Eḷāra and Duṭṭhagāmaṇī – Again

Peter Schalk

Introduction

Intellectuals loyal to the Government in Īḷam/Lāmkā have recently put much effort into launching a homology between King Duṭṭhagāmaṇī (Sīṃhala: Duṭṭugāmunu) and Eḷāra (Tāmil Ellāṇa) on one side and President Mahinda Rajapaksa (Rājapakṣa) and Veluppillai Prabhakaran (Vēluppiḷḷai Pirapākaraṇ) on the other. A homology conveys the impression that as A is related to B, C is related to D. As Duṭṭhagāmaṇī was victorious over Eḷāra so was Mahinda Rajapaksa over Vēluppiḷḷai Pirapākaraṇ. The “conclusion” is that Mahinda Rajapaksa is a modern Duṭṭhagāmaṇī. I found 9090 entries on 26 December 2010 in Google which were influenced by this homology. The more frequently it is presented the more credible it becomes, it seems. Quantity is, however, not convincing in this case, but is persuasive, and so is this homology itself. Homologies are relevant in exact sciences, but when applied to history they become instruments of propaganda. They imply an approximisation of identity between A and B and between C and D and between A/B and C/D. They also imply a synchronisation of A/B and C/D to overcome the cleft of time difference. This alienates homologies from critical historical writing. Homologies imitate, not copy, selections of the past. They may just end up in comedy or even ridicule like in the case of the launched homology by the governmental administration in 1995 between King Kaṉakacūriyaṇ and Sapumal Kumāraya from the 15th century on one side and President Chandrika Kumaratunga-Bandranaike (Candrikā Kumaraṉatuṅga-Bandaranāya) and General Anuruddha Ratwatte (Ratvatte) on the other side.¹ This kind of historical homologies are regularly made by historians with a political agenda.

¹ Peter Schalk, “‘Conjuring up Spirits from the Past’. Identifications in Public Ritual of Living Persons with Persons from the Past”, Ritualistics. Based on Papers Read at the Symposium on Ritualistics Held at Åbo, Finland, on July 31–August 2, 2002, edited by Tore Ahlbäck (Åbo: Donner Institute, 2003), 189–207.
Some intellectuals try to nuance; they emphasise that Duṭṭha-gāmaṇī was not complete anti-Tamil. He had a monument erected after Elāra, a memorial in Anurādhapura. Duṭṭha-gāmaṇī was not simply a victorious Rambo-type hero; he was allegedly a hero of a noble character honouring the memory of his enemy. When we apply this to Mahinda Rajapaksa, we can expect from him that he demonstrates his noble character by honouring Velupillai Prabhakaran by building a memorial at Muḷḷivāykkāḷ. This has not happened and will not happen, but still the homology is cultivated, especially by media, but of course in a mutilated and twisted way.

The event of building a monument was emphasised in a speech by a Yāḻppāṇam born attorney by the name of George R Wiley who welcomed Mahinda Rajapaksa as a modern Duṭṭha-gāmaṇī on his visit to Houston on 19 October, 2010. Wiley realised that his homology was not perfect when confronted with the present reality. All knew at that point of time that Mahinda Rajapaksa had not only Velupillai Prabhakaran killed, but that he had also desacralised the tuyulum illaṅkaḷ ‘abodes of rest’ [Fig. 54], the war memorials of the combatants of the Īlattamil Resistance Movement. He had sent bulldozers to eliminate these memorials [Fig. 34, 56], but during the whole armed conflict war memorials of the Tamil Resistance Movement were destroyed [Fig. 54, 56]. Memorisation of the Resistance Movement’ māvirarkaḷ ‘Great Heroes’ has been suppresses in Īlam after May 2009, but cannot be suppressed in the Diaspora [Fig. 57].

When Wiley made his speech, all knew that the President had a memorial established close to Muḷḷivāykkāḷ [Fig. 32–33, 47] to demonstrate the victory over “the terrorist” Vēluppiḷḷai Pirāpākaraṇ. Wiley has not reproached or even accused Mahinda Rajapaksa for not having built a monument over Velupillai Prabhakaran in Putukkuṭiyirippu close to Muḷḷivāykkāḷ. Instead, Wiley realised the paradigmatic force of the homology. He tried to circumvent its logical and very embarrassing consequence. He twisted therefore the reference to the monument from being a physical monument over the enemy into being a monumental political programme by Mahinda Rajapaksa, a monument that created justice for the Tamil speakers. He advised the

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2 Wiley, George R. Brave Speech by Tamil Attorney. [Video]), http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=in2zdumagww&feature=related..

President to be noble like Duṭṭhagāmaṇī by returning Sri Lanka into that paradise which it once was for all citizens (sic). Wiley asked Rajapaksa implicitly to build a monument over himself. He explicitly advised the President not to let a Prabhakaran ever rise again. Wiley did not burden the President with a demand to demonstrate his noble character in the footsteps of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī.

Homologies can be dangerous stuff. Lankan ideological historiography has more than one. History is apprehended as heritage or as imitation of the past. The Eḷāra-Duṭṭhagāmaṇī narration told by historians was a favourite theme during the long conflict. Ju. Ri. Jayawardhana and Raṇasimha Prēmadāsa also were identified with Duṭṭhagāmaṇī, and Veluppillai Prabhakaran with Eḷāra as their counterpart. Even the Tamil Resistance Movement took it up and created an Ellāḷaṉ Force. What is black for one party is beautiful for another. Some Tamil speakers felt and still feel sympathy with Ellāḷaṉ, of course not because he was a loser in the battle with Duṭṭhagāmaṇī, but because he was a victim with whom Tamil speakers can identify. He, being a just King – even in the evaluation of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī – was killed unjustly. The Tamil historian James Rutnam describes Eḷāra as an aged, but valiant King who was struck down and killed in single combat by the much younger Duṭṭhagāmaṇī. On the Government side the President is celebrated because he was a victor over “Eḷāra” who was a loser, a “terrorist”, who evidently does not deserve to be honoured by a monument close to Muḷḷivāykkāl where he was killed – or anywhere else.

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4 See p. 129 in this volume.
History contra Heritage

To deconstruct this homology it is necessary to approach the sources. To begin, I must introduce here a distinction between “history” as a critical study of the past, and “heritage” which is a conscious selection of past events which supports political or ideological (religious) interests at a given time. In the heritage of a person, family, nation or state are usually only included those events which give a positive image of the past, events which are monumental and exemplary to be repeated in the future. Enemies are usually demonised in a construction of a heritage. Embarrassing and painful events are denied or excused. If there is a defeat on a battlefield it is immediately balanced by a great victory. There is room for Elāra in the construction of a heritage in the Mahāvaṃsa, but only as loser, defeated and killed by Duṭṭhagāmaṇi. He formulated in the name of the Buddha an ethical/religious principle which justifies the killing of even a just king under special circumstances. This principle became one of the pillars in sīṃhala urumaya ‘Sīṃhala heritage’. This principle is unique in world history. We find many examples of justifications for killing tyrants, but no example of justification of killing a just King.

True, there is room for Tamil speakers in the national heritage-construction of Prākrit and Sīṃhala speaking Buddhists, but only as aliens or as settlers of a late period. In some cultures even negative events are included in the national heritage, like the Holocaust in some modern post-war constructions of Germany’s national heritage, but of course not as exemplary acts. They are integrated as warning, as Mahnmal ‘exhortatory memorial’. The UN has also integrated Auschwitz in the world heritage as exhortatory memorial. True, the Government of the island has included Muḷḷivākkāl in its national heritage - not in the form of an exhortatory memorial which memorialises tens of thousands killings of civilian Tamil speakers by the Sri Lankan Armed Forced - but as a triumphant martial memorial of victory over terrorism [Fig. 32–33, 49].

