

Monastic Management in Mediaeval Sri Lanka from 1117 to 1798

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1 Introduction

Monasticism is one of the oldest traditions established in Sri Lanka, introduced with the mission of Mahinda Thera during the reign of King Devānampiyatissa in the Anurādhapura period (247–207 BCE) along with the introduction of Buddhism. In Sri Lankan Buddhism, the Saṅgha, or the monastic community, is a leading force. To manage their activities, the Buddha prescribed the Buddhist monastic rules called Vinaya, which contains all necessary rules for the administration of the Saṅgha and the monastic properties. However, in the medieval period, the kings rearranged the rules prescribed for the management of monasteries, creating the Katikāvatas.

The society of the Saṅgha is quite different from the secular society, and therefore, the kings of the medieval period had to enact several rules to maintain the monasteries and their properties. All the Katikāvatas passed from 1117 to 1798 possess regulations related to the administration of monasteries and their properties. These Katikāvatas are considered edicts of the kings and are more potent than the Vinaya.

Due to the socio-economic growth of each period, the monastic management structure of medieval Sri Lanka steadily changed. This research paper aims to examine how these changes occurred and what factors contributed to them. Additionally, it explores how the conventional Vinaya-based monastic management changed due to the aforementioned socio-economic influences. The Katikāvatas will be the primary source for investigating monastic management in the medieval period, and Vinaya Piṭaka, Sri Lankan chronicles, and other associated historical documentary evidence will be extensively utilized and analyzed to elucidate the changes that have occurred in medieval Sri Lankan Buddhism.

2 Remarks on previous studies

Several studies have primarily focused on monastic properties and their management. However, there is a lack of research on how the Katikāvatas administered monasteries and monastic properties. The following are studies on monastic administration in medieval Sri Lanka.

[1] In his work, *Robe and Plough*, Sri Lankan historian, academic, politician, and government minister R. A. L. H. Gunawardana extensively analyzed the relations between medieval Sri Lankan Buddhism and the Sri Lankan economy. He broadly explains the relationship of the bhikkhus with the economic sector. The Sinhalese version of the study was also published in 1993. However, this research does not clarify the relationship between the Katikāvatas and monastic properties.¹

[2] *The Katikāvatas: Laws of the Buddhist Order of Ceylon from the 12th century to the 18th Century* by Dr Nandasena Ratnapala is a notable book where he briefly explains the economic situation

¹Gunawardana 1979: 53–136.

of medieval Sri Lankan Buddhism and its relationship with the *Katikāvatas*. He mainly discusses the *Katikāvatas*.

[3] Kithsiri Malalgoda's book, *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society 1750–1900: A Study of Religious Revival and Change* provides an overview of the Kandyan Saṅgha's condition and evolution. He goes into great length about Sri Lankan Buddhism, sometimes known as "Sinhalese Buddhism." He states that the Saṅgha's schism occurred during the Kandy period. Additionally, he argues that the Saṅgha's possessions were crucial throughout the Kandy period and that, compared to other periods, the Kandyan Saṅgha made extensive use of the property.²

[4] Sinhalese scholar and university professor A. V. Suravīra argues that the *Katikāvatas* was enacted for two main purposes: to control the bhikkhus and to maintain monastic properties. In his book, *Sinhala Katikāvata hā Bhikkṣu Samājaya*, he identifies eight *Katikāvatas* that are all linked to monastic management.³

[5] *Polonnaruva hā Daṁbadeṇi Katikāvata* by Yatadolavatte Dhammavisuddhi explains the economic and political circumstances of the Polonnaruva and Daṁbadeṇiya period and their influence on the Buddhist Saṅgha.

3 The monastic tradition in Sri Lanka

The originator of the monastic tradition in Sri Lanka was Mahinda Thera (270–204 BCE), who officially introduced Buddhism to King Devānampiyatissa and supported him in establishing Buddhism in Sri Lanka. During the first several days, Mahinda Thera and his companions stayed at the elephant's hall until a proper place was arranged.⁴ We can assume this was because the king or government officials was required proper knowledge about building a dwelling suitable for the Saṅgha. The king first arranged a nearby garden for the Saṅgha, such as Nandana Garden and Mahāmegha Park.⁵ After several days, the king built a residence for Mahinda Thera and his companions to stay, called *Kālapāsādapiriveṇa*, which means "the Dark residence."⁶ The *Kālapāsādapiriveṇa*⁷ was recognized as the first residence of the Saṅgha in Sri Lanka. It was built as a temporary accommodation for the Saṅgha.

Mahāmegha Park, later known as the Mahāvihāra, was founded as a complete monastery with all the main features.⁸ Mahinda Thera advised King Devānampiyatissa to build the Mahāvihāra with his experienced knowledge. We can assume that there were no people who had excellent architectural knowledge to build a proper monastery for the Saṅgha except Mahinda Thera.⁹ Therefore, Mahinda Thera planned

²Malalgoda 1979.

