Some Observations on Geiger’s Etymological Glossary of the Sinhalese Language

The Indo-Aryan philologists, particularly those working in New-Indian, owe a deep debt of gratitude to Prof. Wilhelm Geiger for the valuable information he has provided them in his Etymological Glossary of the Sinhalese Language. Seven years have passed since it was published by the Royal Asiatic Society of Ceylon, and it is quite natural that further light should have been thrown on the etymologies given by Prof. Geiger. Although most of his etymologies are quite acceptable, there are some which are not quite convincing and which need further investigation, e.g., kiyata and dakhuru-kanavā. One should be critical in examining the etymologies suggested by Prof. Geiger, so that the valuable researches he had been conducting in Sinhalese may be carried further. It is in that same spirit that the present writer makes a few observations on Geiger’s Etymological Glossary, and it must be stated in fairness to Prof. Geiger that even if a few shortcomings are found in his work, they do not detract much from the great value of his Glossary.

Atuṇa (plural and stem-form: atuṇa) ‘bowel’.

Although Prof. Geiger has equated this word to Pali antāni, Sanskrit antrāṇi, (Vedic āntrāṇi), it may be connected better with P. antagunā.

Apirisē, apirisēy without limit or end, entire.

Although P. aparisesa and Sk. aparikesa to which Geiger traces the above words do not present any phonological difficulty, Sinhalese a-pirisē and a-pirisēy seem to have been made of a (privative) + pirisē or pirisey (= P. Sk. pariccheda). In the oldest Sinhalese exegetical works, as well as in other classics, pirisey and pirisē nearly always correspond to P. Sk. pariccheda. e.g., upabhoga paribhoga bandun pirisey ‘(the limit or) extent of the objects of enjoyment and of (other) articles of use’ = P. upabhoga-paribhoga-bhandanam paricchedo, Dhampiyā-Atuva-Gāṭapadaya (DhpAGp) 67-18; sat paribhando pav pirise māṇḍa ‘in the middle of the (area) limited or surrounded by seven encircling ranges of mountains’, translation of P. satta-vīcimajjhe, Jātaka-Atuva-Gāṭapadaya (JAGp) 115-23. The Sinhalese verb which often corresponds to pirisē is porisīḍī ‘limits, defines’ (= P. poricchindati, Sk. pari + vichid), and the corresponding past participle passive is pirisun (= P. Sk. poricchinnā).
Ahanavā, asanavā 'to hear'.

Geiger connects these words with P. āsuṇāti, āsuṇoti, Sk. ā + ā śru, ā-śṛṇoti, and says: "We expect as the present stem *ahuṇa-, *asuṇa-. The stem aha-, asa- is, as Turner s.v. sunnu has shown, a new formation from the preterite stem āhu-, āsu- which is correctly derived from Sk. āśrutā, according to the proportion cha-: āhu- = gasa-: gāsu". Although the above explanation is quite possible, one might wonder whether the Present Indicative base asa- or aha- could not have been obtained from the Causative base asva-. Thus the Present Indicative 3rd Person Singular verb asayi 'he hears' may be an analogical formation from asvayi = P. assāveti, Sk. āśravayati (Cf. Chāndogya Upanishad 1.9). karavayī : karayī : maravayī : marayī : gasvayī : gasayī : asvayī : asayī. Asvayī meaning 'causes to hear, speaks, preaches' occurs besides asayī 'hears' from very early times. Cf. asva = P. sāvaya (DhpAGp 162-19—10th century).

Itiri, ituru "remaining, surplus, residual'.

Geiger traces both these words to P. Sk. uttara. Evidently the development he may have had in mind may be uttara > uturu > ituru (through dissimilation) > itiri (through assimilation). It is far more likely that itiri has developed from uttari-, or from uttarim as Prof. Helmer Smith suggests. § Cf. kaḷāka itiriyak kīrīmen 'by doing (to others things) in excess of what has been done (to oneself) = P. karaṇuttariya-karaṇena, DhpAGp 27-17; and also ibid. 108-15.

Idenavā 'to ripen, mature'.