The consciousness of the heritage is expressed visually in painting, sculpture and architecture, not to forget music, all based on Bud-

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dhism. When we come to political Buddhism in Īlam these expressions are of special kind of creative art which we know as kitsch. This German globalised word is usually explained by trash or junk, but here I take the word as technical and descriptive one. It is a special kind of art which renounces originality. *Kitsch* goes for imitation of originals, which introduces a quantitative aspect of beauty expressed in the duplication of imitations *en masse* [Fig. 39, 40]. Quality is measured by quantity which should convey a massive impression. We know this method of mobilising masses developed by totalitarian states.

The Buddha statues in Fig. 39–40 are imitations of the famous *samādhi* statue in Anurātapuram from the 6th century. I say imitation, not copy. The producers have decided to solve an iconographic problem in the way how Alexander opened the famous Gordian knot. They made the robe fall in folds which is not visible on the original. Moreover, the original has a stone block behind the head which suggests that a halo was fixed to it. There is no sign of it in the imitations. They are all moulded in the same mould. *Kitsch* is reduced to a feeling of triviality and banalisation of Buddhist thought - in the evaluation of the critical and knowledgeable beholder.

The Government of Sri Lanka has taken great interest in promoting this *kitsch* and has appointed the Defence Department to enforce the production of it. There is a strong element of militarisation in this *kitsch* which exempts it from the demands of the open market. This again has resulted in a suspension of the distinction between *Edelkitsch* 'noble kitsch' for higher demands and *Massenkitsch* 'kitsch for masses' for lower demands. All *kitsch* has become noble *kitsch* for the masses which is imposed in Tamil areas and in parts of the world in Lankan embassies [Fig. 39–40]. A state's engagement in martial art is not rare, but these states are usually totalitarian states, are in a pressed situation of war or are dependent of ultranationalist movements. The Tamil Resistance Movement also engages in the spread of noble *kitsch* to its sympathisers.

Political Sinhala Buddhism instrumentalises *kitsch* to project two sentiments, one of purity and one of danger. Purity is expressed in the mass production of Buddha statues, of *malāsnayas* 'flower seats' which receive flowers by venerating visitors, and of *vihārayas* 'monasteries' which are established in areas of Tamil speakers under control of the military administration [Fig. 3–8, 15–17, 20–23, 25–

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9 See Fig. 3–13, 19, 26, 28–31, 36, 38, 42–43, 49 in this volume.
Purity stands here for the safe world and for harmony. This harmony is, however, endangered by dirt which is a traditional attribute associated with Tamil speakers, especially from the Cōla period onwards. Usually a lotus [Fig. 31–32, 42] which is also an expression of purity cleans itself from the dirt in its muddy surrounding. So does the Government of Sri Lanka through its military organisation. The lotus is also mass produced. The combination of the lotus representing the pure, safe world, and of violent exorcism is also symbolised [Fig. 30–32].

As Duṭṭhagāmāṇī has killed Eḻāra, so Mahinda Rajapaksa, represented by an anonymous hero, has killed Vēluppiḷḷai Pirapākaraṇ. This close belonging together of purity and exorcism of evil is expressed in art of kitsch in Buddhist triumphalist statues like the one established by the military in Mullivāykkāl [Fig. 32–33, 47]. This kitsch retroactively leads the beholder to the “heritage”. Mahinda Rajapaksa just imitated the past with all its legends about victories against the Tamil speakers. He created an imagination of a safe world by using the gun according to the accepted principle “war for peace” from the 1990s. On the gun [Fig. 32, 49] sits a peace dove! In Fig. 31 we find an imitation of the known motive of God holding the globe in his hands conveying the message “in God we trust”. We find sculptures like that in Western cemeteries. In Fig. 31 the globe is replaced by Lāṃkā and the four hands belong... to whom?

Why is the Government so interested about this kind of political Buddhist kitsch? This unusual enforcement by the Defence Department to spread kitsch is part of the Government’s colonisation program in the North and East. In these areas the Defence Department spreads its kitsch which is beheld not by Tamil Caivas, Christians or Muslims, but by Sinhala-Buddhist speakers who come as visitors, pilgrims, and finally and ultimately as settlers. They are moved to accept the re-conquest of territory and to support in their own interest the ideology of majoritarianism which legalises the colonisation program within the parliamentarian system - at least in the eyes of its Buddhist beholders. This kitsch would have been revealed as trash or junk and rejected if it had been exposed to a historical-critical analysis of “the heritage”, but it is not in the interest of the Government and its dependent media to support such an analysis. Furthermore, expressions of political Sinhala-Buddhism, especially through Buddhist kitsch, is connected with strong demands for territory, but not for any soil. It is the territory of the constitutional unitary state.

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10 See the article by Jude Lal Fernando in this volume, especially pp. 199–201.
Therefore, voices which speak for Tamil Buddhism which are connected with counter demands for an autonomous territory must be silenced.

To close up, the distinction between history as a critical study of the past and as a constructed heritage based on selected sources is theoretical, but it should be held up as guideline. A modern historian should not be a custodian of a constructed national heritage, but should be an analyser and synthesiser of fragments of the past based on all available sources. One of the important custodians of the heritage of Sinhala21 in Ilam/Lamkā was the late monk Walpola Rahula (Valpoḷa Rāhula, 1907–1997) whose works I will take up here.

Historisation

Custodians of a heritage usually claim to be historians also. They want the flair of academic truthfulness. They historise their heritage constructions.22 Historising implies here that a new event is related to a past event which objectively can be said to be invented, mythical or real, which is already known or unknown, but which from the custodian’s side is always regarded as true. Let me give an example. The concept of a unitary state was introduced in 1972 in the Lankan Constitution, but its introduction was facilitated by relating it to the concept of “rule under one umbrella” which was allegedly accomplished already by Dutṭhagāmanī. Ideologues, especially Walpola Rahula, masterminded this historisation. He created an impression of a continuous more than 2000 years old tradition of a unitary state.

There are aggressive, active, revisionist historisations, some of low and others of high sophistication. The first repeat the old slogans of war, or at least allude to them. I refer to the naming of military regiments which often bear the names of killers of Tamil speakers from the past, like Gemunu Watch Regiment and Gajaba Regiment. Both are named after famous exterminators of Tamil speakers, after


Duṭṭhagāmaṇi (101–77/161–137) and Gajabāhu (174–196/114–136). These historisations are historical pastiches; they retrieve the past, but only by imitating it. This is true especially of one monastic group with the significant name Jātika Hāla Urumaya ‘National Siṃhala Heritage’. Its value system is widely used in other right-wing political parties and by individuals. It teaches Siṃhalatva similarly to Indians teaching Hindūtva and similar to how Germans taught Christianity in the 1930s. A part of the German Protestant Church taught “German Christianity” which had an anti-semitic base. In all these cases democratic pluralism is the adversary.

The monk Walpola Rahula belongs to the more sophisticated custodians of a heritage which is historised by him and given the flair of an academic production. He spent many years in Paris, where he had learned the craft of historical-philological criticism. One of his books is significantly called Bhikṣuvagē Urumaya, “The Heritage of the Monk.” It first appeared in Siṃhala in 1946 and was then translated into English as The Heritage of the Bhikkhu from 1974. The monk, according to him, should perform social services to the people, which really meant political services. He glorified war-inspired monks in the Mahāvaṃsa (who were even advocates of violence), which he then repeated in a later book, History of Buddhism in Ceylon from 1956.

