

**A study of the poetry in the unpublished manuscripts of Venerable Mihiripanne
Dhammarathana**

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During the 18th and 19th centuries, particularly during the period of British imperialism there were political, economical, social and cultural changes in Sri Lanka. This period of time also saw a great variety of literary texts being produced in the country. There is evidence that educated Buddhist monks were engaged in writing various genres of literature as well as other texts in Sinhala, Pali and Sanskrit. These texts were protected and conserved in libraries set up in Buddhist temples. The Ambarukkaramaya library which was situated in Balapitiya in the southern province is such an example. The literature produced during this time was classified according to the geographical locations of the writer. As several intellectuals were born in the vicinity of the town of Matara, their writing was referred to as Matara Sahitya. The focus of this study is an unpublished manuscript of erotic poetry, which, through a comparison of the style with his published works, can be concluded to be authored by Venerable Mihiripanne Dhammarathana.

Key words: Ven: Mihiripanne Dhammarathana, unpublished manuscript, 18th and 19th centuries, erotic poetry, Sinhala literature, British imperialism.