³Suravīra 1971: 63–107.

⁴Mhv 14.65–15.2.

⁵Mhv 15.7–9.

⁶Mhv 15.203–204.

⁷The *Kālapāsādapiriveṇa* was built of clay, it was burned to dry with torch-fire. On account of the method for drying it, the walls of the building became dark, and the building came to be called *Kālapāsādapiriveṇa*. Consequently, it was developed as a complete monastery which later became Mahāvihāra (Rāhula 1956: 15–16).

⁸Mahāmegha Park developed as a monastery and named as Mahāvihāraya. Mahāmeghavanārāma is also another term for the Mahāvihāraya. (Mhv 15.213–214.)

⁹Rāhula 1956: 52–53.

the Mahāvihāra's land and what should be built on that land with King Devānampiyatissa.¹⁰

The formal Buddhist monastery, called *ārāma* or *vihāra*, has several features: a dwelling house for the Saṅgha (*āvāsa*), a preaching hall (*dhammasālā*) and, a hall for acts of the Saṅgha (*sīmāmālaka*) or an Uposatha hall, also termed as Uposathāgāra.¹¹ To establish Buddhism in Sri Lanka, the king had to build an Uposatha hall where the bhikkhus held *pabbajjā* ceremony. Mahinda Thera emphasized the importance of an Uposatha hall on several occasions.¹²

We can assume that there was an excellent monastic management system until the end of the Anurādhapura period. At the beginning of the Anurādhapura period, the Mahāvihāra was the base of Sri Lankan Buddhism, and the bhikkhus themselves administrated it. In the early periods of the Mahāvihāra, the bhikkhus engaged only in religious and social matters prescribed in the Vinaya.

After the emergence of the Abhayagiri monastery (during the reign of the king Vaṭṭagāmaṇi-abhaya, 89–77 BCE) and the Jetavana monastery (during the reign of the king Mahāsena, 276–303 CE), the life of the bhikkhus changed, and several changes occurred in monastic tradition as well. To manage such monasteries, the kings of those periods prescribed monastic administration rules. Consequently, an excellent system of monastic administration started in the Anurādhapura period. Still, it collapsed during the reign of the king Vijayabāhu I (1055–1120) because of the invasion of the king Māgha (1186–1255) from the Kalinga dynasty in India.¹³

In the early periods, the Mahāvihāra was a powerful monastery, spreading its influence throughout the country. Its residents were considered the bhikkhus who strictly followed the Vinaya and were known as Theravādin.¹⁴ While the king did not establish rules for the Mahāvihāra, he did set administrative rules for the Abhayagiri and Jetavana monasteries, as seen in famous edicts such as the Jetavanārāma Sanskrit inscription,¹⁵ Anurādhapura slab inscription,¹⁶ and inscriptions of King Mahinda IV.¹⁷

One reason why the kings did not establish rules for the Mahāvihāra bhikkhus was to avoid violating the Vinaya rules. Additionally, in the early days of Buddhism, the Saṅgha held more power than the kings. In some instances, the bhikkhus of the Mahāvihāra even had the power to decide who would be the king.¹⁸

Although Mahā-Tissa Thera did not admit to acting disgracefully, the acceptance of the Abhayagiri monastery as personal property cannot be justified.¹⁹ Later on, both the Abhayagiri and Jetavana

¹⁰Mhv 15.17–172.

¹¹Sīmāmālaka is a space marked off and usually terraced, where the bhikkhus carry out their sacred functions such as Saṅghakammas and other ceremonial events.

¹²Mhv 15.180–185.

¹³Dhammaviśuddhi 1995: 101.

¹⁴Dīp 4.5–6: *pañcasatehi therehi dhammavinayasāṅgaho therehi katasāṅgaho theravādo' ti vuccati*. (“Dhamma and Vinaya were collected by the five hundred Theras. The collection made by the Theras is called Theravāda.”) The tradition of Theriya Nikāya started from the first Buddhist council. The bhikkhus who accepted the teachings of the bhikkhus who took part in the first Buddhist council called Theravādins.

¹⁵EZ I.1–9.

¹⁶EZ I.41–57.

¹⁷EZ I. 230–241, 252–259.

¹⁸Rāhula 1956: 68: “Another incident that shows the powerfulness of the Mahāvihāravāsins is that expulsion of Mahā-Tissa Thera from the Mahāvihāra on account of his acceptance of the Abhayagiri as personal property. We can assume that Mahā-Tissa Thera was a powerful bhikkhu with considerable followers. As a result of the expulsion mentioned above, many bhikkhus with the disciple of Mahā-Tissa Thera called Bahalamahalu-Tissa went to the Abhayagiri.” (Mhv 33.94–97.)