Walpola Rahula felt himself called to emerge politically, first socialist, then nationalistic-Siṃhala. So we know him since the 1950s. In 1956 he praised the historical Siṃhala speakers as a new breed of healthy young blood, who gave themselves to Buddhism. He published “a call to the whole Siṃhala race” in The Independent of 1 February 1992, in which he demanded that the peace proposal of the Minister C. Tōntāmāṉ (Thondaman) should be dismissed. He had suggested that the government should start peace talks with the LTTE. Walpola Rahula, now VC of the University of Ceylon, claimed that the war first should be brought to an end before peace talks started. He implicitly called for a war for peace. Walpola Rahula was by no means alone. The following long-established Buddhist organizations supported his slogan that peace should be established only after completion of successful war: Supreme Council of the Sangha, Mahabodhi Society, Young Mens’ Buddhist Association, Dharma

Vijaya Foundation, All Ceylon Buddhist Women’s Congress, Sri Lanka Temperance Association, All Ceylon Buddhist Congress, Buddhist Theosophical Society, World Buddhist Women’s Congress, Sasana Sevaka Society. The slogan “war for peace” became an identity marker for the regime of President Candirikā Kumaraṇatúṅga-Bandaranāyaka who was backed up by the Buddhist organisations mentioned above. The theme of war for peace continues a phrase which seems to be as old as war itself and is repeated in every generation: *paritur pax bello*, ‘peace is gained by war’.16 The Government side launched in 1995 the battle cry "war for peace!", in Sinhala *samaya saridahā yuddhaya*.17

Now back to Walpola Rahula’s first political work, *The Heritage of the Bhikkhu*. He argued that the political monk is not a new creation which is right of course. It is true that the figure of the anti-Tamil martial monk has a strong presence in tradition. We shall meet a famous martial monk in the role of a King below. We also know that this tradition did not remain unchallenged. Of this we hear nothing.

The main historical problem in Walpola Rahula’s work lies in the fact that “tradition” in his context not only refers to the Sinhala-Buddhist tradition, but also to the canonical tradition of the *Vinaya*, albeit the existence of Tamil speakers is not even suggested in the canon, nor is the political monk glorified in the *Vinaya*. Walpola Rahula could not say to the public "the Buddha taught this, but I teach that". He is expected to say "the Buddha taught this and I do the same". The reader of Walpola Rahula’s anachronism and of his persuasive-constructed understanding of an artificially prolonged tradition is brought to the conclusion that it is in the spirit of the canonical tradition.

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16 This formulation goes back to Cornelius Nepos (100–125) to his work *De viris illustribus*.
Walpola Rahula introduced in the 1940s a relativistic principle and casuistic interpretation of the Vinaya to facilitate for monks the encounter with the modern world. He relied on the testimony of the Buddha that minor rules could be changed which actually happened already in the days of the Buddha. This brings him to the conclusion that the Vinaya could be changed with changing economic and social conditions. This was not seriously disputed, but at stake are not the minor rules, but the figure of the monk as a political monk, whose goal in life has no support in the Vinaya.

Walpola Rahula has two faces. In his account of the true teachings of the Buddha in the book Budun vadāla dharmaya from 1964, translated into English in 1959 under the title What the Buddha Taught, is said that the Buddha did not teach just war. In his other works, however, he wants to justify the war-loving monk’s political involvement based on his ethical relativism, which he ascribes to the Buddha himself.

Lakdiva budusamayē itihāsaya, ‘History of Buddhism on the island of Lanka’, was published in 1989 by Walpola Rahula. It contains the legend of Duṭṭhagāmanī as the founder of the kingdom, and his religious war is classified as a just war. The king is presented as keeper of the Siṃhala race. An English version appeared as early as 1956, in the wake of the above-mentioned book about the legacy of the monk. Apparently it was not necessary for the author to revise its war-inspired views expressed later, which reached a climax in 1992 (see below).

Valpoḷa Rahula does not distinguish between Buddhist politics and political Buddhism. The former is within the frame of a canonical tradition which advises a ruler to incorporate Buddhist morality like compassion in his political program. The latter instrumentalises Buddhism to achieve a political aim as ultimate aim. This ultimate aim

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20 Valpoḷa Rāhula, Budun vadāla dharmaya (Dehivala: Baudhā sanskrītika madhyasthānaya, 1997 [1964]).
21 Valpoḷa Rahula, What the Buddha Taught, revised edition (Bedford: Gordon Fraser, 1972 [1959]).
22 Rahula, What the Buddha Taught, 84.
24 For this distinction see Peter Schalk, "Political Buddhism among Lankans in the
is to strengthen the unitary state, Siṃhala ekīya rājya, against the Tamil Resistance Movement which goes for two nations and two states, but also against the opposition in the home front which strives for a united state, Siṃhala eksat rājya, and of course also against every form of a secular state. 25 Valpola Rāhula speaks of Buddhist politics but means sometimes political Buddhism.

The Sources

A source for the Eḷāra-Duṭṭhagāmaṇī story is the Mahāvaṃsa from the end of the 5th century AD. The Mahāvaṃsa exists now on Internet, in Pāli and English translation, even in a Tamil translation. It is easy to come over the original text. There is no excuse anymore for not using it.

Another source is the Dipavaṃsa. 26 It is also written in Pāli and is translated into English. It was created about 100 years earlier and is shorter than the Mahāvaṃsa. There are no earlier sources available for the Eḷāra-Duṭṭhagāmaṇī story, but there are a number of later sources which can be used for studying the reception of the Eḷāra-Duṭṭhagāmaṇī story. 27 I take up here some other sources in Pāli and Siṃhala, but mainly one source, the Mahāvaṃsa, for the study of the recent reception in the work by Walpola Rahula.

A comparison between the Dipavaṃsa and the Mahāvaṃsa shows interesting contradictions. Through the dominance of the Mahāvaṃsa in the following centuries these contradictions were forgotten. The Dipavaṃsa has been marginalised either by prejudice against the historical value of the Dipavaṃsa, by ignorance or by a

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conscious deselection. What historians like Walpola Rahula present today is a typical construction, based on the Mahāvaṃsa, of a “heritage” glorified by Siṃhala-Buddhist ethnonationalists.

Tamil historians have not contributed to question seriously this heritage; they have swallowed the facts which were presented to them, even if they have another evaluation of these facts (Elāra is not a loser, but a victim). Even James Rutnam who did a deep study of Elāra’s tomb suspended to look in the Dīpa/vāṃsa.

Dutṭhagāmana was a king of Prākrit speakers, who according to the Mahāvaṃsa after a long war against Tamil speakers on 32 battlefields in a last duel fight defeated the ruling Tamil King Elāra in Anurādhapura. When it comes to the dating of kings, we have two possible chronologies. The first is from the German indologist William Geiger, the second is from the Lankan archaeologist Seneraṭ Paranavītana and his school in Pēradeṇiya. Both have good reasons for their chronologies. Historians mix them sometimes. I will always give both. The first is Geiger’s, the second the Pēradeṇiya School’s. Both chronologies are based on the same sources concerning Dutṭhagāmana, namely the Dīpa/vāṃsa and the Mahāvaṃsa. The dating of Dutṭhagāmana is 101–77/161–137. The dating of Elāra is 145–101/no dating. The dates indicate the time of their ruling, not their total lifespan. The two dates show differences, but they do not concern us. Both will fall into what is called the early Anurādhapura period. The political, economic and religious center was from the 3rd century BC a city-state founded in Anurādhapura, in Tamil presented as Anurātapuram. It was the center of decisive, sometimes fatal events for the state formation up to the 12th Century.

Now follow some introductory words about these two sources, the Dīpa/vāṃsa and Mahāvaṃsa. Both are written in Pāli which is a literary language. They were only in the 19th Century translated into Siṃhala, after which they could become popular books. The Dīpa/vāṃsa ‘Chronicle of the island’ includes 22 chapters, stretching from the mythical tale of the three arrivals of the Buddha Sākyamuni to the

28 The history of research on the generation and reception in Pali of the Dīpa/vāṃsa and Mahāvaṃsa up to to 14th century has been summarised in Sven Bretfeld, Das singhalesische Nationalepos von König Dutthagamani Abhaya: Textkritische Bearbeitung und Übersetzung der Kapitel VII.3–VIII.3 der Rasavahini des Vedeha Thera und Vergleich mit den Paralleltexten Sahassavatthupakkaranāga und Saddharmalankaraya, Monographien zur indischen Archäologie, Kunst und Philologie Band 13 (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 2001), XII–XL. For scholars’ interpretation see Ibid., XVII–XXI.
29 Rutnam, The Tomb...
reign of King Mahāsena (334–361/274–301). It was compiled shortly after his death and completed. There is no known compiler. The distance of time between Elāra/Duṭṭhagāmanī and the codification of their life-story in the Dīpavamsa is about 400 years.

