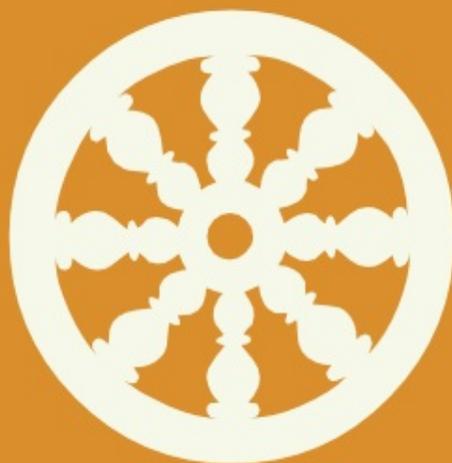


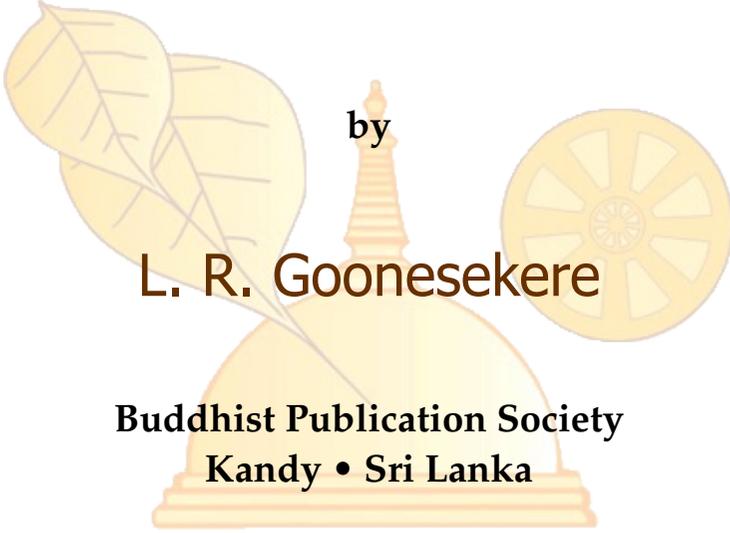
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**Buddhist
Commentarial Literature**

Bhikkhu Khantipālo



Buddhist Commentarial Literature



by

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**Buddhist Publication Society
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Preface

The ancient commentaries to the Pali Canon have made such an important contribution to the understanding of the canonical scriptures of Theravāda Buddhism, that information about them will be welcome to an earnest student of the Dhamma. The Publishers therefore greatly appreciate the permission that was kindly granted to reproduce in The Wheel series a very informative article on the Commentaries (aṭṭhakathā) written by the late Mrs. Lakshmi R. Goonesekere and printed in Vol. II, Fasc. 2 of the Encyclopaedia of Buddhism (publ. by the Government of Ceylon).

The contributions made by the commentaries are both to the letter and the meaning of the scriptures. Variant readings of the Pali texts have been recorded in the commentaries and the meaning of words is established either by definition or by synonyms or kindred and related terms which circumscribe the respective range of meanings. This proves helpful, for instance, with such words and terms the meaning of which in the Pali language differs from Sanskrit usage. The high degree of exegetical reliability of the commentaries is largely based on a perfect mastery of the canonical texts commanded by those ancient commentators.

This enabled them to take into consideration all the different contexts in which the respective terms or doctrinal passages occur. Shades of meaning of words or terms are illustrated by quotations from the canonical texts; also where doctrinal statements in the commented text are concerned, their full significance is sometimes strikingly illuminated by the quotation of a kindred text in the commentary. Such widening and illumination of significance is also achieved by another feature of the commentarial method: the commentaries often express in terms of Abhidhamma categories what in the commented texts is stated in the conventional language of the Suttas. This also serves to illustrate the doctrinal coherence of Sutta and Abhidhamma.

In the Suttas, there are a few texts and textual passages which would remain largely unintelligible without the commentarial explanations. One typical example is the first Discourse of the Majjhima Nikāya, the Mūlapariyāya Sutta, of which so far no entirely satisfactory translation exists, due to the fact that the translators did not make use, or not full use, of the commentarial explanations to that difficult text.

The commentarial literature also contains large sections giving full directions for the practice of the several subjects of meditation (kammaṭṭhāna), which in the Suttas are explained only very briefly and sometimes just mentioned by names and classifications only. Detailed treatment of meditative practices appears either in the Sutta commentaries themselves or reference is made there to the

full exposition in Ācariya Buddhaghosa's "Path of Purification" (Visuddhimagga), which, on its part, is based on the same ancient exegetical material used for the Venerable Buddhaghosa's Sutta commentaries. Part of that material may well go back to oral tradition handed on since the earliest days of the Teaching.

Held against all these and many other benefits that may be derived from a study of the Pali commentaries, the weaknesses which a modern reader may find in that type of Pali literature are comparatively insignificant and can, to a great part, be ascribed to the different requirements of the time in which and for which the commentaries had been composed. Speaking, e.g., of the vast story material in the commentaries, by far the larger part of it is of great interest and value even today; but there are also a good many stories which judged by modern standards will be felt as rather naive and pointless, full of pious exaggerations and (often stereotyped) miraculous elements. Such stories may have served as edifying sermons on a popular level and can be safely ignored by a modern reader. As often in exegetical literature, there is also a good deal of "over-explaining," while on the other hand there is sometimes a blank on textual passages where one would have wished for clarification of information. Both the excessiveness and the omissions in commenting may again be due to the fact that the commentaries or their sources very probably go back as far as 1500 or 2000 years and more. Passages or phrases in the Pali texts for which we should welcome further

explication must have been fully understood without it by the contemporaries of the Buddha and their near successors. With the passing of centuries not only modes of expression but the texture of thought undergo change. What was readily understood by the audience for whose benefit the commentaries were composed may be obscure or difficult for us while what seems extremely simple and obvious to the present day reader was far from being so to them. Thus the features that appear to our eyes as defects are the natural results of a gradual change in outlook, and are themselves a witness to the great antiquity of these writings.

All these shortcomings are, as we mentioned before, amply compensated for by the great help which can be derived from the commentaries for a correct understanding of the canonical Pali texts. Their great exegetical value can be gathered from the Sutta editions of The Wheel series, where many extracts from the commentaries are incorporated in the explanatory notes. The Translation Series of the Pali Text Society also has many references to the commentaries.

A number of complete commentarial texts, large and small, have been published in English translations, and in concluding these preparatory remarks we shall give a list of them for the benefit of those who wish to acquaint themselves directly with the style and method of the commentaries. [1]

As a short specimen, there is the complete commentary to "The Greater Discourse on Voidness" (MN 122), appended

to the translation of that text by the Venerable Ñāṇamoli Thera (The **Wheel No. 87**).

A very instructive commentary of much greater length deals with the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (MN 10), translated with excerpts from the sub-commentary in *The Way of Mindfulness*, by Soma Thera (published by the Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy.)

The 9th Discourse of the Majjhima-Nikāya (Sammādiṭṭhi Sutta), together with its commentary, was issued by the same translator: *Right Understanding*, tr. by Soma Thera (Colombo 1946, Bauddha Sahitya Sabha). [2]

The extensive commentary to a separate small work of the Sutta Piṭaka, the Khuddakapāṭha appears in *Minor Readings and Illustrator*, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Thera (London 1960, Pali Text Society).

The commentary to the first book of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, is *The Expositor (Atthasālinī)*, tr. by Maung Tin (2 vols., 556 pp., Pali Text Society).

A small selection of short stories and anecdotes found in the Sutta commentaries appeared in *The Wheel series (No. 59), Stories of Old, Gathered from the Pali Commentaries (30 pp)*. Outside of the Sutta commentaries, there is the rich treasury of stories to the *Dhammapada* in *Buddhist Legends*, tr. by E.W. Burlingame (3 vols, 1114 pp., Cambridge, Mass, Harvard University Press). It may be added that also the 'Birth stories,' the Jātakas, in their prose

narrative, are regarded as Commentary (aṭṭhakathā), as only the verses are considered to be canonical.

Complete sets of the original Pali text of all commentaries (aṭṭhakathā) have been published, in Roman script by the Pali Text Society, London, in Sinhala script by the Simon Hewavitarne Bequest (Mahā Bodhi Society of Ceylon, Colombo) and in Burmese script, edited by the Sixth Council (Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana) and published by the Union of Burma Buddha Sāsana Council, Rangoon.

—Editor

In Memoriam Mrs. Lakshmi R. Goonasekere

This article was written by Mrs. Lakshmi R. Goonesekere, when she was an Assistant Editor of the Encyclopaedia of Buddhism during 1957 to 1965. The article appeared in Volume II (pp. 335–352) of the Encyclopaedia and is reprinted with the permission of the Editor.

Born on 14th January, 1929, daughter of Muhandiram and Mrs. Alex S. Lamabadusuriya of Colombo, in a devout Buddhist family, she received her early education in Buddhist schools and colleges at Mātara, Kandy, Pānadura,

and Colombo, where she distinguished herself in her studies and obtained annually the respective form and other subject prizes.

At her Higher School Certificate Examination she gained a first division with distinctions in Pali and Sanskrit in 1946. She entered the University of Ceylon from Visākhā Vidyālaya, Colombo, being awarded an Exhibition. At her First in Arts Examination in 1947 she was awarded another Exhibition and also the Waidyasekera Memorial Prize for Pali. She graduated in 1950 in Pali, Economics and Indian History, obtaining a second class. She taught for a short time at Visākhā Vidyālaya, Colombo, and in 1951 joined the Department of Income Tax as an Assistant Assessor. In 1954 she married Raja K. W. Goonesekere and went abroad shortly afterwards.

Her association with the Encyclopaedia of Buddhism dates from March 1957 when she was appointed an Assistant Editor, and she remained devoted to this noble project until death took her away suddenly on the day after Vesak, on 16th May, 1965. She was only 36 years old.

She was a very conscientious member of the staff, always ready to do her part in the work in her calm and efficient manner. Her whole life may be summed up in those two great beautiful mental factors, Hiri and Ottappa, conscientiousness or internal devotion to duty, added to painstaking adherence to rules and regulations, which form the cadre of our social and official life.

The article here reproduced was one of her earliest contributions to the Encyclopaedia and shows the scholarly approach which is characteristic of all her writings. The Encyclopaedia stands enriched by her efforts and contributed articles, which number well over 800.

May she reap the reward of her learning, of her devotion to duty and of her attachment to the teachings of the Buddha, and may she obtain the Peace of Deliverance.

This reprint is offered as a Dhammadāna in her memory by her husband and relations.

Buddhist Commentarial Literature

Aṭṭhakathā

The word aṭṭhakathā is a general term, meaning exposition of the sense (aṭṭha = attha, Skt. artha), explanation, commentary. [3] Although aṭṭhakathā could refer to all commentarial literature, as it did during the Anurādhapura period (3rd century B. C.—10th century A. C.) when it had even a wider application and included all literary works other than the Tipiṭaka, today it is used when referring to the commentaries on the Tipiṭaka. [4] They are the expository treatises on the different texts of the Pali canon, each text having its own commentary. Their main purpose being to interpret the Buddha's teachings, they not only explain difficult words grammatically and lexically but also contain explanations and expositions of the Buddha's doctrine. Commentators have often digressed in the course of their explanations and various narratives and episodes have found their way into the commentaries making them rich in material not only for the religious history but also for the secular history of ancient India and Ceylon. The aṭṭhakathā extant today are the works of Buddhaghosa and

other commentators who translated into Pali the then existing Sinhala aṭṭhakathā which, in turn, were translations from the original Pali.

Tradition regarding the Aṭṭhakathā

The Ceylonese tradition regarding the aṭṭhakathā is that they were composed (in Pali, it is to be presumed) at the First Council (Saṅgīti) and rehearsed at the two following Councils. They were introduced to Ceylon by Mahinda who also, it is said, translated them into Sinhala. The earliest record of this tradition is contained in the introduction in Buddhaghosa's commentaries. [5] It recurs in the accounts of Buddhaghosa contained in the Mahāvamsa [6] and the Saddhammasaṅgaha. [7] According to the Dīpavamsa [8] and the Mahāvamsa, [9] the commentaries (the Sinhala version, it is to be inferred) were put into writing in Ceylon along with the Pali canon in the reign of Vaṭṭagāmaṇī Abhaya in the first century B. C. The Mahāvamsa, [10] and Saddhammasaṅgaha [11] further state that, at the time of Buddhaghosa, the aṭṭhakathā (the original Pali) had disappeared in India. It is not known how far this statement was correct, but the original Pali aṭṭhakathā were not recorded in writing and no trace of them exists today. As will be seen, the Sinhala aṭṭhakathā put into writing in Vaṭṭagāmaṇī Abhaya's time have also disappeared.

