THE TITTIRA-JĀTAKA AND THE EXTENDED MAHĀVAṂSA

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In contrast to the Mahāvaṃsa (Mhv), which is familiar to scholars as an important source on the history of Buddhism and of Ceylon, the extended version (EMhv) has remained relatively little known. The critical and, as far as my knowledge goes, only edition of this text, which is also called sometimes Cambodian Mahāvaṃsa because all extant manuscripts are written either in Cambodian script or copied from such manuscripts, has been prepared by the late G.P. Malalasekera as volume III of the Aluvihāra Series printed in Colombo 1937. In his long introduction, which does not only give a full concordance between the two Mahāvaṃsas, but which also contains an important discussion on the language, the sources, and the probable date and place of origin of this text, Mallalasekera suggests with commendable caution "In fact, there is no proof that the author of EM., ..., was a monk, or that he was a native of Ceylon, though it is more than probable that he was both", and "I would, therefore, provisionally assign EM. to the 9th or 10th century. If, however, as it is not impossible, the work was written outside Ceylon, say in Siam, these calculations become worthless" (both on p. LII).

Obviously, there are three possible ways to approach the solution of the problem of origin and date of EMhv: First, there is the colophon, which, apart from giving the name of the author as Moggallāna does not contain much useful information. Secondly, an investigation into the language of the text may well lead to more concrete results. As, however, our knowledge of post-canonical Pāli, and much more so of post-āṭṭhakathā and South East Asian Pāli is hardly developed at all, the necessary tools are lacking to ascertain the exact linguistic position of the EMhv. Lastly, there are the sources of this text. The colophon states that the author used the Mahāvaṃsa, the Buddhavaṃsa, the Thūpavamsa and the Litattha, which, according to Malalasekera (p. XL) refers to the Mahāvaṃsaṭīkā. Further, as Malalasekera points out, the author used in addition to the texts mentioned by himself also the Mahāvagga of the Vinayapitaka and its commentary, the Mahābodhisvāṃsa, and perhaps also the Buddhavaṃsa and Jātaka commentaries. As all these texts are well known and widely spread in all countries, where Theravāda Buddhism flourishes, they do not seem to be very helpful when trying to solve any of the three aspects of the problem: the author, his time and his country.

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In spite of this, it is possible to draw certain conclusions from the versified version of the Tittira-Jātaka (no. 319) found in the EMhv V 595-625. Although Malalasekera mentions this parallel to the Jātaka, he does not elaborate on, or draw conclusions from this fact. Now it is well known, and it has been pointed out by V. Fausbøll about a century ago in his introduction to the edition of the Jātaka (Ja) vol. IV (1887) and vol. VI (1896), that there are quite considerable discrepancies between the Sinhalese and the Burmese manuscripts of the Jātaka, so much so that Fausbøll was ready to consider them as two separate redactions. Therefore it may be useful to have a closer look at the Tittira-Jātaka comparing Fausbøll's edition Ja III 64.1-66.15 with the relevant verses of EMhv. As the latter text is not readily available everywhere, it may be useful to print it here in full:

595 „Paṭicca kammattho nattihī” ti., kiliṭṭham cetanaṃ vinā,”
 thero bodhesi rājānaṃ vatvā Tittirajātakam:
596 Attate Brahmadattambhi kārente rājataṃ kira
 samiddhe nagare ramme pure Bārāṉasivhaye
597 dijakulamhi ekasmiṃ bodhisatto nibbattiya
 vayappatto sabbasippaṃ ugaṇḥhitvāna vissuto
598 Takkasilāya nikhamma pabbajji isipabbaṭaṃ.
 Himavantappadesamhi pañcābhīñ纳斯u pāragū
599 patvā aṭṭha samāpattiyo kīlanto jhānaṃ jītaṃ
 ramaṇīye vanasandhe vasanto ekako bhave.
600 Paccantagāmaññataram gacchamāno tadantare
 loṇambilasevanatthaṃ narā disvā pastdiya
601 pavane aññatarasimī kāretvā pañņasālakaṃ
paccayeḥ upaṭṭhahitvā sakkaccam taṃ vasāpayūṃ.
602 Tasmiṃ gāme tadā ēko sakuni ko viṇṇhīya
ekaṃ dipaketittiram sikkhāpetvāna paṇjare
603 pakkhipitvā sinehena niccan ca paṭijaggati.
 So taṃ arañṇaṃ netvā tittire āgatāgate
604 tassa saddena gaṇḥhitvā netvāna vikkināti te.
 „Mamaṃ nissāya tittirā nassanti bahu nātakā
605 kiṃ mayaṃ taṃ pāpan’” ti nirāsaddo aho so.
 Nissaddabhāvaṃ ātavā so paharitvāna tittiram
606 velupesika sisamhi abhiṃhaṃ luddako tato
dukkhāturāya saddaṃ karoti tittiro lahum.
607 Evaṃ sakuni ko lobhaṃ nissāya tittire bahū
gāṇḥitvā digham addhānaṃ kappesi jīvit’ attano.
Dukkhāturo so tittiro iti evaṁ vicintayi:

„'Aho ime marantū' ti cetanā me na vijjati

paṭicca kammaṁ paṇ' idaṁ abhiṁhaṁ mama phussati,
akaronte mayi saddaṁ ete pi nāgamuṁ” iti.

„Karonte yeva gacchanti, ayaṁ ca āgatāgata
nātakake me gahetvāna pāpeti jīvitakkhayaṁ.

Ettha kin nu idaṁ pāpaṁ mayhaṁ atth' eva natthi?” ti.
Tato paṭṭhāya, „ko nu kho kaṅkham chindeyya maṁ,” iti
paṇḍitaṁ so tathārūpaṁ voloketvāna vicari.

Ath' ekadivasāṁ so te gahetvā tittire bahū
pūretvā pacchiyaṁ, „pāṇīṁ pivissāṁ” ti cintayi.

Bodhisattassa assamaṁ gantvā taṁ paṇjaraṁ tato
thapetvā santike tassa pivitvā pāniy' ichitaṁ

vālukātale nipanno niddaṁ okkami tāvade.
Niddokkantassa bhāvam so ṅatvāna tittiro tato,

„kaṅkham idaṁ tāpasam eva pucchissāṁ,” ti cintayi,
„Jānanto me sacāyaṁ so ajj' ev' imaṁ kathessati.”

Nisinno paṇjare gāthaṁ pucchanto pāṭham āha so:
„susukam vata jīvāmi, labhāmi c'eva bhūnītum
paripanthe ca tiṭṭhāmi kā su, bhante, gati mama?”
Tassa paṇhaṁ vissajjento dutiyaṁ gāthāṁ āha so:

„Mano te nappaṇamaṭi, pakkhi, pāpasa kammunā,
apāpaṁ tassa bhadrassa, na pāpaṁ upalippiṭ.”

Sutvāna vacanaṁ tassa tatiyaṁ gāthāṁ āha so:
„'Natako no nisinno’, ti bahu agacchate jano,
paṭicca kammaṁ phusati tasmīṁ me saṅkate mano.”
Sutvā so bodhisatto taṁ catutṭhagāthāṁ āha so:

„Na paṭicca kammaṁ phusati, mano te nappadussati
apposukkassa bhadrassa na pāpaṁ upalippiṭ.”

Evaṁ so tittiraṁ tattha saṅñāpesi anekadhā,
nissāya bodhisattam kho nikkukkucco ahosi so.

Sakuniko pabuddho so bodhisattam 'bhivandiya
paṇjaraṁ tattha-m-ādāya sakagharaṁ apakkami.

Dhammadesan' imaṁ satthū āharītvāna jātakaṁ
samodhānesi sabbaṁ taṁ, „tittiro Rāhulo ahu.

Kaṅkham vinodayanto so ahaṁ eva buddho ahu.”
Taṁ dhammadesanṁ sutvā rājā attamano tato.
While the first verse (EMhv 595) is identical with Mhv V 264, the versified Jātaka closely follows the text in the Jātaka-Aṭṭhavatanā. Here, we can concentrate on those passages, where the wording in the Jātaka itself is different in the Sinhalese and in the Burmese manuscripts. EMhv (598 foll.) agrees with pañca abhiññāyo ca atṭha (Bd atha, Bi atta) samāpattiyo (Ja III 64, 13) of the Burmese manuscripts, whereas the numerals are not found in the Sinhalese tradition. The situation is the same in other passages, too:

EMhv (601) vāsāpayum (so read) : Bīd vāsāpesum : vāsesum (Ja III 64,17)
(602) dipakātītiram : Bīd : dipatītiram (Ja III 64,18)
(604) gañhitvā ... vikkiṇāti : Bīd gaheītvā vikniṭvā : different wording in the Sinhalese manuscripts (Ja III 64, 20)
(601) ko nu kho kankham chindeyya 'mam (sic, 'mam=imaṁ), where Fausbīll (Ja III 65,3) follows the obviously wrong Sinhalese reading kammaṁ for kankham found in Bīd.
(612) bahu : Bīd bahu : bahuke (Ja III 65,3)
(617) vissajjento = Bī : vissajjanto (Ja III 65,16)
(621) na paticcakammaṁ phusati = Bīd : paticcakammaṁ na phusati (Ja III 66,6*)

