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දර්ශනපති උපාධිය සඳහා පේරාදෙණිය විශ්වවිද්‍යාලයට ඉදිරිපත්
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මුද්‍රාණය කළේ කුමාරතුංග හිමි

ලි.ප.අංකය :- GS/MPhil/94/165
විභාග අංකය :- MPhil/94/95/375

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of my dissertation titled "A Critical Study of the Sīla and Dhutaṅga Niddesas of the Visuddhimagga based on the Text and the Sinhala Commentary" is to analyze and investigate into the way how the discipline of Sīla (morality) contained in the first two chapters of the Visuddhimagga has been presented. Venerable Buddhagosa has compiled it in accordance with the method traditionally followed in the Mahāvihāra. My secondary aim is to examine this traditional commentarial method of the Mahāvihāra. Accordingly this study has been divided into seven chapters with the Introduction.

The terms "Sīla and Dhuta" are found in the Preliminary Sermons of the Buddha. The first step into the path of Deliverance is Sīla or Morality. The section dealing with precepts in Sīla speaks about good principles, essential for self-restraint and the spiritual development. The section dealing with abstinence is meant to destroy all evil thoughts such as frustration and being over ambitious.

As Buddhism rejects extreme views it contains only a simple form of ethics guided by the Buddha's Middle Path. But as time went on some developments have been made in them according to religious requirements. Accordingly various categories of Sīla also came into being and Dhutaṅgas also were increased into thirteen in practice these were differentiated into three categories as low (Hīna) middling (Madhyama) and high (Utkṛṣṭa). These are elucidated in the introduction to the dissertation.

In the historical sources facts relating to the life of venerable Buddhaghosa have been made colorful with exaggerations. According to traditional belief and he came to Sri Lanka from India and compiled the Visuddhimagga and obtained permission to compile Pāli commentaries (Aṭṭhakathā). The translation of the Sinhala commentaries into Pāli was necessitated by several reasons including the dissemination of Theravāda Buddhism in foreign countries. The study of Theravāda Buddhism at international level also necessitated the translation of Sinhala commentaries into Pāli. The first chapter deals with all these facts.

The Sinhala Commentaries comprised a vast literature. Pali commentaries were compiled based on them. A number of erudite scholars with various merits participated in that venture. Dr. B.C. Law points out that among them there were three monks by the name of Buddhaghosa. These matters have been discussed in the second chapter.

In the third chapter are discussed the structure of the Visuddhimagga and the Sīla and Dhutaṅga included under the discipline of morality (Sīla).

The Visuddhimagga which is almost like an encyclopaedia on Theravāda Buddhism is a work held in high esteem within that tradition. Its main aim is to elucidate the Path of Emancipation based on the threefold discipline (Tri-Śikṣā). As a result a number of ancillary works including the Paramatthamañjusā have been compiled

for it. Scholars like Dr.Nagai are of the view that the Visuddhimagga has been written basing on some older sources. These ideas have been discussed in the fourth chapter.

The Visuddhimagga is an independent research work compiled by Ven. Buddhaghosa under the supervision of the Mahāvihāra monks. It is revealed by the commentarial style found in the work. The narrative style of the Visuddhimagga has been surveyed in the fifth chapter.

The sixth chapter deals with the social, economic, political and religious information revealed by the first two chapters of the Visuddhimagga as a historical source. The spiritual development obtained by the practice of Buddhism is also elucidated here with illustrations.

The seventh chapter, which is a summing up, deals with the basis of the fundamental teachings of Buddhism and the significance of morality (Sīla) in the Path to Emancipation.