalasekera which go against its views are hardly tenable. The modifications of his views made by Geiger himself in his Introduction to his English Translation of the Mv have to be rejected as they were based on an incorrect inference of Fleet.

But in the light of evidence now available a few of the conclusions of this work have to be revised. Adikaram has supplied evidence to conclude that the Sp was based on the *Vinayaṭṭhakathā* and not on the SAKMv. He has also supplied more definite dates for the *Vinayaṭṭhakathā* and the Sp, and thereby also for the SAKMv. Geiger's own research has shown that it is not possible to fix the date of the Mv from evidence from the *Cūlavamsa* even if the author of the Mv, as the colophon of the Vap says, was one Mahānāma who lived in the Dīghasanda Pariveṇa of the Mahāvihāra. Further the available evidence shows that the Dv was neither based on the SAKMv nor belonged to the Mahāvihāra as was inferred by Oldenberg and Geiger and generally accepted by other scholars on the basis of their arguments.

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145. Indian Historical Quarterly Vol. VI No. 2 p. 207.

146. P.L.C., pp. 190-193. Malalasekera's view that the Sinhalese sources on which the Vap was based disappeared not long after the Mv was written is not tenable. There is definite evidence to show that they existed in the tenth century and there is no reason to think that they did not exist in the thirteenth century. See J. de Lanerolle: *Simhala Sāhitya Lipi* p. 23.