¹⁹Mhv 33.95–96 as regards *kulasaṃsaṭṭhadōsa* (“offense of associating with the laity”). *Gihisaṃsagga* is con-

monasteries accepted Mahāyāna teachings. It can be assumed that the inappropriate conduct of the Abhayagirivāsins led the kings to set new rules for the administration of the monastery, which later became known as the Katikāvatas.

4 The Katikāvatas on monastic management and properties

The Katikāvatas were enacted to manage the bhikkhus' life and monastic properties. In the early periods, the administration of a monastery was entirely in the hands of the Saṅgha and resident bhikkhus could decide how the monastery should be administrated. During this time, monasteries did not have properties to maintain, and monastic management was quite easy. However, as the number of bhikkhus increased, monasteries had to start maintaining properties such as lands and fields to earn incomes and care for many bhikkhus.²⁰

The *Mahāparākramabāhu Katikāvata* (MPK), the *Daṁbadeṇi Katikāvata* (DK), the *Kīrti Śrīrājasinha Katikāvata* I-II, (KRK I-II), and the *Rājādhirājasinha Katikāvata* (RRK) are all considered as royal orders enacted for the monastic management in mediaeval Sri Lanka. These Katikāvatas provide fully legal patronage to manage monasteries and their properties. The important fact is that the Katikāvatas were composed by incorporating the Vinaya under the supervision of the Saṅgha.²¹

Managing monastic properties is one of the primary purposes of the Katikāvatas. By the Polonnaruva and Daṁbadeṇiya periods, the life of the bhikkhus became quite complex with monastic properties. According to the Vinaya of early Buddhism, the articles of the bhikkhus are divided into two categories, namely *gurubhāṇḍa* (heavy articles such as beds and chairs, etc.) and *laghubhāṇḍa* (light articles such as robes, bowl, and other personal articles that were used by a bhikkhu).²² The life of bhikkhus, initially with just a bowl and three pieces of robes, became increasingly complicated.

According to the Vinayaṭṭhaka, the Buddha prescribed rules for the protection of monastery (*ārāma*) and monastic properties (*ārāmatthu*).²³ The Katikāvatas also followed a similar way to secure such monastic properties. We will examine the rules involved in the Katikāvatas.

4.1 Management rules during the Polonnaruva and Daṁbadeṇiya periods

The kings had similar concerns when creating their Katikāvatas. For instance, the Daṁbadeṇi Katikāvata covers many of the same topics as the Mahāparākramabāhu Katikāvata, indicating that the former was influenced by the latter. As a result, there are some similar rules in both Katikāvatas, despite them being from different periods.

Let us examine two management rules for visiting bhikkhus.

Nan gaṇayekin ā saṅga kenekun tamā samīpayehi vasavata hun tāna gana-(te)rungeṇ patak ho

sidered as an inappropriate conduct a bhikkhu should not engage in (A III 116, 258).

²⁰Rāhula 1956: 135.

²¹Ratnapāla 1970: 38 (MPK 4): *Dharmma-vinaya sansandana-koṭṭā ādurol-da no-vihidā kaḷa Katikāvati*. “This Katikāvata was formulated also without deviating from the traditions of the preceptors and after the consultation of Dhamma and Vinaya.” (Cf. Ratnapāla 1970: 129.) See also *Daṁbadeṇi Katikāvata* (Ratnapāla 1970: 44–64), *Kīrti Śrīrājasinha Katikāvata* I (Ratnapāla 1970: 94), *Kīrti Śrīrājasinha Katikāvata* II (Ratnapāla 1970: 109), and *Rājādhirājasinha Katikāvata* (Ratnapāla 1970: 119.)

²²In the Vinayaṭṭhaka, heavy articles are referred to as *avisajjiya*, which means that which is not to be given away (cp. *avebhaṅgiya*). (Vin II 170.15.1–2.)

²³Vin II 170.15.1–2.

*pāvīdi kenekun dāka mut no-vāsāviyā yutu.*²⁴ (MPK 11)

“If a bhikkhu who has come from another Gaṇa (monastery) [wishes to] take up his residence at one’s own Gaṇa, no lodging ought to be given to him without obtaining a document of approval or seeing a bhikkhu [i.e., an emissary] from the Head-thera of the Gaṇa.”

The first rule was created to ensure the monastery’s security by preventing fake bhikkhus, such as *samaṇavesa* (laymen who wear only robes) and heretical bhikkhus, from entering. These heretics joined the Buddhist Saṅgha solely for financial gain after losing their income. This event had a significant impact on the Third Buddhist Council (247 BCE).²⁵ A similar incident occurred during the Polonnaruva period, prompting the king to impose a rule on bhikkhus visiting from other monasteries. These bhikkhus were required to provide proof that they were genuine bhikkhus and residents of a monastery. This proof was regarded as a bhikkhu identification certificate.

