

# The Value of the Pāli Commentaries as Research Material

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1. Introduction: the Indic and Early Buddhistic “older stratum” and the Sri Lankan and Theravādic “newer stratum” in the Pāli Commentaries

The Pāli Commentaries (Aṭṭhakathās)<sup>1)</sup> were composed by the hands of Buddhaghosa and other commentators in Sri Lanka in the fifth and sixth centuries mainly on the basis of the so-called ‘lost Sihaḷaṭṭhakathā literature’ or ‘Sihaḷa Sources’, etc. Therefore these texts should be regarded as one category of work. From this standpoint, I will discuss, in the present article, the various values of the Commentaries as research material.

Before entering into the investigation on these values, however, we must pay our first attention to the following two fundamental strata of the texts as a remarkable textual characteristic which can be considered from historical and geographical point of view. These

are the 'Indic older elements' and the 'Sri Lankan newer elements'. The former makes a stratum closely related to the Tipiṭaka, viz. the Vinayaṭiṭaka and Suttaṭiṭaka which are, roughly speaking, the material of Early Buddhism, and the Abhidhammaṭiṭaka connected to the early period of Theravāda Buddhism in India. The latter makes another stratum directly related to a later material of Sri Lankan Theravādins, which were produced and handed down chiefly at the Mahāvihāra in Anurādhapura, the ancient capital of that country. The present Pāli Commentaries basically consist of the above two strata.

To state concretely, the Indic older features of them can abundantly be recognized in the following three kinds of evidence :

- 1) Quotations from and references to the texts originated in India, i. e. the Tipiṭaka and the three semicanonical works, the *Milindapañha*, *Nettipakaraṇa* and *Petakopadesa*.
- 2) Appearance of ancient Indian persons such as the Buddha himself, his disciples and followers, other contemporaries of the Buddha, viz. certain kings, their ministers and retainers and non-Buddhists in general, and also those who belonged to the successive periods to that of the Buddha including King Asoka and his contemporaries.
- 3) Occurrence of the names of kingdoms, cities, towns, villages, rivers, mountains and other places in ancient India.

In this connection, the Indians appearing in the Aṭṭhakathās seem to be principally limited to those who lived in or before the reign of King Asoka, although this statement should be strictly attested by exhaustive examination. In any case, the above is, in a word, an aspect of the Pāli Commentaries as material for the study on India.

While on the other hand, the Sri Lankan newer features of the texts can be looked on from the following three kinds of evidence :

- 1) Quotations from and references to the so-called Sihaḷaṭṭhakathā literature, at least many parts of which were originated in Sri Lanka

and preserved at the Mahāvihāra.

2) Appearance of numerous ancient Sri Lankan persons such as Buddhist monks, nuns, believers, kings, ministers, retainers and so on.

3) Occurrence of the names of cities, areas, villages, rivers, mountains, monasteries, topes, and others in Sri Lanka.

This is, so to speak, an aspect of the texts as material for the study on Sri Lanka. Incidentally, all the datable Sri Lankans appearing in the Commentaries are restricted, with a very few exceptions, to those who were active in the period between the reign of King Devānampiyatissa (reigning: B. C. 250-210)<sup>2)</sup>, contemporary of King Asoka and that of King Vasabha (A. D. 65-109)<sup>3)</sup>.

In any circumstances, the present Commentaries are the works to be constituted as a complete whole by the older stratum which is connected to Early Buddhism in India and overlapped with the Tipiṭaka, and the newer stratum which is connected to Theravāda Buddhism in Sri Lanka and developed into such later Pāli texts as Ṭikas.

Because of its textual nature explained above, the Aṭṭhakathā literature has material values for miscellaneous researches on philology, linguistics, Buddhist doctrine and thought, history, geography, sociology and culture concerning ancient India as well as ancient Sri Lanka. Such being the case, I will argue, in the next section onward, the values and usefulness of the Aṭṭhakathās to the studies on the both countries.

## 2. Value for Philological Studies and Translation

It goes without saying that the Aṭṭhakathās are originally the commentaries upon the Tipiṭaka. Therefore they generally give, in a passage, commented words and phrases from the Tipiṭaka at first and then various equivalents, comments and explanations upon them, and also they occasionally have certain related stories and examples, etc. In this respect, it can be said that the Aṭṭhakathās would be a combination of the Tipiṭaka as the commented text and the Aṭṭhakathā

itself as its commentary. Accordingly, the passages from the Tipiṭaka appearing in the Aṭṭhakathās can always be compared with their originals in the Tipiṭaka itself, and these two corresponding parts should be examined through comparison. The Aṭṭhakathā texts are thus very useful to ‘text critique’ for the Tipiṭaka.

