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Project Topic

The *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā* Quotations of the *Samantapāsādikā* Vinaya Commentary: A Critical Edition and Translation, and A Study on Theriya Vinaya Views

Objectives

The proposed research will undertake to edit, translate and analyse the quotations of the *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā* (lit. ‘Great Commentary’), that appear in the *Samantapāsādikā* (=Sp), with the aim of contributing towards understanding the divergent views developed on Vinaya within the Mahāvihāra school of Theravāda Buddhism during the first half of the first millennium CE. It will pursue to achieve the following objectives:

- To reconstruct the original wording of the *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā* Quotations (=MQs);
- To provide a literal translation of the MQs in the *Samantapāsādikā*;
- To identify early commentaries and their positions on divergent Vinaya topics, and also the *Samantapāsādikā*’s stance on those positions;
- To examine possible Sinhalese origins of lost early commentaries;
- To survey further information on the *Samantapāsādikā*’s date and authorship.

Rationale of the project

The *Samantapāsādikā* (5th c. CE) categorically states that in compiling his work, its author relied heavily on a number of early Sinhalese commentaries (*Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā*), namely, the *Kurundī-aṭṭhakathā*, the *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā*, the *Mahāpaccarī-aṭṭhakathā* and the *San̄khepa-aṭṭhakathā*. According to Buddhaghosa (5th c. CE), the Elder Mahinda brought *aṭṭhakathās* (‘expositions of meaning’) from Jambudīpa (India) to the island of Lankā (Sri Lanka) in the 3rd c. BCE. In Sri Lanka, those commentaries were handed down in Sinhalese. The *Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathās* apparently stem from those ‘expositions of meaning’ brought by the Elder Mahinda. Sometime in the history, the *Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathās* have fallen into complete oblivion. Although we have no way to fully access their contents, a number of quotations borrowed from those lost commentaries are still traceable from the Pāli *Aṭṭhakathās* that have been handed down to us since that early period. Among these Pāli *Aṭṭhakathās*, the *Samantapāsādikā* holds a paramount significance for our purpose as it contains a large number of quotations taken from those lost *Sīhaḷa* commentaries. In the *Samantapāsādikā* these are often quoted on the same subject even when expressing contradictory opinions.

The proposed project’s preliminary survey shows that this commentary’s attitude towards such quotations is multifarious and worth exploring. Throughout his work, the author of the *Samantapāsādikā* greatly esteems the opinions handed down in the *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā*. When quoting differing opinions from a couple of Sinhalese commentaries on the same Vinaya topic, he typically agrees with the view expressed in the *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā* (see Sp II Ee 495, 22-27-496, 1-9, Sp III Ee 536, 28-32-537, 1-4, Sp III Ee 537, 24-31-538, 1-2). Yet, this attitude of his is not consistent. As he explicitly states, in some cases, other Sinhalese commentaries are also highly useful in providing laudable exegesis. For example, the

Mahāpaccaṛī-aṭṭhakathā articulates some topics well, which are not clearly stated in the *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā* (see Sp III Ee 726, 21-23). Compared to the latter commentary, the former is sometimes quite informative (see Sp III Ee 617, 22-23, Sp IV Ee 803, 19-33-804), and systematic (see Sp III Ee 539, 8-16). In some cases, after his exegesis, the author leaves a citation taken from the *Kurundī-aṭṭhakathā* without attempting to comment on it (for instance, see Sp I Ee 181, 26-29, Sp II Ee 314, 19-21, Sp II Ee 509, 24-25, Sp III Ee 527, 25-27, Sp III Ee 531, 5-7). He follows the same practice after quoting from the *Mahāpaccaṛī-aṭṭhakathā* as well (see Sp I Ee 283, 5-6, Sp II Ee 386, 8-16, Sp II Ee 465, 8-10, Sp III Ee 568, 14-16). Sometimes, in light of information provided in the *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā*, he refuses the references handed down in all other early commentaries that begin with the *Kurundī* (see Sp II Ee 345, 28-29-346, 1-4). On the contrary, at times he goes with the views expressed in all the other early commentaries, disagreeing with what is handed down in the *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā* (see Sp II Ee 319, 7-14).

A number of well-researched scholarly works have investigated various aspects of Pāli exegetical literature. Among them, Adikaram (1946), providing us with a couple of attestations, briefly notes how the author of the *Samantapāsādikā* treats the opinions handed down in early commentaries. Lottemoser (1982) examines verse passages quoted from early commentaries attested in Buddhaghosa's commentaries. Endo (2013) points out that commentators like Buddhaghosa relied on multiple *Mahā-aṭṭhakathās* in compiling their works. Kieffer-Pülz (1993) elucidates the quotations of the *Andhakatṭhakathā* in the *Samantapāsādikā*. Moreover, in her massive study (Kieffer-Pülz 2013), titled *Verlorene Gaṇṭhipadas zum buddhistischen Ordensrecht*, she illustrates well how the references to the early commentaries occur in the Vinaya sub-commentaries that begin with the *Vajirabuddhiṭkā*, as well as in the *Samantapāsādikā*. However, no attempt has been made so far to fully examine the MQs that appear in the *Samantapāsādikā*. One of the key aims of this project is to fill this lacuna.

