

The Necessity of Learning Pali in Buddhist Studies*

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1. Preamble

This research focuses on the importance of learning Pali and its application to Buddhist studies, especially to understanding the Buddha's teachings. Naturally, the numerous Pali quotations are unavoidable, despite the author's effort to condense the work into a succinct summary paper. It is based on a personal study of tens of scriptures, such as the *Tepiṭaka*, *Aṭṭhakathā*, *Tīkā*, *Pakaraṇavisesa* and grammar both in Thai and Pali. For historical parts, the author relies on documents written by a number of experts. In a way, this summarized version is an attempt to provide further improvement and elaboration to the original research piece.

2. Language as a tool of communication

Language serves as a tool to communicate messages as well as recording past events for future references. Today, we know about the past from the languages used and written ancient alphabets. Pali is a language in which the Buddha's teachings were recorded, accommodated, learned, and

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recited by his disciples, initially through oral traditions and later through writing on such materials as palm leaves (compiled into *Tepiṭaka* texts) and stones (*Tepiṭaka* inscriptions on marble slabs). For instance, King Mindon had the Pali Canon inscribed on 729 marble slabs at Muthodaw Pagoda in Pagan after the fifth *Saṅgīti*. In Thailand, His Holiness Somdet Phra Maharatchamangkhalachan, the abbot of Wat Pak Nam, when holding the ascetic title of Phra Dhammapanyabodi, and a group of his disciples, had another 1,418 marble slabs of *Tepiṭaka* inscriptions made and housed at Buddhamonthon. The work was not only a homage to the Buddha, but also a celebration of the 60th Birthday Anniversary of His Majesty King Bhumibhol Adulyadej and the Raja Mangala Bhisek marking His Majesty's longest reign in the history of Thailand, equal to the duration of the reign of King Chulalongkorn (Rama V). On that occasion, the Saṅgha and the Thai government held another *Saṅgāyana* in 1987, and the result was the Marble Version of the *Tepiṭaka*. The Pali Canon was also produced in CD ROM in Thai and English, serving as a database system with a search engine program.

3. Pali as the language through which the Buddha disseminated his teachings

The Buddha used the language of Magadha to teach his Dhamma and Vinaya. The *Aṭṭhakathā* and the authorities of Pali grammar all confirm that the language He used was that of Magadha, later called Pali. All His teachings are recorded in that language which existed before the Buddha's time. The Buddha attained Enlightenment in the Kingdom of Magadha and spent much of His time traveling and teaching in the Kingdoms of Kosala and Magadha. For that reason, evidently, He expounded His Dhamma in the language of that region. Mention was made by authors of *Aṭṭhakathā* in *Sammohavinodanī* of *Abhidhammapiṭaka Vibhaṅga* as follows:

“*sammāsambuddho 'pi tepiṭakaṃ buddhavacanaṃ tantim āropento māgadhabāsāyameva āropesi*”¹

¹ Vbha.2/415.At.2/436 mcu.

(Translation: The Buddha used the language of Magadha, a systematic language, to disseminate his words, i.e. the Tepiṭaka.)

Evidently, His 45 years of teaching covered a lot of words. After His *Parinibbāna*, His teachings continued to be orally transmitted – a practice called *mukhapāṭha*.² His disciples met to rehearse His teachings, an event known as *Sanḅāyana*. After the third *Sanḅāyana*, a group of monks led by Mahinda-Thera disseminated Buddhism in Sri Lanka. Sometime later there was unrest in the country, adversely affecting the livelihoods of the Lankan monks who fled to the forests and lived on fruits and roots. There were stories told about the events leading to the decision to inscribe the Buddha’s teachings on palm leaves. When the monks met to review the situation, they felt that there were fewer monks who could recite the teachings in the old oral tradition, and decided that the recording of the Scriptures be made on palm leaves. The practice has continued to the present time.³

4. Pali in the Buddha’s time

In the Buddha’s time Pali was known as “the language of Magadha, the language of the Magadhi people, or Magadhi language,” or “Ariyaka language,” but it was not called “pāli or pāli *bhāsā*” in India then. According to the evidence found in *Aṭṭhakathā*, there had been no systematic learning of the language in the way that Pali grammar was subsequently taught. In other words, there was no Pali grammar at the time although the Sanskrit grammar existed. The local Magadhi people used the language in their everyday conversation; it was passed on from generation to generation in the same way as Thai people learn how to speak Thai from their forefathers. The teachings of the Buddha and his disciples were understood by their audience, in this case the people of Magadha who naturally spoke without any need to learn the grammar. The disciples came from the higher caste background and were well-versed in the

² For more details, see Da. 1/13-15 mcu.

³ For more details, see AA. 1/13-15 mcu.

language used by people of higher classes, such as Sankskrit. In the *Tepiṭaka* mention was made of Mogharāja Thera thus:

“*ajjhāyako mantadharo tiṇṇaṃ vedāna pāragū
gotamassa bhagavato sāsane pabbajissati*”⁴

(Translation: He will be a learned person, possessing manta, complete with the knowledge of *Tiveda*. He will be ordained in the religion of the Buddha named Gotama.)

Also, mention was made of Tissa-Metteyya Thera in this manner:

“*ajjhāyako mantadharo tiṇṇaṃ vedāna pāragū
sambuddhaṃ upagantvāna arahā so bhavissati*”⁵

(Translation: He will be a learned person, possessing manta, complete with the knowledge of *Tiveda*. He will see the Buddha and become an arahant.)