When trying to countercheck this evidence, there are indeed a few instances, where EMhv is closer to the Sinhalese than to, the Burmese tranition :

(614) niddokkantassa bhavaṁ : niddaṁ okkantabhavaṁ, but Bīd niddaṁ okkamanabhavaṁ (Ja III 65,6)

The reading okkanta, however, has been adopted also in the Burmese Chaṭṭhasaṅgīyana edition published on the occasion of the 2500th anniversary of the Nirvāṇa, although it is not clear, whether the edition by Fausbīll or a genuine Burmese edition has been followed.

In some respects the variants found in the gāthās of this Jātaka are more important. They seem to point to a certain independence of the canonical Jātaka tradition known to the author of EMhv. Two such variants (617) kā su and (619) āgacchante (so read for agacchante in the printed edition) follow the Sinhalese tradition (Ja II 65, 10*; 24*) against Bīd kā nu and the unmetrical āgacchanti. Thrice, however, the gāthās preserved in EMhv even furnish altogether new readings: (618) mano te na ppaṇamatit is metrically correct against Bīd mano ce te and the evidently corrupt Cī mano mane nnd Cs mano cane (Ja III 65, 17*); (621) mano te is not shared by the rest of the tradition, which has mano ce (Ja III 66,6*) firmly rooted in the text tradition as proved by the quotation in the Saddanīti mano ce na ppaḍussati, Sadd 101, 15*. As ce instead of te is postulated by the context, this reading certainly is a mistake in the archetype of the EMhv.
The most interesting variant, however, is (618) *apāpaṃ tassa* against *avyāvatassa* (Ja III 65, 18*) with the Burmese variants B° *ajhāvatassa* and B° *abyāvatassa*. The text as printed in EMhv evidently needs correction in the light of the Jātaka: *apāpaṃ tassa* seems to go back to a misunderstood *apāpatassa*, which again may be a genuine variant of *a-ν (y)āvata*. Although -t- instead of -t- seems to bring EMhv nearer to the Burmese Jātaka tradition, it should be kept in mind that *avyāpta* might well develop a doublet showing -t-, cf. *kṛta>kata/kata*. Therefore -pata for -vata- may, but need not necessarily be, a South East Asian reading confusing dentals and cerebrals. The development of ν - p into p-p (cf. V. Trenckner, Notes on the Milindapañha 1879= JPTS 1908. 113; Critical Pāli Dictionary s.v. *avyāvata*, and Helmer Smith, Saddanīti V. 1966. Index p. 1516 “p”) in EMhv against ν - ν again underlines a position of EMhv aloof to some extent at least from both Jātaka traditions.

In those passages of EMhv corresponding to the prose of the Jātaka, on the other hand, there are only two instances, where there might have been a wording in the text used by the author of EMhv different from the Burmese and the Sinhalese traditions: (601) *pavane* against *araññe* (Ja III 64,16) and (616) *nisinno* against *nipanno* (Ja III 65,7). For neither change in wording is vindicated by the metre.

To sum up: On the whole it is quite evident that the text of the Tittira-Jātaka as versified in EMhv is based on a version very near or even more or less identical with the Burmese tradition found in the manuscripts used by Fausbøll. This rules out at once that the EMhv has been written in Ceylon. It does not, however, necessarily point to any South East Asian country as its place of origin. For the differences from the Burmese and the Sinhalese Jātaka traditions may be interpreted in two ways. Either these passages represent simply an older stage of the development of the Burmese manuscript tradition of the Jātaka, or they may reflect, however faintly, a third, South Indian text of the Jātaka. If the date of EMhv inferred by Malalasekera is only approximately correct, the latter might even be the more probable conclusion. This again would be one of the rather few and therefore all the more precious survivals of the South Indian Pāli tradition, which with some probability may be traced also in Aggavaṃsa's Saddanīti, as I have tried to show elsewhere (Notes on the Pāli tradition in Burma, to be published by the Academy of Sciences in Göttingen)°.

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1. The printed edition of EMhv has to be corrected: (600) *gacchamāno* read -naṃ; (602) *sakunika* read sā- always; (610) *yeva gacchanti* read *yevāgacchanti* ; (615) *kankhaṃ idam* read *kankhaṃ imam*. – (605) *nīrasadda* instead of *nissaddo* (Ja III 64, 22) is not clear to me.