This tradition regarding the origin of the aṭṭhakathā may be accepted with certain modifications. It is hardly conceivable that the original versions of the Pali commentaries as we find them today were fixed at the First Council soon after the death of the Buddha. But, it is very likely that certain abstruse points in the doctrine and ambiguous terms were the topics of discussion at the time of the First Council and that definite expositions and meanings to be attached to these were agreed upon. These interpretations would have formed the basis of commentaries of later times. With the development of heretical views and the growth of schisms in the Saṅgha, at the Second and Third Councils, the elders who assembled there would have continued this process of interpretation of the Buddha's teachings. The commentaries that Mahinda is said to have brought to Ceylon, along with the canon, probably consisted of the expositions as laid down at the Third Council which had just been concluded.

[12] These were not the work of one single author but of the community of monks. After Mahinda arrived in Ceylon and lived there, he transmitted these in the Sinhala language, and they came to be known as the Sīhala-aṭṭhakathā. The aṭṭhakathā thus introduced by Mahinda received extensive treatment and further, development at the hands of the Ceylonese monks, and it was this commentarial literature that Buddhaghosa and others later translated into Pali.

A later tradition contained in the tīkāś (sub-commentaries) attempts to attribute the commentaries to the Buddha himself. **[13]** While it would be impossible to think of the

present version of the commentaries as Buddha-vacana, the Buddha's own words, the origins of the aṭṭhakathā may well be traced to the time of the Buddha himself. It has been remarked that "the need for an accurate interpretation of the Buddha's words which formed the guiding principle of the life and action of the members of the Saṅgha was felt from the very first, even while the Master was living. Of course, there was at that time the advantage of referring a disputed question for solution to the Master himself and herein we meet with the first stage in the origin of the Buddhist comments." [14] The writer goes on to describe how at the various religious centres of the time serious discussions on matters relating to religion, philosophy, ethics, morals and polity took place and the raison d'être of the commentaries is to be treated to these discussions.

The earliest beginnings of exegetical literature can be traced to the canon itself. They are in the nature of answers to questions. There are numerous instances in the nikāyas where the Buddha (and in his absence his leading disciples) are approached for clarification of various doctrinal points. The result is a detailed exposition of the point raised. Examples of such expositions by the Buddha are to be found in the Mahākammavibhaṅga Sutta, [15] Koṭṭhika Sutta, [16] Sīvaka Sutta, [17] Aggivacchagotta Sutta, [18] and Sallekha Sutta. [19] The Buddha himself had recognised the ability of some of his disciples to explain in detail what he preached in brief. He had declared Mahākaccāna to be the foremost in this respect. [20] Instances of such expositions by

Mahākaccāna are to be found in the Haliddaka sutta [21] and the Madhupiṇḍika Sutta. [22] When Mahā-Kaccana's explanation is referred back to the Buddha he asks the monks to bear it in mind as the best that could have been given. There are numerous instances of expositions by other disciples, too. [23]

The development of exegetical activity can best be traced in the Vinaya Piṭaka. First, there were the rules or laws, the Pātimokkha which had to be observed by the bhikkhus and bhikkhunis. In the Sutta-Vibhaṅga not only is a verbal commentary of the text of each rule given, but also an account of the incident which led to its promulgation. A still further development is seen in the Mahāvagga and Cullavagga, where much more than a series of offences is found. Passages of commentarial nature and fragments of commentaries can also be traced throughout the nikāyas. The Udāna and Suttanipāta, for example, contain prose passages which are in the nature of commentaries. The Atthuddhāro, the last part of the Dhammasaṅgaṇi, is a kind of commentary on one of its sections, the Nikkhepakaṇḍa, and is in fact termed Aṭṭhakathākaṇḍa (commentarial division) in the Atthasālinī. [24] The last portion of the Nikkhepakaṇḍa itself is worded in the phraseology of a commentary. There is a fragment of a commentary at the end of the Vibhaṅga, too. The culmination of this process is reached in the Niddesa which is wholly a canonical commentary on the Aṭṭhaka and Pārāyana Vaggas of the Suttanipāta. According to Mrs. Rhys Davids, [25] "As these

older incorporated commentaries are varied both in form and in method, it is evident that commentaries of different kinds had a very early beginning. And the probability is very great that the tradition is not so far wrong when it tells us that commentaries on all the principal canonical books were handed down in schools of the Order along with the texts themselves." This statement is qualified by the observation that this does not mean that all the commentaries were so handed down in all the schools, nor that each of them was exactly the same in each of the schools where it was taught.

Sinhala and Dravidian Commentaries

Sīhalaṭṭhakathā was the name given to the Sinhala translations of the commentaries Mahinda had introduced to Ceylon. [26] Certain verses were, however, left unchanged in Pali. Although none of the Sinhala commentaries have come down to us, information regarding them can be gleaned from the Pali commentaries which displaced them, and from later works. [27]

The aṭṭhakathā referred to are: (1) Mahā-aṭṭhakathā or Mūla-aṭṭhakathā, also referred to as Aṭṭhakathā, (2) Uttaravihāra-aṭṭhakathā, (3) Mahā-paccariya-aṭṭhakathā, (4) Kurundī-aṭṭhakathā, (5) Andhakatṭhakathā, (6) Saṅkhepatṭhakathā, (7) Āgamatṭhakathā, (8) Porāṇatṭhakathā, (9)

Pubbopadesaṭṭhakathā, or Pubbaṭṭhakathā, (10)
Vinayaṭṭhakathā, (11) Suttantaṭṭhakathā, (12)
Abhidhammaṭṭhakathā, (13) Sīhalaṃātikaṭṭhakathā, (14)
Dīghaṭṭhakathā, (15) Majjhimaṭṭhakathā, (16)
Saṃyuttaṭṭhakathā, (17) Aṅguttaraṭṭhakathā, (18)
Jātakaṭṭhakathā and (19) Vibhaṅgappakaraṇassa
Sīhalaṭṭhakathā.

Mahinda would have introduced the traditional commentaries, but during the centuries that followed his arrival commentaries had developed, and at the time Buddhaghosa arrived in the island, i.e. in the early fifth century, there were commentaries belonging to different schools. The most important of them and the one on which Buddhaghosa relied most was the Mahā-aṭṭhakathā or Mūla-aṭṭhakathā, [28] the commentary of the Mahāvihāra, the orthodox and traditional school in Ceylon. This is expressly named as the foundation for Buddhaghosa's commentaries on the Vinaya [29] and the first four nikāyas. [30] Quotations from it are also found in other commentaries. [31] The Uttaravihāra-aṭṭhakathā belonged to the Uttaravihāra or the Abhayagirivihāra, the school which was the rival of Mahāvihāra. This does not appear to have been even consulted by the Pali commentators as no mention of it is made by them. It is referred to, however, in the Vaṃsatthappakāsinī where its variant readings from the Mahā-aṭṭhakathā are given. [32] There were also the Mahāpaccaṛī and the Kurundī-aṭṭhakathā which, as stated in the Samantapāsādikā, [33] were also written in Sinhala.

According to the Saddhammasaṅgaha, [34] while the Mahā-aṭṭhakathā was the traditional commentary fixed at the first Council and introduced to Ceylon and translated into Sinhala by Mahinda, the Mahāpaccarī and Kurundī-aṭṭhakathā originated in Ceylon. The Mahāpaccarī was so-called because it was composed on a raft in Ceylon, and the Kurundī was named after Kurundavelu-vihāra in Ceylon where it was composed. [35] We do not know to which school they belonged. [36] The Andhaka-aṭṭhakathā was very likely written in the Andhaka (Andhra) language. It may have belonged to the Andhaka school of south India as Buddhaghosa more often than not rejects its views. [37] The Saṅkhepa-aṭṭhakathā or 'Short Commentary,' quoted in the Samantapāsādikā, if it is to be accepted as written in south India, [38] was probably also the product of a south Indian school. The Cullapaccarī, mentioned in the Vajirabuddhiṭikā, [39] was probably an abridgement of the Mahāpaccarī.

The scope of these different aṭṭhakathā seems to have been varied. The Mahā-aṭṭhakathā appears to have dealt with all three sections of the canon since it furnished material for commentaries on all three Piṭakas. [40] The Uttaravihāra-aṭṭhakathā was the corresponding commentary of the Uttara-vihāra and probably its scope was as extensive. The contents of these two commentaries were not restricted to the canon, but also dealt with the history of Buddhism and the history of Ceylon. [41]

The Mahāpaccarī and Kurundī-aṭṭhakathā were much more

restricted in their scope. Copious references are made from them in the Samantapāsādikā [42] and they are quoted once each in the other Vinaya commentary of Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī. [43] In the introduction to the Samantapāsādikā they are expressly mentioned among the sources for that work. These references and the fact that they are not quoted in any of the other Pali commentaries would lead one to conclude that they dealt chiefly with the Vinaya. According to the Saddhamma-saṅgaha, [44] the Samantapāsādikā was based on the Kurundī-aṭṭhakathā, the commentaries on the first four nikāyas on the Mahā-aṭṭhakathā and the Atthasālinī and Sammohavinodanī on the Mahāpaccarī. While this would confirm that the Kurundī dealt mainly with the Vinaya, it would extend the contents of the Mahāpaccarī to the Abhidhamma. The Andhaka-aṭṭhakathā and the Saṅkhepa-aṭṭhakathā are referred to only in the Samantapāsādikā and this would indicate that they dealt with the Vinaya, either solely or as part of their contents.

Apart from these, three other groups of aṭṭhakathā are mentioned as sources of the Pali commentaries. They are the Āgamaṭṭhakathā, the Porāṇaṭṭhakathā and the Pubbopadesaṭṭhakathā or Pubbaṭṭhakathā. The Āgamaṭṭhakathā are referred to as sources only in the Abhidhamma commentaries of the Atthasālinī (in the introduction) and the Puggalapaññatti-aṭṭhakathā (in the epilogue). [45] Although they are not referred to in the sutta commentaries, their name would indicate that they probably dealt with the āgamas or nikāyas, apart from

abhidhamma. Though these appear to have been very extensive works, they cannot be identified with the Mahā-aṭṭhakathā as the two are mentioned side-by-side in the Atthasālinī. [46] The Porāṇaṭṭhakathā is referred to both in the singular [47] and plural. [48] These were followed by Dhammapāla in all his seven commentaries [49] and by Buddhadatta in his Madhuratthavilāsinī [50] and in the Sammohavinodanī. [51] Different theories have been put forward regarding the nature and identity of the Porāṇaṭṭhakathā. [52] From the above reference it is clear that the Porāṇaṭṭhakathā dealt at least with the sutta and abhidhamma and thus it was a very extensive commentary. The name would suggest that it was also a very old commentary. The fact that Porāṇaṭṭhakathā and Mahā-aṭṭhakathā have nowhere been quoted as two separate works, and the fact that those commentators following the Porāṇaṭṭhakathā-naya ('the method of the ancient commentary') also add that they were writing in the Mahāvihāra tradition make it very plausible that the Porāṇaṭṭhakathā, 'the ancient commentary', was synonymous with the Mahā-aṭṭhakathā which most likely was the oldest commentary. [53] The Pubbopadesaṭṭhakathā, or the Pubbaṭṭhakathā, followed by Upasena and Mahānāma, as mentioned by them in almost identical words in the introduction and the epilogue in their commentaries, the Saddhammapajjotikā and the Saddhammappakāsinī, would also appear to be only another name for the Mahā-aṭṭhakathā.

References are also made in the body of the Pali commentaries to various specific aṭṭhakathā, the names of which would suggest that they dealt with specific sections of the canon. Such are the Majjhimaṭṭhakathā, Saṃyuttaṭṭhakathā and Aṅguttaraṭṭhakathā mentioned in the Visuddhimagga, [54] and the Dīgha-aṭṭhakathā referred to in the Sumaṅgalavilāsinī. [55] The Suttanta-aṭṭhakathā also quoted in the Visuddhimagga [56] may have been the collective name for these commentaries. Reference is also made to an Abhidhammaṭṭhakathā, [57] Jātakatṭhakathā, [58] a Sīhalaṃkāraṭṭhakathā [59] and a Vibhaṅgappakaraṇassa Sīhalaṭṭhakathā. [60] It is not known whether they were independent commentaries or parts of a major commentary.