Here is another example:

piṭat viyā yutu kaṭayuttekin eḷabena maṅgī pāvijīyan visin pasili-pāl piḷima-ge ā kāpā tanek’hi lāgum-gata yutu. (MPK 14)²⁶

“Those bhikkhu wayfarers who arrive on account of some business should be left outside the monastery. They should take up their lodging at an appropriate place such as a mud hut and an image house.”²⁷

A non-resident bhikkhu should avoid staying at a residential building in another monastery and instead opt for an image house²⁸ or mud hut. The Vinaya also dictates that visiting bhikkhus must perform certain customary practices.²⁹ Dhammaviśuddhi suggests that this rule was established because, during that time, travelling bhikkhus may have been staying in unsuitable locations.³⁰

4.2 The Katikāvata on monastic properties in the Daṁbadeṇiya Period

During the Daṁbadeṇiya period in Sri Lanka, the king imposed a number of rules pertaining to monastic management. In fact, there were almost four times as many rules recorded in the volumes of the Daṁbadeṇiya period compared to those in the volumes of the Polonnaruva period. This disparity is attributed to the bhikkhus’ more disgraceful behaviour during the Daṁbadeṇiya period, as well as the fact that the monasteries had greater wealth and properties at that time.

Let us consider some rules on monastic properties in DK:

Tamā ayati deyaku-du mahallan anu-no-danvā anuṇṭa no-diyā-yutu. (DK 52)³¹

²⁴Ratnapāla 1971: 40.

²⁵Mhv 5.228–229.

²⁶Ratnapāla 1971: 40. also Ratnapāla 1971: 55 for the similar rules in the Daṁbadeṇi Katikāvata.

²⁷Cf. Ratnapāla 1971: 132.

²⁸An image house (Sinhalese: *piḷima gē*; Pāli: *patimāghara*) is constructed in every temple to represent the *Gandhakuṭī* (a Fragrant Chamber, name of a room or hut occupied by the Buddha), which is the private chamber where the Buddha resided. The ceiling adorned with statues and paintings creates a display of the world of gods (*deva*) and hell (*apāya*). Additionally, the Image House has been used as a means of propagating Dhamma to those who were illiterate during early periods.

²⁹How the visitor bhikkhu should stay in another monastery is explained in the Vinaya. See the Vattakkhandhaka in Vin II 207.8–231.14.

³⁰Dhammaviśuddhi 1995: 103.

³¹Ratnapāla 1971: 55.

“Even if the article belongs to oneself, it should not be given away without first informing the elder [bhikkhus].”

Monastic properties are considered common properties that all bhikkhus should utilize. At the beginning of the Buddhist tradition, there is no evidence regarding the personal belongings of a bhikkhu except for their robes and a bowl. However, during the Polonnaruva period, the lives of bhikkhus changed and they were allowed to use several articles in addition to their robes and a bowl. Nevertheless, the bhikkhus had to utilize their personal belongings under the supervision of senior bhikkhus.

Dās-das ket-vat vävu geri-mī ādiyak piḷigannā kala lajjipeśala śikṣākāmī nuvanāti tenak hā kathā-koṭā ē-tān kī-pariddhen piḷigata-yutu. (DK 68)³²

“When accepting male and female slaves, land, tanks, cattle and buffaloes, a well-disciplined, wise, and modest bhikkhu should be [first] consulted, and those [slaves etc.] should be accepted in the manner indicated by him.”

According to early Buddhist teachings, the bhikkhus were prohibited from accepting enslaved people and servants for their service or accepting lands, farms, and animals such as cattle and horses.³³ However, the Katikavatas allowed the bhikkhus to accept such things under the supervision of well-disciplined, wise, and modest bhikkhu. This is one of the instances where the Katikavatas permitted bhikkhus to engage in activities prohibited by the Vinaya. As noted by Suravīra, the monasteries in Sri Lanka during the fifth century were full of real estate and required additional workers to maintain them. In some cases, enslaved people made significant profits in the monasteries, which was justified by the society of the time.³⁴ This is in contrast to the traditional view found in the *Samantapāsādikā*, which prohibits granting *pabbajjā* to enslaved people offered by kings for the service of a monastery.³⁵

The Katikāvata implies that the monasteries of that period had permission to accept servants under certain regulations.

Vaṭavil ādi kas-lō-vaṭa lōha bhāṇḍa sāṅghika-koṭā vihārayē tabā anubhava karat misa yana-ena tenaṭa genā-gos paribhoga no-kaṭa-yutu. (DK 74)³⁶

“Copper, metal, and round metal ware such as brass spittoons should be kept in the monastery and used as the common property of the Saṅgha; but they should not be carried to different places visited by him and should not used [them at places visited by himself].”