This ‘text critique’ for the Tipiṭaka, however, should not be confined to the comparison of parallel passages between the Tipiṭaka and Aṭṭhakathā. In case that certain particular passages or parts cannot be found in the corresponding Aṭṭhakathā as the object of commentation, the text critique is also needed. For instance, the present *Buddhavamsaṭṭhakathā* lacks in commentation upon Chapter 27 Pikiṇṇakakathā and Chapter 28 Dhātubhājanīyakathā, the last two chapters of the *Buddhavamsa*. In this case, it is questioned whether or not these two chapters might have been added after the *Buddhavamsaṭṭhakathā* (more probably its old source commentary in Sinhalese) was composed. On the other hand, there is another possibility that the present text happened to lose its final two chapters for some reason or other. Then the situation would not be simple enough to attain a clear conclusion. Be the matter what it may, such philological differences between original texts and their commentaries cause the necessity of text critique. I take up one more example: the Mahāvagga in the *Suttanipātaṭṭhakathā*<sup>4)</sup> gives a statement that throws a doubt as to the number of verse of the *Kokāliyasutta* (Sn III, 10), the commented sutta by the Aṭṭhakathā. That is to say, the number of the verse in the present text of this sutta is twenty-two, whereas according to the above statement in the commentary, the Mahā-aṭṭhakathā, one of the most important source-material commented upon only twenty verses of the sutta lacking in the last couple of verses. This statement raises a question that these two verses might have been a later addition.<sup>5)</sup>

In this way, various kinds of text critique upon the texts of the Tipiṭaka are made possible by examining their parallel passages and portions in the corresponding commentaries. The text critique on

the Pāli Canon was hitherto offered in comparison with its Chinese version for the purpose of confirming or revising passages, or judging textual strata, etc. Yet if we make use of the Aṭṭhakathā texts as another material for this study, then a new method of research would be established. This method would be specifically necessary and effective in case of some Pāli texts which have no translations in Chinese, etc.

I will next consider the value of the Aṭṭhakathās for translation of the Tipiṭaka. The doctrinal interpretations indicated in the Commentaries would be those of a Hīnayāna Sect and they might have more or less been changed into Theravādic transfiguration. I think, however, that they still keep the position of our precious academic heritage for the sake of better understandings of the doctrine and thought of Early Buddhism through accurate interpretation of words and phrases in the Tipiṭaka, especially in the Vinayaṭiṭaka and Suttaṭiṭaka into modern languages. In particular, when we translate the words and phrases of the Canon in Pāli as an old Indian language into any modern non-Indian language, we should take care of the gaps of meaning existing between the two. In order to bridge the gaps, the Aṭṭhakathās are actually very useful. However, it is not reasonable in this case to wholly follow all the interpretations of the words and phrases given in the Aṭṭhakathā texts. When we could find, from a proper and broad point of view, any Theravādic later leanings as to their interpretations and any mistakes and misunderstandings, we should criticise them. Then we are able to make the best use of the Commentaries. In any circumstances, I do not think it possible for us to attempt suitable translation of the Early Buddhist texts without regard for the Aṭṭhakathās which fully contain enormous and detailed expositions and interpretations shown by ancient Indians and Sri Lankans whose religious and cultural positions to the Buddha were much closer beyond comparison than our position today. As a typical example for good translation explained above, the *Elder's Verses* I & II, the English translation of the

*Theragāthā* and *Therīgāthā* made by Mr. K. R. Norman can be taken up.<sup>6)</sup> He tried to gain better understandings on the important and difficult words and phrases of the original texts through the commentation in their Aṭṭhakathās. The above is a discussion of the value of the Commentaries as a material for translation of the Tipiṭaka.

