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OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
BUDDHIST STUDIES

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Volume 7

1984

Number 2

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The *Rasavāhinī* and the *Sahassavatthu*: A comparison

by *Telwatte Rahula*

The *Rasavāhinī* (abbreviated as Rv.) is a non-canonical Buddhist work belonging to the *pakaraṇa* (Skt. *prakaraṇa*) class of the Pāli literature. The title, translated as “Stream of Delights,”¹ is appropriate, for it endeavours to produce the taste of the nectar of the Dhamma. Ancient teachers of Sri Lanka maintain that the work is called *Rasavāhinī* because it produces the essence of the Dhamma and of material accomplishment (*attha*).² The preamble invites “good men” (*sujanā*) to listen to it, as it is “indeed delightful” (*abhimudāvahā*). The text, consisting of 32 *bhaṇavāras*,³ aims to produce this delight through one hundred and three simple narratives concerning monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen of the past, historical or otherwise, who either attained to mundane and spiritual happiness or became subject to various misfortunes as the result of their deeds.

The text is divided into two major parts. The first part, called *Jambudīpuppattivatthu*, contains forty stories originating in Jambudīpa; the second part, called *Sīhaladīpuppattivatthu*, embodies sixty-three stories of similar character originating in the island of Sīhala.⁴ Although characters and events in some stories in each part extend to the country of origin assigned to the other, the division seems to be a reasonable one. Each part is again divided into chapters (*vaggas*). This division, however, is not based on any strict plan, as themes of the stories in all chapters seem to overlap. There are four chapters in the first part, and six in the second. Each chapter contains ten stories. Three additional stories, followed by the colophon, are given at the end of the tenth chapter. The colophon claims that the work was completed unhindered by any obstacle.

This is, however, not an original work. The proem clearly

states that the entire text is a revision of an earlier Pāli work by the Elder named Raṭṭhapāla, “a mine of the virtues of moral conduct,” who was an inmate of the Guttavamka⁵ monastic residence of the Great Monastery in Anurādhapura, Sri Lanka. The Pāli compilation was found to be corrupt throughout (*sabbam ākulam*) with repetitions and such other defects; and the Rv. is the result of an attempt to remove these defects from that popular work. The proem does not mention the name of that compilation, but informs us that it was, in its turn, merely a Pāli translation of ancient stories which had been narrated by arhants and recorded in Sinhala. We know nothing about that old Sinhala collection of stories which, if it ever existed in the form of a book, is now lost. The Pāli translation of the Elder Raṭṭhapāla, on the other hand, is supposed to be the work known as the *Sahassavatthu Aṭṭhakathā*.

Our knowledge of the *Sahassavatthu Aṭṭhakathā* is based mainly on the few references to it found in the *Mahāvamsa Tikā*.⁶ Some details in the *Mahāvamsa Tikā*, quoted from the *Sahassavatthu Aṭṭhakathā*, are found in the second part of the Rv. *in toto*.⁷ This work bearing the name *Aṭṭhakathā* is generally considered to be very old work, and, in any case, the *Mahāvamsa Tikā* is assigned to about the 8th or 9th century A.C.⁸ A Pāli work bearing the name *Sahassavatthupparāṇa* is extant, and that text includes some of the details which the *Mahāvamsa Tikā* quotes from the *Sahassavatthu Aṭṭhakathā*. The very fact that this work embodies 93 stories, 92 of which are found in the Rv., enhances the view that the Elder Raṭṭhapāla’s compilation was the authority which the *Mahāvamsa Tikā* refers to by the name of *Sahassavatthu Aṭṭhakathā*.

The author of the Rv., the Elder Vedeha (13th century), does not mention this work by name. The *Sahassavatthupparāṇa* (abbreviated as Sv.)⁹ does not mention the author’s name. The Sv. is generally thought to be the basis of the Rv. Ven. Buddhādatta, who edited the text, is convinced that it undoubtedly is the prototype of the Rv. A number of other scholars, beginning with Hugh Neville, do think that the Sv. represents the prototype of the Rv.¹⁰ It can, of course, be argued that the Sv., like Raṭṭhapāla’s compilation, professes to follow the tradition of Sinhala commentaries and the expositions of the teachers (*sīhalaṭṭhakathānayaṃ guṇhitvācariyavādañ ca*).¹¹ A

monk of the Great Monastery like the Elder Raṭṭhapāla is the most likely person to have had access to these traditions and lores.