It is noteworthy that the commentaries on the four nikāyas with the exception of the Dīgha-aṭṭhakathā are mentioned only in the Visuddhimagga and not in the corresponding Pali commentaries on the nikāyas. It has been suggested [61] that these four would have been the components of the Āgamaṭṭhakathā and that when Buddhaghosa quotes from the aṭṭhakathā in his commentaries on the nikāyas, he would be quoting not from the Mahā-aṭṭhakathā but from the corresponding Sinhala commentary. This, however, would limit the quotations from the Mahā-aṭṭhakathā only to those instances where it is specifically named. But the paucity of references to Mahā-aṭṭhakathā in these commentaries (with the exception of Samantapāsādikā) does not support such a view. It would seem more likely that these commentaries individually specified were all

sections of the Mahā-aṭṭhakathā, or in the alternative were drawn from it, and thus by the word aṭṭhakathā in the Pali commentary would be indicated the corresponding commentary of the Mahā-aṭṭhakathā. On the same analogy, the Abhidhammaṭṭhakathā, Jātakaṭṭhakathā, Sīhalamātikaṭṭhakathā and Vibhaṅgappakaraṇassa-sīhalaṭṭhakathā were probably also parts of the Mahā-aṭṭhakathā rather than independent commentaries. 'Aṭṭhakathā' in the Vaṃsatthappakāsinī, too, would clearly refer to the Mahā-aṭṭhakathā as the word is used side-by-side with Uttaravihāra-aṭṭhakathā.

The Visuddhimagga also refers to the Vinayaṭṭhakathā sometimes in the singular [62] and sometimes in the plural. [63] It has been suggested that there may have been more than one commentary on the Vinaya and that the most important of them would have been called the Vinayaṭṭhakathā. [64] This view is plausible as the commonest cause of disagreement in the Saṅgha was over the interpretation of the Vinaya rules and this could naturally have given rise to several aṭṭhakathā on the Vinaya.

The different Sinhala aṭṭhakathā have been cited often in the Pali commentaries as authority for particular views, but they do not always speak in the same voice. However, they appear to disagree on matters of detail rather than on major doctrinal points. The Mahā-aṭṭhakathā, the Mahāpacarī and the Kurundī are constantly quoted in the Samantapāsādikā and less often the Andhaka-aṭṭhakathā and the Saṅkhepa-

aṭṭhakathā. Sometimes the Mahāpaccarī and the Kurundī agree with each other [65] and sometimes they differ. [66] Often the Mahā-aṭṭhakathā differs from one or other of the other commentaries. [67] There are occasions when the Mahāpaccarī and the Kurundī differ from each other as also from the Mahā-aṭṭhakathā. [68] At times they agree with each other but differ from the Mahā-aṭṭhakathā. [69] In other instances the Mahā-aṭṭhakathā agrees with one but they both differ from the other. [70] The Saṅkhepa-aṭṭhakathā, though it often follows the view of the Mahāpaccarī, occasionally differs from it. [71] Although Buddhaghosa generally accepts the view of the Mahā-aṭṭhakathā, there are times when the Mahāpaccarī and the others are preferred to it. [72] Most often the Andhaka-aṭṭhakathā stands by itself and its view, when not corroborated by the other aṭṭhakathas is rejected. [73]

In the Atthasālinī, a difference in view between the Mahā-aṭṭhakathā and the Āgamaṭṭhakathā; [74] and in the Visuddhimagga between the Vinayaṭṭhakathā and the Suttantaṭṭhakathā [75] and Majjhimaṭṭhakathā [76] is recorded. But all these differences relate to details. Likewise, differences in the Mahā-aṭṭhakathā and the Uttaravihāra-aṭṭhakathā are recorded in the Vaṃsaththappakāsini. [77]

The commentaries continued to be expanded and developed upon, even after they were recorded in writing in the first century B. C. The period of growth and development can be fixed from the incidents and historical events referred to in the commentaries. Buddhaghosa does not bring the events

down to his day, so that it may be assumed that the last of the events recorded in his commentaries were also found in the Sinhala originals. The fact that stories about India, which can be dated (with very few exceptions of references that could be expected of a writer in Ceylon), [78] relate to a period not later than Asoka in the third century B. C., [79] would incidentally confirm the tradition that the commentaries were introduced to Ceylon by Mahinda. The events after that are, in the main, set in Ceylon. Of the kings of Ceylon, events in whose reigns are discussed, the latest is Vasabha (67-111A.C.). [80] Moreover, it has been shown [81] that in the introduction to the Samantapāsādikā [82] Buddhaghosa in his list of Vinaya teachers from Mahinda up to 'the present day' (yāva ajjatanā) does not include theras who lived after the 1st century A. C. This would indicate that the Sinhala commentaries, in the main, ceased to develop after this time. However, it cannot be concluded that they took the final shape at this time, for there are occasional references to events and persons even after this date, e. g. to Rudradāman, second century A. C. [83] and Mahāsenā (275–301 A.C.). [84] There may have been sporadic additions down to the time of Buddhaghosa.

The Sinhala commentaries, which may be regarded as the earliest literary works in Ceylon, have been lost and no trace of them now exists. It has not been ascertained when exactly they disappeared. In the Buddhaghosuppatti it is stated that when Buddhaghosa completed his task of translating the commentaries into Pali, the Saṅgharāja caused the works of

Mahinda to be piled up and burnt. [85] But there is evidence for the existence of these commentaries long after this date and this episode may be considered as one more of the legends in the Buddhaghosuppatti. The references in the Mahāvamsa to the recitation of the canon together with the commentaries [86] would not prove the existence of the Sinhala commentaries at these periods, as aṭṭhakathā could equally refer to the Pali commentaries. However, quotations from the Sinhala aṭṭhakathā in the works of later authors would prove their existence at the time these book Dīgha-aṭṭhakathā were written, and they would appear to have been available till about the thirteenth century. [87] It is not known how or when they finally disappeared. Just as Pali replaced Sinhala as the literary language at this time, so the Sinhala commentaries were superseded by the Pali commentaries which in addition were used more extensively. Buddhaghosa himself says, in the introduction to the Samantapāsādikā, [88] that the commentary written in Sinhala was of no benefit to the bhikkhus outside Ceylon and therefore he was rendering it into Pali.

Other sources of the Pali Commentaries

Apart from the specific quotations from the different aṭṭhakathā, Buddhaghosa makes use of several other authorities which show a close connection with the aṭṭhakathā. In fact, it is quite possible that some of them

were found incorporated in the Sinhala commentaries. The various authorities cited are a clue to the philosophical and literary activity of the time and it would have been only surprising if the commentaries had remained static.

Two terms closely connected with aṭṭhakathā were aṭṭhakathikā and aṭṭhakathācariya. “Those who studied and handed down the aṭṭhakathā were known as the atthakathikās. [89] By the other term were generally understood the teachers (ācariyā), responsible for the compilation of the aṭṭhakathā. Buddhaghosa holds the aṭṭhakathācariyas in high esteem and says that they knew the intentions of the Buddha and that, therefore, their word should be taken as authority”. [90] The views of these aṭṭhakathācariyas are scattered throughout the commentaries. Quotations from them are given, often in prose and sometimes in verse. [91] The opinion of the ācariyas [92] is also sometimes quoted. This referred to the opinion of great teachers like Mahāpaduma. [93] The authority of Ācariyānaṃ samānaṭṭhakathā (similar expositions of the teachers) is often cited as opposed to the views of the Vitaṇḍavādins (unorthodox sectarians). [94]

The commentaries contain numerous quotations from the porāṇā (ancients), most often in verse [95] but sometimes in prose, [96] which for the most part are introduced with words tenāhu porāṇā, ‘therefore the ancients say.’ The frequency of these quotations and the manner in which they are introduced show that they formed a very important and authoritative source of the commentaries on all the three

Piṭakas. It is not known whether Buddhaghosa found them already included in the Sinhala commentaries. Closely associated with the porāṇā were the porāṇācariyā and the pubbācariyā whose views are also contained in the Pali commentaries. [97] There were also the porāṇakattherā [98] whose opinions are regarded with less authority than the foregoing. The relationship between these has not been definitely established and various views have been expressed. Some have identified the porāṇā with the porāṇaṭṭhakathā while others do not agree with this. [99]

The Pali commentaries have also made fairly wide use of the traditions handed down by the bhāṇakā ('the reciters'). Differences in views between the different bhāṇakas have been recorded. [100] As in the case of the quotations from the porāṇā it is not known whether the views of the bhāṇakas were already found in the Sinhala commentaries or, alternatively, in what form they were available. There are also references to the different views held by the vinayadharas and the suttantikas. [101] The view of the abhidhammikas is also recorded. [102] The derivation of words by the akkharacintakas, the grammarians, is given with the alternative derivation of the aṭṭhakathācariyas. [103] 'Monks living beyond the sea' (parasamuddavāsī), presumably Indian, have also had their share of contribution to religious discussion. Their views are recorded in the Papañcasūdānī. [104] Apart from these opinions of groups of monks and teachers, the individual views of certain eminent bhikkhus, who had a specialised

knowledge of the canon, have also found their way into the commentaries. They were, undoubtedly, greatly respected bhikkhus, for their views to have assumed such importance. Among the individual opinions recorded are those of Dīgabhāṇaka Tipiṭaka Mahāsiva, [105] Tipiṭaka Cūlābhaya, [106] Tipiṭaka Cūlanāga, [107] Tipiṭaka Mahā-Dhammarakkhita, [108] Moravāpīvāsī Mahādatta [109] and Mahāsiva therā. [110]

Buddhaghosa has also quoted from definite texts. The most frequent and copious quotations are from the canonical texts themselves and are found throughout the commentaries. The extra-canonical Pali works quoted are the Milindapañha, [111] Peṭakopadesa, [112] Nettippakaraṇa [113] and the Dīpavaṃsa. [114]

Pali Commentaries

The Pali commentaries are to be dated from the first half of the fifth century A.C. [115] According to the Mahāvāṃsa account (ch. xxxvii), Buddhaghosa came to Ceylon in the time of king Mahānāma (406-28 A. C.). Buddhaghosa is the only commentator known to the Mahāvāṃsa and all the commentaries are Attr. to him, but this is undoubtedly an exaggerated account of his achievements. [116] Buddhaghosa was no doubt by far the greatest commentator and the

author of the most important commentaries, but there were others who continued the task of translating the Sinhala commentaries begun by him. Buddhadatta was an elder contemporary of Buddhaghosa. The most important commentator after Buddhaghosa was Dhammapāla, the author of seven commentaries on books of the Khuddaka Nikāya whose talent and ability were almost equal to that of Buddhaghosa. He was followed by Upasena, Mahānāma and others. [117] The period of the later commentators cannot be definitely ascertained, but it may be surmised that the Pali commentaries, begun in the first half of the fifth century, were completed by the end of the next century. [118]

A list of the Pali commentaries with their authors is here inserted. In this list, Buddhaghosa's name has been marked with an asterisk where his authorship had been generally accepted but doubts have been expressed in recent times.