The articles of a monastery should only be used within the confines of that particular monastery. Monasteries were permitted to accept things independently, and the use of articles from one monastery by bhikkhus in another monastery is prohibited by the Vinaya.³⁷ The king also prescribed a similar rule for bhikkhus to secure the individual possessions of specific monasteries. Each monastery was equipped with income-generating property, and they were encouraged to use that income to maintain the monastery.

³²Ratnapāla 1971: 58.

³³MN I 345.31–35: *Dāsīdāsapaṭiggahaṇā paṭivirato hoti [...] Hatthigavāssa-vaḷavāpaṭiggahaṇā paṭivirato hoti. Khetvatthupaṭiggahaṇā paṭivirato hoti.* (“[A bhikkhu] refrains from accepting female-slaves, male-slaves, elephant, cattle, horse, field, and farm.”)

³⁴Suravīra 1971: 15.

³⁵Sp V 1001.11–13: *Vihāresu rājūhi ārāmikadāsā nāma dinnā honti, the pi pabbājetum na vaṭṭati.* (“Monastic slaves who were offered to a monastery by the kings, are not appropriate to be granted *pabbajjā*.”)

³⁶Ratnapāla 1971: 58.

³⁷Vin III 266.30.2: *Saṅghassa pariṇataṇ aññasaṅghassa vā cetiyassa vā pariṇāmeti, āpatti dukkaṭassa.* (“The things of the Saṅgha turning to use for another Saṅgha or a cetiya is a dukkaṭa offence.”)

*Hudaḷu vā porō ādiya pudgalika koṭṭa parihaṇaya no-kaṭa yutu. Dōli ādī yānayan pudgalika-koṭṭa anubhava no-kaṭa yutu. (DK 76)*³⁸

“Axes, mamoties (a hoe with a sharp blade), adzes, and other tools should not be used by a bhikkhu after he has made them his personal property. [Similarly,] carriages such as palanquins should not be utilized once they have been converted into personal possessions.”

According to the Vinaya, all metal and copper equipment and tools used in agriculture are considered personal items and should be used sparingly.³⁹ However, the Katikāvata divides these items into two categories based on their usage. Copper and metal equipment can be utilized as common property within the monastery, as can other equipment such as axes, mamoties,⁴⁰ adzes, and means of transportation. However, it is not explained whether the equipment can only be utilized inside or outside the monastery.

*Yam tenaka lāgum-geyak karavā iṅdut-hot vihāra parikṣepaya hā grāma parikṣepaya madhyayehi yaṭat piriseyin de-kaṇḍasanak pamaṇa avasara hārā karavāgenā visiyā yutu. Esē vasana kalat ātulehi piṭata siṭiyavun ovunovun kalat ātulehi piṭata siṭiyavun ovunovun no-penena-sē ē ē tenin mādā-genā vādā no-āki-sē ghana-koṭṭa us-no-vā parikṣepa karavā no-vēlehi doraṭuven vaḍanā kenakun terun vahansē dakvā misa no-vadanā les kaṭa yutu. (DK 84)*⁴¹

“If [a bhikkhu] causes the construction of a dwelling house and lives there, [he] should do so after constructing it with at least a distance of two *kaṇḍasanas* between the boundary of the dwelling house and the boundary of the village. Even when living in this manner, [he] should cause the construction of a thick, but the not too high, wall around it, which makes it impossible for those outside to see those inside and vice versa; and which also makes it impossible [for anyone] to jump over it at different places. It should be made so that a person entering the precincts through the gate cannot do so without [first] being observed by the bhikkhu living there.”⁴²

Several rules were established regarding the construction of monastic buildings. In addition to the Buddha’s advice to build walls around the land of the monastery to protect the privacy of the bhikkhus,⁴³ the Katikāvata added three points related to monastic security: (1) building the monastery within the audible range near the village, (2) covering the monastery with a wall to prevent escape, and (3) requiring individuals to inform the responsible bhikkhu in the monastery before entering. These rules indicate the increasing complexity of bhikkhus’ lives in relation to their property and personal belongings during the Daṁbadeṇiya period. To manage these complexities, the Daṁbadeṇi Katikāvata was enacted.

Thus, the rules prescribed in the Daṁbadeṇiya period, as shown above, indicate that the life of the

³⁸Ratnapāla 1971: 58.

³⁹Vin II 170.15.1–2: *lohakumbhī lohabhāṇakaṃ lohavārako lohakaṭāhaṃ vāsī pharasu kuṭhārī kuddālo nikhādanam, idaṃ catuttam avissajjīyam na vissajjetabbaṃ saṃghena vā gaṇena vā puggalena vā, vissajjitam pi avissajjitam hoti, yo vissajjeyya āpatti thullaccayassa.* (“A copper pot, a copper box, a copper jar, a copper vessel, an adze, a hatchet, an axe, a hoe, a spade. This is the fourth thing that should not be disposed of by a Saṅgha or by a group or by an individual; even if disposed of, it is not (really) disposed of. Whoever should dispose of it, there is a grave offence.”) Cf. Horner 1963: 239.

