

## Some Points on Pali Literature

HERE are three works on Pali Literature, in English. The first of them is *Pali Literature and Language* by Prof. W. Geiger, which was at first compiled in German many years ago, and translated into English by Dr. Batakishna Ghosh in 1937 and published in Calcutta, 1943. The second is *The Pali Literature in Ceylon* by Dr. G. P. Malalasekara, published in London, 1928. The third is *A History of Pali Literature* by Dr. B. C. Law, in two volumes published in London, 1933.

Criticising is an easy task but the production of a book is arduous. I myself know well the hardships that a writer has to encounter. My criticism is therefore, not intended to belittle their works but is solely meant for the benefit of students.

1. In some cases Dr. Law has referred to some of my statements to prove his own. One such place is on p. 384 of his book, which runs as follows: "It is stated in the *Vinayaviniçchaya* that when Buddhadatta was going to India from Ceylon he was met by Buddhaghosa who was then proceeding to Ceylon at the request of the Buddhist monks of India with the object of translating the Sinhalese commentaries into Pali. Hearing of the mission of Buddhaghosa, of whose deep learning he was fully convinced, and delighted thereat, Buddhadatta spoke thus, 'When you finish the commentaries, please send them up to me, so that I may summarise your labours.' Buddhaghosa said that he would gladly comply with his request and the Pali commentaries were accordingly placed in the hands of Buddhadatta who summed up the commentaries on the Abhidhamma in *Abhidhammāvatāra* and those on the Vinaya in the *Vinayaviniçchaya*. (Vide Buddhadatta's Manuals or Summaries of Abhidhamma, edited by A. P. Buddhadatta, for the Pali Text Society, in 1915, p. xix)."

Here he refers to my Introduction to the *Abhidhammāvatāra*. As I was then unable to write English it was written in Pali and I got it translated in an abridged form. Both, the Pali original and the abridged English translation, are there. In the Pali original this statement is said to have been taken from the *Ṭikā* on the *Vinayaviniçchaya*, and not from the text itself.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately the English rendering of the same has left out the word *ṭikā*. If this statement is in the *Vinayaviniçchaya* itself my statement in the article entitled "The Great Author of Summaries"<sup>2</sup> that "Buddhadatta nowhere mentions the name of Buddhaghosa," becomes untenable.

1. Sec. p. XIV of my Introduction to the *Abhidhammāvatāra* in *Buddhadatta's Manuals*, 1945.

2. University of Ceylon Review, Vol. III, Part I.

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Dr. Law has committed this error because he has not consulted the *Vinayaviniçchaya* itself. It is a work composed entirely in verse. He himself had admitted the fact when he stated: "These two treatises on the Vinaya seem to have been composed, . . . in an abridged form, in verses"<sup>3</sup>. As the above statement included in my Pali Introduction is in prose, he could have easily found that it was not from the *Vinayaviniçchaya*.

2. Dr. Law states, that there was an old *Vinayaviniçchaya* before the time of the great Commentator, Buddhaghosa. As this is very interesting news let us examine this statement. The following appears on page 378 of his book. "Even apart from the decisive interpretations in the earlier Sinhalese commentaries Buddhaghosa appears to have cited certain authoritative Vinayaviniçchayas without mentioning the source from which he cited them. Looking out for the source we are apt to be led back to a treatise written by therā Buddhāsīha which clearly bore the title of *Vinayaviniçchaya*. In the epilogue of his *Vinayaviniçchaya* Buddhadatta expressly says that his own work was nothing but an abridged form of Buddhāsīha's treatise. Buddhāsīha himself is represented as a saddhivihāri or fellow monk residing in the monastery erected by Venhūdāsa or Kaṇhadāsa in the beautiful river port of Kāveri. No trace of Buddhāsīha's treatise lingers except perhaps in citations in Buddhaghosa's *Samanāpāsādikā*."

From the above statement we have to understand, (1) that there was a treatise named *Vinayaviniçchaya*, compiled before the time of Buddhaghosa; (2) that Buddhadatta followed this work while he was compiling his own work; (3) that Buddhāsīha was a fellow monk residing in a monastery at Kāveri.