List of Pali Commentaries

Non-canonical

<i>Commentary</i>	<i>Author of Commentary</i>
<i>Visuddhimagga</i>	Buddhaghosa

Vinaya

<i>Canonical text</i>	<i>Commentary</i>	<i>Author of Commentary</i>
Vinaya Piṭaka	<i>Samantapāsādikā</i>	Buddhaghosa*
Pātimokkha	<i>Kaṅkhāvitarāṇī</i>	Buddhaghosa*

Sutta

<i>Canonical text</i>	<i>Commentary</i>	<i>Author of Commentary</i>
Dīgha Nikāya	<i>Sumaṅgalavilāsinī</i>	Buddhaghosa
Majjhima Nikāya	<i>Papañcasūdanī</i>	Buddhaghosa
Saṃyutta Nikāya	<i>Sāratthapakāsinī</i>	Buddhaghosa
Aṅguttara Nikāya	<i>Manorathapurāṇī</i>	Buddhaghosa
Khuddaka Nikāya		
(1) Khuddakapāṭha	<i>Paramatthajotika</i>	Attr. to Buddhaghosa [119]
(2) Dhammapada	<i>Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā</i>	Attr. to Buddhaghosa [119]
(3) Udāna	<i>Paramatthadīpanī</i>	Dhammapāla
(4) Itivuttaka	<i>Paramatthadīpanī</i>	Dhammapāla
(5) Suttanipāta	<i>Paramatthajotika</i>	Attr. to Buddhaghosa

[119]

(6) Vimānavatthu	<i>Paramatthadīpanī</i>	Dhammapāla
(7) Petavatthu	<i>Paramatthadīpanī</i>	Dhammapāla
(8) Theragātha	<i>Paramatthadīpanī</i>	Dhammapāla
(9) Therigātha	<i>Paramatthadīpanī</i>	Dhammapāla
(10) Jātaka	<i>Jātakatṭhakatha</i>	Attr. to Buddhaghosa [119]
(11) Niddesa	<i>Saddhammapajjotika</i>	Upasena
(12) Paṭisambhidāmagga	<i>Saddhammapakāsinī</i>	Mahānāma
(13) Apadāna	<i>Visuddhajanavilāsinī</i>	Not known [120]
(14) Buddhavaṃsa	<i>Madhuratthavilāsinī</i>	Buddhadatta
(15) Cariyāpiṭaka	<i>Paramatthadīpanī</i>	Dhammapāla

Abhidhamma

<i>Canonical text</i>	<i>Commentary</i>	<i>Author of Commentary</i>
Dhammasaṅgaṇī	<i>Atthasālinī</i>	Buddhaghosa*
Vibhaṅga	<i>Sammohavinodanī</i>	Buddhaghosa*
Kathāvatthu)	
Puggalapaññatti)	
Dhātukathā	<i>Pañcappakaraṇatṭha-</i>	Buddhaghosa*
Yamaka) <i>kathā</i>	

The chronological order in which the different commentaries were compiled cannot be definitely ascertained because of mutual references in the works. However, this is not so in all cases and some works are clearly presupposed by others. The Visuddhimagga was undoubtedly Buddhaghosa's first work, for, while it does not refer to any of his other works, it is frequently quoted in them. Of the two Vinaya commentaries, the Samantapāsādikā was written before the Kaṅkhāvitāranī. The Sumaṅgalavilāsinī was the first of the Nikāya commentaries and next came the Papañcasūdanī. Of the commentaries in the Abhidhamma, the Atthasālinī and the Sammohavinodanī were the earliest. The Sammohavinodanī is referred to (without any counter-references) in the Papañcasūdanī, Sāratthappakāsiṇī and Manorathapūraṇī. The earliest commentary of the Khuddaka Nikāya was perhaps the Jātakaṭṭhakathā. The Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā was written before the Thera-Therīgāthā commentaries and the Vimānavatthu-aṭṭhakathā and Petavatthu-aṭṭhakathā. Of the last two, the Vimānavatthu-aṭṭhakathā came earlier. The Apadāna-aṭṭhakathā was among the last of the commentaries. [121]

While these Pali commentaries drew their material from the Sinhala and Dravidian commentaries, they were not verbatim translations of them. This is quite evident from the manner in which the Pali commentaries have been compiled. Such expressions as Mahā-aṭṭhakathāyaṃ sāraṃ

verbatim translations of them. This is quite evident from the manner in which the Pali commentaries have been compiled. Such expressions as Mahā-aṭṭhakathāyaṃ sāraṃ ādāya, Mūla-aṭṭhakathāyaṃ sāraṃ ādāya, Porāṇaṭṭhakathānaṃ sāraṃ ādāya (having taken the essence of ...) in the epilogues of certain commentaries [122] where the source has been indicated, would suggest that the Pali commentaries were not mere translations of the corresponding Sinhala commentaries. The work of Buddhaghosa and others appears to have been to make a critical study not only of the different Sinhala and Dravidian commentaries, but also other sources of material, such as the canon and various traditions and opinions, and, to make a new commentary in Pali in the light of all the material available. The commentarial interpretation is often compared with the canonical, and where it disagrees it is rejected. [123] Even the narratives and episodes in the Pali commentaries do not always seem to have been taken from the Sinhala commentaries. Burlingame has discussed [124] how stories in the commentaries, including prose stories in the Jātaka-aṭṭhakathā, are to a great extent not translations from the Sinhala, but borrowings from and adaptations of pre-existing Pali material. Sten Konow has pointed out [125] that while some of the narratives in the Ceylonese commentaries and the chronicles are of Ceylon origin, others can be traced to a distinct Indian origin. Buddhaghosa's quotations from the Dīpavaṃsa, a work generally dated after the Sinhala commentaries, [126] would

Not much original thought is shown in the Pali commentaries. Buddhaghosa does not appear to have had a free hand in his works. According to the Mahāvamsa account, Buddhaghosa did not come to Ceylon on an invitation and as such he probably had to follow the instructions of the Mahāvihāra elders. In the majority of the commentaries, in the epilogue, the commentators have pledged their allegiance to the Mahāvihāra tradition. Under the circumstances, not much originality is to be expected of the Pali commentators. In the introductory verses to the Samantapāsādikā Buddhaghosa gives the method he adopts in his work: “In commencing this commentary, I shall, having embodied therein the Mahā-aṭṭhakathā without excluding any proper meaning from the decisions contained in the Mahāpaccārī, as also in the famous Kurundī and other commentaries, and including the opinions of the elders, perform my task well ... From these (Sinhala) commentaries after casting off the language, condensing detailed accounts, including authoritative decisions and without over-stepping any Pali idiom (I shall proceed to compose) ...” It is in the introductions to the nikāya commentaries that he sheds further light: “And now rejecting the Sinhala language, adopting the graceful language that accords so well with the order of the text, not contradicting the faultless conclusions of the Elders of the priesthood who dwell at the Great Monastery ... and to the end that religion may long endure, I proceed to expound the meaning of my text, omitting all unnecessary repetitions.”

Monastery ... and to the end that religion may long endure, I proceed to expound the meaning of my text, omitting all unnecessary repetitions.”

It is quite clear that he was confined in his writings to the Mahāvihāra tradition and also that not all the material in the Sinhala commentaries has been included in the Pali commentaries. An example of this is found in the Samantapāsādikā where Buddhaghosa says that the Mahā-aṭṭhakathā contained detailed accounts on certain subjects, but he does not proceed to include them. [127] Apart from expressing his opinion on rare occasions where there was no proclaimed opinion, with the note *ayaṃ pana me attano mati* ('but this is my own opinion'), Buddhaghosa does not seem to have added any original material of his own. This is clear from his list of the Vinaya teachers up to 'the present day' (*yāva ajjatanā*) in the Samantapāsādikā (a reference already noted) which he does not bring up to his day but stops at the first century A.C. apparently as he found in Sinhala commentaries. This might also explain why he has not referred to such an important event as the bringing of the Tooth Relic to Ceylon. The Sinhala commentaries which were closed before this event would not have referred to it and thus it did not find a place in the Pali commentaries either. The fact that image worship, which had become quite common in Buddhaghosa's time, is hardly mentioned in the Pali commentaries, too, is probably to be explained in the same manner. [128]

There are different derivations of the same word in different

commentaries would have received treatment at the hands of teachers, both learned and otherwise, and these inconsistencies are probably to be Attr. to them. These found their way into the Pali commentaries and Buddhaghosa possibly did not consider it his responsibility to correct them. His task was not to write original commentaries but to render the existing ones into Pali, making use of all the available material. Buddhaghosa's work was that of an editor-translator, but he seems to have performed his task so efficiently and with such discretion and authority, that now he is regarded more or less as the author of the commentaries. [132]

In the course of the development of the Sinhala aṭṭhakathā, certain deviations from the canonical literature are to be noticed and these are repeated in the Pali commentaries. [133] Firstly, there were instances where the aṭṭhakathā contained readings different from the text, though in some instances the differences were very slight. Such instances are found in the Jātakatṭhakathā. [134] There are marked differences, however, in the Buddhavaṃsa-aṭṭhakathā, which contains some stanzas not found in the text and omits others found in the text. [135] These instances are so many that it has been suggested [136] that the Buddhavaṃsa commented upon is not the text as we have it today and that it has received many additional verses in Ceylon. There are also instances where the commentatorial view differs from that of the text. [137] More frequent are instances where the canonical material has been elaborated upon. This is

also instances where the commentatorial view differs from that of the text. [137] More frequent are instances where the canonical material has been elaborated upon. This is particularly noticeable in the biographical accounts of the Buddha. The narratives in connection with the conception and birth of the Sakyamuni contained in the Mahāpadāna Sutta of the Dīgha-Nikāya [138] and the Acchariyabbhuta-dhamma Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya [139] appear in their respective commentaries in a greatly detailed and exaggerated form. [140] The four guardian gods who, in the canonical accounts, protect the bodhisatta at conception are increased to 40,000 in the commentary. The extra details are sometimes given under the heading sambahulavāra (manifold section) which the commentator states has not come down in the text. [141] Sometimes, an attempt is made to give the stamp of the authority of Buddhavacana to the new material in the commentaries with a note that it was said by the Buddha, though it has not been included in the text. [142] A new subject that is discussed in the commentaries is the pañca-antaradhānāni (five disappearances) that would follow at the end of the Sāsana. [143] Certain terms, too, acquired in the commentaries distinct derivations unknown to the canon. [144]

Differences are also seen between the different commentaries themselves. These no doubt have been taken over from the Sinhalese and Dravidian commentaries. The Pali commentators themselves have pointed out some of them. [145] The inconsistencies in the derivations of words

details. [146] Sometimes differences between the commentaries are seen in the definition of words. [147] However, all these disagreements are with regard to details and no major discrepancies are found.

Most commentaries have been given special names, like *Samantapāsādikā Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, etc., while a few are merely named after the work they comment on, such as the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* and the *Jātakatṭhakathā*. All the commentaries have a prologue in verse, followed often by an introduction in prose of varying length (which in the *Samantapāsādikā* and *Atthasālinī* runs to several pages), and an epilogue, followed by a colophon, indicating authorship. In Buddhaghosa's commentaries to the first four *nikāyas*, the prologue is almost identical and the epilogue also contains similar verses. *Dhammapāla's* works, too, show little variation in the prologue and epilogue. Verses in common also occur in these sections in the commentaries of *Upasena* and *Mahānāma*.

In the prologue, the author usually pays homage to the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha, gives a brief note on the text he is commenting on and proceeds to give the method he proposes to adopt in translating. Excerpts from Buddhaghosa's works have already been quoted. Often the source of the work and the tradition followed are indicated in either the prologue or the epilogue of the commentary. In addition to this is sometimes disclosed the name of the person at whose request the work was undertaken. In the epilogue, too, is often stated why the work has been so

addition to this is sometimes disclosed the name of the person at whose request the work was undertaken. In the epilogue, too, is often stated why the work has been so named. Additional information, such as the name of the reigning king (usually referred to by title only) and the place where the work was compiled, is contained in the epilogues of certain works. [148] The colophons which are worded in almost identical language give some meagre information about the author.

The prose introduction generally gives a literary history of the work, though much more than this is discussed in the longer introductions. In the commentary proper the commentators appear to have followed a fairly systematic method. The work is dealt with section by section, e.g., sutta or gāthā as the case may be, to which very often a special introduction is given on how, when and by whom it was spoken, and on the places and persons named in it. [149] The text is then commented upon, every word or phrase considered doubtful being explained philologically and exegetically. In certain commentaries like the Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā and Jātakatṭhakathā, the actual exegesis of the words of the text is restricted to only a few paragraphs, while the introduction is very long and forms the bulk of the commentary. In the explanation of a word, the various interpretations as also the various derivations are given. A striking example is the eightfold derivation of the word 'Tathāgata' found repeated in many commentaries. [150] The different views of the derivation of

similes are used to make the meaning clearer. To illustrate a point, factual examples are given. It is in the course of such explanation that so much extraneous matter has crept into the commentaries. In illustration of a point, often the commentator is not satisfied with one example but gives a series of them as in the case of the explanation of saṃsaggajāta, occurring in several commentaries, where instances of many bhikkhus who had come to grief are given. [153]

It has already been discussed how the different views of various authorities, like the aṭṭhakathā, the porāṇas and the bhāṇakas have been quoted. There is a passage in the Sumaṅgalavilāsinī [154] where the relative values of the authorities, sutta, suttānuloma, ācariyavāda and attano-mati, are discussed. Ācariyavāda is identified with aṭṭhakathā. Of these, sutta is the most authoritative and should not be rejected, for it would be like rejecting the Buddha himself. The other three are to be accepted only if they agree with 'sutta.' In the Atthasālinī, the reader is warned about the reliability of a statement which is not supported by the text or commentary. [155] Sometimes the different versions are introduced as the pālinaya, or pakaraṇanaya and aṭṭhakathānaya: [156] 'the methods of the canonical texts, of the treatises and of the commentaries.' At times, the alternative interpretation is introduced without naming the sources as, for instance, aparo nayo or keci vadanti or apare ...'ti. [157] Quotations from texts often from the canon are also given without naming the source with the

naming the sources as, for instance, *aparo nayo* or *keci vadanti* or *apare ...'ti*. [157] Quotations from texts often from the canon are also given without naming the source with the words *vuttam hi etam* (it has been said). [158] Later commentaries have borrowed from the earlier ones. [159] Very often the reader is referred to explanations in the earlier works. [160] Repetitions are also avoided by such expressions as *sesam uttānatiham eva* (the rest is clear in meaning). [161] However, in spite of these attempts at cutting down repetitions, numerous instances are found in the commentaries where various narratives and episodes are repeated sometimes in the same wording, sometimes slightly differently. [162] As has been pointed out earlier, in the definitions and derivations of words and the narratives common to different commentaries too, slight deviations are also noticed.

