Writing Pali Texts in 16th-Century Lan Na (Northern Thailand): The Life and Work of Sirimaṅgala (Part I)*

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INTRODUCTION

Sirimaṅgala was a monk who lived in Chiang Mai, the royal city of the ancient kingdom of Lan Na (present-day northern Thailand), at the beginning of the 16th century. He is known for having written a number of significant Pali texts, such as the *Vessantaradīpanī*, the *Saṅkhyāpakāsaka-ṭīkā*, the *Cakkavāḷadīpanī*, and the *Maṅgalatthadīpanī*, all completed ca. 1520. Sirimaṅgala enjoys a recognition that has extended beyond Lan Na, as his work is disseminated not only in all parts of Thailand but also in Laos, in Cambodia, in Burma and even in Sri Lanka. The *Maṅgalatthadīpanī*, in particular, is certainly among the most famous and the most influential religious texts for the Buddhists of mainland Southeast Asia.

However, Sirimaṅgala has attracted little interest outside Thailand, despite some scholars (George Cœdès in the first place) who have highlighted the important role of his writings in the regional Pali literature. Evidence of this is the fact that these have not been extensively studied in a European language. This paper aims to provide an overview of Sirimaṅgala's life and work, attempting to place them in the historical and religious context of 16th-century Lan Na.

PALI LITERATURE IN 15TH- AND 16TH-CENTURY LAN NA

Except for Burma, pre-modern Buddhist texts (written in Pali or in vernacular languages) that have been composed in Theravādin Southeast

* I would like to express my gratitude to Rupert Gethin who provided insightful comments and undertook meticulous editorial work to get the text into shape. I also thank François Lagirarde, Michel Lorrillard, and Javier Schnake for their feedback and ideas.

Asia are mostly anonymous. Therefore, we know almost nothing about the scholars (monks or laymen) who are behind the writings preserved in the hundreds of thousands of manuscripts that are stored in monastic repositories (หอไตร *hạ̄trai*)[1] — or, nowadays, in modern libraries — of Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and of other Tai/Dai cultural areas of south China and east Burma.[2] Although a significant proportion of manuscripts bear a colophon, this indicates not the author of the text but rather its scribe or its sponsor, whose main aim is to gain or dedicate to others the merit that must result from this pious deed. Similarly, when a date is given in a manuscript (sometimes to one-hour precision), it refers to the copying and not the composition of the text. Certainly, the different texts of the *Tipiṭaka* also have no named authors, since each is supposed to represent "the word of the Buddha" (regardless of whether we have to do with texts that obviously do not claim literally to be this, such as the *Kathāvatthu*). However, Indian and Sinhalese traditions have left the names of famous commentators such as Buddhaghosa, Dhammapāla, Nāgārjuna, or Vasubandhu attached to their writings. Chinese, Japanese, Tibetan, and Burmese traditions have also kept the memory of their scholars and their literary production, such as Xuanzang, Nichiren, Milarepa, or Ariyavaṃsa, a memory and a personalisation that allow the establishment of a history of Buddhist literature related to these traditions. This is not the case with the various Thai kingdoms that emerged from the 13th century onwards, for which it is arduous to determine the authors or dates of the Buddhist literary works. In this regard 15- and 16-century Lan Na is an exception.

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[1] For Thai words and names, I use the transliteration system adopted by François Bizot in his publications at the École française d'Extrême-Orient (with some minor amendments). However, some Thai terms that are commonly used are written according to the Royal Institute of Thailand transcription system.

[2] The word "Thai" may refer both to the inhabitants of modern-day Thailand (regardless of their ethnic or linguistic affiliation) and to different population groups — Buddhist or not — speaking Thai (or "Tai", or "Dai") languages that are distributed across Thailand, Laos, Burma, China, Vietnam, and India, and which include several ethnic subcategories (Siamese, Lao, Khoen, Shan, Lue, etc.). This term has become particularly ambivalent since 1939, when Siam took the name of Thailand (viz. "the land of [all] the Thai").

This northern Thai kingdom, which expanded around the city of Chiang Mai (today part of Thailand), during that period saw the emergence of several monks who were erudite enough to compose substantial writings in Pali. Scholars have therefore become accustomed to refer to this period as the "golden age" of Pali literacy in Thailand (Penth 1994: 80*f.*). Setting aside the *Traibhūmikathā*, a cosmological Thai-Pali text that is ascribed to King Lidaya (1347–1368) of Sukhothai, this "golden age" is the only one for which a significant number of literary works are identified by their authors, as well as their date and place of composition. This period also sees a spectacular development of epigraphic and archæological material, which is primarily the product of two kings who actively supported Buddhism in Lan Na, namely Tilokarāja (1441/2–1487), and his great-grandson Mueang Kaew (1495–1526). It is also thanks to royal promotion than Lan Na Buddhism was able to spread into neighbouring countries, through Pali scriptures and Buddhist scholars and craftsmen.

The origin for the development of Pali literacy in this area is, however, attributed to the lineage of the *Sīhaḷabhikkhu*s, as they called themselves, a group of monks at first affiliated to the Suan Dok monastery (วัดสวนดอก *văt svan ṭaḳ*, P. Pupphārāma) in Chiang Mai[3] led by Dhammagambhīra[4] and Medhaṅkara, who are said to have travelled in 1423 to Laṅkā, where they were re-ordained before returning to Chiang Mai some years later and establishing a new ordination lineage. According to them, the ordination carried out previously in Lan Na was regarded by Sinhalese monks to be invalid. Yet Suan Dok monastery was itself considered as belonging to an older "Sinhalese trend" (*laddhi-Laṅkā*), in contrast to monks who were associated with the traditional ordination lineage, probably of Mon origin. Indeed, sources ascribe to Sumana, a monk originated in Sukhothai who had also been re-ordained in the Sinhalese tradition in the Mon kingdom of Martaban (in present-day Lower Burma), the establishment of a forest-dwelling (*araññavāsī*) monastic congregation in the city of Lamphun in 1369 and then in Chiang Mai, precisely in Suan Dok monastery.[5] At any rate, Dhammagambhīra's

[3] For a map of monasteries in an around Chiang Mai, see below, pp. 118*f.*

[4] Ñāṇagambhīra in certain sources.

[5] Previously a royal pleasure garden (*uyyāna*), Suan Dok was transformed in 1370 into a temple by King Kue Na, who then invited Sumana to establish a Sinhalese tradition of Buddhism there.

statement regarding Suan Dok monks (which amounts to saying that they were false *bhikkhu*s) led to disputes between monks who supported Dhammagambhīra's position and the others who rejected it. Eventually, Dhammagambhīra and his advocates had to leave Suan Dok, and thus established the Pa Daeng monastery (วัดป่าแดง *văt pā$_{1}$ tɛ̀ŋ*, P. Rattavana-mahāvihāra), located at the foot of Mount Suthep, about one kilometre away from the former. From there, they sparked an innovation regarding Buddhist practices and text composition in Lan Na and neighbouring principalities, where they established their own network of monasteries (วัด *văt*) that were often also named Pa Daeng or Rattavanamahāvihāra.[6] Therefore, three different Buddhist schools or "factions" (P. *saṅgha*, *gaṇa*, or *pakkha*, Th. ฝ่าย *fāy$_{1}$*) coexisted in Lan Na from the mid-15th to 17th centuries: the first Sinhalese *araññavāsī* school established by Sumana in Suan Dok monastery (P. *pupphavāsīgaṇa*, Th. ฝ่ายสวน[ดอก] *fāy$_{1}$ svan* [*tɑ̀k*]), the second Sinhalese *araññavāsī* school founded by Dhammagambhīra in Pa Daeng monastery (P. *Sīhaḷagaṇa*, Th. ฝ่ายป่า [แดง] *fāy$_{1}$ pā$_{1}$* [*tɛ̀ŋ*]), and the ancient and unreformed school, probably linked to an old Mon tradition and considered as *nagaravāsin* (or *gāmavāsin*) that is, village-dwellers (EHS[7] 19, Penth 1994: 171).[8] These factions were characterized by different practices with regard to the monastic robes, the right or being forbidden to use a walking stick, the proceeding for the installation of *sīmā* stones, and the pronunciation of Pali wording (especially in the context of the ordination ceremony) (Bizot 1988: 15 *ff.*). Sources suggest that King Sam Fang Kaen (1401/2–1441) supported the "fay Suan", while his successors, in particular Tilokarāja (1441–1487) and Phra Mueang Kaew (1495–1526), promoted

[6] In fact, the situation is more complicated, since Pa Daeng was also the name of older monasteries (e.g. at Si Sacchanalay) that were affiliated to the Sumana's lineage, that is, the first "Sinhalese trend".

[7] *Epigraphic and Historical Studies* (A.B. Griswold and Prasert na Nagara, *cf.* bibliography).

[8] *Jinakālamālī* chronicle (Jkm) calls *Sīhaḷasaṅgha* the monks affiliated to Pa Daeng monastery, while the *Mūlasāsana* chronicle (Mls) uses the term *Sīhaḷapakkha*. Although these factions distinguished themselves by different ordination lineages, the term *nikāya* barely occurs in local sources from this period. For this reason, the English word "sect" seems here not to be appropriate. *Nikāya* will be used, however, later in Thailand, in particular with the advent of the *Dhammayuttikanikāya* established by Mongkut, the future King Rama IV (1851–1868). It may also occur in later versions of chronicles.

the "fay Pa".[9] These three factions continued to live side by side for at least two centuries.[10]

The events related above are recorded in local historiography, especially in *Jinakālamālī* (Jkm), *Gambhīrabhikkhu*[11] and different versions of the *Mūlasāsana* (Mls), as well as in stone inscriptions.[12] Certainly, some of these records must perhaps be considered with more caution — and less literally — than is usually the case in academic writings, especially with regard to the Lan Na monks' journey to Laṅkā, whose authenticity is open to question (see below). It is nonetheless beyond doubt that the emergence of the *Sīhaḷabhikkhu*s in the middle of the 15th century led to a radical change in Pali writings in Lan Na and the neighbouring Thai-Lao kingdoms or principalities (เมือง *mi̯aṅ*). Indeed, the few texts we know to have existed before this time were written either in Thai (such as Mls), or in what some call "Indochinese

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[9] Medhaṅkara, one of the two leaders of the 1423 mission to Laṅkā, is said to have been the preceptor (*upajjhāya*) of King Tilokarāja, who bestowed him with the title *mahāsāmī* (Jkm 95; Mls 217). Thereafter, and until the Burmese takeover of Lan Na (1558), the heads of the Saṅgha of Chiang Mai were always affiliated with Pa Daeng.

[10] In 1477 King Tilokarāja gathered monks of the three factions (*tayogaṇa-saṅghaṃ*) at Chet Yot monastery (Mahābodhārāma) for a great ceremony during which an "amended *Tipiṭaka*" (*piṭakattayaṃ akkharaṃ sodhāpetvā*) was deposited (Jkm 114–115). The three factions are also said to have participated together, in 1515, in an ordination ceremony for new monks celebrated in Chiang Saen (Cœdès 1926: 122), and in another in Chiang Mai, at the Sīhaḷārāma, organized in 1523 by Mueang Kaew for the sake of his dead daughter (Jkm 125). Moreover, another inscription from Chiang Saen (JR07), dated CS 977 (1615), refers to the "venerable royal preceptors of the three factions" (*braḥ rāja grū cao₂ dăṅ sām gaṇā*) (*in* Prasert ṇa Nakhorn et al. 1991: 28. I am grateful to François Lagirarde for bringing this inscription to my attention).

[11] This text is of great interest, as it relates the dispute between Dhammagambhīra and the monks of Suan Dok monastery. Arguments, sometimes very technical, concern primarily Pali pronounciation and grammar. For a summary and a discussion of this text, see Bizot 1988: 77–83.

[12] For example EHS 9, 11, 13 and 19, and also JR04 (*in* Prasert ṇa Nakhorn et al. 1991: 9). G. Cœdès is probably the first scholar to have given records of these religious (and actually political) events, in his study of Jkm (Cœdès 1925: 31–33). Others have reviewed the importance of this period for the history of Lan Na (Bizot 1988, Penth 1995, Veidlinger 2004).

Pali", that is, a Pali that does not conform to the grammar and syntax of canonical Pali, but rather to those of the vernacular. Illustrative examples of the latter writings are *Cāmadevīvaṃsa* (Cdv) and *Sīhiṅganidāna*, both being local chronicles based on the vernacular historiographical literature (Cœdès 1915: 44); *Paṭhamasambodhi* and *Māleyyadevattheravatthu* must also be mentioned, although the place and date of their composition remain uncertain.[13] In contrast, the texts that have been written during the subsequent period demonstrate a mastery of Pali as a canonical language, although some linguistic idiosyncrasies may distinguish Pali texts composed in Lan Na from those originating in Sri Lanka and Burma (see von Hinüber 1988). This "golden age", however, will end with the Burmese incursion and stranglehold on the kingdom that occurred in 1558. The recovering of Thai suzerainty over Lan Na at the beginning of the 19th century did not allow the resurgence of such a situation with regard to Pali literacy.

Despite its relative brevity, this period has particular significance as it occurred at a time when monks in Sri Lanka had more or less ceased writing in Pali. This valuable corpus, however, is for the most part yet to be studied, despite some scholarly writings that have already highlighted its importance.[14] Here are some examples of noteworthy texts that have been handed down to us:

> *Saṅkhyāpakāsaka*, a treatise on weights and measures written by Ñāṇavilāsa (15th century)
>
> *Saddabindu-vinicchaya* (or °*abhinava-ṭīkā*), a subcommentary on a Pali grammar text (the *Saddabindu*), written by Saddhammakitti Mahāphussadeva in the late 15th century[15]
>
> *Jinakālamālī*, a history of Buddhism, a substantial part of which concerns religious events that occurred in Lan Na, written by Ratanapañña (1516, completed in 1527)[16]

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[13] For a general discussion of "Indochinese Pali", see Masefield 2008. For case studies related to respectively *Cāmadevīvaṃsa*, *Paṭhamasambodhi*, and *Māleyyadevavatthu*, see Cœdès 1925: 15 and Collins 1993: 3.

[14] Several scholarly works give a survey of Pali literature of Lan Na. Particular mention must be made of Cœdès 1915, Cœdès 1925, Likhitanonta 1969, Supaphan 2533 [1990], Hundius 1990, Filliozat 1992, von Hinüber 1996, Penth 1997, von Hinüber 2000, Saddhatissa 2004, Veidlinger 2006.

[15] Lottermoser 1987: 79-80.

[16] It is not certain whether the later part was written by Ratanapañña himself or by another scholar.