This whole statement is founded on the epilogue of *Vinayaviniçchaya* of Buddhadatta. The lines in the epilogue, to which he refers, are:

"*Vuttassa Buddhāsīhena Vinayassa viniçchayo Buddhāsīhan samud-*  
*dissa mama saddhivihārikam Kato'yam pana bhikkhūnam hiṭṭhāya sam-*  
*sato*"

In these lines the word "Buddhāsīha" occurs twice. In the second place the word is governed by *samudāssa*; taken together they mean "for Buddhāsīha." Who was this Buddhāsīha? "*Mama saddhivihārikam* = one of my pupils or attendant monks," says Buddhadatta. Dr. Law has left the words *mama* and *samudāssa*, untranslated, in his statement. He states that Buddhāsīha was a fellow monk; but does not say here whose fellow monk he was. In the Introduction to the volume ii of his work he says: "the *Vinayaviniçchaya* by Buddhāsīha, a fellow bhikkhu of Buddhadatta, presupposed by the *Vinayaviniçchaya* of Buddhadatta and *Samanāpāsādikā* of Buddhaghosa." Thus it is clear that Buddhāsīha was a fellow monk of Buddhadatta. Is it not

3. History of Pali Literature, p. 397.

very strange that both Buddhaghosa and Buddhadatta have followed a treatise composed by a younger contemporary of Buddhadatta?

Now we have to discuss the first word "Buddhasiṃha" in the epilogue. As it is in the Instrumental the context there is: *Buddhasiṃha vūttassa vīnaya-vīnicchayo* = conclusions of the *vīnaya* which was preached by the Lord Buddha). In the second place "Buddhasiṃha" is a proper name; but the first one is an epithet of the Buddha himself. Every one knows that the *Vīnaya-Pīṭaka* is accepted as the Buddha's own preaching. Words like *sīha*, *nāga*, *puṅgava* are appended to some words as a way of showing respect. There is no doubt about Lord Buddha's existence before Buddhaghosa; but no one can find out an author named Buddhasiṃha living before the great Commentator except in Dr. Law's misstatement.

In his introduction to the volume ii, Dr. Law states: "Mahānāma's Mahāvamsa may be regarded as a Pali model of certain chronicles the Pūjāvāliya and the rest written in Sinhalese (p. vi)." Pūjāvāliya was written during the reign of Parākrāmahāhu II. How can Mahānāma follow a book compiled some centuries later than his date?

4. On page 375 of his book appears the following statement: "The meaning of Mahāpaccari or Great Raft can be so called from its having been composed on a raft somewhere in Ceylon, (*Saddhammasaṅgaha*, p. 55). The suggested origin of the name is quite fanciful and therefore unreliable like the Mahā or Mūla. The Mahāpaccari appears to have been a distinct compilation of a monastic school of Ceylon." Perhaps the Doctor does not know the fact about the Great Raft. The story connected with it is in *Sammohavinodanī*, the commentary on the *Vībhāṅga*.<sup>4</sup> Here I give only the English rendering of it: "The Brahman thief, Tissa, devastated the country. The congregation of monks sent eight Elders to Sakka in order to ask him to pacify the thief. Sakka told them that it was impossible for him to do that, and he suggested that all the monks should go abroad and he would protect them in their voyage. Monks from all sides assembled at Nāgādīpa and there constructed a three-storied float. One floor of it sank under the water, the monks sat on the second, and on the third they kept their bowls and robes. Three Elders: Cullasiṃha, Isidatta, and Mahāsoṇa were then the leaders of the Saṅgha. Two of them told the Elder Mahāsoṇa: "Brother Mahāsoṇa, step on to the float." "Sirs, what are you going to do?" asked the latter. "Brother, there is no difference of dying either in water or on land; therefore we will not leave the Island." "I will not go when you are not going," was his answer. They could not make him embark though they entreated him thrice. Then the Elder Cullasiṃha told Isidatta that he should not leave Mahāsoṇa as he was the person to re-establish the Doctrine in the Island." Thus the story of these Elders

is related to a considerable length there. It explains how they spent seven days feeding only on palmyra nuts, and how for another seven days they had only the outer rind of bassia fruits as their food, and how they had to spend a week having once eaten some raw stems of waterlilies. They say that the Elders who embarked the raft composed a commentary on the Dhamma, foreseeing the danger ahead, and that commentary was known by the name "Mahāpaccari."