### 3. Value for Doctrinal and Philosophical Studies

Since the Aṭṭhakathā texts are a Buddhist literature, the most essential study regarding these texts would be the elucidation on Buddhist doctrine and thought or religious realities of Buddhism described in them. It can be stated that the critical editions of original texts, their translations into modern languages and diverse philological investigations are all the fundamental research which is regarded, in a sense, as precondition and means for the sake of proper understanding of the contents through accurate reading of the originals. In this meaning, the value of the Aṭṭhakathās for doctrinal and philosophical studies discussed in this section would be the most important among many values of them. If the Aṭṭhakathās have been composed and preserved by the Mahāvihāra fraternity of the Southern Theravāda Buddhism at all, the major doctrine and thought expressed in them ought to be those of the above fraternity. In addition to such major doctrine and thought, however, there are recorded in these texts those of other schools and fraternities. These non-Mahāvihāra views are quoted as anonymous views which are in fact expressed either as 'Some' or 'Others' (Aññe, Apare, Itare, Ekacce, Eke, Keci, Pare, Ye.....te, etc. : generally in the nominative, plural, masculine form),<sup>7)</sup> or as 'Sophists' (Vitaṇḍavādins).<sup>8)</sup> These views are denied or criticised as the wrong and heterodox views judged from the Mahāvihāra standpoint, or are noted as supplemental and referential views to the orthodox views of the Mahāvihāra fraternity. The majority of these unnamed persons have been unable to be identified as yet by any means, but some of them have fortu-

nately been identified through the comments upon them in the *Ṭikās* of the *Aṭṭhakathās*. Among these identifiable names a great many are the *Abhayagirivāsins* (or *Uttaravihāravāsins*) and the *Sārasamāsa-ācariyas* (quite probably *Dakkhiṇagirivāsins*), the two rival fraternities to the *Mahāvihāravāsins* in ancient Sri Lanka,<sup>9)</sup> and others are the *Mahāsaṅghikas*, *Andhakas*, *Viññānavādins*, etc.

These doctrine and thought of the *Mahāvihāravāsins* and the non-*Mahāvihāravāsins* derived directly or indirectly from the teaching of the Buddha which can be gathered from the *Vinaya-piṭaka* and *Suttapiṭaka*. His teaching is of course the most essential, on the basis of which the doctrine and thought of the so-called Early Buddhism were formed. These further developed into the two main traditions of Buddhism, viz. the Southern and the Northern Buddhism. The Pāli Commentaries keep a high value as a material for the research on the history of Buddhist doctrine and thought, especially on the comparison between the above two traditions, by which reason their importance should be fully realised. The Commentaries are one of the representative materials of the Southern Theravādins, while as the Northern material of the Hīnayāna being exant today, its major works including their Chinese versions are of the Sarvāstivādins, such as the *Abhi-daruma-dai-bi-ba-sha-ron* (A-pi-ta-mo-ta-p'i-p'o-sha-lun, *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra*)<sup>10)</sup> and the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*,<sup>11)</sup> etc. and other minor works are the *Sha-ri-hotsu-abhi-don-ron* (Shē-li-fu-a-p'i-t'an-lun)<sup>12)</sup> perhaps of the Dharmagupta School and the *Jō-jitsu-ron* (Ch'êng shih-lun, *Satya-siddhi-śāstra*)<sup>13)</sup> of the Sautrāntika School, and so on. With regard to the Buddhist history since the Mahāyāna School arose, the comparative study on the doctrine and thought between the Mahāyāna and the Theravāda are questioned, and for this study the Pāli Commentaries are also needed definitely.

#### 4. Value for Linguistic Studies

The *Aṭṭhakathās* are a literature written in the Pāli language. Pāli is a sort of Prākṛit, the Middle Indo-Āryan language and is

likely to have originated in West India.<sup>14)</sup> Pāli has its history of more than two thousand years since it was adopted as the language for the Buddhist scriptures in the Southern Theravāda School. Professor K. Mizuno roughly divides the stage of development of this language in this duration into the following four :

1. Pāli in verse of the Canon : until 3 C. B. C.
2. Pāli in prose of the Canon : until 100 years B. C.
3. Pāli in the Aṭṭhakathā literature, etc.: several hundred years before and after 5-6 C. A. D. respectively.
4. Pāli in later texts : 10 C. onward.