Presentation of the stories in the Sv. is not uniform, and the subject-matter is not arranged in any proper order. This confirms the Elder Vedeha's statement regarding the confused character of the original. The text apparently has nine chapters, but after the fourth, chapters are not numbered; and the last two groups, with ten stories in each, are not called chapters at all. Four stories in the first chapter have verses, and the *gāthā* in the first story is followed by a short commentary. This feature does not appear again. The second and third chapters have no verses at all, and among the stories from no. 53 to no. 95, only one story (no. 87) contains any verse. The fourth chapter introduces an altogether new format. The first seven stories (nos. 31–37) begin and end with a versified outline of the narrative which follows. Nos. 38, 39, and the next (no. 40 in the Sv., but the text does not count it as a separate entity) begin in the same style, but omit the repetition at the end. Again, the first story in this chapter has the phrase "*taṃ yathā'nusūyate*" after the introductory verse, but nos. 32–35 and 38 have "*taṃ kathaṃ ti ce?*" instead. The story of King Kākavaṇṇa Tissa ends as the "ninth," disregarding the independent story of Veḷusu-mana within it. As for the tenth story, to be expected in its natural sequence, the reader is referred to the Mhv. The historical accounts connected with the great national hero, unnecessarily disrupted by no. 41, continues through nos. 42–45. One would not expect to find the story of King Duṭṭhagāmani, for it was already mentioned at the end of the fourth chapter (p. 89), but no. 46 narrates it "briefly" (*saṃkhepena*). Then follows the sentence: "The story of the royal prince Sāli should be known exactly in the way it is told in the *Mahāvamsa*." This one sentence is called "*Sāli-rāja-kumāra-vatthu dutiyaṃ*." The next story, which is either the third from no. 46 or the ninth from no. 41, is mysteriously called the "fifth." Another chapter has eleven stories (nos. 67–75), but the last one has already appeared as no. 41.¹²

Internal inconsistencies of a more serious character are also noticed. Some stories bear different names in the beginning and at the end. The *Buddheniyā vatthu* (no. 7) becomes

Buddheniyyāma-vaṭṭhu at the end. *Duggatitthiyā vaṭṭhu* (no. 33) turns to be the story of Dhammā. After the introductory verse in this story, there occurs the curious sentence: “*yathā Dhammāya vaṭṭhu, tathā jānitabbam.*” This would lead one to believe that the author is referring to another story, but in fact the story called *Duggatitthiyā vaṭṭhu* is none other than the story of Dhammā. Story no. 68 has the title *Yakkhassa palāyita vaṭṭhu* in the beginning, but concludes as the *Saraṇagamana-vaṭṭhu*. Often, the heading is long, but is shortened at the end of the story. Proper names sometimes vary within a story. Kākavaṇṇa Tissa (no. 39) is thus referred to as Kākavaṇṇa Abhaya, and Raṭṭhapāla (no. 55) becomes Raṭṭhika. Rūpadevī’s story speaks of Rūpavatī (no. 31). The story of Amba the Minister, recorded twice (nos. 41 & 75), also contains some minor variations between the two narratives. There are two stories called *Tissadahara-samaṇerassa vaṭṭhu* (nos. 80 & 81), and another two stories (nos. 9 & 69) are called *Micchādittihikassa vaṭṭhu*.

The language of the Sv. is full of peculiarities that do not conform to the standard Pāli grammar. These usages are thought to reflect the Sinhala influence, which was only natural in light of the fact that the text translates Sinhala narratives. Such sinhalized Pāli forms are discussed by scholars.¹³ One interesting example of direct Sinhala influence is found in the sentence: “*Senagutto Nandiyassa taṃ datvā attano bhāgineyyam akāsi.*”¹⁴ The word *bhāgineyya* (sister’s son) is employed to mean “son in-law” under the influence of the Sinhala *bāna*, which stands for both meanings. On page 134, we find *pulila-rukkhe*, for which the Rv. has *pippali-rukkhe*, and the *Saddharmālaṅkāraya* has *pulila-gaseka*. The word *pulila* does not seem to be a legitimate Pāli word recorded anywhere else.