In language, style and method the *aṭṭhakathā* show an advance on canonical commentaries and post-canonical works like the *Nettipakaraṇa*, *Petakopadesa* and *Milindapañhā*. “In place of the archaic, stilted sometimes halting *sutta* speech, almost puritanical in its simplicity ...” we find in the commentaries “... a language rich in its vocabulary, flexible in its use, elegant in structure, often intricate in the verbiage of its constructions and capable of expressing all the ideas that the human mind had then conceived. Sonorous, long-winded sentences took the place of the direct, simple composition of the *suttas*.” [163] Striking examples of such involved and long sentences, with

use of unusually long compounds and certain peculiar abstract formations. [166] But, the language and the style of all the commentaries are not uniform, varying with the author and also with the contents and subject matter dealt with. It is precisely for this reason that Buddhaghosa's authorship of the Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā and the Jātakaṭṭhakathā is doubted, because of the difference in language and style from the works which are undoubtedly his.

The commentaries reflect the capabilities of their authors. Buddhaghosa is the author of the most important commentaries and is undoubtedly the commentator par excellence. Dhammapāla comes very close to him and, had he not come after Buddhaghosa, he might have written the commentaries on the greater works that Buddhaghosa did. They both show considerable talent, "great learning, much exegetical skill and a good deal of sound judgment." [167] There is much in common between Buddhaghosa and Dhammapāla. They hold "very similar views ... they have the same method of exegesis; they have reached the same stage in philological and etymological science and they both have the same lack of any knowledge of the simplest rules of the higher criticism." [168] The works of the other commentators that followed are inferior to the work of the two great commentators.

Contents: Doctrinal

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The contents of the aṭṭhakathā are, as only to be expected, related to the texts they are interpreting and much information regarding the subjects dealt with in the texts is to be found in the commentaries, which greatly aid the understanding of the texts. Words of doubtful meaning are clarified and explained in detail. This is particularly seen in the Abhidhamma commentaries which contain dissertations of certain Abhidhamma concepts like khandha, āyatana, dhātu (dealt with more especially in the Dhātukathāpakaraṇaṭṭhakathā, pp. 3 ff.) and the paccaya, towards the elucidation of which the bulk of the Paṭṭhānappakaraṇaṭṭhakathā is devoted. The philosophical ideas contained in the canon are found in a more intelligible and systematic form in the commentaries. In the words of Mrs. C. Rhys Davids when she speaks of Buddhaghosa, "... to me his work is not only highly suggestive, but also a mine of historic interest. To put it aside is to lose the historical perspective of the course of Buddhist philosophy." [169]

Other Contents

While a very few commentaries, like the

various episodes, narratives, fables and legends, whereby the commentators have unknowingly given us much information on the social, philosophical and religious history of ancient India and Ceylon. Much geographical data and glimpses of political history are also contained in them. While some commentaries like the Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā, Jātaḱaṭṭhakathā and Dhammapāla's Paramatthadīpāni are rich in material for the social and economic history of Buddhist India, most of Buddhaghosa's commentaries and the later ones, while containing material relating to India, throw a flood of light on the religious and secular history of Ceylon for centuries after Buddhism was introduced into the island. The history of Buddhism in Ceylon, the development of the monastery, the growth of worship and ritual and the history of the Saṅgha can all be traced from the information furnished in them.

India

Religious

The aṭṭhakathā greatly supplement the scattered canonical information regarding the life of the Buddha. In several commentaries biographical accounts are found, the most important of them being in the Nidānakathā of the Jātaḱaṭṭhakathā. The Buddhavaṃsaṭṭhakathā [170] gives a

information regarding the life of the Buddha. In several commentaries biographical accounts are found, the most important of them being in the Nidānakathā of the Jātakaṭṭhakathā. The Buddhavaṃsaṭṭhakathā [170] gives a list of places where the Buddha stayed during the first twenty years of his preaching before he settled down at Sāvatti. The Samantapāsādikā [171] refers to the Buddha's three visits to Ceylon. The origins of the Buddha legend, which can be traced in the canon, developed in the commentaries. An attempt is made in the Sāratthappakāsinī to make the Buddha supernatural, when he is made to appear as not being subject to the signs of old age. [172] Accounts of previous Buddhas are contained in the Buddhavaṃsaṭṭhakathā. While the Therīgāthā-aṭṭhakathā, the Therīgāthā-aṭṭhakathā, and sections of the Manorathapūraṇī directly deal with the biographies of the bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs in the Buddha's time, material about the Buddha's leading disciples and lay followers is scattered throughout the commentaries. The Navaṅgasatthusāsana (ninefold division of the canon) has been explained in many works. [173] The six heretical teachers are also referred to. [174] The formation of schisms in the Saṅgha, the growth of the eighteen schools as also the six post-Asokan schools are dealt with and their views discussed in the Kathāvattuppakaraṇaṭṭhakathā. The ten heretical sects in Asoka's time are named. [175] Views of the unorthodox sectarians, referred to as Vitaṇḍavādins are found throughout the commentaries. [176] The development

(duty of meditation, chosen by those who enter the Saṅgha in their old age) are mentioned. [178] The Vimānavatthu-aṭṭhakathā and the Petavatthu-aṭṭhakathā are the main source of material for the Buddhist idea of heaven and hell.

Social and Economic

Much of the social and economic life of the people of ancient India can be reconstructed from the information found in such commentaries as the Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā, Jātakaṭṭhakathā, Vimānavatthu-aṭṭhakathā and Petavatthu-aṭṭhakathā. There were villages of particular castes like the Brāhmaṇagāma and the Caṇḍālagāma, [179] and sometimes various craftsmen grouped themselves in villages (vaḍḍhakīgāma, kammāragāma), [180] or at times in streets (dantakāravīti, rajakavīthi, pesakāravīthi). [181] Some villages were very large. [182] Slavery existed and the usual price quoted for a slave is 100 kahāpaṇas. [183] There is evidence of polygamy. Often a man with a barren wife takes another in the hope of issue. [184] Frequent references are made to courtesans. [185] A woman was so religious that she hired the village courtesan to attend on her non-Buddhist husband for a fortnight while she was engaged in religious activity. [186] People often gathered at festivals; some of which continued throughout the night. [187] Women used perfume, wore garlands and jewellery. [188] Sometimes men, too, used ornaments, perfume and garlands. [189] There were high roads from Kusinārā to Pāvā, [190] from

which continued throughout the night. [187] Women used perfume, wore garlands and jewellery. [188] Sometimes men, too, used ornaments, perfume and garlands. [189] There were high roads from Kusinārā to Pāvā, [190] from Pāṭaliputta to the old north-west frontier [191] (now West Pakistan), and traders plied in caravans encountering much danger. [192] The more enterprising among them engaged in trade overseas. [193] Two of the ancient ports were Bhārukacca and Gambhīra. [194] The seṭṭhi (merchant, banker, treasurer) was an important person in the village. [195] The existence of guilds (seṇi) is indicated. [196] Coins and measures used are also mentioned. [197] In certain districts in South India the dead were not cremated but buried, and after a period the bones were dug up, washed and smeared with scents. [198] Takkasilā was the great centre of learning which drew students from distant places. [199]

Political

Information regarding tribes like the Vajjis and the Licchavis [200] and kings, contemporaneous with the Buddha, like Bimbisāra, Ajātasattu and Pasenadi, [201] are found scattered. References are also made to later kings, like Asoka and Rudradāman. [202]

Geographical

Accounts of places in India, like the Himālayas, the Anotatta

Ceylon

Religious

Buddhaghosa's commentaries are very rich in material about the religious conditions in Ceylon. The bhāṇakas, who had originated in India as the reciters of the various sections of the canon, developed in Ceylon into different schools of interpretation. Much information is available regarding the more illustrious monks such as Dīghabhāṇaka Abhaya, Tipiṭaka Cūlābhaya, Maliyadeva, Dīghabhāṇaka Tipiṭaka Mahāsiva, Tipiṭaka Cūlanāga and others, [204] who came to be regarded as authorities on the canon. Accounts of diligent monks who strove and attained arahantship in spite of difficulties [205] and, in other instances, monks who were deluded that they were arahants but were found out, [206] are also mentioned. According to the commentaries, at one time arhants were very common in Ceylon. [207]

Accounts of monks who yield to temptation and fall off their religious life are also met with. [208] An instance of a dispute between the Mahāvihāra and Abhayagiri faction over a point in the Vinaya is recorded. [209] In the prologue of the Jātakaṭṭhakathā, reference is made to a bhikkhu of the Mahīsāsaka school. There was a disagreement between the Paṃsukūlikas and Dhammakathikas as to whether learning (pariyatti) or practice (paṭipatti) was more important and it was decided in favour of pariyatti. [210] As seen from this

Pāṃsukūlikas and Dhammakathikas as to whether learning (pariyatti) or practice (paṭipatti) was more important and it was decided in favour of pariyatti. [210] As seen from this reference, the ascendancy of Sutta over Vinaya took place after the disturbance in the country and the dangers the religion faced in the time of Vaṭṭagāmaṇī Abhaya. There were various religious centres, such as Cetiyaṭṭabbata and Cittalapabbata. [211] The development of the idea of worship can be traced. The sacred bodhi tree and the Mahāthūpa became objects of popular worship. [212] Great festivals were held at the Mahāthūpa to which people came from distant places, beautifully dressed. [213] Instances are related where the offering of flowers at the cetiya is rewarded with birth in heaven [214] and the joy of a monk experienced after sweeping the courtyard of the cetiya leads to arahantship. [215] Offerings of lighted lamps to the cetiya are also referred to. [216] The destruction of a cetiya or bodhi tree was a grave crime. The bodhi tree was held very sacred and a branch could be cut only under very special circumstances. [217] The preaching of the Dhamma was common. [218] The preaching of the Ariyavaṃsa drew crowds from far and near. [219] Another festival was that of Giribhaṇḍapūjā. [220] The efficacy of chanting of parittas is discussed. [221] The bringing of the collar bone relic to Ceylon is related, [222] but no mention is made of the tooth relic. Reference is also made to images containing relics, [223] but no image houses are mentioned. An account of how the relics would disappear at the end of the sāsaṇa is

could practise medicine under certain circumstances. [225] (Vasabha's queen was cured by a medicine prescribed, though not directly, by Mahāpaduma). [226] Monasteries could hold land [227] and sometimes slaves were given to monasteries by kings. [228] Incidentally, slaves could not be ordained unless they were freed. [229] In Duṭṭhagāmaṇī's time there were many learned bhikkhus, [230] while in Saddhātissa's time there was general laxity in the Saṅgha. [231] Accounts of various deities, like Sakka, Vissakamma and Yama are to be found. [232] References to other religious practices are also made. [233]

Social and Economic

There is much less information regarding social conditions in Ceylon than those of India. Glimpses of village life can however be obtained. [234] A list of household utensils and articles used is found in the Kaṅkhāvitarāṇī. [235] There were rest halls in ancient Ceylon. [236] Instances of extreme piety among the laity are recorded. [237] At least one street, named after a caste (kevaṭṭavīthi), is mentioned. [238] The king employed an officer to read out his edicts. [239] There were also highly learned people among the laity. [240] People engaged in cattle breeding [241] and worked in sugar mills. [242] There were tax-collectors employed by the king. [243] Coins and measures in use are discussed. [244] A port often referred to is Jambukola. [245] Communications between India and Ceylon were kept up. Ceylonese monks

[243] Coins and measures in use are discussed. [244] A port often referred to is Jambukola. [245] Communications between India and Ceylon were kept up. Ceylonese monks went to India in times of difficulty [246] or in search of knowledge [247] and Indian monks came to Ceylon on pilgrimage. [248] In fact, they too have made their contribution to commentarial literature. [249]