Vajirasāratthasaṅgaha, a compendium containing linguistic and esoteric analysis of Pali words and verses, written by (Siri-)Ratanapañña in 1534[17]

Vajirasāratthasaṅgaha-ṭīkā, a commentary on the latter by an unknown author[18]

Mātikatthasarūpa-Abhidhammasaṃgaṇī, a sub-commentary on the *Abhidhamma* written in 1535 by (another?) Ratanapañña

Ganthābaraṇa-tīkā, a commentary of Ariyavaṃsa's grammatical treatise, written by Suvaṇṇaraṃsi (1585)[19]

Visuddhimaggadīpanī, an exegesis of Buddhaghosa's work, written by Uttarārāma (16th century)

Ratanabimbavaṃsa-vaṇṇanā, the chronicle of the Emerald Buddha, written by Brahmarājapañña (16th century)

Amarakaṭabuddharūpa-nidāna, another chronicle of the Emerald Buddha, written by Ariyavaṃsa (16th century)

Aḍḍhabhāgabuddharūpa-nidāna, a chronicle of the Phra Bang image, by Ariyavaṃsa (16th century)

To these examples must be added the works of the very prolific Ñāṇakitti, who is the author of at least ten sub-commentaries (*attha-*

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[17] A comparative study of this text and the *Jinakālamālī* leads to the conclusion that they have different authors, despite their bearing the same name (Javier Schnake, personal communication). At least two other Ratanapañña are known for the same period in Lan Na. Thus, "Ratanapañña" could be an honourific name, rather than a strictly proper name (Penth 1995). Moreover, the *Vajirasāratthasaṅgaha* is sometimes wrongly attributed to Sirimaṅgala (*viz*. Saddhatissa 1989: 43). For an in-depth study of this text, see Schnake 2018.

[18] Javier Schnake, personal communication.

[19] This *ṭīkā* seems to be mentioned only by G. Cœdès (1915: 41). Its author is said to have composed this text at Visai monastery in Vieng Chan, then the capital of the Lan Xang kingdom (present-day Vientiane, Laos), which is actually outside the scope of Lan Na in the strict sense of the term, but within its sphere of cultural influence. Incidentally, the two kingdoms were politically related. The Lao King Setthathirat (Jeṭṭhādhirāja, 1546–1571) was the son of a princess of Chiang Mai, and as such sat on the throne of Lan Na between 1546 and 1548, before returning to Lan Xang to succeed his dead father as king.

yojana) related to the three *piṭaka*, and one on the Buddhapiya's *Rūpasiddhi* (*Kaccāyanarūpadīpanī*) (von Hinüber 2000: 127–128). Many others might have been lost as a result of the vicissitudes of history, while others' date of composition and authorship are still unknown (such as the *Uppātasanti*, mentioned in the *Sāsanavaṃsa*,[20] or collections of non-classical *jātaka* known as *Paññāsa-jātaka*). But today the most famous author of this period is indisputably Sirimaṅgala, whose work has marked Buddhist literacy in Thailand and beyond.

SIRIMAṄGALA ON SIRIMAṄGALA

Among all the Lan Na authors who wrote their works during the "golden age", Sirimaṅgala is the only one whose literary production had a lasting influence.[21] No less than five of his texts are known so far, most of which have extensively circulated not only in Lan Na, but also in the other Theravādin countries:

> *Vessantaradīpanī* (Vess-dīp): a commentary on the *Vessantara-jātaka* (and its *aṭṭhakathā*), written in CS 879 (1517).
>
> *Gāthādīpaka*: another commentary on the *Vessantara-jātaka* (probably only on the verses), for which the date of composition is unknown, but which was written before the Vess-dīp.[22]
>
> *Saṅkhyāpakāsaka-ṭīkā* (Saṅkh-p-ṭ): a commentary on the *Saṅkhyāpakāsaka* (Saṅkh-p) by Ñāṇavilāsa (see above), written in CS 882 (1520).
>
> *Cakkavāḷadīpanī* (Cakkav-d): a Buddhist cosmology describing the world system, also written in CS 882 (1520).
>
> *Maṅgalatthadīpanī* (Maṅg-d): an exegesis of the *Maṅgalasutta*, written in CS 886 (1524).

It therefore appears that Sirimaṅgala was a very productive author and commentator. Not only are these works substantial pieces compris-

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[20] Sās 51.

[21] Sirimaṅgala of Chiang Mai must not be confused with another Sirimaṅgala (or Sirisumaṅgala), a Burmese monk of the fourteenth century, who is the author of several commentaries on Buddhaghosa's works (see Bode 1909: 27).

[22] This text is known only by its title, as it is mentioned by Sirimaṅgala himself in the Vess-dīp (Yamanaka 2011: viii).

ing several hundred folios, but they were written in less than a decade.[23] Unlike Ñāṇakitti's work, which survived only partially, Sirimaṅgala's texts (except for the *Gāthādīpaka*) have been continually used and copied in the intervening period and widespread in different scripts and languages. In view of the preceding, Sirimaṅgala's case is thus exceptional in the history of Southeast Asian Buddhism, even in the particular context of 15th- and 16th-century Lan Na. It may also well be that he composed other pieces, which have been lost.

Nonetheless, little is known about Sirimaṅgala himself. Various local biographical data — mostly hagiographical — circulate about him in Thailand (see below), but the most reliable information available lies in the manuscripts bearing his own work, especially in the colophons, where he gives details of the place and time he was writing. The colophons of Vess-dīp, Saṅkh-p-ṭ, and Cakkav-d are similar, except of course for the details of the title and date of composition. In each, Sirimaṅgala says that he resided in Chiang Mai (Navapura), in a place that was commonly known under its Thai name, Suan Khuan (สวนขวัญ *svan khvăñ*),[24] which was located to the Southwest of the Sīhaḷārāma,

[23] None of these texts has been extensively studied in a western language, except for the Vess-dīp, which has been transcribed in Roman characters by Nakorn Khemapālī (2006), and also edited in the context of a PhD thesis submitted in 2010 by Yukio Yamanaka. As for Maṅg-d, its two initial books (out of a total of eleven) have been translated into English by Saksri Yamnadda in his PhD dissertation (1971). Cakkav-d has been the subject of several scholarly works in Thai, among which is the remarkable study by Supaphan na Bangchang (2011). As for the Saṅkh-p-ṭ, only one MA dissertation (in Thai) is dedicated to this text (*viz*. Boonna 1980).

[24] *Svan* สวน literally means "garden". As for the notion of *khvăñ* ขวัญ, it is present in all Thai cultures, whether these are Buddhist or not. Thai believe a certain number of *khvăñ* or "vital spirits" inhabit the individual, each of them occupying a specific part of the body. According to Thai tradition, however, not only human beings have *khvăñ* but also certain animals (such as buffalos and horses), and even non-living entities such as rice and also specific locations, especially when these have a guardian or ancestor's spirit. Thus, *Svan Khvăñ* could be here translated as "the garden of the guardian spirit [of the place]". Considering that the Phra Singh monastery, which *Svan Khvăñ* is connected to (see later in this paper), has a special link with the ancestor spirits of Chiang Mai, it could even refer to the guardian spirit of the city (I

that is, the Phra Singh monastery.[25] He further indicates that he lived, at the time of his writings, during the reign of "the great-grandson of the king named Laka,"[26] namely Phra Mueang Kaew (1495–1526):[27]

> *icc' ayaṃ Navapure patiṭṭhita-Sīhaḷārāmassa dakkhiṇa-pacchima-disāya patiṭṭhite deyya-bhāsāya Svan Khvan ti pākaṭanāme pi vihāre, vasantena mahussāhena Tipiṭaka-dhārena saddhā-buddhi-viriya-[paṭi]maṇḍitena saparānaṃ kosallam icchantena Sirimaṅgalo ti garūhi gahita-nāmena mahā-therena, paramende Navapure issarassa Lakavhaya-rājanattuno rājābhirājassa manujindassa sabba-rājūnaṃ tilaka-bhūtassa, parama-saddhassa patthita-sabbaññūta-ñāṇassa Buddha-sāsane pasannassa kāle dvāsītādhikaṭṭha-satasa-kkarāje Mahāsappa-vasse katā tesattati-gāthā-pati-maṇḍitassa Saṃkhyāpakāsaka-pakaraṇassa attha-vaṇṇanā.*
>
> (Saṅkh-p-ṭ, colophon)[28]

The colophon of Maṅg-d is similar to that of Sirimaṅgala's previous works, but differs in some details. Here is an extensive extract from the closing folios:

> *ettāvatā ca*
> *paṭiññātā mayā esā yā Maṅgalatthadīpanī |*
> *ānayitvāna sāratthaṃ anekaṃ piṭakattayā |*

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owe a debt of gratitude to Phongsathorn Buakhampan for sharing his views on this issue).

[25] Some Thai scholars assert that "Sīhaḷārāma" actually refers to another monastery. This issue is discussed below in this paper.

[26] That is, Tilokarāja (1441/2–1487).

[27] Bilakapanattādhirāja in Jkm (with Bilaka = Tilaka). See Cœdès 1915: 39.

[28] In Boonna 1980: 174–175, from a manuscript stored at the National Library (Bangkok). The same text is reproduced (with minor variants) in Cœdès 1915: 39, also from a manuscript kept at the National Library (previously Vajirañāṇa library). See also Supaphan 1990: 419 (with a Thai translation). For the colophon of Vess-dīp, see Samnak Rachadikan 1998: 473–474 and Supaphan 1990: 382 (both in Thai; a romanized version is given in Nakorn Khemapālī 2006: 515–516, but it contains many mistakes). For Cakkav-d, see Nopphorn 1980: 56 and Supaphan 1990: 405 (both in Thai; no romanized versions are available).

katā sā niṭṭhitā suṭṭhu passitabbā hi viññunā |
passantena imaṃ laddhā chekatā sabba-maṅgale ||
Suttābhidhamma-Vinayesu vicāra-ñāṇo |
Siryādi Maṅgal' abhidhānayut[t]oru-thero |
ussāhavā racayi Buddhav[ī]rassa sisso |
Maṅgalatthadīpanim imattha-rasābhirāmaṃ ||

iccāyaṃ Navapurassa dakkhiṇa-disā-bhāge gāvute ṭhāne vivitte, sampattānaṃ pasāda-janake suññāgāre vasantena vivekābhiratena, mahussāhena Tipiṭaka-dharena saddhā-buddhi-viriya-ppaṭimaṇḍitena saka-paresaṃ kosallam icchantena Sirimaṅgalo ti garūhi gahita-nāmena mahā-therena, paramende Navapure issarassa Lakavhaya-rājanattuno rājādhi[29]*-rājassa manujindassa sabba-rājūnaṃ tilaka-bhūtassa, parama-ssaddhassa paṭṭhita-sabbaññuta-ññāṇassa Buddha-sāsane pasannassa kāle chaḷāsīty ādhikaṭṭha-sata-Sakkarāje Makkaṭa-vasse katā Maṅgalatthadīpanī.*[30]

And so,
This *Maṅgalatthadīpanī*, for which I promised [the paternity],
conveying the many essential meanings of the Scriptures,
is now completed, and should be well studied by one who is wise;
studying it he will acquire skill in all that is auspicious.
Knowledgeable in the study of *Sutta*, *Abhidhamma*, and *Vinaya*,
the elder Uru, rightly called Maṅgala with the prefix *Siri*,
and who is the diligent pupil of Buddhavīra,
composed the *Maṅgalatthadīpanī*, delighting readers by getting to the heart of the matter.

The elder monk, whom the masters call Sirimaṅgala, who is delighted to live in solitude in a secluded place that is situated at one league (*gāvuta*) south of Navapura [Chiang Mai], with great effort holding in mind the *Tipiṭaka*, who is endowed with devotion, knowledge, and perseverance, wishing proficiency

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[29] Here Supreme Patriarch Vajirañāṇavarorasa (1976: 479) reads *rājāti*°, which differs from all other versions consulted.

[30] Maṅg-d II 478–79 (the pagination follows the 1972 edition in Siamese characters). See also (with some variants) Cœdès 1915: 40.

> for himself and for others, wrote the *Maṅgalatthadīpanī* in the year 886 of [Little] Era, year of the Monkey, during the reign of the bright monarch, the ruler of men, the king above all kings, who is the great-grandson of the king named Laka,[31] lord of the capital Navapura. He did it endowed with great faith, wishing to obtain omniscience, pious towards the Teaching of the Buddha, at the highest level.

Here Sirimaṅgala does not give the name of his abode, nor does he mention the Sīhaḷārāma again. The question of whether or not he refers to the same place as in his preceding writings (*i.e.* "Suan Khuan") will be discussed later in this paper. For now, we should note that the local tradition in Thailand maintains that the place Sirimaṅgala describes as his abode in all his texts is a unique monastery that bears today the name "Tamnak Suan Khuan Sirimangkhalachan" (วัดตำหนักสวนขวัญสิริมังคลาจาริย์ *văt tāṃhnăk svan khvăñ Sirimaṅgalācāry*), or more commonly Tamnak monastery (*văt tāṃhnăk*). It is located in Tamnak village, Mae Hia precinct, Chiang Mai district, about five kilometres south-southwest of the old city. Moreover, Sirimaṅgala here insists on his delight in staying in solitude and in a secluded place, which is not in the other colophons. Finally, he says he was a pupil (*sissa*) of a master named Buddhavīra, who was not mentioned previously.

Additional information provided by the Maṅg-d colophon concerns Sirimaṅgala's lay (or birth) name, Uru ("*abhidhānayut[ta-U]ru-thero*").[32] Moreover, the sentence is turned in such a way as to highlight the honourific title *siri* that is associated with Maṅgala, his conventual name

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[31] See p. 78, note 26.

[32] Referring briefly to Sirimaṅgala, G.E. Gerini (1904: 108) also states that his birth name was Ru or Uru (see also Finot 1917: 71). Although he does not give any details for the source he relies on, this hesitation as to the spelling (Ru/Uru) suggests it is the Maṅg-d colophon as well. Indeed, Gerini's hesitation likely results from the presence of the *sandhi* in the Pali compound. Moreover, in his Burmese translation of Maṅg-d, scholar Kavinda (1753–1821) gives Ū: Roṅ as Sirimaṅgala's lay name (see Nyunt, Cicuzza 2014a: 523), which leads us to believe that Uru, rather than Ru, is the accurate spelling. The fact that *uru* in Pali (and in Thai as well) means "excellent" or "eminent" tends to confirm this hypothesis.

("*Sir[i-ā]di Maṅgala*"). The epigraphic sources of 15th- and 16th-century Lan Na indicate that the use of the prefix *siri* (or *sirī*) was strictly reserved for sacred persons, places, or objects. It is thus unlikely that it can have been associated with a commoner, even in a case of a well-respected monk. It must be added that in the Buddhist tradition of Southeast Asia (and of other areas as well), monks bear a religious name (*chāyā*) that not only differs from their birth name, but may also change several times throughout their life, especially when they go up in the hierarchy.[33] In this regard, the somewhat hagiographic phraseology that characterizes these colophons might also be meaningful. Indeed, Sirimaṅgala is here introduced in very eulogistic terms as an eminent scholar who is endowed with all kind of qualities and knowledge ("*Suttābhidhamma-Vinayesu vicāra-ñāṇo*").