A text in such confusion needs to be revised, and the Rv. may be the result of an attempt to edit and improve the Sv. Numerous passages in the Sv. show an unmistakable resemblance with the relevant portions of the Rv. This leads us to believe that the Elder Vedeha is reproducing the same material, with editorial touches here and there. However, much can be said against this suggestion. Many prose passages in the two texts are very similar, but the Rv. not only reproduces a grammatically better sentence but also adds details, poetical elaborations, and various comments that go a long way beyond the

limits of a mere edition. If the Sv. is the original work that Vedeha *thera* treats in this manner, he could well have said so in his proem. What he has said is that he is planning to free the original from defects such as repetitions. He does not tell us that it would be elaborated, too. The text has *anākulaṃ karissāmi*, not *vaṇṇayissāmi* or any other expressions to that effect.¹⁵ And where are those “repetitions” in the Sv.? We find one story repeated *in toto* (nos. 41 & 75), and King Duṭṭhagāmaṇī’s story is once mentioned merely by name, whereas it is recorded “briefly” as no. 46. There are no repetitions in the present Sv. to justify any revision from this point of view. It is true that the Rv. is not the only work of its kind, and we do have a number of other post-canonical works which are based on already existing texts. This is especially true in the case of the *vaṃsakathās*, such as the *Dīpavaṃsa*, *Mahāvaṃsa*, *Thūpavaṃsa*, and *Hatthavanagalavīhāra-vaṃsa*, etc. Notwithstanding the unfortunate fact that earlier works in Sinhala and Pāli on which these books are based are not available at present, it is well known that they are not mere editions of the early works. The writers of these revised works have usually extended their “reproductions” wherever they thought more details were necessary, while freely drawing upon the commentaries and other relevant sources. The Rv. may be included in this class of works, though not exactly a chronicle,¹⁶ and its close connection with the chronicles becomes particularly considerable in the second part.¹⁷ Is it, then, not the most natural thing for the Elder Vedeha to use these very same sources while revising the Sv. and provide more details where the Sv. was found deficient? This possibility gains further weight from the *Sāratthadīpikā Rasavāhinī* *Ṭikā* explanation of the phrase *punaruttādīdosehi* as *abyāpitātibyāpita-punaruttādīdosehi taṃ sabbam pubbe kataṃ ākulaṃ hutvā ṭhitaṃ*. But of primary importance is what the author himself has said, and he has not actually said anything about providing great detail. If the Elder Raṭṭhapāla’s work known to Vedeha *thera* was the same as the present Sv., I am inclined to think that he would have stated in more precise manner the kind of improvements he planned to introduce.¹⁸ It should also be remembered that the Sv. does not contain the crucial account of Prince Sāli, as the *Mahāvaṃsa* *Ṭikā* says it did. Dr. Rahula, writing about 30 years ago, concluded that the question whether the Sv. is the same

text as mentioned in the *Mahāvamsa Tīkā* or “whether these MSS. represent an abridged form of the original *Sahassavatthu* cannot be decided, unless and until some more MSS. are consulted.”¹⁹ Ven. Buddhadatta could obtain only one more Ms. for his editions, but as to this point, *viz.*, referring to the *Mahāvamsa* for the story of Prince Sāli, it confirms the other MSS.

Further, the verses in the Rv. represent a completely independent tradition. It is true that the Sv. has less than 35 verses excluding the proem and certain repetitions, whereas the Rv. has over a thousand *gāthās* interspersed throughout the narratives. Even where one can reasonably expect the Rv. to follow the Sv., we do not find in the former similarity enough to suggest any considerable borrowing from the latter. The preamble of the Sv. is very different from that of the Rv., and the only line the two texts have in common is *taṃ suṇātha samāhitā*, which is anything but peculiar to any Pāli text. The three verses in story no. 4 of the Sv. certainly contain a few lines which appear in the Rv., but lines such as *addasaṃ virajaṃ buddhaṃ* are very frequently found in the *Apadāna* and other similar works.²⁰ It is inexplicable why the Elder Vedeha, who quotes from various other sources, does not consider the *gāthās* in the Sv. worthy of attention.

Poetical descriptions of persons, places and events in the Rv. can be independent improvements on the original, but material differences between the two versions of the same story are too many to be entirely ignored. Some of these differences, such as an increased figure, may well be explained away as a “natural growth” in an age of grotesque exaggeration. Thus, King Mahāsena in the Sv. story (no. 23) offers daily alms to 2000 monks, whereas in the Rv. we find him far more generous, feeding 10,000 monks daily. In another Sv. story (no. 67), a culprit is condemned to death the second time he is caught, but according to the Rv., he is pardoned three times. On the other hand, considerable differences between the two versions of many narratives point to a third original source. These variances in the Sv. become all the more interesting when one finds that the Sinhala work called *Saddharmālaṅkāraya* (abbreviated Sdhl.), generally believed to be an enlarged translation of the Rv., sometimes corroborates the Sv.