As for the third stage, the texts belonging to that other than the Commentaries are doctrinal summaries, chronicles, semicanonical texts, etc. It is said that Pāli in this stage is the most fluent and polished.<sup>15)</sup>

The above is just a brief classification, however, and therefore more thorough analysis from the point of linguistic history should be carried out upon the group of text belonging to each stage. By way of example, regarding the third period to which the Aṭṭhakathās belong, it cannot be reasonable to consider that the linguistic feature of Pāli during so long a period of this as about one thousand years was one and the same. That is to say, it is difficult to suppose that no linguistic developments and changes took place in the literary history of semicanonical texts, Aṭṭhakathās, chronicles, doctrinal summaries, etc. In fact concerning chronicle texts, it has been pointed that the Pāli of the *Dīpavaṃsa* is less flowing and refined than that of the *Mahāvamsa* which is a later work.<sup>16)</sup> It is well-known that the *Sihalavatthupparakaraṇa*, a Buddhist narrative literature was also written in meagre and non-standard Pāli, which reminds us of the Pāli of the *Dīpavaṃsa*.<sup>17)</sup>

Regarding the commentarial works of Buddhaghosa, Dhammapāla, Buddhadatta, Upasena, Mahānāma and so on, it would be necessary to examine whether or not any linguistic difference can be recognized beyond the boundary of personal style or personal literary charac-



teristics of these authors. There has not been a single person so far, who took up these problems and investigated in detail all the massive Aṭṭhakathā literature, etc.

As a field of the Pāli studies, we must not neglect to call attention to the subject on metre. The recent representative researches in this field were made mainly by Alsdorf, Norman, Warder, etc.<sup>18)</sup> Yet as far as Pāli is concerned what they discussed was restricted to the metre in the Tipiṭaka: they did not touch upon that in the Aṭṭhakathās. It is accordingly requested to proceed with the study by way of taking up the metre in the Aṭṭhakathās and other later texts.

Mention is next made as to the compiling work of Pāli dictionaries. As is widely known, we have now two major Pāli dictionaries: one is the Pāli Text Society's *Pāli-English Dictionary* and the other is *A Critical Pāli Dictionary* in process of publication by the Royal Danish Academy in Copenhagen.<sup>19)</sup> The former is the only practical good dictionary at present, the revised and enlarged edition of which is being compiled by Mrs. M. Cone at Cambridge under the editorship of Mr. K. R. Norman, President of the Society. Its early publication is earnestly expected. The latter, *Critical Pāli Dictionary* begun by V. Trenckner is the really comprehensive and most authentic dictionary on Pāli. Since the publication of its first fascicle in 1924, this dictionary has occasionally been being issued fascicle by fascicle as an international project. The newest, i. e. Vol. II, Fascicle 15 (ekāyana—evam-adhippāya) was made public in 1988 under the supervision of Mr. K. R. Norman, the present Editor-in-Chief. Although the editors of this dictionary are facing an extreme financial difficulty, its completion even in the remote future is eagerly wished for. Needless to say, the Aṭṭhakathā material is amply used in these two dictionaries, and they expedite the research upon the Aṭṭhakathā texts themselves and also the research by means of the texts.

## 5. Value for Historical, Geographical, Social and Cultural Studies

In spite of the fact that the Aṭṭhakathās are originally the works for commentation of the words and phrases in the Tipiṭaka and for exposition of doctrine and thought, they are not filled with such difficult and boring contents all through the texts. The texts record in detail a large number of truly interesting and vivid stories and episodes of the Buddha himself, his disciples, other monks and nuns, kings, their retainers, lay-believers, non-Buddhists and so forth of both ancient India and Sri Lanka. These stories are inserted in places to give better understandings on doctrine and thought and to show distinguished examples of Buddhist practice. Some of the stories are partially or wholly identical and overlapped with those in the Tipiṭaka. For describing the activities of such persons as mentioned above, it was needed to sketch the historical, geographical, social and cultural backgrounds and circumstances of their stories, in other words, the world they lived in. As a result, these various descriptions unintentionally offer abundant pieces of information valuable to the historical, geographical, social, and cultural researches on the two countries in those days.

In this connection, one point should here be attended to. That is a matter of historicity and legendary nature of the stories. Generally stating the historicity of Buddhist texts is more or less doubted even concerning the Tipiṭaka itself. The biography and teachings of the Buddha himself recorded here and there in the Tipiṭaka are to be examined to find how historically true these facts were. It should be judged as a whole through careful text critique. In this respect, it goes without saying that Chinese versions of the Tipiṭaka and other texts of different traditions would be quite useful. The situation is exactly the same as in the case of the Aṭṭhakathās. As regards the stories told in them, it is necessary to try to discover the historic truth by means of comparing them with as many cor-

responding materials as possible. It is furthermore requested to check up and confirm the conclusions of the researches based on literary evidence in comparison with the achievements of such related studies as archaeology, epigraphy, numismatology, etc.