This contrasts with colophons from Pali and vernacular manuscripts of Lan Na in which scribes most often demonstrate an excessive modesty, apologizing for possible errors and their bad handwriting (Hundius 1990: 33). One possible explanation would be that Sirimaṅgala is not the author of the colophons, which would have been written by another monk, or requested by a lay sponsor. It was not unusual for high-ranking Thai monks to dictate their composition to a scribe, who was responsible for writing it on palm leaves on their behalf.[34] In this regard, the eulogistic depiction of Sirimaṅgala would not be misplaced if he were of a noble origin, or at least related to the secular power. It is very common in Thai religious texts (epigraphs and religious writings) to depict dignitaries, who are often introduced as their sponsors or even their authors, as scholars in matters of Pali and Buddhist scriptures. An illustrative case is King Lidaiya (1347–1368),

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[33] According to local sayings, Sirimaṅgala received his *chāyā* from King Mueang Kaew himself, although there is no extant source that allows us to confirm this.

[34] One example is the Thonburi version of the *Traibhūmikathā* (1776), entitled *Tāṃrā bhāp Traibhūmi chapăp hlvaṅ* ("The Great Three-Worlds Treatise Illustrated"). The manuscript says that it was ordered by King Taksin (1767–1782) and copied in the residence of the *saṅgharāja*, who dictated the story together with Pali verses to an artist and scribe whose name was Śrī Dharmādhirāja (see Krom Silpakorn 1999: 6).

whose knowledge in Pali scriptures is underlined both in inscriptions (EHS 11.1) and in the *Traibhūmikathā*, which is ascribed to him (see Archaimbault, Cœdès 1973: 3). Similarly, Ratanapañña (the author of Jkm) places himself and his work in the frame of the highest religious hierarchy and royal circle (Jkm 115, 185).[35] More broadly, written sources show that monks, especially high-ranking ones, were connected with the ruling elite.[36] In Lan Na, it was the prerogative of the king to appoint the abbors of the most important monasteries, who were endowed with the title (*mahā-*)*saṅgharāja*, and temples were more often sponsored by rulers or their families.[37]

Actually, later colophons that are written by copyists of Sirimaṅgala's works also plead in favour of the assumption that he was a high-ranking figure linked to the political power. A very interesting case is a *Cakkavāḷadīpanī* manuscript dated CS 900 (1538), stored at Phra Sing monastery in Chiang Mai.[38] As only eighteen years separate this copy from the original, Sirimaṅgala was possibly alive at that time, which would make this manuscript rather exceptional (Hundius 1990:94, von Hinüber 2000: 123).[39] The cover folio states that the copy was ordered by "the lord Mahāsaṅgharāja Candaraṃsī arañ[ñ]avāsi",

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[35] Pagination of Jkm refers to the edition of A.P. Buddhadatta (PTS, 1962).

[36] There are several examples in Thai history where the head of the *saṅgha* belonged to the ruling family. An illustrative example is the case of the supreme patriarch of Siam Vajirañāṇavarorasa (1860–1921), who was the son of King Rama IV, and the half-brother of King Rama V.

[37] See previous note.

[38] This manuscript is now available to scrutinize and download from the Digital Library of Northern Thai Manuscripts (code number 010704024_06). Supaphan na Bangchang (1990: 405), and after her Daniel Veidlinger (2006: 94), mention another copy bearing the same date and the same sponsor's name, kept at the Pupphārāma monastery. One can suspect that only one manuscript exists, which had been displaced at the time of Supaphan's survey (the fact she does not mention the copy of Phra Singh supports this hypothesis). Moreover, Supaphan seems to confuse the present-day Pupphārāma monastery, which is located in inner Chiang Mai, with the Suan Dok monastery, whose Pali name is also Pupphārāma.

[39] One could also suppose that this manuscript was copied directly from Sirimaṅgala's original, while later versions might have been subject to changes or alterations.

showing that Sirimaṅgala was connected with the forest-dwellers lineage (Veidlinger 2006: 94) and that his work was, during his life or just after, already recognised by leading figures of the Buddhist hierarchy in Lan Na. Manuscript copies from later periods and originating in other areas confirm this connection. This is the case of the oldest Pali manuscript of the Maṅg-d found so far, dated CS 1009 (1647). This palm-leaf manuscript is stored at Maha That monastery (วัดมหาธาตุ *văt mahā dhātu*) in Yasothorn (northeast Thailand), but it probably originated in Vientiane, which was at that time the capital of the Lao Kingdom of Lan Xang. Indeed, hundreds of texts were brought to this monastery after the sacking of Vientiane by the Siamese in 1828 (Iijima 2005: 346).[40] The colophon of this manuscript indicates that it was ordered by Venerable "Mahāsaṅgharāja Bodhijotaka araṅ[ñ]avāso", that is, a patriarch within the forest-dweller congregation (presumably in Vientiane). Moreover, two Cakkav-d manuscripts copied in Nan (in present-day Northern Thailand), which was at a time a *miịaṅ* dependant of Lan Na, are also said in their colophons to have been made at the behest of the ruler himself (see Hundius 1990: 88-100). One of them, dated CS 1185 (1833) was copied by the Venerable Khruba Kanchon (ครูบากัญจน *grūpā kañcana*) (1789–1878), an *araññāvāsin* monk originally from Phrae (about 200 kilometres east of Chiang Mai), famous for having collected and copied thousands of manuscripts throughout the region (Chiang Mai, Nan, Chiang Saen, Luang Prabang, etc.). He did this often under the patronage of rulers, in particular those of Nan and Luang Prabang, suggesting political issues were at stake beyond the religious fervour (*ibid*. 34–36, Veidlinger 2006: 96*ff.*). It is noteworthy that royal sponsoring of Maṅg-d is also found in Burma and Cambodia, as several colophons mention the support of Burmese and Khmer

[40] The date of this manuscript is not given in the provisional inventory established by Akiko Iijima, which only mentions one *Maṅgala[ttha]dīpanī* without any details (Iijima 2005: 355). Date and content of the colophons are given in the catalogue established by Mahasarakham University, Thailand. I thank Prof. Weena Wisaphen from the Research Institute of Northeast Art and Culture at Mahasarakham University for letting me consult this valuable document. I am also grateful to the abbot of Maha That monastery in Yasothon, who was kind enough to confirm the date given in the manuscript.

dignitaries.[41] In this connection, many Maṅg-d manuscripts are finely crafted, with palm-leaves gilded and decorated with vermilion bands, which denotes their origin at the highest level of society. Last but not least, Maṅg-d received the attention of King Rama III (1824–1851), as he ordered its translation into Siamese in 1821, before his enthronement; this was partly published in 1876–1877 (Gerini 1904: 108–109). Later on, at the very beginning of the 20th century, prince Wachirayan Warorot (วชิรญาณวโรรส Vajirañāṇavarorasa) (1860–1921) produced a modern printed edition in Thai script including a scholarly apparatus, which has been often reprinted (see bibliography).

Apart from the colophons, Sirimaṅgala's writings give no explicit information about him. One can only notice a remarkable command of the Pali language, as well as an extraordinary scholarship in Pali scriptures from Sri Lanka and Burma. In parenthesis, the references Sirimaṅgala gives in his works provide us with information on the canonical and postcanonical texts that circulated at this time in Lan Na. Furthermore, they shed light on several Pali works that have not found their way into our times. For instance, Vess-dīp mentions several lost or hitherto unknown texts such as *Sārasamāsa*, *Ganthapotthaka*, and *Gāthādīpaka* — the latter being written by Sirimaṅgala himself (see Nakorn Khemapālī 2006: 39; Yamanaka 2011: xvi–xvii, and above). Sirimaṅgala also refers to some Pali scholars who were his contemporaries. Ñāṇavilāsa, in particular, must have been known to him, at least through his work if not in person; not only does he quote passages of the *Saṅkhyāpakāsaka* in his writings (Supaphan 1990: 402), but also he wrote a voluminous exegesis of this very text, namely, the *Saṅkhyāpakāsaka-ṭīkā*. The Vess-dīp mentions three other authors from 16th-century Lan Na, Anomadassi-thera, Mahāpussadeva (or Pussadeva, or Phussadeva) and Ratanapaṇḍita. The first one is unknown to us, but the second could be the author of the *Saddabindu-abhinavaṭīkā* (Khemapālī 2006: 39 and above). As regards to Ratanapaṇḍita, he must have been very well-known by Sirimaṅgala, as he refers to him and to his work no less than 40 times in Vess-dīp (*id.*; Supaphan 2011: 264).[42] These

[41] A Burmese example is a manuscript entitled *Maṅgalatthadīpanī kyaṃ:*, dated 1894, copied at Maṅgala Bhuṃ Khyō monastery. The colophon says it was ordered by Minister Sīri-jeyya-kyō-cvā (see Nyunt, Cicuzza 2014b: 117).

[42] Both Supaphan na Bangchang and Bhikkhu Nakorn Khemapālī believe that this Ratanapaṇḍita actually is Ratanapañña, the author of Jkm. However,

references made to scholars and texts of his lifetime show that Sirimaṅgala was not a reclusive scholar who spent all his life isolated from the Buddhist community. Rather the opposite: it appears that he was fully in communion within the Chiang Mai *saṅgha*. It is therefore all the more surprising that he never quotes, nor even mentions, the few authors who are familiar to us today, such as Bodhiraṃsi, Ñāṇakitti, or Ratanapañña.

SIRIMAṄGALA IN LOCAL HISTORIOGRAPHY

Apart from his own writings, ancient sources tell us little about Sirimaṅgala. As regards the epigraphic corpus, it provides interesting elements on the religious figures of Lan Na, but adds at the same time confusion. On the one hand, stone inscriptions, especially those of the 15th and 16th centuries, regularly refer to high-ranking monks by giving their names. On the other hand, religious titles are often used as proper names, so that it is difficult to identify individuals with certainty. Moreover, epigraphy also shows that many religious names have been widely shared within the Buddhist communities of Lan Na. An illustrative case is that of "Ratanapañña", which has been discussed above. In this connection, a *paṇḍita* named Ratanaphrayā appears in an inscription from Phayao (BY39) dated 1495,[43] but is is not clear whether it refers to one among the "Ratanapañña" we know through their Pali composition.[44] Additionally, the same inscription mentions a certain high-ranking

excerpts that are reproduced in Vess-dīp are not in Jkm, neither do they occur in texts ascribed to the other "Ratanapañña", that is, *Vajirasārattha-saṅgaha* and *Mātikatthasarūpa-Dhammasaṅgaṇī* (see Khemapālī 2006: 39). Moreover, the two names are not entirely similar. Even if this were the case, Ratanapañña was a rather common name for monks at this time, and thus could refer to different persons (see p. 75, note 17).

[43] Lorrillard, Michel, "Règne de Phra Muang Kèo (1495–1526)", unpublished paper (hereafter referred to as "Mueang Kèo"); Prasert ṇa Nakhorn et al. 1991: 177–80.

[44] It is not unusual in the Thai world that Indic names are spelt in different ways, especially as local pronunciation might lead to confusion. In Northern Thai dialects, in particular, the consonants *ñ* and *y* (or *ny*) may have the same phonetical value /j/. Moreover, words or personal names can occur with a Sanskrit as well as a Pali etymology or spelling, depending on sources and context.

monk named Mahā Ñāṇakitti, which could refer to the reknowned Pali scholar of the same name (see above). But here again, more evidence is needed to confirm this. Also noteworthy is the mention, in an inscription dated 1496 found in Chiang Saen (JR03), of a *saṅgharāja* named Ñāṇavilāsa, who might be the author of the *Saṅkhyāpakāsaka* (Cœdès 1925: 120). If so, this would confirm Sirimaṅgala's proximity with the ruling elite, as we have said that he obviously knew Ñāṇavilāsa, whether directly or indirectly. As for Sirimaṅgala himself, the available data are difficult to interpret. "Maṅgala" as a proper religious name (or as a part of it) appears frequently in epigraphy, showing it was in common use in Lan Na. There is a Srī Maṅgala mentioned in two inscriptions from the Phayao area, one of which (LB 10) is a royal edict written on the occasion of the installation of *sīmā* stones in a monastery in 1496.[45] Its content attests that this monk was a religious dignitary who was designated by King Mueang Kaew to inscribe and install the stones. It is nonetheless not possible to ascertain that this is the same person as the author of the Maṅg-d.

Sirimaṅgala's name does not appear in the great Thai Buddhist chronicles, such as *Jinakālamālī* (Jkm), *Cāmadevīvaṃsa* (Cdv), *The Chiang Mai Chronicle* (TCM),[46] or *The Annals of Yonok* (PY).[47] This might seem surprising, especially in the case of Jkm, which records in great detail religious events that occurred in Lan Na up to 1527, the end of the decade during which Sirimaṅgala wrote all of his works. This silence could be explained by the fact that Sirimaṅgala chose to spend these years in an unobtrusive place, keeping his time for writing his monumental pieces. Indeed, Jkm focuses on religious events connected with royalty and kingship. Monasteries such as Pa Daeng (Rattavana-mahāvihāra), Chet Yot (Mahābodhārāma) and Phra Singh (Sīhaḷārāma) were at the core of royal religious sponsorship, while Sirimaṅgala's abode (Suan Khuan) was probably less visited. On the other hand, we have seen that there is reason to believe that Sirimaṅgala was probably well-connected with the high religious hierarchy and the secular power. The fact is other famous Lan Na scholars such as Ñāṇakitti, Brahma-

[45] Lorrillard, "Muang Kèo".

[46] ตำนานพื้นเมืองเชียงใหม่ *Tāṃnān biịn$_2$ mịịaṅ Jīaṅ hmai$_1$*.