The Sdhl.²¹ is a popular religious work of the mediaeval

Sinhala literature. Its author is the Elder Dharmakīrti III, also known as Devarakṣita Jayabāhu. According to the *Saddharmaratnākara*, his first name was Devarakṣita, and Jayabāhu the name taken on becoming a *mahāthera*. Dharmakīrti was a title taken upon his becoming *saṅgharāja*. Like Vedeha *thera*, this learned monk also belonged to the *Araññavāsī* chapter. In the Pāli colophon to the Sdhl., the author says that he had already written three other books (*Nikāyasamgraha*, *Bālāvatāra-saññaka*, and *Jinabodhāvalī*). The work was written toward the close of the 14th century. It has 24 chapters, written in a mixed Sinhala style full of Sanskrit *tatsama* words. The first three chapters do not concern us here, as they deal with such matters as the preaching of the Dhamma, and the bodhisattva's career. But the next 21 chapters are directly related to the Rv. The author does not mention the Rv. or Vedeha *thera* anywhere in the Sdhl., but the 103 stories of the Rv. are presented here with much additional information and many embellishments. Moreover, the verses appearing in the Rv. narratives are given together with a Sinhala translation thereof. The order of the Sdhl. stories agrees with neither that of the Rv., nor of the Sv.; but the work is at least as well organized as the Rv. Vedeha *thera* includes 10 stories in every chapter, but his successor limits each chapter to 5 narratives. The lengths of the chapters vary; and the author reckons that the work embodies no less than 146 stories (*ek siya susalisak pamaṇa vastu-kathā*).²²

The view that the Sdhl. is based on the Rv. can be supported by a variety of internal evidence. The work begins with the same verse in salutation to the Buddha as found in the Rv. The stories usually agree with the Rv. versions, and with a few exceptions, the *gāthās* of the Rv. are also included in the Sdhl. Although the subject-matter is described as "the noble teaching expounded by the Enlightened One" (*budun visin vadāraṇa laddā vū saddharmaya*), the author twice compares his work to "a flow of the delight of nectar" (*amṛta-rasa-dhārāvah*),²³ which reminds us of the name *Rasavāhinī*. The division of the stories into two parts, as in the Rv., is not recognized in the beginning of the Sdhl., but after narrating 41 stories of Jambudīpa origin (*jambudvīpotpanna*), the author proposes to record the stories of Sri Lankan origin (*laṅkā-dvīpotpanna*).²⁴ The text gives only nine *gāthās* in the *Devaputra vastu* (pp. 292–6), but it refers to

“the twenty verses given above” (*yathokta gāthā vissen*), which is exactly the number of *gāthās* appearing in that particular story in the Rv. In the story of Saddheyya, the Rv. has 24 verses, and the Sdhl., too, specifically mentions that the original narrative contained 24 verses. This is particularly noteworthy, considering the fact that the Sdhl. story quotes no more than nine verses that show a few important variations when compared with the Rv. Similarly, the 38 verses quoted in the Rv. story of Uttara the novice, borrowed from the *Apadāna*, are referred to in the Sdhl. (p. 205) as “the thirty-eight *gathas* beginning with *Sumedho nāma sambuddho*, etc.,” even though this first verse is not fully quoted in the Sdhl. narrative.

Nevertheless, with regard to certain details the Sdhl. also preserves the traces of an ancient tradition not wholly incorporated in the Rv. We note that all the three works have Dhammasoṇḍaka’s story as the first in the collection, and that, strangely enough, they all end with the story of Danta the house-holder. The Sdhl., of course, has the additional *Maitreya-vastu*, which is not a story like others. Apart from this, the order of presentation is not similar, although the Rv. and Sdhl. agree in a few individual cases. I give the table of stories below. The titles are from the Rv.

Name of the <i>vatthu</i>	Number in Rv.	Sv.	Sdhl.
Dhammasoṇḍaka	1	1	1
Migaḷuddaka	2	4	3
Tinnaṃ janānaṃ	3	6	21
Buddheniyā	4	7	39
Ahiguṇṭhika	5	9	18
Saraṇatthera	6	10	4
Vessāmittā	7	11	2
Mahāmandhātu	8	17	6
Buddhavammavāṇijaka	9	26	5
Rūpadevī	10	31	33
Nandirāja	11	37	11
Aññataramanussa	12	38	32
Visamalomakumāra	13	48	34
Kaṅcanadevī	14	59	15
Vyaggha	15	62	22
Phalakakhaṇḍadonna	16	63	23