Political

The piety of kings like Duṭṭhagāmaṇī and Saddhātissa, Bhātiya and Kūṭakaṇṇa is often discussed. [250] Other royal figures like Mahānāga Coranāga, Vasabha and Mahāsenā are referred to. [251] References are also made to political figures, like the Tamil minister Dīghajantu. [252] Historical events, such as the revolt of brāhman Tissa and the famine in the time of Vaṭṭagāmaṇī Abhaya are also recorded. [253] At this time, the Saṅgha experienced much suffering. The Mahāniddeśa was known only by one bhikkhu and he happened to be immoral. [254] Bhikkhus fled to the Malaya district and many of them died of starvation. Others went to India and returned only after the famine. [255]

Geographical

A number of places in Ceylon, centres of learning, like the Mahāvihāra, the most important of them, and others like Tissamahārāma, Tulādhārapabbata, Kāladīghavāpi-dvāra-

The commentaries record instances of additions to the canon in Ceylon. In the *Sumaṅgalavilāsini* [259] it is said that the verses beginning with 'aṭṭhadonaṃ cakkhumato sarīraṃ' in the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* were added in Ceylon. According to the *Suttanipātaṭṭhakathā* [260] the *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā* did not comment on the last two verses of the *Kokālika Sutta* of the *Suttanipāta*. It has been suggested that this may indicate that these two verses were added in Ceylon. [261] There is also an instance where a sutta is given a new name in the commentary. [262]

The aṭṭhakathā occupy a very important place in the literature of Ceylon, as also in Buddhist literature. The Sinhala commentaries, which are now lost, may be said to have been the earliest literary works of the Island. The Pali aṭṭhakathā were among the earliest works in Pali to be written in Ceylon. [263] Buddhaghosa and his successors gave an impetus to the Pali language and paved the way for the literature that followed. The Sinhala aṭṭhakathā provided the material for much of the literature in Ceylon. Of the two chronicles, the *Mahāvamsa* (if not also the *Dīpavamsa*) [264] was directly based on the Sinhala aṭṭhakathā and many of the later works were to a greater or lesser extent dependent on them. The influence of the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* and the *Jātakaṭṭhakathā* is seen on Western literature as well as on Burmese literature.

The aṭṭhakathā are very important for the study of Buddhism. They are essential for a proper understanding and critical study of texts. They are indispensable for a

The aṭṭhakathā are very important for the study of Buddhism. They are essential for a proper understanding and critical study of texts. They are indispensable for a knowledge of the development of the doctrine and the history of Buddhism and the Saṅgha. These aṭṭhakathā, which are exegetical treatises on the canonical texts, were themselves commented upon in the sub-commentaries called the *ṭīkā*. The *ṭīkā* were in turn followed by further sub-commentaries, called *anuṭīkā*. At least one of them, the *anuṭīkā* on the *mūlaṭīkā*, was still further commented upon in the *madhuṭīkā*

Notes

1. Since this was written several other translations of commentaries have been published by the P.T.S., i.e., the Buddhavaṃsa commentary tr. by I.B. Horner, the Udāna Commentary tr. by Peter Masefield, the Therīgāthā commentary tr. by William Pruitt, the Petavatthu and Vimānavatthu commentaries tr. by Peter Masefield, and the *Samantapāsādikā Bāhiraṇidāna* tr. by N.A. Jayawickrama.

The BPS has published Bhikkhu Bodhi's translations of the Brahmajāla Sutta (DN 1), Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2), and Mūlapariyāya Sutta (MN 1) together with their commentaries and subcommentaries, respectively as *The All Embracing Net of Views*, *The Fruits of Recluseship*, and *The Root of Existence*.

2. A new translation by Ñāṇamoli Thera of this sutta together with its commentary is found in *The Discourse on Right View*, The Wheel Publication no. 377–379, BPS.
3. *Etthaca, attho kathīyati etāyāti aṭṭhakathā, sāyeva aṭṭhakathā thakāraṣṣa thakāraṃ katvā dukkhassa pīḷanaṭṭho'ti ādīsu viya: Sāratthadīpanī* (Sinhalese edition) p. 17. Also JRAS 1870 (Vol. V, New Series) p. 292.

4. W. Rahula, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon*. Intr. xxvii f.
5. *Atthappakāsanattham aṭṭhakathā ādito vasisatehi Pañcahi yāsaṅgītā ca anusaṅgītā ca pacchā pi. Sīhaladīpam pana ābhata'tha vasinā Mahā-mahindena, Ṭhapitā Sīhalabhāsāya dīpavāsīnam atthāya.*

“For explaining the meaning, the Commentary was originally recited by the 500 Masters (i.e. the Arahats assembled at the First Council) and was later rehearsed (at the two following Councils). Then it was brought to the island of the Sinhalese by the great Mahinda, the master (of Dhamma), and was rendered into the Sinhala language for the benefit of the island dwellers.”

Verses 6 and 7, Intr. in D-a, M-a, S-a, A-a See also verse intr. in Dhs-a.

6. Revata tells Buddhaghosa:

*Pālimattaṃ idhānītaṃ natthi aṭṭhakathā idha,
Tathīcariyavādāca bhinnarūpā na vijjare. Sīhalaṭṭhakathā
suddhā Mahindena matimatā Saṅgītattayaṃ ārūlhaṃ
sammāsambuddhadesitaṃ Sāriputtādigītañ ca
kathāmaggaṃ samekkhiya katā Sīhalabhāsāya Sīhalesu
pavattati.*

“The text alone has been handed down here (in Jambudīpa), there is no commentary here. Neither have we the deviating systems of the teachers. The commentary in the Sinhala tongue is faultless. The wise Mahinda who tested the tradition laid before

the three Councils as it was preached by the Perfectly Enlightened One and taught by Sāriputtā and the others, wrote it in the Sinhala tongue and it is spread among the Sinhalas.” Mhv xxxvi, 227-9.

7. JPTS 1890, p. 53
8. Dīp xx, 20-21.
9. Mhv xxxiii, 100-101.
10. See 4.
11. See 5.
12. G. P. Malalasekera, *Pāli Literature of Ceylon*, p. 90 f.
13. *Na hi bhagavatā abyākatam nāma tantipadam atthi. Sabbesam yeva attho kathito. Tasmā Sammāsambuddheneva tinnaṃ piṭakānam atthavaṇṇanākkamo pi bhāsito' ti daṭṭhabbam. Tattha tattha bhagavatā pavattitā pakiṇṇakadesanā yeva hi aṭṭhakathā: Sāratthadīpanī* (Sinhalese edition p. 18).
14. B. C. Law, *Life and work of Buddhaghosa*, 1923, p. 49
15. M III 207.
16. S IV 145.
17. S IV 230.
18. M I 483.
19. M I 40.
20. A I 23.

21. S IV 115.
22. M I 108.
23. Ānanda's expositions are contained in the *Subha Sutta* (D I 204), *Aṭṭhakanāgara Sutta* (M I 349), *Bāhitika Sutta* (M II 112), *Ghosita Sutta*, (S IV 113), and Sāriputta's in the *Saṅgītī Sutta*, (D III 207), *Dasuttara Sutta* (D III 272), *Saccavibhaṅga Sutta* (M III 248), *Mahāvedalla Sutta* (M I 282) Bhikkhunī Khemā's explanation is found in the *Avyākata Saṃyutta* (S IV 374) and Dhammadinnā's in the *Cūlavedalla Sutta* (M I 299)..
24. This has been ascribed to Sāriputta who is said to have compiled it for the benefit of a pupil who could not understand the *Nikkhepakāṇḍa*.
25. *A Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics*—Intr. p. xx.
26. See 4.
27. Such as the *Vaṃsatthappakāsinī*, *Saddhammasaṅgaha*, and the *tīkā*.
28. These two terms have been used synonymously in the epilogues to Buddhaghosa's commentaries on the first four nikāyas and therefore it may be concluded that they were identical.
29. Vin-a Intr.
30. Epilogue, D-a, M-a, S-a, A-a
31. See Ud-a 399; Sn-a 202, 477; Dhs-a 80; Pug-a, JPTS, 1913-14, p. 39.

32. pp. 125, 155, 177, 187, 247, 249, 289, 290.
33. See Epilogue.
34. JPTS, 1890, p. 55.
35. See also *Sāratthadīpanī* p. 17. In the *Gandhavaṃsa*, (JPTS 1886, p. 59) they are described as the works of *Gandhācariyā* who are defined as teachers who came after the *Porāṇacariyā*. The *Porāṇacariyā* are identified with the *Aṭṭhakathācāriyā*.
36. Barua in his 'Ceylon Lectures' (p. 85) suggests a connection between the *Kurundī* and the Jetavanavihāra, and the *Mahāpaccarī* and the Abhayagirivihāra. But it does not seem probable that Buddhaghosa would have made such extensive use of commentaries of 'heretical' schools when he has ignored the *Uttaravihāra-aṭṭhakathā* altogether.
37. Vin-a III, 646-7, 697; IV, 747, 763; V, 970, 1055, 1069.
38. Malalasekera (*Pāli Literature of Ceylon*, p. 92) and Law (*A History of Pāli Literature*, p. 376) with Mrs. Rhys Davids (*A Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics*, p. xxvii) are of opinion that it was probably of S Indian origin. The fact that it is not included among the Sinhalese commentaries given in the *Samantapāsādikā* epilogue strengthens this view. However, see E. W. Adikaram (*Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, p. 12) where he suggests that it might have been an abridged version of *Mahāpaccarī*.
39. See JRAS 1870 (Vol. V, New Series) p. 298.

40. See 27, 28, 29.
41. This is clear from the quotations in the Mhv-a. The main source of the *Mahāvamsa* is more definitely specified as *Sīhala-aṭṭhakathā-mahāvamsa* (*Mhva.* p.48) and Oldenberg held the view that this formed a historical introduction to the *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā*. (See the *Dīpavamsa*, intr. p. 4). Geiger did not agree with him and believed that even if the *Sīhala-aṭṭhakathā-mahāvamsa* had its beginnings as a historical introduction to the *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā*, it was in fact an extensive monastery chronicle of the Mahā-vihāra (The *Dīpavamsa* and *Mahāvamsa*, p. 64. See also UCR, Vol. IV, Oct. 1946, p. 1 f. G. C. Mendis: *The Pāli Chronicles of Ceylon*). It seems very likely that the work on which the *Mahāvamsa* was based had a close connection with the *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā* for the word often used is plain *aṭṭhakathā*, the Uttaravihāra recension also being referred to as merely *Uttaravihāra-aṭṭhakathā*.
42. pp. 299, 317, 783, 789, etc.
43. *Mahāpaccarī*, p. 110; *Kurundī*, p. 138.
44. JPTS 1890, p. 56. However, the *Saddhammasaṅgaha* is to be dated about the fourteenth century and too much reliance cannot be laid on its statements.
45. These two works also contain quotations from the *Āgamaṭṭhakathā* (Dhs-a 86, 188, 189; Pug-a 193) where the word is also used in the plural.
46. p. 86.

47. See 59.
48. Vibh-a epilogue.
49. See prologue and epilogue.
50. See epilogue.
51. See prologue and epilogue. A quotation from the *Poranāṭṭhakathā* (singular) is also contained in Cp-a 15.
52. H. Oldenberg, *Dīpavaṃsa*, Intr. W. Geiger *Dīpavaṃsa and Mahāvaṃsa*, p. 43 ff. E.W. Adikaran op. cit. Pp. 22-3. B. M Barua, *Ceylon Lectures*, p. 76. B. C. Law, *Buddhaghosa*, 1946, p.53.
53. See 32. This view is strengthened by the fact that the *Sīhalaṭṭhakathā-mahāvaṃsa* (whose close connection with the *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā* has already been noted, see 39), is alternatively referred to as *Porāṇaṭṭhakathā* (Mhv-a 36).
54. *Majjhima-aṭṭhakathā* 72, 184, 547. *Samyutta-aṭṭhakathā* 387, 432. *Aṅguttara-aṭṭhakathā*, p. 315.
55. p. 87.
56. p. 272.
57. Vism 547.
58. J 62.
59. Ps-a 159.
60. Yam-a 83.
61. Adikaram, op. cit. p. 13.