Mahāvaṃsa means ‘Great Chronicle’. The Mahāvaṃsa includes 37 chapters and extends from the arrivals of the Buddha up to Mahāsena. It was compiled and completed towards the end of the 5th Century. The work is attributed in a commentary, not in the Mahāvaṃsa itself, to the Buddhist monk Mahānāma. The distance between the event and its codification is about 500 years. There is preserved no eyewitness report about Elāra and Duṭṭhagāmanī.

One should speak in this case of the first part of the Mahāvaṃsa, because to this work were added three more parts later. These last three parts are known by the name Cūḷavaṃsa ‘Little Chronicle’, but it is more comprehensive than the first part. Those who wish to see continuity between all parts speak only on the Mahāvaṃsa as a unit which is numbered continuously from chapter 1 to 100. The second part includes Chapter 37: 50 to 70 and was developed by a monk named Dhammakitti compiled in 1186. The third part includes the chapters to 90: 104 and was in the 14th compiled century by an unknown poet. The fourth part includes Chapter 90: 105 to 100 and was completed by the monk Tibbotuvē about 1782, shortly before the arrival of the first British.

It is important to see that the Mahāvaṃsa is no single work with its 100 chapters; it is a concoction of different parts which must be dealt with separately. They originated in different periods and were created by different authors. Walpola Rahula skips without explanation the fourth part about the beginning of colonial period and insists in using the name of Mahāvaṃsa for all parts. This creates the impression of an organic continuity. Moreover, there is no provision which says that the Mahāvaṃsa is ended with the fourth part. There is no closed Vaṃsa canon. A fifth part which extends into our time could be added. It would not astonish me to find that the present President Mahinda Rajapaksa has a fifth part written which glorifies him.

Both chronicles are written by Buddhists. The Dīpavamsa is anonymous, but the content reveals that the authors were insiders, nuns and/or monks. In the case of the Mahāvaṃsa, we know the name of three Buddhist monks, who have written different parts. It is

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important to know that all these monks belonged to the same school tradition, the Mahāvihāra tradition of the Theravādins within Hinayāna Buddhism. They reflect a concord of view. Therefore it is not totally wrong to see an ideological continuity in the whole of the Mahāvaṃsa. Both chronicles and their successors are created for the purpose of consolidating a self-image of the Buddhists of the island, in the Mahāvaṃsa in conjunction with the idea of a centralized state. This self-image proclaims that the islands destiny as a whole is to become a Buddhist country as a centralized state. This image is unfolded in the Mahāvaṃsa and is retrieved today by Śiṃhala-Buddhist ethnonationalists as the heritage’s ultimate concern for the island. From this perspective, the Kings are valued by the monks/nuns as good or bad. Duṭṭhagāmaṇī turns out very well because he killed the Tamil king Elāra, not because Elāra was evil or unjust. On the contrary, it is said that he was a just King. He was, according to the Mahāvaṃsa – not to the Dīpavaṃsa – killed because he was not Buddhist, and therefore he was an obstacle for the predestined spread of Buddhism. This part of the heritage is paradigmatic. Rulers in the chronicles are not only judged individually for their merits, but they were also idealized as paradigms for the following period. It is now important to see that the earlier source, the Dīpavaṃsa has a completely different explanation for the killing of Elāra (see below). Let me just note that it is the Mahāvaṃsa, not the Dīpavaṃsa, that defines the conflict between Tamil and Prākrit speakers as a religious conflict. Today the influence of this part of the Mahāvaṃsa on media is intensive. How often have I seen the statement that the conflict between Tamilś and Śiṃhalas is religious, is a conflict between Hindus and Buddhists?

The chronicles are post-canonical. There are no claims in them that they are words of Buddha. No one has claimed of that being the case. The chronicles have, however, a special status as being central for the construction of a national “heritage”. They contain a high-profile doctrine of jus ad bellum ‘just war’, and of jus in bello ‘equitable way of warfare”, both in the name of Buddha. For some Buddhists of today, these passages are embarrassing, but within political Buddhism these chronicles are ideal role models. They are not classified as time-and locally-related statements without any claim to succession. The actual historical impact of the Mahāvaṃsa, having been retrieved in the 19th century, throws its shadow on education, on the popularization of history, on media and on ongoing controversies in the conflict between government loyalists and resistance fighters of the Tamil movement.
In addition to the chronicles, there are also Prākrit inscriptions from pre-Christian times which are usually short. Some of them are approximately from the same time as Eḷāra and Duṭṭhagāmaṇī. These inscriptions are aware of the title gāmaṇī, which refers to a local ruler. There are many men from the ruling class mentioned and they are described briefly, but there is no reference to a king of a centralized state. Attempts by Senerat Paranavitana to project Duṭṭhagāmaṇī into these inscriptions are speculative. This does not suggest that Duṭṭhagāmaṇī did not exist, but that he played a limited role in his lifetime.

If these inscriptions are not rewarding as source for the Duṭṭhagāmaṇī-Eḷāra story there is another hypothetical source. Versions of events which are identical or similar in the Mahāvaṃsa and Dipavaṃsa go back to a common written source for both in Eḷu, a literary forerunner in Prākrit of Sinhala. This source is not preserved anymore, but there are references to this now lost chronicle in Prākrit-Eḷu. Both chronicles end with King Mahāsena (274–301, 334–361) which indicates that they had the same source as basis ending with this king.

What is surplus in the Mahāvaṃsa in relation to the Dipavaṃsa can be understood as a new creation or borrowing from other sources by the monk Mahānāma, the supposed compiler of the Mahāvaṃsa, in the end of the fifth century. The content of the Dipavaṃsa is then primary to the content of Mahāvaṃsa not only in time, but above all in relation to the now lost original written transmission of the Eḷāra-Duṭṭhagāmaṇī story in Prākrit-Eḷu. We cannot exclude also that the Dipavaṃsa has consciously deselected material from this common source.

The Dipavaṃsa has been regularly marginalized as source for two reasons. Wilhelm Geiger found it to be a clumsy work, more a dry list of names and things than a chronicle, containing many repetitions and mnemonic verses for the reciter of the episodes. His argument is esthetic, but in his German academic tradition sloppiness is also a sign of unreliability, albeit he does not say explicitly that the Dipavaṃsa is not trustworthy.

31 Inscriptions of Ceylon 1, Containing Cave Inscriptions from 3rd Century B.C. to 1st Century A. C. and Other Inscriptions in the Early Brāhmi Script, edited by Senerat Paranavitana, Archaeological Survey of Ceylon (Colombo: Department of Archaeology, 1970), LV, LXX.
32 For the used sources see Sven Bretfeld, Das singhalesische Nationalepos..., XXVIII–XXXIII.
33 Wilhelm Geiger, Culture of Ceylon in Mediaeval Times. Edited by Heinz Bechert. 2., unveränderte Auflage (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1986), 71.
The other reason for marginalizing the Dipavaṃsa in the modern period is that it cannot be exploited for promoting Śimhala-Buddhist ethnonationalist aims. This is possible with the Mahāvaṃsa that is one of the pillars of Śimhalatva. The Dipavaṃsa corresponds to our idealizing image of Buddhism as a non-violent religion which resists attempts to be instrumentalised for political aims. The Dipavaṃsa mentions realistically cruel events in the political world, but does not excuse or even sanction a fitting selection of them by a Buddhised just-war theory.