Name of the <i>vatthu</i>	Number in Rv.	Sv.	Sdhl.
Corasahāya	17	64	24
Maruttabrāhmaṇa	18	65	26
Pānīyadinna	19	66	25
Sahāyassa pariccattajīvitaka	20	67	27
Yakkhavañcita	21	68	16
Micchādiṭṭhika	22	69	17
Pādapīṭhikā	23	70	19
Uttarasāmaṇera	24	71	12
Kāvīrapaṭṭana	25	73	20
Coraghātaka	26	76	7
Saddhopāsaka	27	83	9
Kapaṇa	28	84	29
Devaputta	29	87	30
Sīvalitthera	30	14	8
Mahāsenarāja	31	23	31
Suvaṇṇatilakā	32	27	38
Kapaṇā	33	34	14
Indaguttatthera	34	49	35
Sākhamaḷapūjīkā	35	...	13
Moriyabrāhmaṇa	36	...	28
Putta	37	21	37
Tebhātika-madhuvāṇijaka	38	94	36
Bodhirājadhītā	39	60	41
Kuṇḍalī	40	80	40
Migapotaka	41	2	45
Dhammasuta-upāsikā	42	3	43
Kuḍḍarajjavāsītthera	43	5	44
Ārañṇaka-Mahā-abhayatthera	44	8	46
Sirināga	45	12	86
Saddhātissa-mahāmacca	46	13	68
Samaṇagāma	47	15	47
Abhayatthera	48	18	76
Nāgā	49	19	48
Vatthulapabbāta	50	20	72
Uttaroliya	51	22	49
Tambasumanatthera	52	24	71
Pūvapabbatavāsī Tissatthera	53	25	50
Cūlatissa	54	28	65
Tissā	55	29	69



Name of the <i>vattu</i>	Number in Rv.	Sv.	Sdhl.
Ariyagālatissa	56	30	75
Gāmadārkikā	57	32	78
Dhammā	58	33	79
Kiñcisaṅghā	59	35	80
Saddhāsumanā	60	36	42
Kāka	61	50	74
Kākavaṇṇatissarāja	62	39	51
Duṭṭhagāmaṇi-abhaya-mahārāja	63	46	52
Nandimitta	64	16	53
Suranimmala	65	42	54
Mahāsoṇa	66	43	55
Goṭhaimbara	67	44	56
Theraputtābhaya	68	...	57
Bharaṇa	69	...	58
Veḷusumana	70	40	59
Khañjadeva	71	...	60
Phussadeva	72	...	61
Labhiyavasabha	73	...	62
Dāṭhāsena	74	...	63
Mahānela	75	45	64
Sāliṛājakumāra	76	47	66
Cūlanāgatthera	77	52	70
Meghavaṇṇa	78	53	73
Dhammadinna	79	54	77
Raṭṭhikaputta	80	55	82
Silutta	81	56	84
Nesāda	82	57	83
Hemā	83	58	85
Kāṇasigāla	84	61	88
Nandivāṇijaka	85	72	91
Nakula	86	74	67
Ambāmacca	87	41 & 75	87
Vānara	88	...	89
Jayampatikā	89	89	92
Davaputta or Rukkhadevatā	90	87	93
Cūlagalla	91	77	96
Paṇḍaraṅga	92	78	94
Dubbiṭṭhi-Mahātissa	93	79	95
Gola-upāsaka	94	82	98
Tissasāmaṇera	95	81	97

Name of the <i>vatthu</i>	Number in Rv.	Sv.	Sdhl.
Puṭabhaddāyikā	96	85	99
Dutiya-jayampatikā	97	86	90
Samghadattatthera	98	88	81
Aññatarakumārikā	99	90	100
Tissamahānāgatthera	100	91	101
Mahallikā	101	92	102
Pañcasatabhikkhu	102	93	103
Danta-kuṭumbika	103	95	104

The Sv. has one story (*Phussadevatthera*, no. 51) not found in the Rv. or Sdhl., although this famous Elder is mentioned several times in the Pāli literature.²⁵ The Sdhl. also embodies one major narrative, i.e., the *Padmāvati-vastu*, not included in the other two works. The Rv. and Sdhl. have two separate stories of Devaputta (the second one is known as *Rukkhadevata-vatthu* also, but the Rv. introduces the story as *Devaputta-vatthu*), whereas the Sv. has only one brief version. Now the no. 87 in the Rv. and Sdhl. are identical, and this story of Amba the minister is the one which is repeated in the Sv. Altogether, there are nine stories (Rv. nos. 35, 36, 68, 69, 71–4, and 88) missing in the Sv. In the Sv. and Rv., nos. 11, 31, 37, 40, 47, and 87 tally. Further, nos. 2, 14, 28, 29, 34, 42–44, 49, 82, 88, and 99–103 of the Rv. appear in the Sdhl. as nos. 3, 15, 29, 30, 35, 43–45, 48, 83, 89, and 100–104. Story no. 89 is identical in the Sv. and Rv., but the Sdhl. calls it *Dutiya-jayampatika-vastu*.