Prof. Geiger thinks that this word is an inherited form of P. ijjhati, Sk. īṛdh—ṛdhyate, and compares it with Punjabi rijjhāṇā 'to be cooked' and refers to Nepali rijhinu in Prof. Turner's Dictionary of the Nepali Language. But ideyi, 3rd Sg. Indicative and also its older form hideyi, are given in the oldest exegetical works as the Sinhalese equivalents of P. sījjate, Sk. svidyate. Cf. "piṭṭha-piṇḍam viya, āṭiyē bahā-lū piṭi-piṇḍak men, like a lump of flour (or dough) put in a pan; sijjamāne, tāvena kalhi hevat idena kalhi, as it was being baked or cooked", JAGp 113-15. The phonological changes in ideyi < hideyi < hijeyi = P. sījjate, Sk. svidyate seem to be quite natural. If ideyi is derived from ijjhati as has been done by Prof. Geiger, the initial h in hideyi has to be explained through

§ In a letter to me.
analogy, and the meaning ‘is cooked’ has also to be considered an extended meaning, and not the direct one. Thus the latter explanation of the word appears to be more justifiable.

Another possible explanation suggested to me very kindly by both Prof. R. L. Turner and Prof. Jules Bloch is that *ideyi* may be an inherited form from Sk. शिडन—*sidhyati* (Passive: *sidhyate*). Although derivatives of शिड are to be found in the Modern Indo-Aryan Vernaculars too, in the sense of ‘being cooked or prepared’, I do not remember any instance where *ideyi* has been connected with शिड in that sense, in any of the early Sinhalese exegetical works which generally preserve the ancient tradition.

*Ira*, *hira* ‘line, streak’.

In explaining the above words, Prof. Geiger connects them, with a mark of interrogation however, with P. Sk. *cira*, or in the alternative, in accordance with Prof. Helmer Smith, with Sk. वस.

*Ira* in Sinhalese may mean, besides ‘sun’, etc., either ‘a piece, slice, splinter’ or ‘a crack, line, streak’. Cf. *hiri hiri koʃa* ‘having cut into pieces’ = P. *hira-hiɾam kaʃvَا, JAGp 13-6; mas-hira, translation of P. *maʃsa-sùlaʃ, ibid. 195-23; vã-hiri-maʃ = P. ma湘sa-sùlayni, ibid. 174-4; pãli hiri ‘cracks’ = P. *rãjiyo, ibid. 241-6; *soʃos hirak* ‘sixteen lines’ = P. *soʃasa lekha, ibid. 44-1. One cannot be certain whether both the latter meanings are developments of one and the same. If so they could be traced to P. *hira*. Even otherwise, *ira* and *hira* meaning ‘peace, slice’ may be inherited forms of P. *hira*.

*Is-vaʃtiya* ‘turban’ may be explained better through Sk. शिऱा + *paʃṭika* than through शिऱा + *paʃṭaka*.

*Uṇuṣuma, uṇuṣuma* ‘heat, warmth’.

Prof. Geiger says *uṇuṣuma* is probably from *uṇuṣyama uṇu + kama* ( =Sk. *uṇa + karman*), and that the change of *h* to *s* in *uṇu-suma* is by false Analogy.

It is more likely that *uṇuṣuma* is a blending of *uṇu* ( = P. *uṇha*, Sk. *uṇa*) and *usuma* ( = Sk. *uʃman, P. usumə, usmə*). Prof. Helmer Smith is of the same opinion, and he says that blends of this nature are quite frequent in Sinhalese, and cites as an example how *nam*— + *vand* > नमान्दी (-navā) ‘to bow down, worship, salute’.
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*Udalu* (plural and stem form of *uddāla* 'hoe, mattock').

Prof. Geiger derives *udalu* from Pk. P. Sk. *kuddāla*, and cites numerous Modern Indo-Aryan forms all of which have an initial *k*, from Prof. Turner's Nepali Dictionary. The Sinhalese form *kudalu* given by Prof. Turner, s.v. *kodalo*, may be a misprint for *hudalu*, because there is no such form as *kudalu* in Sinhalese, and the only forms found are *udalu* and *hudalu*.

In trying to explain the loss of the initial *k* of *kuddāla*, Prof. Geiger says in his Etymological Glossary: "The dropping of the initial *k* is perhaps caused by a confusion of the two tree-names *uddāla* 'Cassia fistula' and *kuddāla* 'Bauhinia variegata'."

Prof. Helmer Smith seems to be of opinion that *hudalu* owes its existence to popular etymology. He says: "*Kuddala* is a form where popular etymology—in this case the verb *uddālayati*—may have intervened. 'Learned etymology' also avails itself of *dālayati* (with the useful *kū* earth'. e.g., Sadda-Niti 240, 24)."