Elāra in the Dipavaṃsa

Tamil scholars have made themselves dependent on the Mahāvaṃsa for their study of Elāra. Therefore we cannot expect any new facts from them. Irācanāyakam in his book on Ancient Jaffna from 1926 followed closely the Mahāvaṃsa and added fanciful narrations of the type “it is said that...”34 They are useless as historical documents because they cannot be checked, but they convey all a positive image of Elāra.

We are now concentrating on the killing of Elāra by Duṭṭhagāmanī, first in the Dipavaṃsa and then in the Mahāvaṃsa. In the Dipavaṃsa the story of Elāra includes sections 18: 49–54. We do not even learn that he was a Tamil and non-Buddhist. The name Elāra is a Prākrit corruption of Tamil Ellālan. Those who do not know the phonetic rules for transforming Tamil into Prākrit will not suspect that Elāra was a Tamil speaker. This we learn only in the Mahāvaṃsa. This omission in the Dipavaṃsa to record such information has been used to criticize the historical value of the Dipavaṃsa, but there is another way to look at this omission. It was not in the interest for the compiler(s) to provide this ethnic information because their interest was another to which I shall come below. The Dipavaṃsa does not define the conflict in religious or ethnic terms, but as what? Let us go step by step.

Elāra is represented as khattiya ‘warrior’ in a series of royal succession. Elāra murdered his predecessor, who in turn had murdered his predecessor. Those murdered were two warriors, Sena and Gut-taka, who rajjam dharmena karayum, ‘ruled justly’ for 22 years.

Their names alone do not reveal that they were Tamil speakers, but this time they are said to be Tamil speakers. Evidently they were not tyrants and usurpers because they had ruled justly for 22 years. Why were they killed?

Elāra was not the first ruler who assassinated his predecessor, and he was not the last. The murder of predecessors in dynastic systems of government is not rare; it is a natural result of power struggles within and between dynasties. Elāra found that his predecessor was an obstacle in his own expansion and killed him in an intradynastic struggle. From the perspective of the historian, the role of Elāra as killer who is killed later himself is expected. Dynastic killings belonged to normalcy. Elāra had spent his time and stood in the way for a young warrior of a neighboring dynasty on the island. Intra- and interdynastic struggles alternated. The Prākrit speakers had several dynasties, a sūriyavamsa and a candravamsa. There were subclans to the former like the Kālinga princes and the Lambakaṇṇas. The āriyavamsa was classified of being of lower rank in spite of its high status name.

The Dipavamsa refers to six Tamil rulers and in no case in pejorative way (Dipavamsa 18: 47, 20: 15–17). These are the mentioned Sena and Gutta (177–155, no date) and Pulahattha, Bahiya, Panayamāra, Piḷayamāra and Dhāṭika who reigned in succession (43–29, 103–89).

Elāra, according to the Dipavamsa, had ruled for 44 years justly by the four ways of avoiding desire (chanda), hatred (dosa), fear (bhaya) and delusion (moha). He lived up to norms of Buddhism, but his religion is never characterised. If the reader of the Dipavamsa does not know what the Mahāvaṃsa says about Elāra, he would not even guess that Elāra is not a Buddhist. All the demerits he avoided, desire (chanda), hatred (dosa), fear (bhaya) and delusion (moha) are also explicitly classified as vices by Buddhism.

Elāra could also do wonderful deeds. When it rained day and night, he caused the rain to fall only at night. Why was he murdered? There is no explicit reason given in the Dipavamsa but it conveys the impression that the time had come for Elāra to be eliminated by a warrior, whose name was Abhaya and who was surrounded by ten soldiers and a war elephant called Kaṇḍula. This warrior is known as Duṭṭhagāmaṇi in the Mahāvaṃsa.

In the Dipavamsa is no mentioning of Abhaya killing Elāra in single combat. We learn only that Abhaya killed 32 kings and then reigned alone. These 32 Kings were not classified as Tamil speaking kings and not as non-Buddhists (Dipavamsa 18: 54). In the Dipavamsa neither alienation of nor xenophobia against Tamil speakers
are visible. Abhaya’s victory is therefore not given an ethnic touch by pinpointing Prākrit speaking Buddhists as standing against Tamil speaking non-Buddhists. The picture is that of two power-hungry dynastic leaders standing against each other in a war for territorial gains.

If we had only the Dipavamsa, Abhaya’s attack could be described as a struggle between dynasties. These had not yet formed nation states that relied on a linguistic or religious basis and on a continuous territory, but whose unity and continuity was symbolized by the dynasty whose state formation was composed of different linguistic and religious communities. Loyalties were not defined ethnically, but in relation to the dynasty. Pledges of allegiance from different ethnic groups were placed on rulers. The presentation by Walpola Rahula of the pre-colonial state as a linguistic, racial, religious, national and centralized unitary state even at Duṭṭhagāmaṇi’s times is a retrospective and rude anachronistic projection.

Interdynastic wars were common in South Asia in the pre-colonial period. The kingdoms in South India fought each other and within their reach was also the island. Also Prākrit speaking rulers on the island went to wars of conquest to South India and collaborated with the Pāṇṭiyas against the early Cōḷas. It’s amazing: The armies of these Prākrit speaking rulers were in part Tamil-speaking mercenaries. Such wars were economic, territorial, and sometimes religious, but only when it came to save the own religion. Wars of conquest were legitimate means to increase the treasure of the own kingdom. In Indian law books such as the Arthasāstra conquest was presented as a legitimate and necessary source for enriching the treasury. Treasures on the island were often hidden in Buddhist monasteries. Therefore, these were a natural target of looting by South Indian armies. Duṭṭhagāmaṇi’s own wars of conquest against 32 rulers followed this pattern. The imperial Cōḷas in the 11th and 12century, plundered Buddhist monasteries of the island, but at the same time constructed a huge Buddhist monastery for Buddhist monks in Southeast Asia, though not a single Cōḷa ruler was personally attracted to Buddhism.35 The Cōḷas were crude pragmatists. They needed the Buddhists of Sri Vijaya for the recovery of trade with Southeast Asia, and they needed the Buddhist monasteries on the island for their plundering. Moreover, there were no recognized borders. The frontiers shifted constantly, depending on how a ruler could defend them. Might was right. The Cēras, the Pāṇṭiyas, the Cōḷas and the Prākrit speaking rul-

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35 BaT 1, 133–145.
ers of the island were all educated in this martial ideology.

Let us now turn to Walpola Rahula. He neglects the Dipavaṃsa. In doing so he escaped the view of the nature of the struggle as interdynastic between Elāra and Duṭṭhagāmaṇī. Walpola Rahula followed the view of the Mahāvaṃsa that represents the struggle as a religious war. His assessment of the Mahāvaṃsa as authentic and impartial source is underlined by him. After all, the view of the Mahāvaṃsa is his view.

**Elāra in the Mahāvaṃsa**

Now we go to the Mahāvaṃsa, especially to section 21: 1–145, 25: 1–116. The starting point of the story is that the Tamil speaking King Elāra occupied Anurādhapura and that there was total of 32 small kingdoms of Tamil-speaking rulers. In this point the Dipavaṃsa and Mahāvaṃsa agree. Let us reduce the kingdoms to chieftains, but still the modern concept of Siṃhalatva of Tamil speakers being late-comers and invaders to the country, settling first in the 13th century, has no backing in the pillar-source of Siṃhalatva, in the Mahāvaṃsa. It shows that from the start of historical times we find both Tamil and Prākrit speakers.

In the Mahāvaṃsa too Elāra is presented as a just ruler against friend and foe. 44 years he ruled. Also in dispute Elāra precipitated fair verdict. His righteousness enabled him to perform miracles, such as regulation of the rainy season. We learn that he was Tamil, and of high lineage (ujiujātiko) and he came from the Cōla country (colaraṇṭha). Evidently, the alleged author of the first part of the Mahāvaṃsa felt a need to identify Elāra as Tamil and as an alien. The present stereotype of Tamil speakers being aliens has here its origin. If this information was in the common source for both the Dipavaṃsa and the Mahāvaṃsa the former left it out because the authors’ interest was another.