[47] พงศาวดารโยนก *Baṃśāvatāra Yonaka*.

rājapaññā, or Bodhiraṃsi are also not mentioned in Jkm, despite their having been very active and certainly of great reknown at that time. Among the Pali authors known to us, only the name of Ñāṇavilāsa occurs in this text. His name is actually just listed among several other *mahātheras* coming from different cities of Lan Na, who gathered in Mahābodhārāma in the year CS 873 (1511) on the occasion of the construction of an *uposatha* hall and the installation of *sīmā* stones, under the patronage of King Mueang Kaew (Jkm 106). This Ñāṇavilāsa may well refer to the author of the *Saṅkhyāpakāsaka* and/or to the *saṅgharāja* of Chiang Saen whose name is found in the above-mentioned inscription, but it would be unwise to assert it. The same list also gives the name of a certain Sumaṅgala, whom some scholars identify with Sirimaṅgala, unconvincingly arguing that monks in the list are said to have been well-versed in the *Vinaya* and other canonical scriptures (Supaphan 1990: 325). Although the dates are consistent, there is indeed no substantiated evidence that both names (which are in any case not the same) refer to the same person. Moreover, a "Mahāthera Sumaṅgala Medhāvī" appears in an inscription dated the same year (1511), where this monk is linked to the Kao Tue monastery (วัดเก๋าตื๋อ *văt kao₂ tɨi₂*), which was situated near the Suan Dok monastery.[48] This monk can thus hardly be Sirimaṅgala. Finally, some claim that Sirimaṅgala was among the eighteen *mahātheras* described in Jkm as being "versed in the Scriptures" who were invited by Mueang Kaew in 1523 to come to the Sīhaḷarāma (Phra Singh monastery) on the occasion of the cremation of the king's dead daughter (Jkm 125, see also Penth 1994: 245–46). The fact that Sirimaṅgala refers to the Sīhaḷarāma in his colophons gives some credibility to this assumption, but this does not constitute evidence.

Although Jkm does not mention Sirimaṅgala's name, it might refer to one of his works. In 1519, King Mueang Kaew had an ordination ceremony for no fewer than three hunderd monks organized in Pa Daeng monastery (Rattavanamahāvihāra). This was a large ceremony that was attended by dignitaries of neighbouring *mɨaṅ*. The participants were invited to anoint the Sīhaḷa Buddha statue (Phra Sihing); they then listened to "the *Mahā-Vessantara* introduction that he [the king] had himself sponsored, and to the exposition of the Dhamma entitled Mahā-Vessantara" (*attanā likhāpitaṃ Mahā-Vessantara-nidānañ ca Mahā-*

[48] Lorrillard, "Muang Kèo".

Vessantaran nāma dhammapariyāyañ ca suṇi) (Jkm 120). This *Mahā-Vessantara* "introduction" (*nidāna*) that King Mueang Kaew is said to have ordered could actually be the *Vessantaradīpanī*, which Sirimaṅgala had composed shortly before in 1517 (Cœdès 1925: 132–33). This is particularly likely since Sirimaṅgala refers several times to Mueang Kaew in Vess-dīp, even more than in his other works. He explicitly mentions the king in the colophon, showing considerable deference towards him (*rājābhirājassa manujindassa sabbarājūnaṃ tilaka-bhūtassa*). He then expresses the wish that the "lords [of the land] still protect the population in accordance with the Dhamma" (*evaṃ dhammena rājāno janaṃ rakkhantu sabbadā ti*) (Vess-dīp 516).[49]

While Sirimaṅgala seems to be absent from ancient Thai sources, late Burmese historiography does mention him. The *Sāsanavaṃsa*, the famous Burmese chronicle that was written in 1861 by Paññāsāmi, lists several Pali texts and authors that originated in Yonakaraṭṭha (*i.e.* Lan Na), including Ñāṇavilāsa, Uttarārāma, and Sirimaṅgala (Sās 51 ; Cœdès 1915: 39).

> *tattha nagare Ñāṇavilāsa-thero Saṅkhyāpakāsakan nāma pakaraṇam akāsi. taṃ ṭīkaṃ pana patta-Laṅka-therassa vihāre vasanto Sirimaṅgalo nāma thero akāsi. Visuddhimaggadīpaniṃ pana saññatta-araññavāsī Uttarārāmo nāma eko thero, Maṅgala-dīpaniṃ Sirimaṅgalathero, Uppātasantiṃ aññataro thero.*
>
> In that very city [of Chiang Mai], the Elder Ñāṇavilāsa composed a book entitled *Saṅkhyāpakāsaka*. Then an Elder named Sirimaṅgala, while residing in the monastery of an Elder who had travelled to Laṅkā, wrote its *ṭīkā*. Moreover, an Elder named Uttarārāma, who was considered a forest-dweller, [wrote] the *Visuddhimaggadīpanī*; the Elder Sirimaṅgala [also wrote] the *Maṅgala[ttha]dīpanī*,[50] and another Elder the *Uppātasanti*.

As noted before, this passage, albeit very short, gives additional — and noteworthy — information concerning Sirimaṅgala, saying he was

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49 Pagination according to the 2006 edition of Nakorn Khemapālī (see bibliography).

50 This text is sometimes titled *Maṅgaladīpanī* instead of *Maṅgalatthadīpanī*, especially in Burma.

staying in a monastery whose abbot had travelled to Laṅkā.[51] In other words, Sās suggests that this "Elder" was among the Lan Na monks who are said to have reached the island of Laṅkā in 1423 and then established the reformed tradition of the *Sīhaḷabhikkhu*s at the Pa Daeng monastery (Saksri 1970: xix; Veidlinger 2006: 94). This passage is, however, puzzling, as the use of the present participle implies that Sirimaṅgala was living with this Elder at the time he was writing the Saṅkh-p-ṭ (*ṭīkaṃ pana patta-Laṅka-therassa vihāre vasanto Sirimaṅgalo nāma thero akāsi*). This would mean the same Elder was the abbot of Suan Khuan monastery, where Sirimaṅgala says he composed Saṅkh-p-ṭ. The problem is this text was completed in 1520, that is, almost a century after the Thai *Sīhaḷabhikkhu*s came back from Laṅkā. This situation is thus impossible in terms of chronology. One hypothesis is that this Elder was not among the monks who travelled to Laṅkā, but was a pupil of one of them.

Another hypothesis is that this passage of Sās refers confusingly to an earlier time in Sirimaṅgala's life. In this case, this abbot could be Buddhavīra, of whom Sirimaṅgala says in Maṅg-d he was a pupil. In this case the chronology is plausible, provided Sirimaṅgala was at least fifty years of age when he wrote his first works (1517 or before). This is actually very likely if one considers the depth of knowledge demonstrated in his writings; it seems also to be confirmed by the use of the honourific title *mahāthera* that he attributed to himself in Vess-dīp, Saṅkh-p, and Cakkav-d, as this title is normally conferred upon monks who have spent at least twenty years in the monastery (Suphon 1999: 23).[52] Therefore, Sirimaṅgala would have been born in mid-15th century, so that he might have been a *sāmaṇera* around 1460 or later.[53] If one accepts Buddhavīra was in his twenties when he set out on his journey to Laṅkā (1423), he might have been alive at this time, although already an old man. Unfortunately, no monk bearing the name of

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[51] Javier Schnake points out that the Sinhalese editor of the Cakkav-d, who also mentions this passage, understands "Pattalaṅka" as to be the proper name of the abbot. One can doubt the relevance of this reading. In any event, it explicitly connects the *thera* to the Sinhalese lineage (*Sīhaḷagaṇa*).

[52] In Lan Na, the title *mahāthera* seems to have been used by the three factions.

[53] This corresponds to the assumption of some Thai scholars, according to which Sirimaṅgala was born during the reign of King Tilokarāja (1442–1487) (Nopporn 1980: 13; Saduphon 1999: 23; "History of Tamnak monastery").

Buddhavīra occurs in Thai epigraphy or historiography, and it is thus not possible to learn more about him.

Another Burmese document, the *Piṭakat Thamaiṅ*, which enumerates Pali scriptures and authors known in Burma at the time of its writing (1888), also mentions Sirimaṅgala (as well as other scholars from Lan Na). However, information given in this text is partly inaccurate, as it ascribes to him two pieces that were actually written by Ñāṇakitti, namely the *Aṭṭhasālinī-atthayojanā* and the *Sammohavinodanī-atthayojanā* (Likhit 1969: 277).

As for recent sources, Sirimaṅgala and his life have been the subject of several biographies in Thailand, which have circulated in the form of books, booklets, or notices. Many of them, however, are not reliable. The truth is that in large part what has been written on Sirimaṅgala in Thailand owes more to conjecture than to fact. First of all, the local tradition has it that Sirimaṅgala was of the lineage of King Mangrai (1263–1292), the first king of Lan Na,[54] and that he became a monk because he was reluctant to take the throne (see Supaphan 1990: 386; Saduphon 1999: 33–35). It is also believed that Sirimaṅgala was a son (one of ten) of King Sam Fang Kaen and that he ordained in order to escape, when his brother, Thao Lok, seized power from his father and became king under the name Tilokarāja (Sa-nguan 2009: 382).[55] Although TCM and PY confirm the coup of Tilokarāja, neither of them mentions Sirimaṅgala, nor do they make any allusion to a son of Sam Fang Kaen who took refuge in a monastery. Above all, the time frame does not match: even if one supposes Sirimaṅgala was only twenty years old, or even a teenager, at the time of Tilokarāja's coup (1441), it would imply he was almost one hundred years old when he wrote his works (1517–1524), which is hardly conceivable (Supaphan 2011: 18).

Another common belief is that Sirimaṅgala himself had been to Laṅkā to be reordained in the Sinhalese tradition (Saddhatissa 1989:

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54 All kings of Lan Na until the Burmese stranglehold (1558) actually belong to that lineage.

55 Sa-nguan relies on another paper by Saen Thammayot, which it was not possible to examine in the frame of this study.

42).[56] This is very unlikely, as written sources do not record other Lan Na monks having travelled to the island subsequent to those who accompanied Dhammagambhīra and Medhaṅkara — which obviously happened before Sirimaṅgala was born. Here one can suppose that the historiographers have relied on the inscription of Vana Ārām monastery (JR04, Phayao, dated 1499), which gives the name of two *thera*s who were among the twenty-five Lan Na monks who had been to Laṅkā, one of these being "Mahā Sāramaṅgalā".[57] Further unreliable information circulating in Thailand is that Sirimaṅgala was the spiritual teacher (*upajjhāya*) of King Mueang Kaew (Saddhatissa, *op. cit.*; Khemapālī 2006: 35). The biography of Sirimaṅgala that is displayed at Tamnak monastery passes on this rumour, and even states that Mueang Kaew built the Rattavanamahāvihāra (Pa Daeng monastery) in honour of the great monk, which is, of course, a nonsense based on historical sources concerning this place.[58] According to other sayings, he eventually took on the position of supreme patriarch of the Lan Na kingdom (*id.*), which is here again not supported by any evidence.

A more consistent source is a manuscript partly dedicated to Sirimaṅgala and his life. Unfortunately, this manuscript has been lost, and all we know about it comes from the testimony of the scholar and royal attendant Tho Jum na Bangchang (อำมาตย์ โทชุ่ม ณ บางช้าง, 1897–1987), who reported its content after he found it in 1921 at Khuang Singh monastery (วัดข่วงสิงห์ *văt khvaṅ$_1$ siṅh*), located a few kilometres north of Chiang Mai city.[59] This manuscript was written by a monk named Phra

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[56] This is also what is written in the biographical notice that is displayed at the entrance of Tamnak monastery. A similar notice is found below the statue of Sirimaṅgala that is situated within old Chiang Mai, near the Nam Ping river (see p. 104, n. 85, for details).

[57] See Lorrillard, "Muang Kèo", and Prasert ṇa Nakhorn et al. 1991: 9.

[58] This detail occurs only in the Thai version of the text. The adjacent English translation just indicates that Mueang Kaew "built a temple for him to reside in".

[59] Tho Jum na Bangchang's record about Sirimaṅgala is included in a book published by Silpakorn University, entitled นำชม จังหวัดเชียงใหม่ (*Nāṃjam căṅhvăt jīaṅ hmai$_1$*), pp. 59–60 (date of publication unknown, probably the 1920s or 1930s). It was unfortunately not possible to find this publication. Its content, however, is summarized in Saduphon 1977: 232–33, Supaphan

Siwichai (พระศรีวิชัย *Braḥ Śrīvijăy*), who was the abbot of the Ho Phra monastery (วัดหอพระ *văt hạ̄braḥ*)[60] and who allegedly wrote the biographies of several prominent figures of Lan Na, including Sirimaṅgala. On palæographical grounds, Tho Jum na Bangchang reckoned the manuscript to date from Mueang Kaew's reign (1495–1526), which means that it could have been written soon after Sirimaṅgala's death. This is of course unverifiable, and, to be honest, doubtful, as palæographical analysis is certainly not sufficient for dating a Thai manuscript.[61] According to this text, Sirimaṅgala was born in the city of Chiang Mai, in a family whose father was a mahout. Sirimaṅgala's birth name was Siri Ping Mueang (ศรีปิงเมือง *siri*/*śrī piṅ mịịaṅ*), which was given to him after the wind blew so hard on the day of his birth that the family home tumbled down. His mother, who was about to deliver, ran out and took refuge at the foot of a *bodhi* tree, which in Northern Thai is also called "mai sri" (ไม้ศรี *mai*$_2$ *śrī*, "the sacred tree"). He is said to have ordained as a novice (*sāmaṇera*) at a young age. When he was 13 years old, he urged the inhabitants to build a new monastery in his village. This monastery was called Veḷuvana-vihāra, but became commonly known under its vernacular name, Pa Phai Kao Ko (วัดป่าไผ่เก้ากอ *văt pā*$_1$ *phai*$_1$ *kao*$_2$ *kạ̄*), meaning "the temple with the nine bamboo clumps". Siri Ping Mueang stayed permanently in this monastery and, after some years, he received the full ordination (*upasampadā*). From there, he took the name of Sirimaṅgala, which was given to him by King Mueang Kaew himself. Sirimaṅgala spent some years in the Veḷuvana-vihāra, then Mueang Kaew appointed him as the abbot of Mahābodhārāma (Chet Yot monastery). He obtained on this occasion the rank of *ācārya*.

1990: 384–85, Saduphon 1999: 29–33, Khemapālī 2006: 35, and Supaphan 2011: 16–17.

60 No temple of this name seems to exist today around Chiang Mai, but a school located in the vicinity of Phra Singh monastery is named Ho Phra. As modern schools in Northern Thailand are sometimes built on monastery lands, it is not impossible that a Ho Phra monastery existed on this location in former times.

61 Moreover, although the oldest northern Thai manuscripts are dated from the end of the 15th century, only a few go back that far. It is rare to find Thai manuscripts older than two or three hundred years.

Therefore, his full religious name (*chāyā*) became Sirimaṅgalācārya. Later on, Sirimaṅgala was appointed as the abbot of Suan Dok monastery (Pupphārāma) and remained there until his death.

