

## **Society Expose from similes of Saddharmaratnāvalī**

Ven. Pitathalawe Wimalasara Thero  
Assistant Lecturer, Department of Sinhala, University of Peradeniya  
wimsarap@gmail.com

Ven. Aparekke Sirisudhamma Thero  
Assistant Lecturer, Department of Sinhala, University of Peradeniya  
sudhaaparekke@gmail.com

The Saddharmaratnāvalī written by venerable Dharmasena is one of finest treatise in the Sinhalese classical prose history. A recurring feature in the style of writing is the use of similes to describe the folk life-style in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and by observing the language one can gather a great deal of information about the ways and life of the contemporary society of that time. The aim of this research is to discover the life style of the people in 13<sup>th</sup> century, such as how they lived and the objects and tools that were used in their day to day work. The Saddharmaratnāvalī is one of the most popular books among the folk in Sinhalese classical prose history which originated from the Amāvatura. A profound language style was used by the Sinhalese classical authors at the very beginning of history and Dharmapradipīkāva, Amāvatura, Butsarāṇa, Pūjāvaliya are some of examples of this. Unlike these authors, Venerable Dharmasena wanted to address the uneducated people. Therefore, the author used a simple language style with colloquialism and many similes to accomplish that purpose. Subject of comparison (upameya) and object of comparison (Upamanaya) are the two main parts of a simile. Venerable Dharmasena extracts object of comparisons from various things that are familiar to the lives of these folk. When examining these similes, facts about their cast system, livelihood, custom and taboos, faith and beliefs, arts and science, jewelries, relationships, food, equipment and more of contemporary society can be observed, thus revealing many undiscovered facts that related to the ways of life of the Sinhalese folk of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Key words: Classical Sinhalese prose, Saddharmaranawaliya, Simile, Sinhalese society of 13<sup>th</sup> century.