5. Writing about the Pali Chronicles, Dr. Law states on page 575: "He then saw Sakka, the king of gods, and got from him the Buddha's right eye... a great vihāra was built and the right eye of the Buddha was placed in it." The statement is from the *Thūpavamsa*, and on the establishment of Thūpārāma shrine. It is interesting to learn that the Ceylonese have got one of the Buddha's eyes. Unfortunately for us the word in the text is *dakkhinaḅbhaka* (= the right collar-bone)!! The learned Doctor has mistaken *abhaka* for *abhhi*, eye.

6. While giving a description of the Commentary on Dīgha he states: "Jivaka Komārabhāṇḍa was reared up by Abhayakumāra, one of the sons of Bimbisāra, so he was called Komārabhāṇḍa. Once Bimbisāra and Abhayakumāra saw from the roof of the palace Jivaka lying on the ground at the gate of the palace surrounded by vultures, crows, etc. The king asked "What is that?" He was told that it was a baby. The king asked whether it was alive. The reply was in the affirmative. Hence he was called Jivaka."<sup>5</sup>

In the text we do not see any reference to the king, and any clue to his seeing the baby from the roof of his palace. The text runs as follows: "Tattha jīvati ti Jivako; kumārena bhato ti Komārabhacco. Yath'āha: "Kim bhāṇe, etam kākehi samparikiṇṇanti?" "Dārako devā ti." Jīvati bhāṇe" ti? "Jīvati, devā" ti. Tena hi, bhāṇe, tam dārakam antepuram netvā dhātānam detha posāpetum" ti... Ayam ettha sanikhepo, vithārena pana Jivakarathhu Khanadhake āgalam eva." Here everything refers to the prince and not to the king. The prince saw the babe while he was going to the palace. It was surrounded by crows, and there is no mention about vultures. The commentator refers to the *Mahāvagga of the Vīnaya* for the full account of Jivaka. It is on page 268 ff. of Oldenburg's edition of Mahāvagga. I am unable to explain how he has got *Komārabhāṇḍa* instead of *Komārabhacca*.

Now I come to Dr. Malalasekara's book. In the statement about Kaccāyana's Grammar he says,<sup>6</sup> "D'Alwis in the scholarly Introduction to his edition of the *Kaccāyana*, has shown that either Buddhaghosa was not familiar with the work of Kaccāyana or the grammar had not in his time acquired the authority which it certainly exercised a few centuries later. Since, however,

5. S. V. Part I, p. 133.  
6. P. 183.

4. See P. 445 of my edition P. T. S., 1923.

Buddhaghosa does make reference to Kaccāyana in his *Anguttara-Atthakathā* as the chief of Nerutikas and mentions *Kaccāyana-pakarāma* in the Sutta-Niddesa, the first supposition falls to the ground." The author has disposed of Mr. D'Alwis' statement in too facile a manner. He says that Buddhaghosa has referred to Mahā-Kaccāyana as the chief of the Nerutikas or the grammarians, in his Commentary on the *Anguttara*. It would be interesting to know the place where this statement is to be found! I do not find even the word *Nerutika* in any edition of that commentary.

Secondly, he says that Buddhaghosa has mentioned Kaccāyana's Grammar in the *Sutta-Niddesa*. What is this *Suttaniddesa*? There is no work of Buddhaghosa bearing that name. The author again fails to give the page, or at least the edition, from which he got this statement. There is a book, bearing that name, written by Chappata, a Burmese Elder whose Pali epithet was Saddhammajotipāla; and who lived, according to some documents, in or about the reign of Parākrāmabāhu the Great, but according to his own statement in the colophons of some of his works, during the reign of Parākrāmabāhu VI. Dr. Malalasekara mentions Chappata's name more than once, and he seems to be fond of the epithet "Saddhammajotipāla"; but he says nothing about his *Suttaniddesa*. It is a commentary on the grammar of Kaccāyana. But what has Buddhaghosa to do with this *Suttaniddesa* which was compiled some five centuries after his date? I do not understand how D'Alwis' statement can fall to the ground because Kaccāyana's name is mentioned in a book composed by Chappata. Both arguments of Dr. Malalasekara in this instance thus become groundless.