This manuscript is the only source giving a more or less complete chronology of Sirimaṅgala's life. For that reason, it is not possible to cross-check most of the biographical elements it contains, such as details about his family or his social origin. Only Sirimaṅgala's lay name (Siri Ping Mueang) can be compared with the one indicated in the Maṅg-d colophon, but it turns out to be different (see above). One can only say that the alleged occupation of Sirimaṅgala's father does not necessarily contradict the hypothesis that he was of noble rank. Indeed, Thai royal courts have their own herds of elephants, especially as the white or albino elephant (ช้างเผือก *jān₂ phiṭak*) is considered sacred and is the symbol of wealth, royal virtue, and power. The function of royal elephant keeper in Lan Na was certainly not considered a degrading position but quite the opposite, a position of status. The *Mūlasāsanā* even relates the case of a nephew of the king of Chiang Mai who was his mahout, before he brought the Sinhalese tradition of Buddhism in Chiang Tung. Although not specifically significant, it may be noted that the Burmese *Piṭakat Thamaiṅ* indirectly connects Sirimaṅgala to the royal elephants, by stating that he lived during the reign of a king who was the owner of four white elephants from Vijayapura (Likhit Likhitanonta 1969: 277), which was the capital of the Shan (Tai) kingdom of Pinyā.[62] Parallel to this biography, Tho Jum na Bangchang records that he read in another manuscript that Sirimaṅgala used to ride an elephant when he entered Chiang Mai, which would support the hypothesis that his father worked as an elephant keeper. He also says that he had the opportunity to see with his own eyes Sirimaṅgala's elephant saddle stored at the Tamnak monastery, although nowadays no saddle is visible there.[63] In any event, it would be surprising that a

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[62] The kingdom of Pinya, located in central Burma, existed in the 14th century. It was subsequently absorbed by the Burmese kingdom of Ava.

[63] Venerable Bhikṣu Caruñ Paññādharo, who was a resident of Tamnak monastery in 1977, confirms that an elephant saddle was indeed stored there in the past, but that it had since been moved to the Chiang Mai museum

saddle would have remained intact for four centuries. One can also doubt that Sirimaṅgala, whose works bear witness to his knowledge of and respect for the Vinaya, would have travelled riding on the back of an elephant, as the monastic code of the Pali tradition clearly prohibits such a practice.

Some other information given in this biography is puzzling, and some even seems to contradict that given by Sirimaṅgala himself in his writings. First, it is surprising that it remains silent about Suan Khuan monastery, where Sirimaṅgala must have spent a subsequent part of his life. On the other hand, the name of the monastery that Sirimaṅgala is said to have had built, Veḷuvana-vihāra, is confusing. Following the Thai erudite Mahā Vuḍḍhiñāṇo, some scholars believe this is the same place as the Veḷuvana-vihāra that is mentioned in Jkm (121) and PY (368) (Saen Monvithun 1958: 154; Saksri 1971: xviii; Saduphon 1977: 6; Saduphon 1999: 24; Supaphan 2011: 19–21) — and which would also be the actual Tamnak monastery (see below for discussion of this matter). The fact is the Veḷuvana-vihāra that these chronicles refer to is actually the Umong monastery, located to the west of the Chiang Mai city wall, in which King Mueang Kaew enshrined relics in 1520 (Penth 1994: 201, 266-7).[64] Umong monastery (วัดอุโมงค์ *văt umōṅg*) is also called in other local chronicles Pa Phai Sip-et Kor monastery (วัดป่าไผ่สิบเอ็ดกอ *văt pā₁ phai₁ sip ĕt kạ̄*), which means "the monastery of the eleven bamboo clumps" — thus not "of the nine bamboo clumps", as Sirimaṅgala's temple is called in his biography. It turns out that Veḷuvana is a name that is quite widespread in Northern Thailand for Buddhist monasteries, in particular for those affiliated to the *Sīhaḷa-bhikkhu*s, as it refers to an emblematic place in the life of the Buddha.[65]

(Saduphon 1999: 33). While various accessories for a mahout are kept at Chiang Mai museum, their age and provenance are unknown.

64 Sometimes Veḷukaṭṭhārāma. Its complete vernacular name is Wat Umong Suan Phutthatham (วัดอุโมงค์สวนพุทธธรรม *văt umōṅg svan Buddhadharrma*), not to be confused with the Umong Thera Chan monastery (วัดอุโมงค์มหาเถรจันทร์ *văt* umōṅg mahā thera Căndr) that is located in inner Chiang Mai (see Penth 1974).

65 There is today, for example, a Weluwan (P. Veḷuvana) monastery located about 5 kilometres east of Chiang Mai. Moreover, the Pali name of the Ku

It would not be surprising that two monasteries situated at the south or southwest of Chiang Mai both bore the name of Veḷuvana. These would have been distinguishable by their respective vernacular designations, namely "the monastery with nine bamboo clusters" (Sirimaṅgala's abode) and "the monastery with the eleven bamboo clusters" (*i.e*. Umong monastery).

The mention of Sirimaṅgala having been appointed as the abbot of Mahābodhārāma (Chet Yot monastery) also raises questions. According to Jkm (112) and PY (362), the abbot of Mahābodhārāma, whose honourific name or title was Mahābodhārāmādhipati Mahāsāmi, was appointed by King Mueang Kaew as the patriarch (*saṅgharāja-adhipatī-saṅgha*) of the *Sīhaḷabhikkhu*s in 1517, and thus moved to Rattavana-mahāvihāra (Pa Daeng monastery). It is thus theoretically possible that, as the biography states, Sirimaṅgala would have been then assigned to replace him at the head of this monastery. It is, however, supported by little evidence. Moreover, in 1517, Sirimaṅgala had just completed the writing of Vess-dīp, while Saṅkh-p-ṭ and Cakkav-d were composed three years later, in 1520. Considering the significance of both texts in terms of volume and complexity, a period of three years for writing is already impressive. It is thus unlikely that Sirimaṅgala would have been able to achieve this while being at the same time the abbot of one of the most important monasteries in Lan Na, especially as this task is particularly heavy, not only in terms of internal responsibilities, but also with regards to the relationship with the secular power. Additionally, Sirimaṅgala states in his colophons that he was staying at Suan Khuan at the time of completing Saṅkh-p-ṭ and Cakkav-d. This means that in any event, he would have left the Mahābodhārāma in the meantime to go back to his previous abode. In sum, it is more likely that Sirimaṅgala stayed permanently at Suan Khuan during this period, and thus that it was another monk who was appointed as the abbot of the Chet Yot monastery.

Tao monastery (one kilometre north of Chiang Mai) is also Veḷuvana-vihāra (mentioned in TMC 197). One can also mention another old Veḷuvana-ārāma (built in 1488) that is located in Lamphun. A stone inscription (n. 67) found in San Makha monastery (in Lamphun) clearly connects this Veḷuvana-ārāma to the *Sīhaḷabhikkhu*s lineage and to the Pa Daeng monastery" (see Penth et al. 1999: 160–61).

As for Sirimaṅgala having been appointed as the abbot of Suan Dok monastery (Pupphārāma) and having resided there until his death, it is not supported by evidence either. It is also inconsistent with the previous allegation according to which Sirimaṅgala was once the abbot of a monastery affiliated to the Pa Daeng lineage, namely the Mahābodhārāma. But if one were to accept such a possibility, his appointment to Pupphārāma could have taken place only after 1524, the year of the completion of Maṅg-d, his last known work.[66] In this regard, Tho Jum na Bangchang asserts that in 1925 he saw in the vicinity of the Suan Dok monastery a reliquary bearing an inscription saying it shelters Sirimaṅgala's bones (*aṭṭhi braḥ Sirimaṅgalācāry*). Unfortunately, this alleged reliquary was removed two years later by villagers, while the place is now located within the precinct of the airport (Supaphan 1990: 385; Sadupon 1999: 35).[67]

In the final analysis, only little information on Sirimaṅgala that is given in Thai historiography can be considered as relevant, as it mainly rests on unexamined or unverifiable assumptions.[68] On the other hand, these writings reflect the devotional respect Thais have for Buddhist figures and their need to place them within both an historic and hagiographic religious tradition. To adopt a critical perspective toward the

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66 According to Jkm (127), King Mueang Kaew honoured the abbot of Suan Dok in 1524, and filled him with incalculable wealth (*Pupphārāme [...] anagghaparikkhārehi therādhipatino pūjetvā pavesāpesi*). The chronicle doesn't give the name of this abbot but, in any case, it can't be Sirimaṅgala, as this event took place at the very beginning of the year (10th day of the month of Māgha, *i.e*. Friday 15 January 1524).

67 Tho Jum na Banchang also states that he read a document handwritten by Prince Damrong Rajananubhab, in which the latter attests having found a source according to which Sirimaṅgala was once the abbot of Ton Khanun monastery (lit. "the monastery of the jackfruit"). This name appears to be the sobriquet of Chet Yot monastery (P. Mahābodhārāma). Here again, Tho Jum na Banchang gives no other evidence than his own testimony. This might simply be a confusion with Ñāṇakitti, who is said to have resided in a monastery also called "Jackfruit grove" (Panasārāma) (see Saddhatissa 1989: 41).

68 Not to mention the fact that all the things Tho Jum na Banchang writes about strangely disappear.

life, work, or acts of these figures would certainly be seen as misplaced if not outrageous. Ultimately, they do not tell much about Sirimaṅgala, but they do tell a lot about Thai culture and local Buddhism.

WHERE DID SIRIMAṄGALA WRITE HIS WORKS?

I noted above that Sirimaṅgala mentions in his colophons the place where he wrote each of his pieces, namely Suan Khuan (*svan khvăñ*) for Vess-dīp, Saṅkh-p, and Cakkav-d, and "a secluded place that is situated one league south of Chiang Mai" (*Navapurassa dakkhiṇa-disā-bhāge gāvute ṭhāne vivitte*) for Maṅg-d. The identification of this (or these) place(s) has been the subject of several discussions in Thailand, but it is now widely agreed that all colophons refer to the same place, namely the present-day Tamnak monastery (วัดตำหนัก *văt tāṃhnăk*), located approximately 5 kilometres south of inner Chiang Mai (*viz*. Bimala-dharrm 1953: 21–30; Supaphan 1990: 388; Hinüber 1996: 179; Saduphon 1999: 24; Nakorn Khemapālī 2006: 35; Supaphan 2011: 21–24).[69] This place has therefore been renamed Tamnak Suan Khuan Sirimangkhalachan monastery (วัดตำหนักสวนขวัญสิริมังคลาจาริย์ *văt tāṃhnăk svan khvăñ Sirimaṅgalācāry*), in homage to Sirimaṅgala.

There are reasons, however, to question these views. As for Suan Khuan, colophons specify that it is "located at the southwest of the Sīhaḷārāma" (*Sīhaḷārāmassa dakkhiṇa-pacchima-disāya patiṭṭhite*), which recognisably refers to the Phra Singh monastery (วัดพระสิงห์ *văt braḥ siṅh*) (Cœdès 1925: 132). This monastery, one of the most important ones in inner Chiang Mai, owes its current name to the presence of the Phra Sihing image (Sīhaḷapaṭima). It also shelters one of the biggest *cetiya* in Chiang Mai, which was probably built even before the temple itself. As for King Mueang Kaew, the ruler of Lan Na at Sirimaṅgala's time, not only did he support renovation and construction works in this monastery, he also made it a place of representation of power, as it was there that rulers of smaller principalities came to pledge allegiance to him (Jkm 119, Notton 150–51); it was also this monastery that Mueang Kaew chose for organising the funeral of his dead daughter (Jkm 125*ff*., and above). Yet several Thai scholars argue that the Sīhaḷārāma refers in Sirimaṅgala's colophons not to Phra Singh monastery, but to the Mahā-

[69] See also *The Life and Work of Braḥ Mahā Hmiịn, Vuḍḍhiñāṇo* 1957: 41.

bodhārāma (Chet Yot monastery), which is located about 3 kilometres northwest from Chiang Mai (Saen Monvithun 1958: 138; Nopphon 1980: 235; Supaphan 2011: 19, 25, 263–64).[70] However, the arguments put forward are not convincing. One of these is that the designation "Sīhaḷārāma" would be related to *Sīhaḷa* (*i.e.* Laṅkā), while the etymology of the vernacular name of the temple, Phra Singh (พระสิงห์ *braḥ siṅh*), would be *siṅgha*, or *sīha* ("lion", *i.e.* the Buddha). Admittedly, Phra Singh monastery is also known under another Pali name, Siṅghavara-vihāra, but texts from this period often display confusion between *siṅgha* (or *sīha*) and *sīhaḷa*, which are anyhow linguistically related.[71] According to chronicles, Phra Singh monastery was first called Mahāvihāra, and then took the name of Sīhaḷārāma after King Kue Na (*circa* 1355–1385) had the Phra Sihing image (Sīhaḷa-paṭima) brought from Laṅkā (Jkm 86–91, 102; CMC). Thus, whichever etymology is accepted, the vernacular name of this temple refers, directly or indirectly, to Laṅkā. In any event, this name was given to the monastery before Dhammagambhīra's mission to Laṅkā, meaning that it is not related to the formation of the *Sīhaḷagaṇa* in Lan Na (*circa* 1430). On the other hand, it coincides with the establishment of the first Sinhalese trend by Sumana (*circa* 1370). Another argument raised by scholars to contest the identification of Sīhaḷārāma with Phra Singh monastery relies on the "biography" of Sirimaṅgala related by Tho Jum na Bangchang (see above). According to this text, Sirimaṅgala was for a period of time the abbot of Mahābodhārāma, and as such was connected with this temple. They deduce from this that the place he refers to as Sīhaḷārāma in his colophons must be the Mahābodhārāma. One can only notice how fragile the

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[70] Saen Monvithun, in his Thai translation of Jkm, seems to be the source of this identification.

[71] The Sv-pṭ glosses *sīhaḷa* as "the lion prince", taking the suffix *la* in the sense of "catching" (*lāti*) (Crosby 2004: 75). Moreover, Supaphan na Bangchang has noted that some sources write Sihārāma, instead of Sīhaḷārāma. She deduces that two distinct monasteries might have existed, Sīhaḷārāma and Sihārāma, the latter only being the Pali name of Phra Singh monastery (Supaphan 2011: 264). The truth is, misspellings are habitual in ancient Thai sources, and that the two names very likely refer to the same monastery.

foundations are on which this view rests.[72] Whatever the case may be, cross-checking passages concerning the Sīhaḷārāma that are recorded both in Jkm (written in Pali) and in TCM (written in Thai) leaves no doubt regarding the identity of this monastery with the Phra Singh monastery.[73]

Nevertheless, one might wonder why Sirimaṅgala mentions the Sīhaḷārāma in his colophons. As Phra Singh monastery is situated at the very centre of Chiang Mai, such a reference is indeed by no means helpful in locating Tamnak monastery, which is situated several kilometres south of the city walls.[74] This was actually another argument used by some modern scholars in asserting that "Sīhaḷārāma" cannot in this instance be the Phra Singh monastery. In fact, the problem occurs only if one admits that Tamnak monastery is the same place Sirimaṅgala refers to as Suan Khuan in his colophons. There is, however, material

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72 The same scholars raise other arguments, which are summarized below in order to give a clearer idea of the hypotheses or assertions that circulate in Thailand about Sirimaṅgala: Mahābodhārāma was affiliated to the *Sīhaḷa-pakkha*, while Phra Singh monastery would have been affiliated to the old Mon tradition. Taking for granted that Sirimaṅgala was a *Sīhaḷabhikkhu*, they conclude that he could not have resided in Phra Singh monastery. Not only is there no real evidence of Sirimaṅgala's affiliation to the *Sīhaḷa-pakkha* (see below), but sources do not support the affiliation of Phra Singh monastery to the old Mon tradition. Evidence rather shows it was primarily connected with the first Sinhalese trend led by Sumana (see above). Some studies also assert that Ñāṇakitti and Ratanapañña once resided at Mahā-bodhārāma (Supaphan 2011: 26). Assuming that Sirimaṅgala must have been close to them, they deduce that he must have resided in the same monastery. None of these arguments is supported, or even suggested, by evidence.