Some details found in the Sv. are either missing in the Rv. and Sdhl. altogether, or preserved in one text only. Referring to the agitation caused in Sakka's abode by Dhammasoṇḍaka's entering the forest, the Sv. says that the golden projection on the side of the Vejayanta palace was shaken. In the Sv. story, again, Dhammasoṇḍaka while contemplating his self-sacrifice observes that the tears shed by one being weeping for the beloved, such as parents, exceed the water in the four great oceans. In no. 6, the nāga himself announces that the condemned man can cure the queen. Buddheni (no. 7) has accumulated merit at the time of Sikhī Buddha, and her parents, who were alive until she became mature, were eager to have her married. The King attempts to kidnap her, motivated by his desire to earn merit through her, and the thieves lie in wait for her in a *nimb* forest. The snake charmer in story no. 9 attempts

to capture a *nāgarāja* lying in his abode, and the golden flower which the man sells brings a hundred thousand (coins). In story no. 10, the younger sister's ornaments are inherited from her mother, and her husband shows no interest in visiting her elder brother. Sīvalī (no. 14) is said to have renounced homelife on the seventh day at the conclusion of the great almsgiving ceremony celebrating his birth. In story no. 17, Mandhātu is called the "ninth king," and when he falls down from heaven, his eldest son comes to greet him. In the *Nandirāja-vatthu* (no. 37) the *senagutta* tests Nandiya before his marriage. Indagutta the Elder (no. 49) becomes an arhant by means of the meditational topic of *saṃghānussati*. Marutta the brahman (no. 65) marries after his return from Takkasilā, and, following the attempt on his life, his relatives advise him not to nourish the assassin. In story no. 66, we are told that the good-hearted man notifies the gatekeeper when he arrives at the hall by the city gate. Though Vassakāra is mentioned in the story of Uttara the novice (no. 71), it is the king who sentences the novice after he has been forcibly implicated by the thieves. A verse beginning with *na pitā na ca te mātā*, etc., is attributed to Uttara in this story. The *Mahāvamsaṭṭhakathā* is referred to in the story of Dhammāsoka.²⁶ The Sv. is often terse and lacking in poetical charm, but some of its descriptions, e.g., the lotus pond mentioned on page 11, are unique. Such details are not found in the Rv. and Sdhl.

On the other hand, the Sdhl. confirms some other information given in the Sv. Thus, in the story of Nandirāja, the householder's name is given as Vedeha in the Sv. and Sdhl., but the Rv. omits this significant name. Another story in these two works preserves the name Sumana the merchant, whereas the Rv. version speaks of a "householder." In the story of King Asoka, the Sv. and Sdhl. mention the marvellous sword that kills enemies even at a distance of hundreds of leagues, but the Rv. is silent on this feature. Such details, admittedly, do not affect the main body of the narratives. Nevertheless, they indicate the possibility that the Sdhl. author had access to an authority other than the Rv. This would explain at least some of the additional information contained in the Sdhl. A good example of this is found in the story of the snake charmer. The Sv. (p. 16) gives no detail of the *thūpa* enshrining the bodily relics of Kassapa Buddha. The Rv. preserves a greater part of

the traditional description of it, but refers to Setavya city in a very general way only. The Sdhl., on the other hand, mentions the country of Kāsī and the garden having the same name as the city of Setavya. This information, as seen in the ancient Buddhist tradition, was most probably included in the original passage describing the *thūpa*.