⁴⁰A kind of hoe used for digging in India and Sri Lanka, especially in farming.

⁴¹Ratnapāla 1971: 58.

⁴²Ratnapāla 1971: 155-156.

⁴³Vin II 152.3.2–3: *Tena kho pana samayena vihārā ālakamandā honti. Bhikkhū hiriyanti nipajjitum.* (“At that time, the dwellings had open views. The bhikkhus felt ashamed to lie down.”) Vin II 153.7–8: *anujānāmi bhikkhave parikkhipitum tayo pākāre iṭṭhakāpākāraṃ silāpākāraṃ dārupākāraṃ ti.* (“Bhikkhus, I allow [all of] you to fence [the monastery] with three kinds of walls, [namely] a burnt brick-wall, a stony wall, and a woody wall.”)

bhikkhus became complicated with property and personal belongings. To manage them properly, the *Dāmbadeṇi Katikāvata* was enacted.

4.3 The Katikāvatas on monastic properties in the Kandy period (1597–1798)

The Kandy period marks the end of medieval Sri Lanka, during which the previous monarchy in Sri Lanka was established. During this period, the lives of the bhikkhus underwent significant changes. As the political participation of the bhikkhus increased, so did their power, even extending into the royal palace. In some cases, monks even performed duties that were traditionally carried out by the laity.⁴⁴ It is possible that the king offered monastic lands to win the hearts of the bhikkhus, and in turn, they maintained their influence over the community. The king utilized this approach to control the community.

The management of properties and the use of personal belongings became significant aspects of the monastic tradition during this period. The Katikāvatas of the Kandy period illustrate the effort put into managing monasteries and monastic properties at that time. The *Kirti Sī Rājasinha Katikāvata I* and *II* are the main Katikāvatas enacted during this period."

4.3.1 KRK I: Katikāvata along with the rules of the Vinaya

There is evidence that suggests that the laity had an impact on the lives of the bhikkhus, which led to an increase in their worldliness. In order to prevent excessive relationships between the bhikkhus and the laity, the Buddha advised them to only treat their parents, as seen in the Vinaya.⁴⁵ However, according to the *Samantapāsādikā*, the bhikkhus are allowed to take care of ten different types of relatives, in addition to their parents.⁴⁶

Drawing from the principles found in the Vinayaṭṭaka and the *Samantapāsādikā*, the king ordered the bhikkhus to care for their parents in every way possible, as well as for their ten types of relatives in emergency situations and for any necessary needs, such as medicinal requirements. KRK I states the following:

Pāvīdi tān visin de-mavu-piyaṅṭa upakāra kirīma anu-dat bāvin patā siṭit-nam tamā nisā lada kāpa pratyayen saṅgraha kirīmat [...] kāpa akāpa deyin nā-no-nān daham varadavā saṅgraha-kirīmen saddhādeyya vinipāta no-kaṭa-yutu. (KRK I 103)⁴⁷

“Bhikkhus are approved of helping their parents. Therefore, if their [parents] are hoping for help, they should help with the proper requisites that they [namely, the bhikkhus] have received. [...] They should not help relatives or non-relatives, contrary to the Dhamma, with proper or improper articles.”

⁴⁴Malalgoda 1976: 50.

⁴⁵Vin I 297.22.1–298.23.1: *Anujānāmi bhikkhave mātāpitunnaṃ dātum*. (“Bhikkhus, I allow [all of] you to give parents [alms-food received by you].”)

⁴⁶Ten kinds of relatives are described as follows. Sp II 470.1.3: *jeṭṭhabhātu kaṇiṭṭhabhātu jeṭṭhabhaginiyā kaṇiṭṭhabhaginiyā cūlamātuyā mahāmātuyā cūlapituno mahāpituno pitucchāya mātuḷassā ’ti*. (“Elder brother, younger brother, elder sister, younger sister, younger sister of one’s mother or wife of one’s father’s younger brother, elder sister of one’s mother or wife of one’s father’s elder brother, younger brother of one’s father or husband of one’s mother’s younger sister, elder brother of one’s father or husband of one’s mother’s elder sister, father’s sisters, and mother’s brothers.”)

⁴⁷Ratnapāla 1971: 99.