The stories in the Aṭṭhakathā texts can briefly be divided into two: stories of Indians living in India and stories of Sri Lankans in Sri Lanka (including Indians living there). This division derives from the dual stratified feature of the texts already explained. In the part concerning India, there appear plenty of Indians such as the Buddha himself, his disciples and followers, kings, their retainers, etc. who were contemporaries of the Buddha or later persons. Some of these stories are identified with those in the Tipiṭaka, whereas others differ more or less from them. The disagreement generally tends to come from the fact that they are extended, in greater or lesser degree, from the original stories in the Tipiṭaka. Such two aspects can thus be known about the Indian stories. The agreed parts in the Aṭṭhakathās with the stories in the Tipiṭaka fulfill a role of confirming the original stories: in case that they are regarded as historical facts, the concord between the two further proves their historicity; while in case that they are regarded as a mere legend, the concord between the two proves the fact that the legend did not develop or change any more in a later period. Moreover the disagreed parts afford evidence of historical changes of the stories regardless of their historicity or legendary nature. The stories in the Aṭṭhakathās which have no corresponding stories in the Tipiṭaka can generally be considered to be later fictions or from different traditions.

As we have seen, the Pāli Commentaries are valuable as the supplemental and growing material to the Tipiṭaka for the purpose of the historical and legendary researches as to India. Incidentally, not only historical facts of the Buddha and his disciples, but also their fictional legends should be researched more by making full use of the Aṭṭhakathā texts.

On the contrary to the phase that the Indian stories in the

Aṭṭhakathās seem to be of more legendary nature rather than otherwise, the stories regarding Sri Lanka are likely to keep more historicity. It perhaps comes from the racial and cultural characteristics of Sri Lankan people who composed many works on history, such as the *Dīpavaṃsa*, *Mahāvaṃsa*, etc. Their characteristics make a good contrast with those of the people in India, the so-called non-historical country which hardly has any reliable works on history at least in ancient times. The above chronicles of Sri Lanka naturally contain many legendary and fictional elements which cannot be considered to be historical facts by any possibility. It would also be indispensable, in this case, to go through due text critique. However, if we take the necessary steps to compare the contents of these chronicles with those of the Sri Lankan stories in the Commentaries and also with those of the Buddhist narrative literature of Sri Lanka which would be of value for historical studies as mentioned earlier; and if we consult the achievements of such related studies as already explained, then we would be able to reach considerably trustworthy conclusions on history.

In this connection, if we take up any subject limited to the history of Buddhism, the research would be on the history of Buddhism in general, of Buddhist doctrine and thought or of Buddhist Order, etc. in ancient Sri Lanka. The exemplary products in this field are the works of Adikaram, Rahura, etc.,<sup>20)</sup> all of which made full use of the Aṭṭhakathā material. On the other hand, for the general history on that country, its outstanding books would be the *History of Ceylon* by the University of Ceylon (now University of Peradeniya) Vol. I, pts. I & II, its concise edition, etc.<sup>21)</sup> in which the Aṭṭhakathās were also used as the most essential material together with other Pāli texts.

The value of the Aṭṭhakathās for historical studies has been stated above. The value for geographical studies should not be left untouched. B. C. Law who made a contribution to the historical geography in ancient India as one of his subjects laid emphasis upon

the material value, in this subject, of the Pāli Aṭṭhakathās and Pāli chronicles along with the Pāli Nikāyas and Sanskrit Buddhist texts. He states<sup>22)</sup> that the works of Buddhaghosa are of particular importance among the Aṭṭhakathā texts as the material for historical geography. The reason would be as follows: in the Tipiṭaka as the canon commented by the Aṭṭhakathās, especially in the Vinayapiṭaka and Suttapiṭaka, there occur many names of places centring round the so-called Madhyadeśa, the region of the middle reaches of the River Ganges, in connection with the activities of the Buddha and his disciples and followers. These places are countries, cities, villages, monasteries, mountains, rivers, etc. Let us say, it is common with an ordinary sutta that it begins with the stereo-typed expression, 'Evaṃ me sutam' and next it mentions the place (and the monastery) where the Buddha preached this sutta, the number of the bhikkhu, etc. who listened to this preaching and so forth. In this way, the names of places, etc. in ancient India become very familiar to us. Because of the circumstances explained above, the Tipiṭaka itself is useful for the geographical studies on ancient India. The Aṭṭhakathās contain in places comments and explanations upon these places mentioned in the Tipiṭaka, which offer pieces of new geographical knowledge and information in detail. They can be regarded, therefore, as a good sort of material in this subject. However, it does not seem that they have been made full use of in the existing researches. For instance, in spite of the suggestion from B. C. Law as written above, the Aṭṭhakathā material was not at all referred to even in the work of D. C. Sircar published in 1971,<sup>23)</sup> although Pāli Nikāyas were put to good use.