In the 5th century when the Mahāvaṃsa was compiled a hostile and intransigent attitude towards Tamil rulers was intensified. This attitude is already visible in the Mahāvaṃsa 33: 75 that falls in the period of Vaṭṭagāmaṇī (29–17, 89–77). The heads of the Saṅgha were asked whether it was possible to have a Tamil-speaking ruler. Their answer was no. They were not satisfied with a just ruler; they wanted a Buddhist ruler. Mahāvaṃsa 33: 75 is regularly retrieved today by
Simhalatva forces. This stand would make power sharing – following the Northern Ireland model in the island today – impossible. I think of power sharing between Caiva and Bauddha heads of state.

This assessment from Mahāvaṃsa 33: 75 was retrieved at a time in the 5th Century, when the islanders had already made some bad experiences with invasions from South India and learned that Tamil culture was barbaric, precisely because it was not Buddhist. Such a bad experience was the South Indian invasion in the time of Vaṭṭagāmaṇī (29–17/89–77), by the assistance of a traitor whose brāhmaṇa origin is emphasized (Mahāvaṃsa 33: 37–55). The implication is that the conflict is religious, conducted by Caivas against Buddhists. This priest and seven Tamil speaking, warlike invaders from South India stole the crown, and the war broke out. The intruders took by force one of the women of King Vaṭṭagāmaṇī with them, and even more, they robbed a relic of the Buddha, his begging bowl, and took everything with them to South India. This description, which depicts the Tamil invaders as barbarians, is missing in the Dīpavaṃsa. It seems that the story in the fourth and fifth centuries AD, or roughly half a millennium after the events, grew and was inflated and popularized in a very short time. Evidently the Prākrit rulers had made definitive decision to eliminate the Tamil influence on the ruler’s level.

Now back to Elāra. Why had he to be removed? In section 21: 21 is stated that he did not know about the three jewels, about the doctrine of the Buddha. In 21: 34 we learn that he had his own false view (kudiṭṭhi) not destroyed. What this false view was, we do not learn, but we can conclude that it was regarded as incompatible with Buddhism. He probably adhered to post-vedic traditions prevailing in Tamilakam and Īlam. In short, Elāra did not meet the new requirement to be a Buddhist ruler. It was not enough to be just and live according to Buddhist norms. He had to be eliminated.

In section 22 of the Mahāvaṃsa the life story of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī is told. He predicted that he would spread Buddhism throughout Lāmā. As a young warrior, he was preparing for the fight with Elāra (22: 65-69). He learns (23: 9) that Tamil speakers had disgraced (asakkāram karonte) thūpas. Thūpa Pāli, Sanskrit stūpa, is a memorial which preserves relics of the Buddha or relics of near ones to the Buddha.

In section 25, we reach the climax. Duṭṭhagāmaṇī took to the north from the South in Rohaṇa to reach Anurādhapura. He held a spear to which a relic (dhātu) was attached (25: 1). He invited the

36 For a comment see BaT 1, 210f.
Buddhist monks to go in the frontline of the army. The monks’ blessing (mangalam) and protection (rakkhā) was needed (25: 3). 500 monks accepted. They said to do repentance (daṇḍakamaththam) because they had to pay an earlier debt.

Duṭṭhagāmaṇī made an assertive oath in 25: 16-18 which clearly reveals his war as a religious war. He said [the truth is] that he is fighting not for the happiness of government power (rajjasukhāya), but to stabilize the regulation of order of the Fully Enlightened (saṃbuddhasāsanassa). If he speaks the truth, the armor of his mercenaries should light up. That happened.

To the reader today this statement seems to contradict what is conveyed in the Dipavamsa where Duṭṭhagāmaṇī as dynastic ruler eliminates rulers from other dynasties for power and for nothing else. The Mahāvamsa “corrects” the Dipavamsa by ascribing a Buddhist motive to Duṭṭhagāmaṇī.

All local Tamil rulers were defeated, and he went further up to Anurādhapura. Eḷāras warriors were defeated. Duṭṭhagāmaṇī triumphantly entered Anurādhapura. This scene was repeated by President Mahinda Rajapaksa after the defeat of the LTTE in 2009. An almost life-size image of the President, flanked by a military commander, and led by a Buddhist monk, was visible when entering the city of Colombo from the international airport.37

The duel between Eḷāra and Duṭṭhagāmaṇī remained. At the southern gate of the city Duṭṭhagāmaṇī killed Eḷāra. Then the Mahāvamsa produces a section of the triumphalism of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī who had united Laṃkā ekatapattakam ‘under one umbrella’ (Mhv 25: 71). This expression occurs repeatedly and is retrieved today as forerunner of the unitary state (see below).

Duṭṭhagāmaṇī made people come and he organised a pūja ‘honouring’ for Eḷāra. He had the body of Eḷāra burnt at the place of their duel and had a cetiyam ‘sanctuary’ built. He parihāram adasi ‘made an encircling’ (Mhv 25: 73). This is the traditional way to honour a dead person and to separate him from the living.

The Tamil historian James Rutnam has rightly pointed out that the word cetiyam creates a problem. According to him a cetiyam is a stūpa,38 but he had better say that it can be a stūpa. The word refers to a sanctuary which can be another sacred building. Rutnam also

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38 Rutnam, The Tomb..., 3.
highlights a reference in the commentary to the *Mahāvaṃsa* where the tomb is said to be an *elārapatīmāghāra*, ‘image house of Ėḷāra’,
which hardly fits into the concept of a *stūpa* which is not an image house. Today there is no image house visible, but a *stūpa* called Dakkhina thūpa built in the second century AD. [Fig. 50]

Today it is difficult to understand that Duṭṭhagāmaṇi honoured Ėḷāra, but this honouring was nothing special; it can be interpreted as a normal and expected way of warrior ethics to mark out a final separation from an enemy. Strictly speaking there was nothing special about Duṭṭhagāmaṇi’s *puja*. Personal feelings of grief are not necessarily involved.

Evidently, Duṭṭhagāmaṇi’s arranging of a *puja* cannot be accepted by anti-Tamil interest groups. Today Duṭṭhagāmaṇi is not expected to honour Ėḷāra who together with Māgha (1214–1235, 1215–1236) represent Tamil evilness *per se*, (albeit the latter was no Tamil). Therefore, reinterpretations of Ėḷāra appear. In the *Rājavaliya*, a 17th century chronicle in Śimhala, Ėḷāra is depicted as an evil man. He is described as invader and as ruling *adharmayen* ‘injustly’. One of Dutugamunu’s fighters addressed Ėḷāra [Ěḷāra] as *nivaṭ o demaḷ o* ‘worthless Tamil’. He did not say “worthless ruler”, but “worthless Tamil”, thereby emphasising ethnicity. All these points contradict the *Dīpavaṃsa* and in this case even the *Mahāvaṃsa*. In the 17th century we have reached the point not only when Duṭṭhagāmaṇi’s honouring of Ėḷāra has been replaced by dishonoring him, but also when “Tamil” has become a pejorative.

Sven Bretfelt has made a study of the reception of the Duṭṭhagāmaṇi story in the *Rasavaṇhini* in Pāli from the 13th century, composed by the monk Vedeha Thera, and found that no more positive qualities are attributed to Ėḷāra. He is characterised as enemy of Śāka and the Tamils in general are defined as enemies of the Buddha and are defamed as “Tamil dirt”. The text gives a special reason for this negative evaluation. In Anurādhapura the *damilā* ‘the Tamils’ had turned the city into a cemetery, they had destroyed the Cetiyas and all around were human bodies lying. They climbed the bodhi tree,

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40 For Māgha see BaT 2, 532 and Āḷvāpillai Vēlupillai’s remark on pp. 73, 79, 100, 101 in this volume.
41 *Rājavaliya*, *Rājavaliya*, Edited by E. Vi, Suravīra, Kolamba, 1997 (1976), 175.
42 *Rājavaliya*, 189.
43 Bretfeld, Das singhalesische Nationalepos..., XXXIX, 15, 109: *Idan’ āyam damilakacavaram jhāpetva sambuddhasāsanam sobhetum kālo ti... [= Ras VII.3].
cut its branches and spread dirt on it, they broke the statues of the Buddha, and *anācaram karonte te tiracchānā daniḻa* ‘the Tamils behaved immorally like animals’. In another text in Sinhala from the 13th century, *Saddharmālaṅkāraya*, non-Buddhist Tamil speakers were animalised as cattle, dogs and mice.