This view is further supported by Sdhl. stories like the *Saddheyya-vastu* and its unique sequel, *Padmāvati-vastu*, which is completely missing in the other two works. The verses in the *Saddheyya-vastu* are not strictly compatible with those in the Rv. counterpart, and with regard to the other episode, the source remains a greater mystery. The story of Pad(u)māvati is well-known in the ancient Buddhist tradition,²⁷ and the concluding verse of the *Saddheyya-vastu*, with its reference to Lājadāyīdevī—this verse appears in the Rv. also—makes its presence quite in order. The whole account exactly follows the usual style in prose passages with Pāli verses and the Sinhala translation thereof. The Elder Dharmakīrti appears to quote the verses, conclusion and all, from his original source, for he acknowledges them in the usual phrase: "Therefore, it is said" (*ese heyin kiyana ladī*).²⁸ Vedeha *thera* had no reason to omit this popular story, and one cannot assume that it was dropped by later copyists, for the prologue gives the precise number of 40 stories to be included in the *Jambudīpuppattivatthu*. It is interesting to note that in the Sdhl. this story is followed by the *Nandirāja-vastu*. Now both the Sdhl. and Rv. versions of this tale refer to the 500 *paccekabuddhas* as the sons of Padumāvati, but the Sv. is silent on this point. It is possible that the original work, being a mass of folk-lore, had these three stories together, but the Elder Vedeha, retaining the reference to the 500 *paccekabuddhas*, omitted the story of their origin. However this may be, this would show the relative independence exercised by the three texts drawing materials from one and the same source.

The view that the present Sv. is probably an abridged form of the original *Sahassavatthu Atthakathā* is forwarded by some scholars. Dr. Rahula's comments on this point have already been referred to. Sirimal Ranavella, another Sri Lankan, has also pointed out this possibility.²⁹ The question cannot be settled without further research, particularly focussed on more MSS. of the Sv., but one peculiar feature of the present Sv.

should be mentioned in this connection. This is, as already mentioned above, the lack of verses in the Sv. Excluding a number of repetitions in the fourth chapter, the entire work has less than 35 verses. It is hard to reconcile this feature with the well-established tradition of the Indian story-teller. Prose passages in the *ākhyānas* are usually interspersed with verses that either continue the story or emphasize certain points already raised in the narrative. This format of the traditional *ākhyāna* type is traced as far back as the R̥gvedic period.³⁰ Buddhist stories (*jātakas*, *avadānas*, etc.) are representative of this literary species.³¹ Hence, it is most probable that these narratives were originally intermixed with verses. No less than 72 out of 93 stories in the Sv. are entirely in prose, with no trace of any versification at all. It cannot be suggested that versified passages belonging to these stories were not known to Raṭṭhapāla *thera*. The Sv. is definitely later than the third century A.C., as it mentions King Sirināga of Sri Lanka. By this time the stories of Uttara and Sivalī were well-known from the *Apadāna*. The *Sihalavathupparāṇa* is older than the Sv.,³² and even this text has some stories which are narrated entirely in verse. Of special importance is the story of Phussadevatthera, common to both these texts. In the Sv. it is given in prose, but the *Sihalavathupparāṇa* presents the same story in a more elegant style, giving 51 *gāthās* in the course of narration. Why, then, does the Sv. not produce any verse in stories like the *Phussadeva* and *Duṭṭhagāmaṇī vatthus*? The reason, probably, is the obvious length of the narratives. King Duṭṭhagāmaṇī's is the longest narrative in the Rv. The Sv. author refers to the Mhv. at the point where, as in the Rv. and the Sdhl., one expects to find the story of the great national hero. He treats the second longest story, the *Sāliṛājaku-māravatthu*, in the same way. Immediately before the reference to Prince Sāli there appears what is actually a mere fragment of the Duṭṭhagāmaṇī saga, presented here as *Duṭṭhagāmaṇī rañño vatthu*. This *vatthu* begins, unlike any other in the text, with the word *paccha*, indicating the character of an extract from the middle of a larger narrative. The author himself admits that the story is given only "in brief." More revealing is the illogical number assigned to it. This means one of the two alternatives: either the last five stories of the chapter embodying the stories of the great warriors are missing, or the present work is a

summary of the *Sahassavatthu Atthakathā* with no proper arrangement. Since it is not suggested that the Sv. has a lacuna, the second alternative seems to be the case.

NOTES

1. This paper is largely based on part of the Introduction to my Ph.D. thesis: *An edition of the Rasavāhinī-Jambudīpuppattivathu, together with an English translation*, submitted at the Australian National University, Canberra, Australia. The English rendering of the name *Rasavāhinī* is mine.

2. *dhammāmatarasam loke vahanti Rasavāhinī*, colophon, v. 2a-b.

3. *battimsabhānavārehi niṭṭhitā Rasavāhinī*, *ibid.*, v. 3a-b. A *bhānavāra* (recital) "usually consists of eight thousand syllables." *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, ii, p. 690A. But Prof. Jayawickrama says that it is "usually reckoned as 6000 syllables." *Thūpavaṃsa* (PTS), p. 39 n. 47. The first Sinhala edition of the Rv. has 298 pp. with an average of 35 lines per page, 21 syllables per line. This probably means that one *bhānavāra* of the Rv. consists of more than 6000 but less than 8000 syllables.