The Aṭṭhakathā material for the historical geography of ancient Sri Lanka would not be so plenteous as of India. The names of certain places and other geographical information, however, are available in the stories concerning ancient Sri Lankan individuals and it would be helpful to collect this kind of geographical knowledge of this country and to integrate it with other literary and archaeological knowledge relating to this subject.

The value of the Aṭṭhakathā literature for social and cultural studies will be discussed next. As to Indian features, to my knowledge, no research employing the Aṭṭhakathās has been made to this day. The reason seems to be that scholars in these fields set aside the Tipiṭaka and consider the Aṭṭhakathās to be ‘Buddhist commentarial literature’ which was composed in Sri Lanka and has been preserved not in India but in the Southern Buddhist countries and which they believe has no relation with social and cultural researches on India. Moreover it is to be noted that, on the contrary, Buddhist scholars, linguists and philologists dealing with the Aṭṭhakathā texts are not particularly interested in Indian society and culture in general. However it may be, the following statement would be a very good example to prove the Aṭṭhakathās to be an important material on the social and cultural history both in India and Sri Lanka. That is regarding ‘nāḷi’ (Skt. nāḍi), a unit of weight for gold, silver and other precious metals. In the *Samantapāsādikā*,<sup>24)</sup> there are mentioned three kinds of nāḷi in ancient period, i. e. Magadha nāḷi (in North India), Damiḷa nāḷi (in South India) and Sihaḷa nāḷi (in Sri Lanka). The comparison of the weight is recorded as follows: 1 Magadha nāḷi=13.5 pala (or phala, Skt. pala)<sup>25)</sup>; 3 Magadha nāḷi=1.5 Sihaḷa nāḷi (the former is the half of the latter); and Damiḷa nāḷi is less than Magadha nāḷi: “Sihaḷa nāḷi>Magadha nāḷi>Damiḷa nāḷi”. In addition, the original source of the above statement is the Andhakaṭṭhakathā made in South India and the Mahā-aṭṭhakathā which is one of the most important sources composed in Sri Lanka. This clear reference to these original sources increases the authenticity of the above statement as to nāḷi. In any case, this would be quite valuable from the point of view of social and cultural history. Many other records of the similar kind could be found out by way of thorough investigation throughout the Aṭṭhakathā texts.

The Aṭṭhakathā texts are made better use of for social and cultural studies of Sri Lanka than of India, perhaps because of the recognition that they are Sri Lanka’s own classics. For example, W.

Geiger's posthumous work mentioned below which was published by Professor H. Bechert was written chiefly on the basis of the statement of the *Mahāvamsa*, but it has already quoted some Aṭṭhakathās in it.

W. Geiger: *Culture of Ceylon in Mediaeval Times*, ed. by H. Bechert (Wiesbaden 1960).

The use of the Aṭṭhakathās in this work, however, is very limited and not enough as yet. On the other hand, the following books of Ellawala and Hettiarachchy cite many Aṭṭhakathās, and their value for these topics is fully realised there.

E. Ellawala : *Social History of Early Ceylon* (Colombo 1969).

T. Hettiarachchy : *History of Kingship in Ceylon up to the Fourth Century A. D.* (Colombo 1972).

In the future the Aṭṭhakathā literature would possibly be taken full advantage of in more particular fields such as the ancient histories of society, culture, politics, etc. in Sri Lanka, and the value of this literature would be more and more appreciated.

The value of the Aṭṭhakathās as the material of research on the ancient period of India and Sri Lanka should be further argued from many other points than those already touched on. In substance, it should further be improved by scholars with critical and creative mind. It would be no exaggeration to say, in this sense, that the Aṭṭhakathā [texts or Pāli Commentaries are a vast treasure-house of material to be opened up by those who get interested in the studies of the both countries.