I am inclined to think that *hudalu* may have been obtained from a compound of *kuddāla* with some preceding word, by separating the *kuddāla* element from the rest. Cf *keti-hudalvāk* 'a blunt mattock', translation of P. *kuṇṭha-kuddālakam*, DhpAgp 100-32. Another instance where an initial *k* has disappeared is *vāni* 'tower, minaret' = P. *kaṇṇikā*, Sk. *kaṇṇikā*. Cf. compounds like *mini-vāni* = P. *maṇi + kaṇṇikā*, Sk. *maṇi + kaṇṇikā*.

Sometimes even without being compounded, the initial letter of a word that is generally retained in that position, may undergo change if that word occurs most often after some other word, and not at the beginning of a sentence. e.g., *vaḷay* 'from' in *bhīnikmāṇi* *vaḷay* 'from the (time of) renunciation' = translation of P. *abhīnikk-hamaṇato paṭṭhāya*, DhpAgp 79-20.

*vaḷay > paṭṭay(a) = P. paṭṭhāya, (Sk. prasthāya).*

Even in Middle-Indian, one notices numerous forms which have come into existence through wrong separation of words while in combination with others. Cf. *miva, viva, riva* 'like' = P. Sk. *iva*. See Siddha-Hemacandra, Adhyāya VIII (Hemachandra's Grammatik der Prakrit Sprachen,' Edited by R. Pischel, 1877) II 182; and *meva* 'indeed' = P. Sk. *eva*.

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In explaining this word Geiger says: "Can perhaps be connected with P. sudhā 'cement', Sk. sudhā 'brick' if we assume a Prakritic *sudhā with cerebral, as in sūdana 'killing' (Hemacandra IV 106) = Sk. sūdāna. Cf. Tamil ṭu'. Although this etymology is not beyond doubt, it is difficult to suggest an explanation which is sufficiently convincing.

One may wonder whether ṭu cannot be an inherited form of P. iṣṭakā, Sk. iṣṭakā. Although -ṭh- of Middle-Indian changes into -ṭh- in early mediaeval Sinhalese, and subsequently to -t-, sometimes that -t- seems to develop further into -t-. e.g., Sk. uccāṭha, P. uccāṭha = ujju, ujul DhPAGp 186-4, ināṭ, inādal; Sk. kaṭṭhita, P. kaṭṭhita = givuḷu, givul 'wood-apple'; Sk. kuṭthīn, P. kuṭhī = kilī 'leper' DhPAGp 218-18 (Cf. kuḷī-rov 'leprosy', translation of P. kuṭṭhīna-roga, ibid. 181-30); P. paṭṭhāya (Sk. prasthāya) = paṭay, -vaṭay 'from' DhPAGp 79-20. It must be admitted that the changes of: ḍh > th, ṭ > t and of cch > j are both quite unusual. Cf. also Sk. a-kṛcchra, P. a-kiccha = a-kij 'without difficulty, easy' DhPAGp 107-8; P. samuacchara (Sk. samuatsara) = havajara (EpZ III 251-3), havaraja, havuruju, havuruḍu, avuruḍu 'year'.

Kakaḷa, kakuḷu, kākuḷu 'rough, severe'.

Prof. Geiger says that the above words seem to be blendings of P. kakkasa, Sk. karkasa and P. Sk. kaṭuka. But the first two words can be explained better through P. kakkaḷa, and the latter probably through Pk. *kakkiḷla as has been suggested by Prof. Helmer Smith.§

Divuranaḷa 'to swear, take an oath'.

Prof. Geiger looks upon this word as a combination of divi + uranaḷa 'literally: 'to absorb an oath' '. But there is no such expression in Sinhalese, and divuranaḷa is in all probability a verb formed from divi or divu (= Sk. divya 'oath') by adding (ka)ranavā 'to do' to it. Cf. vaṣṭuranaḷa 'to sow' = vaṣṭa + (ka) ranavā 'literally: to do the sowing'; kaṁburaṇavā 'to do (menial) work' = kama (Sk. karman) + karaṇavā; vaṇāṇavaḷa 'to vomit' = vaṇa + (ka)ranavā; vadaṇavāḷa 'to say' = vada (P. vācā, Sk. vāk) + (ka)ranavā; huḍāṇavāḷa 'to recite, learn' = P. saṭṭhāyaṃ, Sk. svādhyāyaṃ + ṭkṛ; (Cf. muḷu-va hājārum 'reciting in a body', translation of P. geṇa-saṭṭhāyaṃ DhPAGp 101-12).
Dō, dohō, (dohō), particle expressing doubt or uncertainty.