4. According to the *Sāratthadīpikā*, the text was also called *Satavatthu*. This, however, does not mean that it should contain exactly one hundred stories and no more.

5. Otherwise not known. Malalasekera refers to this as *Tamguttavaṃka*. *Pali literature of Ceylon*, p. 224; DPPN, i. p. 985.

6. For these references, see: DPPN, ii, p. 1083; Walpola Rahula, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, Intro., xxix.

7. Rahula, HBC., Intro., xxix.

8. *ibid.* Geiger's view that it belongs to the 12th century A.C. is refuted by Malalasekera, who gives the approximate date as "the seventh or eighth century." *Pali Literature of Ceylon*, p. 144. But see DPPN, ii, p. 798. when he says that it was probably written in the ninth century A.C.

9. *Sahassavatthupparāṇa* by Ven. Raṭṭhapāla of *Guttavaṅka Pirivena in Anurādhapura*, edited by Aggamahapandita Buddhadatta Nayaka Thera, Colombo, 1959, xxxi pp. 200.

10. Rahula, HBC., Intro., xxvii.

11. Sv. 1. All references to the Sv. are from Ven. Buddhadatta's edition in Sinhala script. No other edition of this text is available, although Ven. Buddhadatta mentions about two earlier attempts to prepare a romanized edition.

12. These points are, in the main, already discussed by Dr. Rahula. See HBC., Intro., xxxi-xxxiii. I have attempted to add more details, while giving my own examples as far as possible.

13. HBC., Intro., xxx-xxxii; Sv., Intro., xi-xii.

14. Sv. p. 74.

15. cf. *paripunnam anākulam*, *Thūpavaṃsa*, p. 147.

16. Buddhadatta, *Pāli Sāhityaya*, p. 398.

17. Source relations among these works, particularly between the *Mahāvamsa* and the Rv., are an important issue. Except for story no. 38, the first part of the Rv. has nothing to do with the Mhv. or any other chronicle. It must be remembered, however, that all Pāli chronicles in Sri Lanka claim to draw upon an ancient Sinhala tradition.

18. Consider, for example, the Elder Vācissara's statement at the beginning of the *Thūpavamsa*: *Yasmā ca māgadhaniruttikato pi thūpa-vaṃso viruddhanayasaddasamāculo so Vattabbam eva ca bahum pi yato na vuttam- tasmā ahaṃ puna pi vaṃsam imam vadāmi!* *Thūpavamsa*, p. 147. Even the Nhv. admits its dependence on the "tradition" (*sulito ca upāgatam*).

19. HBC., Intro., xxix.

20. There are two *gāthās* common to the two texts. In the Rv. they both occur in the second part. Dr. Rahula has quoted these two verses. HBC., Intro., xxxvii.

21. Various editions of this very popular religious work exist. The one used in this study is the *Saddharmāṭṭhakaraya* (Illustrated), edited by Ven. Pandit K. Sri Gnanavimala Thera, Colombo, 1954, xii pp. 796.

22. Sdhl. p. 793.

23. *ibid.*, p. 30 & p. 793.

24. *ibid.*, p. 399.

25. Part of his story is given at *Visuddhimagga* 263, and JA. iv. 490 & vi. 30 mention his name. These references are from DPPN., ii, p. 258. Dr. Rahula gives further references from the *Samantapāsādikā*, *Sārasaṃ*, and also from the Sinhala work *Saddharmarātṇākaraṇa*. HBC., Intro., xxxiii. The story is found also in the *Sihalavathuppakaran*, pp. 20–26.

26. The Rv. and Sdhl. refer to the Mhv. This fact in itself seems to indicate the appearance of the existent Sv. at a date later than the *Mahāvamsa Tikā*, unless there existed another work by the name of *Mahāvamsa Atthakathā*.

27. DPPN., ii, pp. 135.

28. Sdhl. pp. 168–83.

29. *Ātthāsika lekhaṇa saṃgrahaṇa*, no. 2, 1962, p. 2.

30. Winternitz, M., *A History of Indian Literature*, i, p. 100ff.

31. See H. Oldenberg's article: "Akhyana type and the Jatakas," in *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, 1910–12, p. 19ff.

32. *Sihalavathuppakaraṇa*, edited by Ven. A.P. Buddhadatta Nayaka Thera, Colombo, 1959, Introduction.