4.3.2 KRK I: How to manage the Bhikkhus' belongings

KRK I provides instructions on how to manage the belongings of elder bhikkhus. The following two rules provide more detailed guidance on this matter than the Vinaya, which only has regulations regarding bowls and robes.⁴⁸ Let us consider one particular instruction in KRK I, which reads as follows:

Pāvīdi tñ ayati pot-pat sivuru-pirikara ādi-vū deya ē ē ārāvala tabā śiṣya-paramparāvaṭa ayati-vīmen idiri Śāsanayaṭa-ma upakāra vana lesa kirīma misa uvadurak nātiva nā no-nā kenekungē gamvala tabā ovunut ē pratyayat no-nāsiya-yutu. (KRK 104)⁴⁹

“Other than acting in a manner that would contribute to the future benefits of Buddhism by saving items such as books, documents, robes, and other requisites belonging to the bhikkhus in their respective monasteries, and by ensuring the inheritance of these requisites by the lineage of pupils, the bhikkhus should not keep these requisites in the villages of their relatives or non-relatives, as doing so would destroy not only the requisites but also their own merits.”

The law of succession, known as (*paramparā nītiya*), remains a significant rule used today to manage monastic properties. All items belonging to a bhikkhu are considered communal property of the Saṅgha. During the Kandy period, the lives of bhikkhus underwent significant changes. Monastic properties were seen as something that should be passed down from generation to generation. As a result, the king made the properties of monasteries and bhikkhus the properties of their successors.

Here is another example:

Pāvīdi tñ ayati pot-pat sivuru-pirikara ādisiyalla gihi-vīmenda kāla-kriyā-kirīmenda saṅgha santaka -vana bāvin sivuru hāra gihi bhāvayaṭa pāmiṇena tñ visin pāvīdi-va siṭa lat kisivak gena no-yā-yutu. (KRK 105)⁵⁰

“All articles used by a bhikkhu, such as books, documents, robes, and other requisites, became the property of the Saṅgha after the bhikkhu’s death or departure from the priesthood. Therefore, a bhikkhu who gives up their robes should not take anything they had received during their time as a bhikkhu.”

When a bhikkhu passes away, all items they used during their lives belong to the Saṅgha. The king followed the rules of the Vinaya as his guide and strengthened the law by adding an additional point: when a bhikkhu leaves the priesthood, they lose the right to use any items they earned during their time as a bhikkhu.

Additionally, as the following rule suggests, the concept of membership in the monastery emerged during this period.

Ē ē vihāra-lābha-gam ē ē vihāravala kaṭayutu pirimasā ehi-ma hiṇḍa prayojana viṇḍima misa amutu tānakaṭa genavā no-gata-yutu. (KRK 107)⁵¹

“The profit gained from the respective villages (*vihāra-lābha-gam*) should be kept and utilized in the particular monasteries where a bhikkhu is staying. However, the bhikkhu should not use it by taking it to another place.”

⁴⁸Vin I 303.27.1–2: *bhikkhussa bhikkhave kālaṃ kate saṅgho sāmī pattacīvare.* (“O bhikkhus, the Saṅgha is the owner of the bowl and the robe after the death of a bhikkhu.”)

⁴⁹Ratnapāla 1971: 99.

⁵⁰Ratnapāla 1971: 99.

⁵¹Ratnapāla 1971: 99.

The income of a monastery should only be used for that specific monastery, and the bhikkhus are not permitted to transfer the monastery's income, even if they move from one monastery to another. This rule designates monastic income as monastic property and restricts the use of that income at the discretion of the resident bhikkhu. The king also prioritized the protection of monastic lands as it was state property before being offered to the bhikkhus.

The term *lābha-gam* refers to a set of lands that have been donated for the monastery's upkeep. The oldest evidence of land offerings to monasteries dates back to the Anurādhapura period, between 119 and 109 BCE, and comes from King Lajjitissa. Giving land to monasteries has been a tradition for centuries. By the Kandy period, it had reportedly occurred on a large scale, and the king had to govern and preserve the management of such regions.

4.3.3 KRK II: Personal possessions of the Bhikkhu

By the Kandy period, monasteries had become significantly more complex in terms of their revenue and properties. It became increasingly difficult to manage wealthy monasteries in the same way as traditional monasteries. To effectively manage such monasteries, the king advised the bhikkhus to select a well-educated and impartial bhikkhu as the head of each monastery.

Let us consider the following examples:

*Budun satu vāḍi pratyaya upadanā vihāragamvalaṭa ajjipeśala śikṣākāmi-vū agatigāmi no-vana dasa-vayas hō atireka dasa-vayas hō pīruṇu lābha-garuka no-vana tānak-ma Sthavira-padavi asvā siṭṭiṇṭa sālāsviya-yutu. (KRK II 6)*⁵²

“In those villages belonging to the Vihāra where requisites are produced plentifully, a well-disciplined, modest, and virtuous bhikkhu who is not attached to the gains and who has completed ten or more years in age should be invested with the *sthavira* title and caused to take residence.”