## 6. Remarks

In the previous sections, I discussed the value of the Pāli Aṭṭhakathā texts for the various studies as to the two countries, India and Sri Lanka, in ancient period. In order to conduct whatever studies, it would first of all be necessary to make clear the chronological aspects of the texts. This problem can be classified into the following two: the first is the chronology of the sources for the Aṭṭhakathās, i. e. the sources of Indian origin and those of Sri Lankan

product. These two kinds of chronological feature can be cleared up by way of examining the dates of all the Indian and Sri Lankan persons appearing in the texts.<sup>26)</sup> The second is the chronology of the present Pāli Commentaries themselves, which can be investigated through the biographical researches of their authors headed by Buddhaghosa.<sup>27)</sup>

In addition, for the more effective and comprehensive analysis in any research, the completion of the general index or concordance of the texts would be most urgently requested. I believe it could sufficiently be compiled on computer system. And then the early completion of the full translations of the Aṭṭhakathas is also required, only some of which have been being published one by one by the Pāli Text Society in Oxford and others.

### Notes

*Abbreviations* are as in the Epilegomena to V. Trenckner: *A Critical Pāli Dictionary*, Vol. I (Copenhagen 1924-28). In addition, Nanden = Nanden Daizōkyō, 70 vols. (Japanese translation series of the Pāli Canon and other Pāli texts, Tokyo 1935-41); Taishō = Taishō Tripiṭaka of Chinese Version, 100 vols. (Tokyo 1897-1910, reprint: 1960-79).

*References* to Pāli texts are to the Pāli Text Society's editions unless otherwise stated.

- 1) These texts refer here to the *Visuddhimagga* and the direct commentaries upon the Pāli Canon (Tipiṭaka). They are also called on occasion the Aṭṭhakathā texts, Aṭṭhakathā literature, (Pāli) commentarial literature, etc.
- 2) As for the dates of the reigns of the kings of Sri Lanka, those given in "A Chronological List of Ceylon Kings" composed by S. Paranavitana, which is contained in the *University of Ceylon, A Concise History of Ceylon* (Colombo 1961, pp. 341-46) are adopted in the present article. This is the most recent and most reliable.
- 3) As to this matter, cf. S. Mori: "Chronology of the 'Sihala Sources' for the Pāli Commentaries" (I), (II) in the journal of *Buddhist Studies*, Vols. XVI (pp. 151-82), XVII (pp. 119-67), Hamamatsu, Japan 1987-88.
- 4) Pj II, 477.
- 5) Some other examples as to the difference and contradiction between the passages in the Tipiṭaka and those in the corresponding commentaries were pointed out by Adikaram: they are in the cases between Ja, Vibh, Paṭis, etc. and their respective commentaries. See E.W. Adikaram:



- Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon* (Colombo 1946) pp. 33-35. As a similar instance, the following statement by Mizuno is to be noted: "Although the quotation in Vism (II, 655, ll. 27 ff.) is most likely to come from Nidd II, the identical passage does not exist in its present text. See K. Mizuno: Japanese translation of Nidd II (Nanden, Vol. 64) p. 425, n. 7. Many more similar cases seem to be found out by thorough investigation.
- 6) K. R. Norman, tr.: *The Elder's Verses I (Theragāthā); The Elder's Verses II (Therīgāthā)* London 1969-71.
  - 7) A list of sources of all these words found in the Aṭṭhakathās is available in the following: S. Mori: *A Study of the Pāli Commentaries: Theravādic aspects of the Aṭṭhakathās* (in Japanese, Tokyo 1984), pp. 112-28.
  - 8) As to the Sophists, see S. Mori: "The Vitaṇḍavādins (Sophists) as Seen in the Pāli Aṭṭhakathās", *Essays on the Pāli and Buddhist Civilization* (Tokyo 1982), pp. 1-18.
  - 9) As to these two fraternities, see S. Mori: "Uttaravihāraṭṭhakathā and Sārasamāsa: some unattributed non-Mahāvihāravāsin sources for the Pāli Commentaries", *Journal of the Pāli Text Society*, Vol. XII (Oxford 1988), pp. 1-47.
  - 10) Taishō No. 1545: Vol. 27, pp. 1 ff.
  - 11) P. Pradhan, ed.: *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, Patna 1967.
  - 12) Taishō No. 1548: Vol. 28, pp. 525 ff.
  - 13) Taishō No. 1646: Vol. 32, pp. 239 ff.
  - 14) Cf. S. Mori: "The Chronology of the *Sihālavatthupparāṇa*", *Bulletin d'Etudes Indiennes*, No. 5 (Paris 1987), p. 236 f.
  - 15) K. Mizuno: *A Pāli Grammar* (in Japanese, Tokyo 1955), pp. 14-16.
  - 16) H. Oldenberg, ed., tr.: *The Dipavaṃsa* (London 1879), Introd. p. 8 f.; W. Geiger: *Dipavaṃsa und Mahāvaṃsa und die geschichtliche Überlieferung in Ceylon* (Leipzig 1905), p. 17 f.; K. R. Norman: *Pāli Literature* (Wiesbaden 1983), p. 115 f., etc.
  - 17) A. P. Buddhadatta, ed.: *Sihālavatthupparāṇa* (Sri Lanka 1959), Preface, p. ix. As for this text, in passing, see S. Mori: *op. cit.* (n. 14) pp. 221-50; S. Mori: "Sihālavatthupparāṇa and Pāli Aṭṭhakathā Literature," *Journal of Pāli and Buddhist Studies*, Vol. 1 (Nagoya 1988), pp. 47-72. A preliminary article upon the Pāli of the *Dipavaṃsa* in comparison with the *Sihālavatthupparāṇa* and *Dasavatthupparāṇa* (Paris 1976) was very recently published, i. e. R. Tsuchida: "Observations on the Language of the *Dipavaṃsa*" in *Die Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik*, Heft 13/14 (Reinbek 1987), pp. 301-10. More studies of this kind are to be expected.
  - 18) L. Alsdorf: *Les Études Jaina* (Paris 1965), pp. 51-72; L. Alsdorf: *Die Ārya-Strophen des Pāli-Kanons* (Wiesbaden 1967), K. R. Norman & L. Alsdorf: *The Thera-Therīgāthā* (London 1966), Appendices I, II; K. R. Norman, tr.: *The Elder's Verses I, II* (n. 6), respective Introduc-