73 For instance, both texts report that Mueang Kaew ordered simultaneously the construction of two religious buildings (*vihāra*), one in the Phra Singh monastery (Jkm "Sīhaḷārāma"), one in the Maha Chedi Luang monastery (Jkm "Mahācetiyārāma") (Jkm 119, CMC 160). H. Penth (1994: 245–246) also identifies Sīhaḷārāma with Phra Singh monastery.

74 It must be added that Tamnak monastery is, strictly speaking, located to the south of Phra Singh monastery rather than southwest. Certainly, the road coming from the southern gate of Chiang Mai is slightly oriented towards the southwest, but people from ancient Lan Na must have assumed that its orientation was clearly southward.

evidence that tends to contradict this assumption, namely two old manuscripts actually stored at Lai Hin monastery in the city of Lampang (about 100 kilometres south of Chiang Mai). These manuscripts are two Pali *Jātaka*s of the *Tiṃsanipāta* and *Paṇṇāsanipāta*. Both bear colophons indicating they were copied at a monastery named Suan Khuan in CS 876 (1514) and ordered by an "important faithful layman" (*mahā-upāsaka*) whose name was Bua Kham.[75] The colophon of the second text provides additional details, saying that this very monastery is located "within the walled city, near the gate of the Flower-garden (*svar khvăr nai vyaṅ cim$_1$ paḥtū svar tạ̄k*)".[76] The fact is there is no record of a gate in Lampang that is called "Flower Garden" (Suan Dok), nor of a monastery with the name of "Suan Khuan". The mention of "the gate of the Flower-garden" actually leaves little doubt that it refers to the western gate of Chiang Mai, which nowadays still bears this very name, opening onto the road that leads westward to Suan Dok monastery (Pupphārāma) and beyond to Mount Suthep.[77] This city gate is already

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[75] "*1 pī kāp seḍ sakrāja ḍai 876 tiṃsanipāta jātaka mahā-upāsaka bva gāṃ tāṅ meiṅ sāṅ káp vát svar khván*". "*Paṇṇāsanipāta káp váḍ svar khvan nai vyaṅ cim paḥtu svar ḍøk lee. 12{?} pī kāp seḍ sakrāja ḍai 876 paṇṇāsanipāta jātaka mahāupāsaka bva gāṃ tāṅ meiṅ sāṅ káp vát svar khván lee*" (in Hinüber 2013: 106–107). Both manuscripts are readable online through the Digital Library of Northern Thai manuscripts (http://lannamanuscripts.net/en) (codes PNTMP: 030104092_01, and 030104005_00).

[76] *Cim$_1$* จิ่ม is a Northern Thai word that is equivalent to Central Thai (Siamese) ใกล *klai$_2$*, meaning "near", "close to" (see Udom 1991: 195; I am also grateful to Phongsathorn Buakhampan for having confirmed this meaning). The reading of the colophon by O. von Hinüber (2013: 107) is thus not entirely accurate, as he understands *cim* as a proper name, and thus wrongly translates as "in the city of Cim".

[77] The presence at Lampang of manuscripts that originated in Chiang Mai is not surprising, especially in the case of Lai Hin monastery. Indeed this monastery is famous for its manuscript collection, since the *araññavāsin* monk Kesārapañña endeavoured at the end of the 17th century to collect Pali texts from different areas. The oldest manuscripts in Thailand, dating from the end of the 15th century are stored in Lai Hin monastery (see Hinüber 2013, and also Veidlinger 2006: 93). As for Tamnak ("Suan Kwan") monastery, it does not hold any manuscripts. Yet there is a manuscript respository (หอไตร *hạ̄ trai*), but it is very new and at present empty. See p. 104, note 84.

mentioned under this name in local chronicles; what is more, in terms that are similar to that of the colophon:

> [In year 1367] the prince [Phayu] took his father's remains and deposited them in the [walled] city of Chiang Mai, near the Suan Dok Gate (*nai vyaṅ jīaṅ hmai, bāy pratū svar tą̄k*), where he had a *cetiya* built to enshrine them; and he built a temple there for the monks to live in. At the time, everyone going to the market saw the temple, which came to be called the Li Chiang Phra. Later the Buddhasiṅgha [image] was in the temple, and it came to be called Phra Singh monastery to the present day.
>
> (TCM 65)[78]

Significantly, TCM here associates the Suan Dok gate with the Phra Singh monastery, which is actually located in close proximity to the east. PY, which also relates this event, specifies that the ashes of King Kham Fu (1334–1336)[79] were deposited at 100 fathoms (Th. วา *vā*) from the Suan Dok Gate (PY 187). This perfectly matches with observations that can be made today, as excavations undertaken in 1925 uncovered the ruins of a *cetiya* containing the king's remains within the enclosure of the Phra Singh monastery (Notton 1932: 84). Therefore, the Suan Khuan monastery which the colophon refers to as situated "within the walled city and near the Suan Dok gate" must have been established in inner Chiang Mai, between this very gate and the Phra Singh monastery, which are only (approximately) 300 metres apart from each other. Although the latter is nowadays the only Buddhist monastery that is located near the Suan Dok gate, it is not impossible that another one existed in its vicinity in the past. As a matter of fact, a 19th-century manuscript listing all temples within the city wall of Chiang Mai at that time precisely mentions a monastery named "Suan Khuan". What is more, Suan Khvan appears in the list immediately after the Phra Singh monastery, thereby indicating the geographic proximity of the two temples.[80]

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78 Transl. Wyatt & Aroonrut Wichienkeo 1998: 103–104.

79 1338–1345 according to TMC.

80 Leporello manuscript of the Harald Hundius collection. The colophon indicates it was ordered by a high ranking official of the principality of Lampang (*khun-nāṅ Lāṃpāṅ*), who originated in Phayao. This official said (folio 58) to have inventoried 161 temples in Chiang Mai (62 within the wall, and 99

Such information sheds new light on the place Sirimaṅgala described in his works (Vess-dīp, Saṅkh-p-ṭ, Cakkav-d) as "situated to the south-west of the Sīhaḷārāma, and commonly known by its Thai name, Suan Khuan" (*Sīhaḷārāmassa dakkhiṇa-pacchima-disāya patiṭṭhite deyya-bhāsāya Svan Khvan ti pākaṭanāme*).[81] It clearly refers to the same monastery that is mentioned in the *Paṇṇāsanipāta* manuscript dated 1514, which was situated between the Suan Dok gate (to the west) and the Phra Singh (to the north-east). In this regard, Suan Khuan must have been a modest and discreet temple, otherwise the reference to Sīhaḷārāma would have not been necessary to Sirimaṅgala, as well as that to Suan Dok gate for the copyist of the *Paṇṇāsanipāta* manuscript. It is also significant that both refer to Suan Khuan only by its vernacular name. Sirimaṅgala at least would certainly have used the Pali name if it had existed, especially as the presence of these two Thai words clashes within a text that is entirely written in Pali. This absence of a Pali name suggests we are dealing with a simple monastic abode, which perhaps did not have an ordination hall (*sīmā*). On the other hand, Suan Khuan must have been an active place in terms of Pali literacy, as not only did Sirimaṅgala spend years writing his works in this monastery, but Pali texts were also ordered and copied there, such as the two *Jātaka*s mentioned above. It was probably a quiet place where monks could write or copy manuscripts in complete tranquillity. Therefore, there is a greater understanding of the mention by Sirimaṅgala of the Sīhaḷārāma (Phra Singh monastery), since he lived in its close vicinity. The presence in the manuscript repository of Phra Singh monastery of the oldest copy of a text written by Sirimaṅgala, namely the Cakkav-d dated

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outside) in the year CS 1182 (a year *koṭ-si*), that is, in 1820. The names "*Braḥ Siṅ*" and "*Svar Khvar*" are given on folio 53. Once again, my gratitude goes to Phongsathorn Buakhampan for having provided me with a sample of this manuscript.

81 To be precise, this sentence could well be interpreted as "situated at the southwest quarter of the Sīhaḷārāma", meaning within the monastery rather than outside it. It is actually the way G. Cœdès (1915: 39) has translated this passage: "dans la partie Sud-Ouest du Sīhaḷārāma". However, mention made of a *văt* bearing the name Suan Khuan, in both 1514 manuscript and 19th century list of Chiang Mai monasteries, invalidates this reading.

1538 mentioned before, is another indication of Sirimaṅgala's connection with this temple. This also pleads in favour of the supposition that he participated in some royal or important ceremonies held in Phra Singh monastery (see above).

Having denied the possibility that Sīhaḷārāma was actually the Phra Singh monastery, Thai scholars could not have imagined that the place named Suan Khuan would actually be located in inner Chiang Mai. It follows from this that, contrary to what is generally accepted today in Thailand, the place Sirimaṅgala refers to as Suan Khuan in Vess-dīp, Saṅkh-pṭ, and Cakkav-d can hardly be the present-day Tamnak monastery, as it is located several kilometres south of the old city of Chiang Mai. The actual name of "Suan Khuan *Sirimaṅgalācāry*" that has been added to that of Tamnak is therefore the result of a mistake, mainly due to the assumption that the "Suan Khuan" and "a secluded place situated at one *gāvuta* south of Chiang Mai" referred to in Sirimaṅgala's various writings were a single place. The fact this is not the case actually explains why the colophon of Maṅg-d differs from that of his previous works (Vess-dīp, Saṅkh-p, and Cakkav-d), while making no mention of the Sīhaḷārāma in Maṅg-d.[82]

But although Tamnak monastery is not Suan Khuan, could it still be the "secluded place" Sirimaṅgala refers to in the Maṅg-d colophon? Certainly the situation of Tamnak village is, even today, beyond the major roads. Despite the urbanization that has deeply changed the landscape since Sirimaṅgala's time, it retains a feeling of peace and tranquillity. According to local tradition, the name Tamnak (ตำหนัก *tāṃhnăk*) was given to this village only in 1796 after King Kavila

[82] One might ask why Sirimaṅgala would have moved from Suan Khuan monastery to a place located outside Chiang Mai. Although it is not possible to provide a definitive answer, one can at least formulate a hypothesis. The *Annals of Yonok* relate that Chiang Mai experienced a flood disaster in CS 886 (1524), that is, precisely the year Sirimaṅgala completed the Maṅg-d. The flood affected in particular the eastern part of the town, around the Tha Phae (or Chiang Rueak) gate, and caused massive damage with a high number of deaths (PY 371, Saduphon 1999: 24). It could have been a reason for people impacted to move, and Sirimaṅgala could have been one of those. If so, he probably looked beyond the city wall for a safe, quiet place to complete his work.

(1775–1813) and his entourage spent four nights there, in a pavilion built for the occasion (the word *tāmhnăk* refers in Thai to a residence for the ruling elite or the *kuṭi* of a *saṅgharāja*).[83] Historical sources are, however, silent on this episode. As for Tamnak monastery, it is in large part a classical Thai monastery, which includes the usual religious buildings, such as a *vihāra*, an ordination hall, residences for monks (*kuṭi*), a manuscript repository,[84] and several chapels. One must also notice a statue representing Sirimaṅgala that has been installed just before the *vihāra*, and another one that stands inside a small chapel.[85] All these structures are of recent construction.

Other architectural elements, however, suggest that this place might have been a Buddhist monastery for centuries. First, an ancient, massive entrance gate together with ruins of a brick surrounding wall (and probably of another smaller gate) give an imposing and majestic character to the whole. Although the gate has obviously been recently restored, it might evoke the style of Lan Na architecture of the 16th century. Local tradition says that these ruins are those of the Veḷuvana-vihāra, the alleged abode of Sirimaṅgala (Saksri 1971: xviii). The "History of Tamnak monastery" (ประวัติวัดตำหนัก *pravăti văt tāmhnăk*) that is displayed at the entrance states that it was built in the mid-15th century, during King Mueang Kaew's reign.[86] This statement actually results from a confusion with the Veḷuvana-vihāra that is mentioned in Jkm and PY, which we have proved to be another monastery (see above). Second, an older and now abandoned *vihāra* adorned with a beautiful carved wooden pediment, possibly dating from the 18th or

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[83] *The Life and Work of Braḥ Mahā Hmiṇ, Vuḍḍhiñāṇo* 1957: 42. See also Supaphan 2011: 20.

[84] This repository is actually an exact replica of the one in Phra Singh monastery, probably because Sirimaṅgala refers to this monastery in his writings.

[85] There is another statue representing Sirimaṅgala in Chiang Mai. It was installed in 1998, at the angle of Chareung Prathet and Tha Phae avenues, not far from the Ping river. It represents Sirimaṅgala holding a *Maṅgala-tthadīpanī* manuscript. These images of Sirimaṅgala attest his popularity in present-day Northern Thailand.

[86] Other sources give the dates BE 2038 (1495), BE 2050 (1507), or BE 2053 (1510) as the date of construction. None of them is supported by evidence.

19th century, is still standing in close proximity to the gate. Thirdly, a *cetiya* is present just behind the old *vihāra*, but recent restoration makes it difficult to estimate the date of its construction. Lastly, a centuries-old *bodhi* tree stands near it, a sign that this location has been a religious site for ages. For reasons that remain to be cleared up, an old *vihāra*, *cetiya*, and *bodhi* tree are located outside the ancient boundary wall. New buildings, however, have been erected inside the wall.

On-site observations made in the 1940s attest that more ancient architectural elements were visible then, including the surrounding wall and smaller gates at the four cardinal points (see Bimaladharm 1953: 26*ff.*). According to some, these ruins and ancient buildings were those of an ancient monastery that was destroyed or abandoned in the second half of the 16th century, after the Burmese seized Chiang Mai (Supaphan 2011: 23).[87] Later publications attest that Tamnak monastery was still in ruins at the end of the 1960s (see Saksri 1971: xviii). Thereafter, inhabitants of Tamnak village invited a charismatic monk, the Venerable Paññā Siridhammo, to reside in this monastery and to become its abbot. Between 1977 and 1986 this monk undertook, together with the provincial responsibility of the *saṅgha* of Chiang Mai province (เจ้าคณะจังหวัด *cao₂ gaṇa căṅghvăt*), the rehabilitation of the monastery and the construction of the new buildings of the present-day Tamnak monastery (Saduphon 1999: 22; Supaphan 2011: 24).