62. p. 272.
63. p. 72.
64. See 59.
65. pp. 616, 664.
66. pp. 544, 789.
67. pp. 360--61, 377, 863, 1203.
68. pp. 817-18, 1167.
69. p. 627.
70. pp. 536-7.
71. p. 494.
72. pp. 319, 617.
73. pp. 646, 647, 697, 970, 1055, 1069.
74. p. 86.
75. p. 272.
76. p. 72.
77. p. 249.
78. See 81.
79. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, *The Path of Purification*, Intr. p. xx.
80. Vin-a II, 471; D-a I. 291; II, 635; M-a II 869.
81. Adikaram, op. cit, p. 87.
82. Sp I, p. 62.

83. Vin-a 297.
84. *ibid.* 519.
85. Gray's edition, p. 60,
86. xii, 58; ix, 8; xci, 27.
87. The *Dhampiyā-aṭuvāgāṭṭapadaya*, a work dated in the tenth century A. C., contains quotations from these commentaries in the original Sinhalese (pp. 136, 148, 149). In the *Sahassavatthupparāṇa*, a work assigned to a period before the eleventh century A. C., the author says in the introduction that he is following the method of the *Sīhalaṭṭhakathā*. There is evidence that the Sinhalese commentaries were available also to the author of the *Vaṃsatthappakāsinī* which has been dated by Malalasekera in the eighth century or ninth century A. C. (Mhv-a Intr. p. cix) and by Geiger between 1000 and 1250 A.C. (*Dīpavaṃsa* and *Mahāvaṃsa* 34). The author of the *Vaṃsatthappakāsinī* has quoted from the *Sīhalaṭṭhakathā*, *Sīhalaṭṭhakathāmahāvaṃsa* and *Aṭṭhakathā*, *Uttaravihāra-aṭṭhakathā*, *Uttaravihāramahāvaṃsa*, *Porāṇaṭṭhakathā*, *Vinayaṭṭhakathā*, *Mahāvaṃsaṭṭhakathā* and *Dīpavaṃsaṭṭhakathā*. These were all commentaries in Sinhalese. *Vinayaṭṭhakathā*, too, may be taken as referring to the Sinhalese commentary on the Vinaya, as the *Samantapāsādikā* has been separately quoted. The *Pālimuttaka-Vinayavinicchaya-Saṅgha* dated in the twelfth century A.C. contains quotations from the *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā*, the *Mahāpaccari* and the *Kurundī* (pp. 2, 4,

Sinhalese edition, B. E. 2450). The *Sārasaṅgaha* which was probably written in the thirteenth century refers to a statement found in the *Vinayaṭṭhakathā* (p. 32, Sinhalese edition, 1898) which cannot be traced in the *Samantapāsādikā*. This would indicate that the statement was taken from the Sinhalese *Vinayaṭṭhakathā*, unless it was contained in the *Samantapāsādikā* of the author's time.

88. Verses 8-9.
89. Khp-a 151.
90. Adikaram, op. cit. pp. 14-15.
91. M-a 59, 225; S-a III 13, 138, 185; A-a II, p. 53; Khp-a 110; Ud-a 55; Ps-a 521; 532; Vibh-a 350.
92. A-a II 18; *Eke ācariyā vadanti*.
93. See Vin-a I 283.
94. A-a V 85; It-a II 6; Vibh-a 9, 51, 319, 459.
95. Vism 152, 206; Vin-a I 62; D-a III 757; M-a I 46; S-a II 43; A-a I 105; Ap-a 101; Dhs-a 84, etc.
96. Vism I 20; D-a II 491; M-a I 205; Ud-a 23; Ps-a 431, 676; Dhs-a 400, etc.
97. Porāṇācariyā, Pubbācariyā (Vism 523).
98. Vism 99; A-a II 26; Vibh-a 254
99. See Oldenberg, *Dīpavaṃsa* intr.; Geiger, *Dīpavaṃsa and Mahāvaṃsa*; Law, *Life and Work of Buddhaghosa* —Foreword; Malalasekera, *Pāli Literature of Ceylon*, p. 92;

Vaṃsatthappakāsinī—Intr. pp. lxi f.; Adikaram op. cit. pp. 16-22.

- 100.** For differences in views held by (a) the *Dīghabhāṇakas* and the *Majjhimabhāṇakas*, see Vism II 428; D-a I 10, (b) the *Majjhimabhāṇakas* and *Samyuttabhāṇakas*, see Vism 431, and (c) the *Dīghabhāṇakas* and *Samyuttabhāṇakas* on the one hand and the *Majjhimabhāṇakas* on the other, see Vism 275; Vin-a II 413; Ps-a 493. The *Āṅguttarabhāṇakas*' views are also occasionally cited (Vism I 74–77; A-a II 208). The other *bhāṇakas* referred to are the *Uḅhatovibhaṅgabhāṇaka* (Vin-a III 644), *Dhammapadabhāṇaka* (Dhp-a IV 51, Dhs-a 18), *Jātakabhāṇaka* (Vin-a 789; Khp-a 151; Sn-a 186; Vibh-a 484) and *Mahā-Ariyavaṃsabhāṇakas* (S-a III 182). The word *Mahākhuddakabhāṇaka* occurs in the Burmese edition of the *Manorathapūrānī*, instead of *Mahājātakabhāṇaka*. See A-a II 249.
- 101.** Vism 72; Suttantiya thera's view: Vin-a 454. Dhammakathika's view; Pug-a 224.
- 102.** Ap-a 83
- 103.** Khp-a 110; Ps-a 532.
- 104.** M-a IV 94.
- 105.** S-a III 281
- 106.** S-a III 277, Pug-a 190.
- 107.** S-a III 277; Pug-a 190.
- 108.** Pug-a 190; Dhs-a 267, 278, 286.

- 109.** Dhs-a 230, 267, 284, 286; Ps-a 405; Vibh-a 81.
- 110.** Dhs-a 405; Ps-a 80.
- 111.** Vism pp. 283, 438; M-a I 118, 253; Dhs-a 112, 114, 119, 120, 122, 142.
- 112.** Vism 141; Ps-a 181; Dhs-a 165.
- 113.** M-a I 31.
- 114.** Vin-a 1 75; Kvu-a 3-5.
- 115.** See 116.
- 116.** See however Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. II, p. 220.
- 117.** The author of the *Apadāna-āṭṭhakathā* is not known. The theory of (a) Culla-Buddhaghosa as the author of *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* (see discussion in Malalasekera op. cit. 96 f.) and of the *Jātakatṭhakathā*, *Khuddakapāṭha-aṭṭhakathā*, and *Suttanipāta-aṭṭhakathā* (see Barua, op. cit., pp. 88 ff. and Law, *Buddhaghosa*, 1946, p. 60) and (b) Buddhaghosa III as the author of the *Samantapāsādikā* and *Kaṅkhāvitarāṇī* (see Barua, *ibid.*: Law, *ibid.*) has been postulated.
- 118.** This period has not been generally accepted. Barua, op. cit. p. 93; UCR. Vol. III, Nov. 1945, pp. 77 f.; Law, op. cit. pp. 26, 29, 61, 77; A. P. Buddhadatta in UCR, Vol. II, Nov. 1944, pp. 77 f.
- 119.** See references in 115 and Winternitz, op.cit. pp.196-7; Burlingame in HOS, Vol. 28, intro.; Bapat and Vadekar,

Aṭṭhasālinī intr., A.P. Buddhadatta in *UCR*, Vol. II, Nov. 1944 pp. 77 f.

- 120.** See colophons in the commentaries and *Gandhavaṃsa*, JPTS, 1886, pp. 59, 68. (The *Gandhavaṃsa* also ascribes the commentary on the Apadāna to Buddhaghosa).
- 121.** The *Mahāvāṃsa* account (ch. 37) that the *Aṭṭhasālinī* was written before the *Visuddhimagga* cannot be accepted.
- 122.** D-a, M-a, S-a, A-a: *Sā hi Mahā-aṭṭhakathāya sāraṃ ādāya niṭṭhitā ... Mūlaṭṭhakathāsāraṃ ādāya mayāimam karontena ...*
Vibh-a: *Porānaṭṭhakathānam sāraṃ ādāya sā ayam niṭṭhaṃ*
- 123.** *Vism* 315; *Vin-a* V 970; *Yam-a*, JPTS 1910-12, p. 83.
- 124.** *JAOS* 38, 1918, p. 267.
- 125.** *Aus Indiens Kultur; Festgabe für Richard von Garbe*, 1927, pp. 33 f.
- 126.** On the other hand, according to G. C. Mendis' date of the *Dipāvāṃsa* (*UCR*. Vol. IV, Oct. 1964, pp. 1 f.) these quotations could have already been included in the Sinhalese commentaries.
- 127.** *Vin-a* II 473-4.
- 128.** See W. Rahula, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, pp. 125 f.
- 129.** *Janetasmiṃ*; S-a I 219; *Janetasmiṃ'ti janatasmiṃ pajāyāti attho*; S-a II 247, *Janetasmiṃ'ti janite: pajāyāti attho* (A. P. Buddhadatta, *Aṭṭvāparīkṣāyā hā Aṭṭvāgāṭapadaya*, p. 4).
- 130.** *Indriyaṭṭho* in *Visuddhimagga*. See Adikaram, op. cit, p.

3.

- 131.** *Dosinā* in *Dosinā rattī* in *DA*, I 141, defined as *dosāpagatā* when it is the Pāli form of Sanskrit *jyotsnā* (moonlight). See Adikaram, *ibid.*
- 132.** Rahula, *op. cit.* Intr. p. xxiv.
- 133.** In this paragraph, A. P. Buddhadatta, *Aṭuvā parikṣanaya hā Aṭuvākathāvastu*, pp. 3 ff. and Adikaram, *op. cit.*, chap. 4 have been made use of.
- 134.** J-a I 488; II 241, 299; IV 236; V 95, 273, 276; VI 36.
- 135.** See Adikaram, *op. cit.* p. 34.
- 136.** *loc. cit.*
- 137.** In the Cūlassapura Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya (M I 284) all the castes, *khattiya*, *brāhmaṇa*, *vessa* and *sudda*, are treated as suitable for recluseship. In the commentary on the Cūlahatthipadopama Sutta (M-a II204), however, an attempt is made to show that the *gahapati* are most suitable for ordination, as both the *khattiyas* and the *brāhmaṇas* suffer from a sense of pride because of their high birth and high learning, respectively. For other examples see Ud-a 171, and Vibh-a 27, 28.
- 138.** D II 1 f.
- 139.** M III. 118 f.
- 140.** D-a II 407 f.; M-a IV 167 f.
- 141.** Under *sambahulavāra* is also included in the

Sumaṅgalavilāsinī a fabulous account of the various signs that could be seen on the soles of the bodhisatta's feet (D-a II 445 f.)

142. D-a I 238; S-a I 201: *idaṃ pi kira Bhagavatā vuttam eva, pāḷiyam pana na ārūlham;* D-a II 636: *idaṃ pāḷiyam ārūlham ca anārūlham ca sabbam Bhagavā avoca.*
143. A-a I 89 ff.
144. For instance, the term *nibbāna* which in the canon is connected with *nibbāti* (S II 85; *Sn.* p. 235) and *nibbuta* (M I 487) and has the significance of 'blowing out,' is in the commentaries explained as *ni + vāna*, 'absence of craving' (S-a I 196: III 112; It-a I 164)
145. Ud-a 101.
146. According to the *Papañcasūdanī* (II 187), at the birth of Siddhattha, all five brahmans predicted that he would become Buddha, whereas Kondañña alone made this prediction in the *Manorathapūraṇī* (I 144).
147. The word *gopo* in Dhp-a I 157 and Sn-a 28.
148. King referred to in the *Samantapāsādikā*, *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*, *Saddhammappajjotikā*, *Saddhammappakāsinī*. Place where the work was compiled given in the *Madhuraṭṭhavilāsinī*, *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*, *Mahāniddeṣaṭṭhakathā*, *Paṭisambhidāmagga-aṭṭhakathā*.
149. In the words of the commentators: *Yena yathā yadā yasmā vuttā gāthā ayaṃ imaṃ vidhiṃ pakāsayitvāssā karissām'*

atthavaṇṇananti: Sn-a 2. *Kena bhāsitaṃ kattha bhāsitaṃ kasmā bhāsitan'ti vuccate*. Prose intr. in Vv-a and Pv-a

150. D-a I 59 ff., M-a I 45 ff.; S-a 11, 237; Ud-a 128 ff.; It-a I, 117; Nid I 177 f.; Ps-a 207 f.; Bv-a 15; Pug-a 234.

Derivations of *Tathāgatha*, though less than eight, are also given in Khp-a 196; Pv-a 64; other examples *sūkaramaddava*: D-a 568; Ud-a 399.