*Vihārayaṭat tamunnānsēṭat sivu-pasaya piṇisaya-yi kiyā gam-bim ādi kāpa-pratyayak duna-hot ehi sammukhībhūta bhikṣūn gaṇanaṭa vaḍā de-koṭasak hā bhikṣūn gaṇanaṭa eka koṭasak-da bedā eyin eka koṭasak vihārayaṭa dī tamāṭa pudgalika koṭasak-da saṅgin koṭasak-da gena sesu koṭasa bhikṣu-saṅghayāṭa diya-yutu. (KRK II 13)*⁵³

“When the proper requisites, such as villages and lands, are presented [by the laymen] and they say, ‘I give these villages, lands, and so forth to the monastery and you’, then the requisites thus presented should be divided into several portions equal to the number of bhikkhus assembled plus two. One portion from these portions should be given to the monastery, two portions should be kept for oneself including the portion that one receives personally, and the rest of the portions should be given to the Saṅgha.”

The quoted passages above explain the correct way to distribute lands and other items received by a bhikkhu. The crucial point here is the use of personal belongings. The Buddha did not permit bhikkhus to have a personal portion of what they received. However, the Katikāvatas allowed bhikkhus to keep a bit for personal use from what they received. This was a significant change in the lives of bhikkhus during the medieval period.

In Buddhism, it is customary to provide anything given to a bhikkhu or Saṅgha for everyday use. However, the Katikāvata approved of personal usage, as they were offered according to the king's personal

⁵²Ratnapāla 1971: 109.

⁵³Ratnapāla 1971: 110.

will. At that time, the bhikkhus belonged to the aristocracy and held a persuasive leadership position. This was one of the key reasons the king was tempted to make personal offerings. The bhikkhus had the authority to make significant decisions on the state's administration. It can be assumed that the bhikkhus accepted such personal offerings to maintain a strong relationship between the king and the Bhikkhu Saṅgha.

Although accepting such offerings went against Vinaya's rules, the bhikkhus accepted them because of the king's offerings, and there was no public opposition to state-sponsored offerings. Accepting personal offerings enhances the worldliness of the bhikkhus. However, it was not only because of the worldliness of the bhikkhus but also because the monastic administration required sufficient income. On the other hand, the bhikkhus and the laity came to monastic educational institutions because the monastic education centres were of high quality during that period. Consequently, by the Kandy period, it became common for one or two resident bhikkhus to manage the monastery lands personally.⁵⁴

5 Conclusion

The above analysis has shed light on the management of Buddhist monasteries in Sri Lanka, which followed the Katikāvatas rules from the Polonnaruva to the Kandy periods. These rules were enacted as royal edicts by the kings, who sought to protect monastic properties from misuse, alienation, and destruction. Over time, as the properties of the monasteries grew more complex, the rules of the Katikāvatas evolved to reflect the changing needs of monastic management. Despite this complexity, the duty of maintaining monasteries remained a significant obligation of the kings, who took it upon themselves to fulfill this duty. Overall, the rules of the Katikāvatas highlight the importance of devout management in the proper functioning of Buddhist monasteries and their ongoing significance in Sri Lankan society.

Abbreviations and Literature

DK: Daṁbadeṇi Katikāvata

EZ: Epigraphia Zeylanica

KRK: Kīrti-srī Rārajasinha Katikāvata

MPK: Mahā Parākramabāhu Katikāvata

RRK: Rājādhi Rājasinha Katikāvata

(1) Pāli

The system of abbreviations of Pāli texts follows *A Critical Pali Dictionary*.

(2) Sinhalese

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⁵⁴Malalgoda 1976: 52.

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(3) English

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スリランカ中世（1117年～1798年）における僧院管理について

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スリランカ仏教の僧伽は、元々初期仏教で定められた戒律によって僧院の管理を行っており、財産などを保有していなかった。しかし、中世になると社会や経済の変化に伴い、僧院の管理の仕方が大幅に変更された。仏教の保護に協力していた国王が僧院管理や僧伽の安全のために、様々なカティカーワタと呼ばれる条例を制定した。

ポロンナルワ時代（1017–1232）からキャンディー時代（1590/92–1815）までに制定されたカティカーワタには、僧院の財産管理などに関する多くの規則が見られる。キャンディー時代になると比丘の私有財産の所有についての規則や、寺院が保持する資産を問題なく適切に管理するための規則が定められた。これは初期仏教の戒律には存在しない規則であった。特に比丘の私有財産についての規則は、伝統的な戒律に反すとも受け取られかねない問題を孕んでいる。時代の変化に伴い、比丘の生活にも変化が生じたが、国王が規則を定めることによって彼らが重大な戒律違反にならないよう歯止めをかけたと理解すべきであろう。カティカーワタは国王が定めた規則ではあるが、初期仏教の戒律に基づいて作成されている。僧院の財産を誤用、紛失、破壊等から守り、時代に即した適切な方法を提案しているといえる。

本論文では、スリランカの僧院管理が社会的・経済的成長によってどのように変わったか、そして、その変化に対応するためにカティカーワタで定められる規則は初期仏教の戒律とどのように両立するのかを明らかにする。