While it is commonly assumed today in Thailand that Sirimaṅgala once resided in the place that is today the Tamnak monastery (or more exactly in its older part, on the other side of the gate), when and how this assumption became established is not entirely clear. It seems that the one who is at the origin of this identification is the prince Damrong Rajanubhab (1862–1943). Relying on the details given by Sirimaṅgala about his abode in Maṅg-d colophon ("*Navapurassa dakkhiṇa-disā-bhāge gāvute ṭhāne*"), he would have reviewed all the temples located within a distance of 2,000 fathoms (*i.e.* one *gāvuta*) from the southern wall of Chiang Mai. He found Tamnak monastery was the location that corresponded most, especially thanks to the presence of the old

[87] See also "History of Tamnak monastery".

archæological remains.[88]

The truth is the correspondence is rather approximate: distance from Tamnak monastery to the southern gate of the old city is in fact more than five kilometres, while one *gāvuta* is equivalent to ¼ *yojana*, that is, a little less than three kilometres. Subsequently the study of the royal attendant Tho Jum na Bangchang, discussed earlier, certainly reinforced Prince Damrong's hypothesis. In his study (*circa* 1930), he clearly identifies Tamnak monastery with the Veḷuvanārāma, or Pa Phai Kao Ko monastery ("the temple with the nine bamboo clumps"), which Sirimaṅgala's biography indicates to have been his place of residence for many years (see above). His assumption draws on the fact that Jkm and PY mention a Veḷuvana-vihāra monastery also located "at the southwest of Chiang Mai" (*Nabbisipurassa dakkhiṇa-pacchimadi-santarāḷakone*) (Jkm 121, PY 368), which may appear as analogous to that given by Sirimaṅgala to locate his own abode (*Sīhaḷārāmassa dakkhiṇa-pacchima-disāya patiṭṭhite*). However, we have shown that not only is the Tamnak monastery not the place Sirimaṅgala refers to in his colophons, nor is it the "Veḷuvana-vihāra" mentioned in Jkm.

Taking all this into consideration, arguments supporting the idea that Tamnak monastery was the place where Sirimaṅgala wrote the Maṅg-d are very fragile. First, the geographical situation of this monastery matches only approximately with the details given in the Maṅg-d colophon (*i.e.* "situated at one league south of Chiang Mai"). Second, this situation might as well apply to several other places in the vicinity, especially as many old temple structures have been excavated over the past few years in the surroundings. Furthermore, this statement results for its greater part from a confusion related to the name of Veḷuvana-vihāra, which Thai scholars wrongly identified with Tamnak monastery. Finally, Sirimaṅgala does not specify in this very colophon that he was residing in a temple. He only mentions a secluded place (*ṭhāne vivitte*) that allowed him to live in solitude, which rather suggests a simple monk's abode or hermitage, and certainly not a large monastery surrounded

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88 Mahā Vuḍḍhiñāṇo attests he read the record of Damrong's survey and findings in the prince's correspondence (see *The Life and Work of Braḥ Mahā Hmiịn, Vuḍḍhiñāṇo* 1957: 39).

by walls and massive gates.[89] In the end, no reliable data allows us to connect Sirimaṅgala to present-day Tamnak monastery. This connection rests only on a series of suppositions that are not supported by the evidence so far. Still, it appears from subsequent studies that monks and laypeople in Chiang Mai had by around 1940 already acknowledged that Tamnak monastery was Sirimaṅgala's abode (see Bimaladharrm 1953: 24–25), probably after Prince Damrong's conclusions.[90] At that time, however, the name *Svan Khvăñ Sirimaṅgalācāry* had not been included yet. The "History of Tamnak monastery", displayed at the entrance of this temple, leads to the conclusion that this additional name was added only later on, after academic studies had been published on Sirimaṅgala and his work, and had, inaccurately, identified Tamnak monastery both with Veḷuvanārāma (Umong monastery) and Suan Khuan monastery (*viz*. Bimaladharrm 1953: 24–26; Saksri 1971: xviii; Supaphan 1990: 387; Saduphon 1999: 24).[91] Ironically enough, these misinterpretations and confusions caused Tamnak monastery to gain its present reknown, not only in Chiang Mai, but also in other regions of Thailand, so much so that members of the royal family came on an official visit in 1973 (see Saduphon 1999: 32).

WAS SIRIMAṄGALA A *SĪHAḶABHIKKHU*?

As said at the beginning of this paper, a radical change in Pali writings is perceptible in Lan Na from the 15th to mid-16th century which corresponds to the emergence of the *Sīhaḷagaṇa* and the development in Chiang Mai and neighbouring principalities of a network of monasteries affiliated to the Pa Daeng monastery. A large number of new texts demonstrate their authors' undeniable mastery of the Pali language in

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[89] Certainly it is also possible that a monastery was built on the same location after Sirimaṅgala's death, but even so, this only brings additional suppositions.

[90] The Venerable Bimaladharrm Āsabha Thera relates that when he asked monks and officials of Chiang Mai in 1943 to lead him to the place where Sirimaṅgala had resided, they straight away conducted him to Tamnak monastery. They left Phra Singh monastery and then travelled about six kilometres southwest.

[91] Supaphan na Banchang's book on Pali literature in Thailand (1990) is given as the main source of this notice.

comparison with previous and subsequent literary religious productions in the area. Sirimaṅgala's works, which were all written in the first decades of the 16th century, clearly belong to this "fresh sap" in Thai Buddhism (Cœdès 1925: 32). It is thus generally assumed that Sirimaṅgala belonged to the *Sīhaḷagaṇa* (Saksri xvi-xvii, Saddhatissa 1989: 43), that is, the second *araññavāsī* trend founded by Dhammagambhīra. This remains, however, a supposition, and further analysis is needed to determine whether it can be taken for granted.

In truth, reliable information we have on Sirimaṅgala does not allow a definitive conclusion about his affiliation to one or the other of the three factions that coexisted in Lan Na at that time. On the one hand, it has been demonstrated above that Suan Khuan monastery, where Sirimaṅgala wrote at least three of his works, was located within the walls of Chiang Mai, in the close vicinity of the Phra Sing monastery (Sīhaḷārāma). One might thus conclude that he was a town-dwelling monk (*gāmavāsin*), and as such that he was affiliated to the old Mon tradition. However, the term *araññavāsī* should perhaps not be understood too literally when dealing with Lan Na (and probably when dealing with Sri Lanka earlier). Indeed, one can only observe the high concentration of monasteries within the walls of Chiang Mai,[92] while a large number of them were established after the installation of the two factions that claim to belong to the forest-dwelling tradition. Even monasteries affiliated to the *Sīhaḷagaṇa*, such as Pa Daeng (Rattavanamahāvihāra) and Chet Yot (Mahābodhārāma), although complying with the rules of the *Vinaya* on this matter (see below), were close to the city and located in inhabited places. Contrary to the common view, Buddhism in Southeast Asia was for a long time of an "urban" nature, which is also true for the so-called forest-dwelling trends.

As for the Phra Singh monastery, we have seen that it was supported by kings, especially by Mueang Kaew who had organised the funeral ceremony for his daughter there. It is not clear, however, to which lineage this monastery was affiliated, as monks of the three *gaṇa*s are said to have participated (Jkm 125). Certainly, its Pali name (Sīhaḷārāma) refers to Laṅkā, but we have seen that it predates the return of the *Sīhaḷabhikkhu*s from the island (*circa* 1430) and the establishment of the Pa Daeng monastery. The name of Phra Singh is a direct consequence of

92 The same can be said for other old Thai-Lao cities, such as Sukhothai, Lamphun, or Luang Prabang.

the installation of the Phra Sihing image (Sīhaḷapaṭima), which is said to have originated in Laṅkā (above). It is thus very likely that Phra Singh monastery was at first connected with the first Sinhalese trend, established by Sumana around 1370. This does not mean, however, that this situation prevailed for later periods. It may also be that "royal" monasteries of inner Chiang Mai, which were sponsored and frequented by kings, were not clearly affiliated to one of the three *gaṇa*s that coexisted in Lan Na, even if rulers could have unofficially supported one of them.

On the other hand, when Sirimaṅgala wrote the Maṅg-d some years later (in 1524), he had obviously moved from Suan Khuan to a place he describes as secluded and at a distance from the city. His insistence in the colophon on his delight at staying in solitude is probably intended to highlight that he conformed to the forest-dwelling tradition. However, this does not necessary mean that Sirimaṅgala was affiliated to the Pa Daeng lineage (*fāy$_1$ pā$_1$*), as some monks of Suan Dok lineage (*fāy$_1$ svan*) also claimed to belong to an *araññavāsī* tradition. Suan Dok was indeed divided in two branches, one — probably the vast majority — gathering the village-dwelling monks (*gāmavāsin*), who were devoted to the study of texts (*ganthadhura*), the other one gathering forest-dwelling monks, who practised introspective meditation (*vipassanādhura*) (Bizot 1993: 50).[93]

But the mention of the distance of one league (*gāvuta*) between Sirimaṅgala's residence and Chiang Mai is significant, as the geographical remoteness from the city of a forest-dwelling monastery has precisely been an issue between monks of both trends. Indeed, this attribute was contested with the monks of Suan Dok monastery by Dhammagambhīra and his companions when they came back from their journey to Laṅkā, arguing that this monastery was too close to the city. Indeed the *Vinaya* states that a monk's residence can be considered a forest dwelling only if it is located at least at 500 bow lengths from a village or a city (*āraññakaṃ nāma senāsanaṃ pañcadhanusatikaṃ pacchimaṃ*) (Vin IV 183). Hence, they established the Pa Daeng monastery one kilometre west of the Suan Dok temple, at a greater distance from the Chiang Mai city walls. The fact is all monasteries

[93] The distinction between *vipassanādhura* and *ganthadhura* is still meaningful today in Thailand and Laos, although the "forest-dwelling" is much more controlled and structured than in the past.

whose affiliation to the *Sīhaḷagaṇa* is definitely ascertained, such as Tapodārāma,[94] Mahābodhārāma, Veḷuvanārāma, and Rattavanamahāvihāra, are situated a certain distance from the historical centre of Chiang Mai.

Another element that supports the hypothesis that Sirimaṅgala was a forest-dwelling monk comes from the 1538 dated manuscript of the *Cakkavāḷadīpanī* (above), stored at the Phra Singh monastery. The word that immediately follows the title says the copy was sponsored — if not during the lifetime of Sirimaṅgala, certainly soon after — by "the lord Mahāsaṅgharāja Candaraṃsī araṅ[ñ]avāsi".

It happens that a high-ranking monk named Candaraṃsī, who came from Khelāṅga-nagara (i.e. Lampang), is listed among the *Sīhaḷabhikkhu*s who are said to have attended the above mentioned ceremony for installing the *sīmā* at the Mahābodhārāma (Wat Chet Yot) in CS 873 (1511) in the presence of King Muang Kaew (Jkm 106–107, see also above p. 87).

The Cakkav-d manuscript from 1538 would thus connect directly at least Sirimaṅgala's writings to the "fay Pa" lineage, and also to the highest religious hierarchy, if not to the king himself. Here we must remember the possibility that the Vess-dīp was preached during the ceremony supported by Mueang Kaew at Rattavanamahāvihāra in 1519, when 300 monks received their ordination. If this is the case, it would add another argument in favour of this hypothesis.

The passage of the *Sāsanavaṃsa* mentioning Sirimaṅgala also supports the idea of his affiliation to the Pa Daeng lineage. As said before, Paññāsāmi states that Sirimaṅgala once resided in a temple whose abbot was an Elder who had visited Laṅkā (*patta-Laṅka-therassa vihāre vasanto Sirimaṅgalo*) (Sās 51). We have seen that several interpretations of this statement are possible. One possibility is that this Elder was the abbot of Suan Khuan at the time Sirimaṅgala resided there writing the Saṅkh-p-ṭ (1520) — though in this case this abbot would not himself have travelled to Laṅkā. This would mean that Suan Khuan monastery was affiliated to the *Sīhaḷagaṇa*. Here its location in the city centre would raise questions concerning the local understanding of the "*araññavāsī*" qualification. Another less likely possibility is that this Elder is Buddhavīra, the master Sirimaṅgala refers to in Maṅg-d. In this case, Sirimaṅgala would have been directly instructed by a *Sīhaḷabhikkhu*. Both hypotheses actually link Sirimaṅgala to the "fay Pa" (*fāy*$_{1}$

[94] Known under its Thai name as Wat Ram Poeng (วัดร่ำเปิง *văt rām*$_{1}$ *pọṅ*).

pā$_1$) lineage. However, the information given by Paññāsāmi about this "Elder who had visited Laṅkā" is too loose to be taken for granted. Furthermore, the fact that it comes very late in the historiography (Sās was written in the 19th century) makes it all the more questionable.

Sirimaṅgala's affiliation to the "fay Pa" is also supported by his biography as recorded by Tho Jum na Bangchang and summarized above. This document states that Sirimaṅgala was once the abbot of Mahābodhārāma (Chet Yot monastery), which was, after the Rattavana-vihāra, the most important monastery of the Sīhaḷagaṇa. However, we have suggested that this is very unlikely considering the time frame, as this would have happened during the same period Sirimaṅgala produced some of his major works, which it is clear he in fact wrote in other places. Furthermore, the same document says that Sirimaṅgala was then appointed as the abbot of Suan Dok monastery (Pupphārāma) and resided there until his death. This is confusing, as this monastery was the very centre of Sumana's lineage (*fāy*$_1$ *svan*), and thus in direct opposition with the *Sīhaḷabhikkhu*s of the Pa Daeng monastery. If regular monks of the "fai Suan" and the "fay Pa" might not have continuously been in open conflict, it is unlikely that the abbot of the Suan Dok monastery would have been subsequently appointed as the abbot of the rival faction. Here again this illustrates how limited the credit is that can be given to this "biography".

Ultimately, what pleads the most in favour of the hypothesis that Sirimaṅgala was a *Sīhaḷabhikkhu* are the four texts of his composition that have reached us. The huge number of quotations and textual references that Sirimaṅgala used to compose them show a high level of literacy and knowledge in Pali scriptures. The variety of the Pali sources on which Sirimaṅgala relies for his writings is astonishing; not only does he extensively quote canonical scriptures and commentaries of all kind, but he also mentions grammatical works, cosmological treatises and later texts, some of which are not widely spread.[95] Interestingly enough, Sirimaṅgala refers to some Pali texts that originated in Burma,

[95] For Vess-dīp, Sirimaṅgala's Pali sources are listed in Supaphan 1990: 400–402 and Khemapālī 2006: 40–41 (see also Yamaka 2011: xii–xvii for further analysis); for Cakkav-d, see Supaphan 405–406; for Saṅkh-p-ṭ, *ibid*. 423. For Maṅg-d, see the second part of the present study (forthcoming).

such as the *Maṇisāramañjusā*,[96] the *Bālāvatāra-ṭīkā*,[97] the *Candasuriya-gatidīpanī*,[98] the *Nepātikapada-vibhatta*,[99] and, above all, the *Sadd-anīti*.[100] Scrutinizing references and quotations in Sirimaṅgala's writings shows that they correspond to Pali texts that were available in 15th-century Burma, as is apparent in the Kalyānī inscription (1476), especially *Vinaya* commentaries and manuals (Sp, Sp-ṭ, Vmv, Vjb, Kkh, Kkh-ṭ, Vin-vn, Vin-vn(p)ṭ, Pālim, etc.) (*cf*. Hinüber 1996: 159–60).