By retrieving the past and synchronise it with and approximate it to the present parties of the conflict anti-Tamil sentiments are again generated. One part of it is the devaluation of Elāra who represents the Tamils. In this connection we can see the statement that this *cetiya* which we see today at the Southern gate, named Dakkhina thūpa [*Fig. 55*], is the tomb of Elāra, was rejected by Senerat Paranavitāna in the 1950s. He wanted to see this tomb, the Dakkhiṇa thūpa, as the tomb of Duṭṭhagāmanī. This was refuted by the Archaeological Commissioner Raja de Silva in 1957, but Paranavitāna’s view became the official view of the state. The honouring of Elāra has no more physical base.

Paranavitāna’s intervention resulted in withholding or even suppressing of official information about the traditional view of the identity of this place as Elāra’s tomb at the Southern gate of Anurādhapura [*Fig. 55*]. If there is no tomb for Elāra, he cannot be honoured. If there is a *thūpa* for Duṭṭhagāmanī, he can be honoured instead of Elāra, which happened in 2011 when President Mahinda Rajapaksa honoured in Anurādhapura the publically exhibited alleged ashes of Duṭṭhagāmanī, of his alter ego. In a way, he honoured himself. These ashes have been examined by experts, but the result has not been made public. My present view is that the Dakkhiṇa thūpa contains other relics than those of Duṭṭhagāmanī or of Elāra. Stūpas were not built for Kings. The *cetiya* built for Elāra by Duṭṭhagāmanī was not a *stūpa*, but an *elārāpataṇimaghara*, ‘image house of Elāra’ as mentioned by the *Vamsatthappakāsini*. This image house is no more, but the memory of a *cetiya* for Elāra was kept alive even in the *Thūpavāṃsa* from the 13th century. The *Thūpavāṃsa* has taken over

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44 Ibid., 31 [*= Ras VII,4*].


47 For the discussion see Rutnam, *The Tomb...*

48 Anon., “President Rajapakse inaugurates the exposition of King Dutugemunu ashes 18–5–2011”, http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=siYSBaxq-Fo
without modification the formulation from the *Mahāvaṃsa* that *ajjāpi* ‘even to this day’ kings, on reaching this spot do not have their drums sounded there (as a sign of honour).\(^{49}\)

We realize that the story above about Duṭṭhagāmaṇī and Eḷāra is based on the *Mahāvaṃsa* only. It is missing in the *Dīpavaṃsa*. It could have been taken from a special source, one that was not common to both, by the compiler of the *Mahāvaṃsa* to glorify Duṭṭhagāmaṇī as a noble character who abides to his warrior ethics.

The duel between Eḷāra and Duṭṭhagāmaṇī is one of the major events in the *Mahāvaṃsa*. The story seems to be a theatrical dramatization and poetical exaggeration by the compiler of the *Mahāvaṃsa*. To this dramatization and exaggeration belongs the establishment of a *cetiya* and the image making of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī’s noble character by his honoring of his adversary. There is no tradition and convention of interdynastic duels of that kind between leaders of inimical armies in the history of Iḷam/Laṅkā. The duel between the two as told in the *Mahāvaṃsa* is the only one known, but the compiler was a learned man. He may have studied oral versions of the *Mahābhārata* or of other epical traditions where many interdynastic duels are narrated.

Duṭṭhagāmaṇī, having defeated 32 Tamil rulers, ‘ruled Laṅkā under one umbrella’ (*ekachattena Laṅkārajjam akāsi*, 25: 75). This reference to one umbrella is also a poetic exaggeration. It refers to sole authority on the island, here to sole authority under a Buddhist leader. Such an authority was never established in total.

The image of the single umbrella has often been highlighted in the chronicles and inscriptions up to modern times. However, it was modernized by formulating it as a conception of the unitary state which is mentioned in the present Constitutions from 1972 and 1978. The modern unitary state was historised by being associated with the past perception of the state under one umbrella. This connection between sole reign under one umbrella and the modern unitary state is indeed a gross anachronism, but anachronisms are common in heritage language. They make the new look old and age induces confidence. This linking to the past gives the unitary state also religious sanction, not in the Constitution itself, but in comments on the Constitution by extremist Buddhist groups of which the Government has become dependent to stay in power. The reality is, however, that only by the British empire an integrated state was formed in 1833. This

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colonial state-formation was the precursor of the present unitary state. The present nation state of Laṃkā was prepared by foreign colonials, not by Duṭṭhagāmaṇī.

We conclude that the Mahāvamsa’s anti-Tamil xenophobia in section 25 was based on the view that a Tamil ruler was impossible not because he was Tamil, but because he was not Buddhist. The Tamil ruler was a representative of all Tamils. From this follows that if the Tamil ruler had been a Buddhist there would be no xenophobia. This idea is implicit in Mahāvamsa 25: 101–115. There it is said that Duṭṭhagāmaṇī was joyless because he had destroyed millions of living beings. This is the so-called “Buddhist remorse” introduced by Aśoka’s remorse of having killed many humans and which is here copied by Duṭṭhagāmaṇī.

Buddhist saints, known as Arahants, who claimed to be infallible, comforted him by saying that he had killed only one and a half human. One of them had accepted the refuge formula to Buddhism and the other five precepts. These killings will not prevent him from coming into heaven. The others which he had killed were just like brutes (pasusamā) who held a wrong view (micchādiṭṭhi) and demonstrated misconduct (dussīlā). Humans who have not at least partly accepted Buddhism are not humans. They are beasts. It has no after-effect to kill these beasts (who were Tamil speaking non-Buddhists). This story was radicalised through the centuries. When we come to the Rājavaliya from the 17th century we learn that (Dutu)gāmunu killed 1,080,000, but this act was balanced against a long enumeration of merits of (Dutu)gāmunu for the establishment of the buddhāśa-sanaya. For this he would be assigned to sit on the right side of Maitru budu. No remorse is mentioned because there is perfect balance between demerits and merits.

Mahāvamsa 25: 101–115 has been retrieved through the centuries and is in the modern period a carte blanche for killing non-Buddhist Tamil speakers in pogroms which the world has witnessed several times, above all in 1983. It is meaningless to criticise an old source, but this past is consciously repeated, in the present time by Walpola

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51 Rājavaliya, 189.
Consider the content of this message of this repetition: If you kill a non-Buddhist Tamil speaker, you need not to regret. The majority of Tamil speakers on the island are non-Buddhists.

The compiler of the Mahāvaṃsa appears to us today as inhuman and paradoxically as anti-Buddhist, but he was a child of his time. He was dependent of an accepted postvedic, panindian, religious principle in the tradition of Dharmaśāstra. It said that humanity is graded from the state of a non-human beast to the divine ideal man and that the parameter is the intensity of dharma which the man has internalized in his life. The view that religion determines the quality of humanity was and still is the recommended way in many religions spread globally. For Mahānāma, the alleged compiler of the Mahāvaṃsa, the dharma was the Buddha Dharma. At his time there was no global view that humanity is one or that every religion had the key to humanity.