2. While referring to the works of Saṅgharāja Saraṇankara Dr. Malalasekera states that he wrote "a paraphrase of several Suttas used in the Paritta." This work is known here by the name of පරිවරණ පරිවරණය. It is not a paraphrase of several Suttas in the *Paritta*, but of the whole text that is under the name of *Paritta*. Not only Dr. Malalasekara but also Prof. Geiger has gone astray on this *Satara-baṇavāra* or *Catubhāṇavāra* which means "four Bhānavāras." A *bhānavāra* is a measurement of texts, which contains 8,000 letters. As the whole text of *Paritta* contains four times 8,000 letters it is called *Catubhāṇavāra* in Pali and *Satara-baṇavāra* in Sinhalese. This word may be applied to any four bhānavāras of the Pali texts; but by tradition we here understand what it means. Not being aware of this tradition the German Professor made a slip; but Dr. Malalasekara's lapse is unintelligible.

The place where Prof. Geiger made this slip is in his translation of the *Cūlavamsa*.<sup>7</sup> He translates the 23rd verse of Chapter 98 as follows: "He invited him and had a commentary on the four bhānavāras made by him in the language of Lankā and thus protected the knowledge of the sacred scriptures."

7. Vol. II, p. 246.

Footnote on the same: "1. For purposes of recitation the whole of Tipitaka is divided into *bhānavāras*, sections of equal length. There are said to be 2547 of these (Childers, S. V.). It seems to me, however, as if the word in our passage is used instead of *Nikāya*. The commentary would then have embraced *Dēgha-Majjhima-Samyutta* and *Anguttara-Nikāya*."

While Dr. Malalasekara has taken *Catubhāṇavāra* to be several suttas in the *Paritta*, Prof. Geiger has taken them to be four *Nikāyas*.<sup>8</sup> The verse which has been misunderstood is far from difficult.

"*Nimantetvāna tam yeva Catubhāṇavaraṇamānam  
Lankābhāsāya kāretvā pariyattim pi rakkhhi so.*"

The Sinhalese version of the same is:

"ඒ ආරක්ෂණී දාම පමරා සහර බණවර ආනන්ද සිංහල භාෂාවෙන් කරවූ ඒ (කරේනු) නම පසභීපතීබ්බසද රකිවෙයි."

There is a Pāli commentary on this *Catubhāṇavāra*, named *Sārathhasa-muccaya* or *Catubhāṇavāraththakathā*, which is widely used in Ceylon. But Dr. Malalasekara does not refer to it in his book on Pali Literature.

3. On page 309 of his book Dr. Malalasekara states: "The Kandyan Kings were all strongly imbued with the prejudices of the Brahmans and upheld the doctrines of polytheism and caste, and when King Kittī Siri re-established the *Upasampalā* from Siam, he decreed that none but members of a particular caste, the Gahapati (Goigama) should be admitted to the higher order of monks." According to my knowledge of history there never was such a decree. Dr. Malalasekara will render a service if he will name the document containing this decree or give the authority on which he based this statement.

4. On the same page he states: "Seven years later, in 1809, a second expedition was led by Dadalle Dhammarakkhita, who with four colleagues received the *Upasampalā* in Burma." While I was compiling the History of the "Kalyāṇivamsa Sect" (in Sinhalese) I examined closely every document, Pali and Sinhalese, which had some connection with the recent history of the Buddhist Sects in Ceylon; but I did not come across such a name in any of those documents. The name of the founder of the Dadalle Section of the Burmese Sect is well known in Ceylon; and it is strange that Dr. Malalasekara has given an incorrect one.

A. P. BUDDHADATTA.

8. Once I pointed out this error to Prof. Geiger who accepted it and promised to correct the same in a future edition of his translation. But, alas! he did not live long enough to bring out a revised edition of it. When he paid a visit to me while he was sojourning in Ceylon for the last time, I showed him the book which we call *Catubhānavāra* and presented him a copy of the same, which he received very courteously together with my other literary presents.

9. Ch. XCVIII, v. 23.