The explanation given by Prof. Geiger for this word is: "? < *dāhu = P. udāhu, Sk. utavā, utāho'. But it seems to be more plausible to look upon dō as a contraction of do-hō or dō-hō which is a combination of da + hō (= P. Sk. ca + uta).

Nāvata 'again'.

The explanation given by Prof. Geiger that nāvata = nava + ata is very fanciful and is quite untenable. The older forms of it, nāvāta and nāvatā (= P. nīvattiyā) fully corroborate the suggestion that has been made by Mr. Julius De Lanerolle and quoted by Prof. Geiger himself.

Pinisa ' for, for the purpose of, through, on account of'.

Prof. Geiger thinks that pinisa < Middle-Indian *pañissāya (Sk. pra-nī + sāri). The form he has reconstructed, viz., *pañissāya, should give rise more regularly to pinisā. It is quite likely that pinisa = P. paṭicca. For t > t > ṇ Cf. puṇusvayi = P. paṭicchāpeti DhpAGp 71-29; pinisvī = P. paṭicchāpesi ibid. 159-29; sapinisayi = P. sampaṭicchati, ibid. 99-6.

Polambanavā 'to instigate, impel, urge, tempt'.

Although Prof. Geiger has traced this word to Sk. pra + ālabh, prālabhayati 'cheats, deceives', P. pālabheti, it seems to be more likely that the word has had its origin in P. pālabheti, Sk. pralobhāyati 'allures, entices'.

Ma 'enclitic particle emphasizing the preceding word'.

Prof. Geiger states that ma has had its origin in Sk. eva = Pk. ea, P. eva, -yeva, 'va, and that v and m alternate in Sinhalese. Thus according to him, the intervocalic v in eva has changed to m and eva has given rise to ema and ultimately ma. But the older forms of ma, found in early Sinhalese literature and lithic records point out to a different line of development, although it is from the same word eva. Ma < mā < me (DhpAGp 43-18, 220-32) < mē (DhpAGp 62-10, 133-15), meva (DhpAGp 6-18, 10-7) < meva (DhpAGp 4-6, 7). Although the Dhampiya-Ātuvā-Gātapadaya preserves several of the above forms as archaic survivals, meva is really Prakritic and is found, as was pointed out to me by Dr. S. Paranavitana, in some unpublished inscriptions of Kaniṭṭhatissa at Nelugala, dating back to the 3rd century A.D. e.g., Teranaṭa Meva ' to the Theras themselves'; Viharahi Meva ' in the monastery itself'.

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Meva seems to have arisen from Old and Middle-Indian eva through wrong division of it while in combination with a preceding word—particularly a word ending in Anusvāra. Meva < eva finds a parallel in mīva, rīva, vīva < iva. See Hemacandraṃ, Adhyāya VIII (Ed. R. Pischel, 1877) II 182. Even in Pāli one comes across uses like:

“Yato yato hiṃsamano nivattati
tato tato sammati meva dukkhaṃ”

(Dhammapada XXVI 8).

Prof. Jules Bloch and Prof. R. L. Turner have kindly pointed out to me the Prakrit forms emeva (Pischel: Grammatik der Prakrit-sprachen §149) and Aśokan hemeva (= evameva), which suggest another possibility of the development of the above-mentioned emphatic particles in Sinhalese. Those two Prakrit forms should also be examined in the light of the various forms like: meva, mev, mē, me, etc. found in Sinhalese.

Sanaha ‘bathing’.

In explaining this word, Prof. Geiger says: “Perhaps from a Sk. *siṃpūsā from the desiderative siṃpūsatī of śnā”. I am inclined to think that sanaha(yi) comes from the Intensive sāṃnāti of the same root śnā.

Sāri-saranavā ‘to walk about, wander about’.

Although Prof. Geiger looks upon it as a development of the ‘Intensive stem *carīcar- of Sk. ściar’, it can be explained better through P. cārikam carati. Prof. Helmer Smith also agrees with the latter view. In old Sinhalese exegetical works, this sāri is always associated with P. cārikā. See DhpAGp 155-19, 226-8.

Hō1 ‘either, or’.

Prof. Geiger connects this word with Pk. ahavā, P. Sk. athavā. I wonder whether hō is not a development of P. Sk. usta, with h as an augment. For u-a > o-o > ō see Sk. tuṣa, P. thusa > toho, tō ‘chaff’; P. Sk. asuka > *asoo > asō ‘such and such’; P. Sk. bahuka > *bahoo > bohō ‘many, numerous’.

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