It is important to see that the Mahāvaṃsa does not say that a Tamil speaking person cannot become a human. Quite the contrary, Mahānāma holds a door open for Tamil speakers to become Buddhists and by that to become humans. Only later this door was closed after the many invasions from South India and after the introduction of racism by the colonials. When Tamil and Sinhala speakers are seen as different races their qualities cannot be changed. It is not possible to change the race like a snake its skin. A Tamil speaker was, is and shall be a non-Buddhist who is a beast. To this comes a long polemical tradition within Tamil Caivam against Buddhism which also prevented conversions of Tamil speakers to Buddhism. Tamil speaking Buddhists are rare today and are classified as anomalies from both sides.

Mahānāma also reflects the view of a just war of his time in the fifth century AD. If we fight for religion, in his case for Buddhism, warfare is not only permitted; it becomes a duty. Exactly the opposite was taught by the Buddha Sākyamuni.

The doctrine of just war involves the doctrine of the law to instigate a war (jus ad bellum), and the doctrine of the right to choose the means of war (jus in bello). Both rights were actualized by Duṭṭhadāno

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53 Bat 1, 49. Bat 2, 840–842.
gāmaṇī implicitly, or better, were attributed to him by the compiler of the *Mahāvamsa*. This doctrine of just war is still defended by monks today - with reference to Duṭṭhagāmaṇī who is memorialized\(^{55}\) and whose martial career is revived today in classrooms.\(^{56}\)

**The Dīpavaṃsa contra the Mahāvaṃsa**

We now come to the difference of representation in the *Dīpavaṃsa* and *Mahāvaṃsa*. In the first Duṭṭhagāmaṇī is a warrior who fights an interdynastic struggle for power. In the second he is a religious crusader who for the defense of Buddhism leads a war against non-Buddhists. This change in the image of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī by the compiler of the Mahāvaṃsa in the 5th Century was accomplished to justify the killing of Eḷāra, albeit he was just. When it comes to rescue religion everything is permitted, even enthusiasm for the war by Buddhist monks. This justification was promoted in a particular historical situation in the 5th Century in connection with a particular political interest.

The compiler of the *Mahāvaṃsa* from the 5th Century looked back. He obviously knew the story of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī and he could see that some similarities existed in his own time, above all the continued invasions from South India. In the 5th Century ruled a king named Dhātusena (460–478/455–473). As a youth he had to flee to Rohaṇa to escape Tamil-speaking invaders. He decided to become a monk and passed the first ordination (*pabbajjā*), but he devoted his life to the armed resistance. He was an armed Buddhist monk. Dhātusena destroyed six dominant Tamil-speaking predecessors, who allegedly had attacked Buddhists (*Cūḷavamsa* 38: 34). The similarities to Duṭṭhagāmaṇī are evident, his life as a refugee in Rohaṇa and the total dedication to martial Buddhism.

At the time of Dhātusena the compiler of the *Mahāvaṃsa* lived, I suppose. The compiler chose to expand the story of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī, but in such a way that the reader could see the similarities to Dhātu-

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sena. It is also expressly stated in the *Cūḷavamsa* that Dhātusena had a “clarification” (*dīpikā*) of the *Dīpavaṃsa* ordered and paid 1000 gold pieces (*Cūḷavamsa* 38: 59) for its accomplishment. I suggest that this “clarification” is the *Mahāvaṃsa*, in which multiple sources and interpretations have been processed. The *Mahāvaṃsa* seems to be the result of a purchase order to contract a monk (Mahānāma) to glorify Dhātusena. When the compiler of the *Mahāvaṃsa* says “Duṭṭhagāmaṇi” he thinks “Dhātusena”. It is not an unusual tactic in a global perspective that rulers are imagined in the light of a high status, famous predecessor and are made to mimic him. Implicitly, the *Mahāvaṃsa* manipulates a current homology: As Elāra is related to Duṭṭhagāmaṇi, so are the Tamil invaders related to Dhātusena.

Now we come back to Walpola Rahula. He constructed an image made of Duṭṭhagāmaṇi which was modern. It revolved around an image of Duṭṭhagāmaṇi who had allegedly started a Sinhala-Buddhist, culturally and racially homogenized, island-wide nation-state. This has to be defended against colonialism and against Tamil speakers. A chapter in *The Heritage of the Bhikkhu* is about Buddhism as the national religion of the people of the Sinhalas. Walpola Rahula historised this picture by projecting it into the *Mahāvaṃsa*. This “historising” should make it clear that this unitary state of Lamkā is allegedly nothing new, but is a legacy (that conveys a feeling that a tree has in its roots, to speak with Nietzsche). Moreover, this Sinhala-Buddhist heritage is not only harmless sentimental nostalgia, but is also war mongering against Tamil speakers today.


tives of the present political administration are deeply influenced by Walpola Rahula’s “historisation”. The war appears as just if one assumes that the unitary state has existed continuously for 2,000 years as dhammadīpa, ‘island of the doctrine’, to fulfill its historic destiny foreseen allegedly by the Buddha in the Mahāvaṃsa. I have elsewhere in detail described the semantic shifts and manipulations of this concept. 59

Summary and Conclusion

There is of course no homology between Ėḷāra/Duṭṭhaṁigaṇi and Vēluppilai Pirapākaraṇ/Mahinda Rajapaksa. Rajapaksa is no modern Duṭṭhaṁigaṇi who honored his adversary. Rajapaksa dishonored him by not following the rules of martial ethics. James Rutnam had other doubts about Duṭṭhaṁigaṇi’s noble character: A young man to kill an old man is not noble.

The historical Duṭṭhaṁigaṇi may have been a gāmaṇi, a local chief, known in his own time for his martial ambitions and dedication to Buddhism. His story has been inflated in the lost source that was exploited by the compliers of the Dīpavaṃsa and Mahāvaṃsa. The Dīpavaṃsa, four hundred years after Duṭṭhaṁigaṇī, depicts him as a common and power-hungry leader who eliminates Ėḷāra, a representative of a competing dynasty in the island. His religion and ethnicity was not of interest. The Dīpavaṃsa in this case has a sense for historical realism that has gone lost in the Mahāvaṃsa. The Dīpavaṃsa is a primary source for the development and reception of the Duṭṭhaṁigaṇi story in the 4th century and the Mahāvaṃsa for the 5th century.

The Mahāvaṃsa presents Duṭṭhagāmana as a noble character: He honors allegedly his adversary and transforms him into a Buddhist crusader against non-Buddhist Tamil speakers at a time when King Dhātusena needed ideological support by the Mahāsaṃgha for his extermination of Tamil speakers. Duṭṭhagāmana’s and Dhātusena’s wars were allegedly just because their ultimate aim was the preservation of Buddhism. Walpola Rahula retrieves this image in his own crusade against aliens comprising colonials and present Tamil speakers of the resistance movement who by association are connected with the invaders of the past. This way of constructing a Siṃhala-Buddhist heritage amounting to the slogan “war for peace” covers the complexity of the present conflict.

We can learn an important lesson by Duṭṭhagāmana’s triumphalism over Elāra. It resulted allegedly in a “rule under one umbrella”. This concept is retrieved today and is interpreted as unitary state which is a centralised and culturally homogenous state based on political Siṃhala budu samayam.

Let us not forget that “the rule under one umbrella” in the past and present was and still is about control of territory through colonisation by the centralised power in Jayawardhanapura. To achieve this control the present controllers, the Tamils in their tāyakam ‘motherland’, must be deprived of their control. To justify this, the ideal “heritage” is retrieved from the past represented by Duṭṭhagāmana’s conquest and victory over Elāra [Fig. 1, 24]. This retrieval eliminates the last moral scruples and mobilises the Siṃhala speaking masses politically; it contributes to create a base for majoritarianism in Parliament. Minority rights were eliminated from the Constitution already in 1972. The retrieval of urumaya ‘heritage’ is decisive for the formation of majoritarianism. No Government has yet made the attempt to push through the colonisation program in areas of Tamil speakers without having first retrieved the “heritage” with the help of custodians like Valpola Rāhula. A critical approach to this “heritage” by promoting tamilppauttam is rightly classified as dangerous for the preservation of the unitary state.60 It questions the ideological base of majoritarianism.

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