Significance

Offering a systematic treatment of the MQs, this study expects to add a whole chapter to Pāli literature between *Parivāra* and *Samantapāsādikā* and to provide further information on the author(s) of the *Samantapāsādikā*. While consulting four editions of this commentary (see Methods and Scope below), we have noticed a number of cases where these editions do not help us to accurately figure out the quotations under discussion. For instance, within the gloss on the Vinaya IV Ee 82, 28, the *Samantapāsādikā* cites a passage from the *Mahāpaccaṛī-aṭṭhakathā*, and the wording of this quotation significantly differs in each of these editions (see Sp III Be 90, 8-10, Sp II Ce 606, 3-5, Sp IV Ee 823, 13-16, Sp II Se 401, 14-16). Consulting a couple of palm-leaf manuscripts of the *Samantapāsādikā*, as well as the relevant glosses found in the Vinaya sub-commentaries such as the *Vajirabuddhiṭkā* and *Sāratthadīpanī*, this study aims to identify the corrupted readings that have crept into the quotations during the process of textual transmission, and to thereby establish more plausible readings for them. As Kieffer-Pülz has already pointed out (Kieffer-Pülz 2014, Kieffer-Pülz 2015), the author of the *Samantapāsādikā* sometimes defines both the beginning and the end of the quotes, but mostly only one of them (See Sp IV Ee 825, 15-16; Sp II Ce 607, 23; Sp III Be 92, 2; Sp II Se 404, 9, Sp IV Ee 826, 21; Sp II Ce 608, 22; Sp III Be 93, 5; Sp II Se 406, 1-2, Sp IV Ee 852, 10; Sp II Ce 628, 28; Sp II Se 440, 7). Furthermore, the divisions that editors recognised between some quotations in this commentary vary quite substantially among extant editions. It would appear that they often broke up quotations to reflect their own idiosyncratic interpretations. In such cases, by closely looking

at the content and context of each account, the proposed project will attempt to come up with a version of the quotes that closely approximates that in the original text.

We have an English translation of the Chinese version of Saṅghabhadra's *Samantapāsādikā* (Bapat and Hirakava 1970). This version, as this translation shows, is markedly different from that is under our discussion. Saṅghabhadra's attitude about the MQs is substantially varies from what we see in the received *Samantapāsādikā*. In a number of places, the proper names of early commentaries found in the latter commentary are missing from Saṅghabhadra's version. He often cites the quotations from early commentaries and ascribes them to anonymous authorities. For instance, in the Sp II Ee 359, 14-17, the author of the *Samantapāsādikā* quotes a differing view handed down in the *Kurundī-aṭṭhakathā* and the *Saṅkhepaṭṭhakathā*. In the corresponding context, Saṅghabhadra does not mention the names of these two Sinhalese commentaries. On the contrary, he ascribes this view to "some teachers" (See Bapat and Hirakawa 1970, 265, 7-9). It is significant to note that this view too, differs substantially from what we read in the *Samantapāsādikā*. Saṅghabhadra adopts the same attitude with respect to the *Samantapāsādikā*'s quotations that are taken from the other Sinhalese commentaries such as the *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā* (cf. Sp II Ee 311, 5-6 with Bapat and Hirakawa 1970, 241, 4-6) and the *Mahāpaccarī-aṭṭhakathā* (cf. Sp II Ee 311, 5-15 with Bapat and Hirakawa 1970, 241, 11-19). These examples make clear that the English translation of Saṅghabhadra's version cannot be considered to be a direct translation of the received *Samantapāsādikā* preserved in Pāli, and we still lack an English translation of its Pāli version. This study offers a literal translation of the MQs found in this commentary.

Systematically analysing the quotations, the proposed study will attempt to uncover divergent standpoints on many Vinaya topics discussed in the *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā* and on how its views differ from or resemble those of the *Samantapāsādikā*'s author(s). Similarly, this study evaluates to what extent the views expressed in the *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā* are in keeping with the leading figures of the Mahāvihāra school, such as the Elder Mahāsumma and the Elder Mahāpaduma (Mori 1988), and vice versa. This research thus enables the reader to realise the diversity of the views on the Vinaya maintained in the early commentaries and developed within the Mahāvihāra school, and their doctrinal significance. Since it makes many original observations related to the Theriya tradition, we firmly believe that this study will be of relevance for the field of Buddhist Studies as a whole.