- tions; A. K. Warder: *Pāli Metre: a contribution to the history of Indian literature* (London 1967), etc.
- 19) For a recent information regarding these two dictionaries, see K. R. Norman: "A Report on Pāli Dictionaries", the journal of the *Buddhist Studies* (n. 3), Vol. XV, pp. 145-52. Cf. M. Cone: "A Pāli-English Dictionary" in the same journal Vol. XVIII, pp. 121-124.
- 20) E. W. Adikaram: *op. cit.* (n. 5); W. Rahula: *History of Buddhism in Ceylon* (Colombo 1956).
- 21) H. C. Ray &c., ed.: *University of Ceylon, History of Ceylon*, Vol. I, pts. I, II (Colombo 1959-60); C. W. Nicholas & S. Paravitana: *University of Ceylon, A Concise History of Ceylon* (Colombo 1961). As a material in the Aṭṭhakathās for historical studies, especially for the study on Buddhist history, Professor Warder stressed the importance of the Bāhiraṇidāna, the introductory part of Sp and the Ācariyaparamparā contained also in the same text. (A. K. Warder: "The Pāli Canon and its Commentaries as an Historical Record", *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, ed. by Sir C. H. Philips, pt. 1 (London 1961), pp. 47-49). Yet this kind of material should not be limited to the above two: various descriptions and pieces of information concerning historical matters which can be found in many places throughout the whole Aṭṭhakathās should all be widely recognized and picked up as the material of historical research.
- 22) B. C. Law: *Historical Geography of Ancient India* (Paris 1955), p. 2f. Incidentally the following are also his writings on the [same subject: *Geography of Early Buddhism* (London 1932); *Geographical Essays*, Vol. 1 (London 1937); "Geographical Data from Sanskrit Buddhist Literature", *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Vol. XV, pts. I-II, pp. 1-38.
- 23) D. C. Sircar: *Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India* (Second edn. Revised and Enlarged, Delhi 1971).
- 24) Sp III, 702.
- 25) According to Monier-William's *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, the conversion factor of 'Pala' in Sanskrit is as under: 1 Pala=4 Karṣas; 1 Karṣa=16 Māṣas=80 Rettis=1/4 Pala=1/400 Tulā=about 176 grains troy, in common use 8 Rettis are given to the Māṣa, and the Karṣa is then about 280 grains troy. As to 'Troy Weight' for precious metals and stones, 1 grain=0.0648 g.; in passing, 1 pound=12 ounces; 1 ounce=20 pennyweights; 1 pennyweight=24 grains.
- 26) About the chronological aspects of the Sri Lankan sources, see S. Mori: *op. cit.* (n. 3).
- 27) With respect to the biographies of Pāli commentators like Buddhaghosa, see my book (n. 7), pp. 467-558 (: Part III).

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