The evident Burmese influence in Sirimaṅgala's works (which is also observable in the writings of other Lan Na scholars of the 15th–16th centuries)[101] leads to questioning the authenticity of records of Lan Na monks having visited Laṅkā. Indeed, one might be surprised that, on the one hand, connections with the island are highlighted in Thai historiography, while, on the other hand, Buddhist cultures that are geographically closer are more discreetly mentioned. Indeed, the presence of a Pali trend of Buddhism that is attested among various populations throughout the region for centuries (Pyu, Mon, Burmese, Khmer, Sukhothai) does not entail the conclusion that the use of Sinhalese Buddhism was a complete innovation at that time. The historiographical tradition of Northern Thailand certainly mentions Mon and Burmese civilizations, but barely assigns to them Lan Na's own affiliation to

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96 The *Maṇisāramañjusā* is an exegesis of the *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī* (Abhidh-s-mhṭ). It was written in 1466 by Ariyavaṃsa, a Burmese monk living on the banks of the Irawaddy (Bode 1909:42).

97 This *ṭīkā* of the *Bālāvatāra* was composed by a monk named Uttama, who was born in Pagan (Burma). He is also the author of the *Lingatthavivarana-ṭīkā* (Bode 1909: 22).

98 An astrological treatise written by a Burmese scholar named Uttamaṅga (Hinüber 1996: 185). Its date of composition is unknown, but it is obviously older than Cakkav-d (1520), which quotes it.

99 *Nepātikapada-vibhatta* seems to be a commentary on the *Abhidhāna-ppadīpikā* (a Pali lexicon written by Moggallāna at Sri Lanka in the 12th century). This text, which is rarely found in publications and catalogues, was written in 1351 by a high-ranking Burmese officer (Bode 1909: 27, 67).

100 A Pali Grammar written in 1154 by Aggavaṃsa of Pagan (Bode 1909: 16).

101 For example, the *Saddabindu-vinicchaya* (*or* °*abhinava-ṭīkā*), written by a scholarly monk originated in Haripuñjaya (*i.e*. Lamphun, Northern Thailand), is a commentary on a Pali Grammar, the *Saddabindu*, which was composed in Pagan in the 13th century. The *Saddabindu* seems to be unknown in Sri Lanka (Lottermoser 1987: 79).

Buddhism. Lower Burma, in particular, is depicted as an intermediary stage towards Laṅkā (Lorrillard 2018: 161), but not really as an important religious centre. Another fact that makes these records suspicious is that Lan Na sources show numerous inconsistencies and contradictions (in particular between records of the supporters of Pa Daeng and those of Suan Dok). Curiously enough, they also echo similar events that are said to have happened in other places at other times. Indeed, analogous events are related for Ava (Burma), where the monk Chapata established the *Sīhaḷasaṃgha* congregation in 1181. The Sukhothai epigraphy also records the establishment in the Mon country (Rāmaññadesa) of an *araññavāsī* lineage by a certain Udumbara-mahā-sāmī who came from Laṅkā (EHS 11.1, Jkm 84), of whom Sumana is said to have been the pupil in Martaban.

Lao chronicles give another example in saying that Buddhism was introduced in Lan Xang kingdom by a religious mission of monks coming from Laṅkā and sent by the king of Mahā-Nagara (Angkor Thom).[102] But it is the Kalyānī inscriptions that presents the most astonishing similarities with the Lan Na accounts: these relate the journey of 22 Peguan monks in Laṅkā (between 1476 and 1479), who subsequently introduced the Sinhalese lineage into Burma through a new procedure for ordinations and the custom of installing *sīmā* stones (*cf.* Taw Sein-Ko 1892: 16-22). While it is true that according to these sources, the Thai mission to Laṅkā (*circa* 1420) predates that from Pegu (1476), it is striking that Burmese and Thai sources use, to a certain extent, the same proper names, toponyms and vocabulary — first and foremost the Kalyānī river on which both group of monks are said to have received a new ordination.[103] In this regard, a comparison between the Kalyānī inscriptions and Jkm remains to be undertaken. One might also notice that references made to Laṅkā in Thai historiography are often legendary. One example is the mention by several chronicles (Jkm, Cdv, Mls)

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[102] Michel Lorrillard (2001) has convincingly shown the artificial character of these events.

[103] On this matter see Cœdès (1925: 32). In addition, it should be noted that Jkm extensively borrows from the *Mahāvaṃsa* (as well as other Sinhalese chronicles), which also relates the history of Buddhism in Sri Lanka from the perspective of reformists of the Mahāvihāra, rivals of the two other monasteries, Abhayagiri and Jetavana. It is difficult not to see the resemblance between the two chronicles, both in terms of events and ideology.

that the Burmese king Anuruddha visited Laṅkā by riding on his horse through the air in order to bring back the *Tipiṭaka* to Pagan, because the local scriptures were not correct (Penth 1994: 2). All this encourages us to see Lan Na historical records with caution, and to consider the possibility that some of their account — especially those dealing with the journey of Thai monks to Laṅkā — is more literary schemes than historical facts.

At a broader level, the idea that Buddhism is a direct borrowing from Laṅkā has certainly political and symbolic issues that remain to be explored, as well as the fact that more often than not Burma is concealed in Thai historiography. Yet the influence of Lower Burma on Sukhothai, and indirectly on Lan Na, is beyond doubt (Lorrillard 2018: 169–70). Monks from 14th-century Lan Na, especially those close to the kings and linked to Suan Dok monastery, were used to going to Pagan and even participated in religious events there (Penth 1994: 72–73). In view of the geographic proximity with Burma, and of the dynamism towards Pali literacy that started in Ava, Martaban, and Pagan prior to the advent of the Lan Na kingdom, it is very likely that Pali scriptures were disseminated from the Irrawaddy valley rather than directly from Sri Lanka. Conversely, evidence shows that several Pali texts written in the 15th and 16th centuries in Lan Na circulated widely in Burma.[104] Furthermore, it has been explained above how the Pali writings that originated in Lan Na borrowed extensively from the Burmese Buddhist corpus. In the same vein, stylistic analysis shows that Buddha statues that were said to have come from Laṅkā, such as the Phra Sihing Buddha image, were very probably crafted in Southeast Asia and based on a Burmese model.

It should also be emphasized that the "Tham" (ธรรม *dharma*) script, used in Northern Thailand and Laos for writing Buddhist texts, is close to the Burmese script while rather different from the Sinhalese script, which would be another indication of the Burmese influence on Lan Na Buddhist literacy. It just so happens that Tham script was precisely widespread from the 15th century, when the *Sīhaḷabhikkhu*s are said — in the Mls — to have returned from Laṅkā with a new script that included 41 consonants (*akkhara*) in order to accurately write Pali (*cf.*

[104] Among Lan Na Pali texts that are found in Burmese manuscript collections, we find the Maṅg-d, the Vess-dīp, the Saṅkh-p and its *ṭīkā*.

Sommai Premchit & Swearer 1977: 87).[105] While it is commonly agreed that Tham script derives directly from the Mon script through the Haripuñjaya civilisation, the important historical gap between the latest Mon written testimonies (very beginning of the 13th century) and the appearance of Tham script (end of the 14th–15th centuries) raises serious questions for this connection. It is more likely that Tham script derives from a Mon-Burmese template that was used in Lower Burma at the turn of 15th century (Lorrillard 2018: 169–71).

As for the Burmese sources, such as *Sāsanavaṃsa* and the *Zimme Yazawin* ("Chronicle of Chiang Mai"), they reflect concerns about Buddhism in Lan Na, and even consistently highlight the influence of Burma in matters of religion. Sās even suggests, although not in a straightforward way, that the development of an important Pali literature in the Yonakaraṭṭha is the result of policies conducted by King Bayinnaung (1551–1581), who sent an Elder named Saddhammacakka-sāmi to Chiang Mai with the task of "purifying the religion" (*sāsanañ ca visodhetuṃ*) in the kingdom (Sās 51). As Burmese seizure of Lan Na is supposed to have happened only in 1558, that is, much later than the composition of the first original Pali texts in Lan Na, one certainly might question this chronology. Still, the discrepancy between Burmese and Thai sources concerning the relationship between the two cultural domains in terms of Buddhism is noteworthy.

Finally, the Sinhalese historiography seems not to have kept traces of these early Thai missions, contrary to the later (18th century) visit of Siamese monks from Ayutthaya, which has been accurately recorded (see Supaphan 1988: 185). In any event, even if we believe in the authenticity of the journey to the island of Laṅkā made by Dhamma-gambhīra and his companions, we cannot help but be astonished by what seems to be a wilful omission of Burmese influence on Lan Na.[106]

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[105] The oldest testimony for Tham script could, however, be earlier, in the form of a short inscription from Sukhothai, dated 1376 (Penth 2004: 59; see also EHS 11). Nevertheless, it must be noted that this inscription is mainly written in Sukhothai script; only the last line, a Pali verse, is written in Tham script. It is thus possible that this last line was added at a later period.

[106] The concealment of the contribution of Burma on Northern Thai culture still prevails today in Thailand.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to give a picture of a major Pali scholar in Lan Na in the particular context of the "golden age" of the kingdom, which lasted barely a century (mid-15th to mid-16th centuries). Scarcity of sources, in addition to the lack of reliability of some of them, makes the task difficult. In particular, the recent writings that are dedicated to Sirimaṅgala offer conjectures rather than certitudes. Luckily, the greater part of Sirimaṅgala's writings have survived. These actually constitute the most reliable information we have about this prolific author.

Sirimaṅgala was probably born within the first decades of the reign of Tilokarāja (1442–1487). His birth name was Uru, and he likely took the name under which he is actually known later on during his long and outstanding religious career. We do not know where he spent the first part of his religious life, as biographical elements available are not reliable. However, one can infer from his honourific titles (*siri*, *mahā-thera*, *ācārya*), and from the very high degree of knowledge of Pali scriptures he demonstrates, that Sirimaṅgala had already spent many years as a Buddhist monk at the time he wrote his main work. What we do know is the place where he was residing while he composed the *Vessantaradīpanī* (1517), the *Cakkavāḷadīpanī* (1520), and the *Saṅkhyā-pakāsaka-ṭīkā* (1520), namely a small monastery commonly known as Suan Khuan located in close proximity to Phra Singh monastery (Sīhaḷārāma) in the centre of the city of Chiang Mai. Suan Khuan monastery was apparently a place where Pali texts were composed and copied. It was, moreover, very likely connected with Sīhaḷārāma in some way: not only does Sirimaṅgala repeatedly refer to this monastery in his colophons, but copies of his writings were ordered and reproduced there during his lifetime, or soon after. It is also probable that Sirimaṅgala participated in ceremonies organized in this monastery.

Sometime between 1520 and 1524, he moved from Suan Khuan to a secluded place situated outside Chiang Mai, a few kilometres (one *gāvuta*) south of the city walls. There he wrote the last of his compositions (as far as we know), the *Maṅgalatthadīpanī*. It is asserted today in Thailand that this place is the actual Tamnak monastery, but there are serious reasons to question this identification. In any case, Tamnak monastery is not the place Sirimaṅgala used to call Suan Khuan in his

colophons, contrary to what the actual name of the monastery (*văt tāṃhnăk svan khvăñ Sirimaṅgalācāry*) implies.

Several elements, such as his religious name and the way he describes himself, suggest that Sirimaṅgala was a high ranking monk, possibly of a noble origin. But one must be more than cautious with the speculations put forward by modern scholars who would like to see him as having been appointed by kings to honourary functions, and even as belonging to the royal lineage. Certainly, his texts were known and widespread among the highest ranks of several cities in Lan Na, and even in other kingdoms, not only during his lifetime but also afterwards. There is even a probability that the Vess-dīp was sponsored by King Mueang Kaew himself, who would have had it recited during an ordination ceremony which took place in 1519 at the Pa Daeng monastery.

Other evidence, such as his proximity to the Sīhaḷārāma, leaves little doubt that Sirimaṅgala was an *araññavāsin* monk, in the sense that term was understood in Lan Na at that time. His alleged connection with an Elder "who had visited Laṅkā", as well as the colophons of manuscript copies of his work, even reflects an association with the *Sīhaḷabhikkhu*s of the Pa Daeng monastery. But the most convincing argument about Sirimaṅgala's affiliation to the *Sīhaḷagaṇa* is his own writings, which fall within the advent of the golden age of Lan Na and the development of Pali literature in the region. In this regard, it remains to be determined to what extent Sirimaṅgala and the other scholars of his time were connected to Burmese trends of Buddhism. Whether or not we believe in the reality of the expedition of the *Sīhaḷabhikkhu*s to Laṅkā, the influence of Burma on their followers is undeniable. Only an in-depth study of the Pali writings that have been produced in Lan Na can shed light on the impact that Burmese or Sinhalese Buddhism had on their authors. To do this, it would be best to start with Sirimaṅgala's own works, as these are for the most part accessible to us.

MAP OF CHIANG MAI

KEY TO MAP OF CHIANG MAI

1. Wat Phra Singh (*Sīhaḷārāma*)
2. Wat Suan Khuan [now disappeared]
3. Wat Chedi Luang (*Mahācetiyārāma*)
4. Wat Umong Thera Chan
5. Wat Buppharam
6. Wat Ku Tao (*Veḷuvanavihāra*)
7. Wat Khuang Singh
8. Wat Chet Yot (*Mahābodhārāma*)
9. Wat Suan Dok (*Pupphārāma*)
10. Wat Kao Tue [subsequently integrated into Wat Suan Dok]
11. Wat Pa Daeng (*Rattavanamahāvihāra*)
12. Wat Umong Suan Puttharam (*Veḷuvanavihāra*, *Veḷukaṭṭhārāma*)
13. Wat Ram Poeng (*Tapodārama*)
14. Wat Tamnak Suan Khuan *Sirimaṅgalācāry*

A. Chang Pueak Gate
B. Chiang Ruak Gate (present-day Tha Phae Gate)
C. Chiang Mai Gate
D. Saen Pung Gate
E. Suan Dok Gate
F. Chang Moi Gate

Old city walls

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