Bhūta: 7 meanings given at M-a I 31.

151. *Sāvattihī*: M-a I, 59; Khp-a 110; Ud-a 55; Ps-a 532; *Ukkaṭṭhā*: M-a I 10; Jetavana Ps-a 532.

152. *Pasenadi*: *Paccataṃ parasenaṃ jinātī'ti Pasenadi* (Ud-a 104). (*Bāla*: *balanti anantīti bālā*. Khp-a 124). An example of a peculiar derivation is *acchariya* in Ud-a 127-8.

153. M-a II 145; Sn-a 70 f.; Nid-a III 111 f.; Ap-a 156 f.

154. pp. 567 f.

155. *Aṭṭhakathāsu pana anāgatattā vimamsitvā gahetabbā*, Dhs-a 99; D-a 73.

156. *Pāḷinaya*—Dhs-a 3 (*Pañcappakaraṇaṭṭhakathā*, SHB. Vol. XXVIII); Paṭṭhāna-a. p. 381 (*Pañcappakaraṇaṭṭhakathā*, SHB. Vol. XL). *Pakaraṇanaya*: D-a 754. *Aṭṭhakathānaya*: Vism 433; D-a 760; M-a I 245; A-a I 113; Pug-a 171. *Ācariyanaya*: Pug-a 174.

The definition of a word according to *vinayapariyāya*, *abhidhammapariyāya* and *suttantikapariyāya* is given in Vism 72.

157. *Aparo nayo*: Dhs-a 117, 118, 120; *Keci vadanti*: Dhs-a 312: *apare'ti*: Dhs-a 312.
158. Vism 285.
159. Kkh has borrowed from Vin-a.
Nid-a has borrowed from Vism, Sn-a, and Vibh-a
Ap-a *Nidānakathā* from the *Nidānakathā* of J and
corresponding portions of Bv-a, and also from Dhp-a, Sn-
a, Th-a, and J.
160. Vin-a V 953, 1025; D-a 1000; M-a II 30; S-a I 15; II 285;
Cp-a, 16; It-a I, 12; II 85.
161. Sn-a II 517, 507; Ap-a 400; Paṭṭh-a 375
(*Pañcapakaraṇaṭṭhakathā*, SHB. Vol. XL).
Sesam uttānaṃ eva: Sn-a II, p 508, 509.
Sesam vuttanayaṃ eva: Sn-a I 365; Khp-a 144; Ap-a 199.
162. See 151.
163. Malalasekera, *Pāli Literature of Ceylon*, p. 103.
164. *Sādhu bhante'ti kho Rāja Ajātasattu ... bhikkhusaṅghassa ārocāpesi: niṭṭhitaṃ bhante mama kiccaṇ'ti*: Vin-a 10-11
(repeated in D-a I 9); or Vin-a 43-4. *Imāhi iddhīhi nāma akāsi*.
165. *Sakala dasasahassilokadhatu ... paramasobhaggapathā ahoṣi*: J-a I 51.
166. Examples of long compounds:
massukaraṇakesa-saṅthāpana-aṭṭhapāna-aṭṭhapadaṭṭha (J-a II 5).

Bhīṅkārapaṭigaha-ulūṅkadabbika-ṭacchupātitaṭṭakasara-
kasamuggaṅgāraka-
pallakadhuma-kaṭacchu (Kkh 136).

Examples of abstract formations: *jānaṇatā*, Khp-a 144, Kkh 124.

ananuññātata: Kkh 114.

167. Malalasekera, op. cit. p. 115.
168. ERE. Vol. IV, pp. 701 f.
169. *A Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics*, Intr. p. xxi.
170. Bv-a 3. This information is also found in A-a II 124-5.
171. I 89. This account differs from the account in *Mahāvamsa* in that Adam's Peak is not mentioned among the places visited.
172. S-a III 244. Incidentally this is reminiscent of the view of the Lokottaravādins.
173. Vin-a I 28; D-a I 23; A-a III 5; Cp-a prose intr. *DhsA* 26.
174. M-a II 233-4; A-a II, 28; III 174; IV 93.
175. Vin-a I 60-61.
176. M-a II 404; A-a V 85; It-a II 6; Cp-a 158; Dhs-a 3, 8, 90, 92, 241, Vibh-a 9, 51, 319, 459.
177. M-a II 393, Dhp-a I 53 f.
178. Dhp-a I 8, 154; IV 37.
179. Brāhmaṇagāma: Vv-a 45.

Caṇḍālagāma: Vv-a 105.

180. Vadḍhakīgāma: J-a II 18; IV 159.

Kammāragāma: J-a III 281.

181. *Dantakāravīthi*: J-a I 302 f.; II 320 f.,

rajakavīthi: J-a IV 82.

pesakāravīthi: J-a III 49.

182. *Sahassakuṭiko kammāragāmo*: J-a III 281.

kulasahassanivāso mahāvadḍhakīgāmo: J-a IV 159.

183. J-a I 224, 299.

184. Dhp-a I 45 f. Pv-a 31.

185. Vv-a 57, 76, 81; J-a III 59.

186. Vv-a 67; Ps-a 671.

187. Vv-a 63; Dhp-a I 190.

188. Vv-a 157.

189. Vv-a 295; J-a III 507.

190. J-a IV 19.

191. J-a III 365.

192. J-a I 108.

193. J-a II 128; IV 150, 196, 466.

194. J-a IV 137.

195. J-a I 120-2; IV 63; V 185.

196. J-a I 267.

- 197.** Vin-a II 297; III 702; S-a I 152, 153.
- 198.** D-a I 84 f.
- 199.** J-a I 159; II 85, 277, 282; Dhp-a IV 66.
- 200.** Vajjīs: D-a II 516, 519.
Licchavīs: M-a II 20.
Sakyas: D-a I 258-60.
- 201.** Bimbisāra: Vin-a II 297; A-a I 100, 405.
Ajātasattu: Vin-a I 10; D-a I 134 ff.; I I 516.
Pasenadi: Dhp-a 111 78; Ud-a 104.
- 202.** Asoka: Vin-a I 41; D-a II 612; M-a III, 276; A-a III 244; V 45.
Rudradāman: Vin-a II 297.
- 203.** Himālayas: A-a IV 107 f.; Sn-a II 437. Anotatta: A-a II. IV 107 f.; Sn-a II 437. Ganges: A-a IV 110.
- 204.** Dīghabhāṇaka Abhaya: Vin-a 474; D-a 430; M-a I 79; IV 97. a
Tipiṭaka Cūlābhaya: Vin-a III 591; D-a pp. 442, 530; M-a I, 230, IV 94; A-a I 26.
Maliyadeva: M-a V 101; A-a I, 38 f.
Dīghabhāṇaka Tipiṭaka Mahāsiva: D-a pp. 375, 430, 805, 881, 883.
Tipiṭaka Cūlanāga: Vin-a III 699, 892; M-a I 230; A-a I 26.
- 205.** M-a I 257 f; Ap-a 145 f.
- 206.** M-a I 184 f.; IV 97.
- 207.** *Imasmim̐ yeva dīpe ekavāraṃ puthujjana-bhikkhu nāma*

nahosi: D-a 898; M-a IV 115.

Sīhaladīpe yeva tesu tesu gāmesu āsanasālāya na taṃ āsanaṃ atthi, yattha yāgum pivitvā arahattaṃ patta-bhikkhu n'atthīti: M-a I 257; S-a III 186.

- 208.** M-a II 145, repeated in Sn-a 70 f.; Nid-a III 111 f.; Ap-a 156 f.
- 209.** Vin-a III 582 f.
- 210.** A-a I 92-3.
- 211.** Cetiyaṃabbata: M-a II 398; Vibh-a p. 473.
Cittalaṃabbata: M-a 185; Vibh-a 445.
- 212.** M-a III 244.
- 213.** M-a I 253, repeated in S-a III 183; Vibh-a 348.
- 214.** M-a IV 125, 23; A-a II, 17, 231 f.; Vibh-a 439.
- 215.** Vin-a VII 1335-6.
- 216.** Dhs-a 156.
- 217.** M-a IV 111, repeated in A-a II 6 f.: Vibh-a 427.
- 218.** A-a II 249 f. Sometimes *bana* preaching went on throughout the night: A-a I 39; Vibh-a 348.
- 219.** M-a I 79; A-a II 249.
- 220.** D-a II 535; M-a II 398; A-a I 22.
- 221.** Vin-a II 472, 476; D-a III 962-70; S-a I 341-2; A-a II 9.
- 222.** Vin-a I 83 f.

- 223.** M-a IV 111, repeated in A-a II 6 f.; Vibh-a 427.
- 224.** M-a IV 117; Vibh-a 432 f.
- 225.** Vin-a II 469 f.
- 226.** Vin-a II 471.
- 227.** Vin-a III 678 f.; IV 755.
- 228.** Vin-a V 1001.
- 229.** loc. cit.
- 230.** e.g., Maliyadeva, Dhammadinna, Dhammagutta.
- 231.** A-a I 23; Vibh-a 473.
- 232.** Sakka: D-a II 609 f.; Dhp-a III 269; J-a I 60; Vibh-a 352, 445.
Vissakamma: D-a II 613; A-a II 236
Cattāro Mahārājāno: J-a I 51, 80; Vibh-a 352.
Brahmā Sahampati: Vibh-a 352.
Yama: M-a IV 234; A-a II 230.
- 233.** *Sivaliṅgādīpūjanatthāya*: Vin-a III 626.
- 234.** Soon after Tissa's revolt there were 7000 families in Kālakagāma: Vibh-a 448.
- 235.** pp. 135 f.
- 236.** M-a I 257; S-a III 186.
- 237.** M-a I 146; A-a II 61.
- 238.** M-a III p. 272.

- 239.** M-a I 193 f.
- 240.** Vin-a II 582.
- 241.** A-a II 61.
- 242.** loc. cit.
- 243.** Vibh-a 441.
- 244.** Vin-a III 702.
- 245.** Vin-a I 91, 98; VII 1336; Vibh-a 389, 446.
- 246.** M-a I 145; Vibh-a 445 f.
- 247.** Vibh-a 389.
- 248.** Vin-a VII 1336. An instance of how a brāhman came from Pāṭaliputra to see a monk in Ceylon whose reputation had spread even in India is given in A-a II 246.
- 249.** M-a IV 94.
- 250.** Duṭṭhagāmaṇī: A-a II 212 f.
Saddhātissa: M-a II 294; S-a III 24 f.; A-a II 30; Vibh-a 473.
Bhātiya: Vibh-a 440.
Kūṭakaṇṇa: Vibh-a 452.
Kaniṭṭhatissa: Vin-a III 582.
- 251.** Vaṭṭagāmaṇi Abhaya: Vibh-a 448.
Mahānāga: He went abroad with his brother: Vin-a II 473;
Dhs-a 399.
Vasabha: D-a II 635; M-a IV 97.
Mahāsenā: Vin-a III 519.

252. M-a IV 234: A-a II 230.
253. S-a II 111; A-a I 92; Vibh-a 445 f.
254. Vin-a III 695.
255. Vibh-a 445 ff.
256. Mahāvihāra: D-a II 578; Dhṛp-a IV 74; Vibh-a 446.
Tissamahārāma: D-a II 581; A-a I 40; Vibh-a 445.
Tulādhārapabbata in Rohaṇa: Vism 96.
Kāladīghavāpi-dvāra-vihāra: M-a II 141.
Maṇḍalārāma: M-a I 66.
257. Mariccavaṭṭi-vihāra: M-a II 145; Ap-a 128.
Nāgadīpacetiya: M-a II 398; Vibh-a 457.
Kalyāṇīmahācetiya: M-a III 249.
Kajarāgāmamahāvihāra: A-a I 37.
258. Vattakālakā: Dhs-a 116.
Setambaṅgaṇa: Dhs-a 399.
259. D-a II 615.
260. p. 447.
261. Adikaram, op. cit. pp. 11-12.
262. The Ariyapariyesana Sutta (Sutta No. 26 of the Majjhima Nikāya) is called Pāsārāsī Sutta in the commentary.
263. They are not the earliest, the *Dīpavaṃsa* having been compiled earlier.
264. It had been generally accepted that the *Dīpavaṃsa* was

based on the *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā*, but this has been disputed and a new theory put forward by G. C. Mendis in UCR. Vol. IV, Oct., 1946, p. 12 'The Pali Chronicles of Ceylon.

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