The authors of *Aṭṭhakathā* explained that “*ajjhāyako 'ti anekabrāhmaṇānaṃ vācetaṭṭhāpetā. mantadharo 'ti mantāna dhāretā...vedassa sajjhāyanasavanadānānaṃ vasena dhāretā...tiṇṇaṃ vedānanti iruvedayajurvedasāmavedasaṃkhātānaṃ tiṇṇaṃ vedānaṃ... pāraṃ pariyosānaṃ gato*.”⁶ This means that “a learned person is one who teaches a large number of Brahmins. A person possessing *manta* is one who remembers all the *manta*, who can explain the knowledge by himself, listen to others and teach the Vedas to others, and who has completed the study of all three Vedas, i.e. (1) the *Iruveda* or *Ṛgveda*, (2) the *Yajurveda*, and (3) the *Sāmaveda*.” These three Vedas were explained differently in various dictionaries.⁷

Such explanations indicate that both Mogharāja Thera and Tissa-Metteyya Thera had completed the study of the Vedas and taught

⁴ Ap. 32/79/125 mcu.

⁵ Ap. 32/23/477 mcu.

⁶ Apa. 1/330 mcu.

⁷ For more details, see Ratchabandittayasathan, **Photchananukrom Chabap Ratchabandittayasathan B.E. 2554 (2011)**. Bangkok: Siriwatthana Interprint, p. 1129.

them to a large number of Brahmins. Furthermore, there is a literal translation from Pali to Thai of a learned person as a teacher of grammar, as in “*kovidam chekam ajjhāyakaṃ anekesaṃ sissānaṃ byākaraṇāvācakaṃ mantadharaṃ vedattayasamkhātamantadhārakaṃ paṇḍitaṃ*,”⁸ which means “a bright learned person is a pundit who teaches a large number of students and who knows by heart the *mantas*, in other words, all the three Vedas.” Therefore, the knowledge of the Buddha’s disciples belonged to the higher class. They were able to teach by using the language readily understood by the audience. In subsequent times when there was a need to apply linguistic structures to the language of Magadha or Pali, these learned disciples well-versed in Sanskrit could transfer their linguistic skills to writing Pali texts and Pali grammar.

Mention was also made of higher-caste Brahmins with the knowledge of Sanskrit grammar as experts of the grammar of *Tepitaka*:

“*brāhmaṇassa pokkharasātissa ambaṭṭho nāma māṇavo antevāsī hoti ajjhāyako mantadharo tiṇṇaṃ vedānaṃ pāragū sanighaṇḍukeṭubhānaṃ sākkharappabhedānaṃ itihāsapañcamānaṃ padako veyyākaraṇo.*”⁹

(Translation: Ambaṭṭha-mānava, disciple of Brahman Pokkharasāti, is a learned person, possessing *manta*, complete with the knowledge of *Tiveda*, including *nighaṇḍu*, *keṭubha*, arts and history, well-versed in the text and grammar.)

“*brahmāyussa brāhmaṇassa uttaro nāma māṇavo antevāsī hoti tiṇṇaṃ vedānaṃ pāragū sanighaṇḍukeṭubhānaṃ sākkharappabhedānaṃ itihāsapañcamānaṃ padako veyyākaraṇo*”¹⁰

(Translation: Uttara-mānava, disciple of Brahman Brahmāyu, has completed the study of *Tiveda*, including *nighaṇḍu*, *keṭubha*, arts and history, well-versed in the text and grammar.)

⁸ Apa. 1/531/344 mcu.

⁹ D. 9/256/87-88 mcu.

¹⁰ M. 13/383/366 mcu.

“selo brāhmaṇo āpaṇe paṭivasati, tiṇṇaṃ vedānaṃ pāragū sanighaṇḍukeṭubhānaṃ sākkharappabhedānaṃ itihāsapañcamānaṃ padako veyyākaraṇo lokāyatamahā purisalakkhaṇesu anavayo, tīṇi ca māṇavakasatāni mante vāceti”¹¹

(Translation: Brahmin Sela, living at a forest in the Āpaṇa area, has completed the study of *Tiveda*, including *nighaṇḍu*, *keṭubha*, arts and history, well-versed in the text and grammar, expert in popular philosophy and prediction of *mahāpurisalakkhaṇa*, and taught *manta* to 300 young men.)

All this shows that these people were knowledgeable of the elements of the grammar. The researcher wishes to present only the following issues concerning grammar:

“nigaṇḍū ’ti nigaṇḍur ukhādīnaṃ vevacanapakāsakaṃ satthaṃ. keṭubhan ’ti kiriyākappavikappo kavinaṃ upakārāvahaṃ satthaṃ. Akkharappabhedo ’ti sikkhā ca nirutti ca. padam tadavasesaṅca byākaraṇaṃ adhīyati vedeti cāti padako veyyākaraṇo”¹²

(Translation: *nighaṇḍu* is a book of vocabulary covering a number of categories, such as the variety of plants. *keṭubha* is a book of lexicography very useful to poets. *Akkharappabheda* is a set of educational handbooks for correct pronunciation and recital of grammar and vocabulary, (such as the Book of *Pāṇinīsikkhā* and the Book of *Nāradasikkhā*).”¹³

Nighaṇḍu, in particular, is the oldest thesaurus which Moggalāna used to compose the Book of *Abhidhānappadīpikā* and others.¹⁴

¹¹ Sn. 25/7/444 mcu.

¹² Da. 1/222-223, Ma. 2/262 mcu.

¹³ For more details, see Aphithanwanna, translated and edited by Phra Maha Sompong Mudito, Bangkok : Thammasapha Printing House, B.E. 2542 (1999), p. 162.

¹⁴ Khamphi Aphithanwanna, translated and edited by Phra Maha Sompong Mudito, p. 163.

A *Tīkā* text provides even a clearer explanation on this matter as follows:

“*pajjati attho etenāti padaṃ, nāmākhyātopasagganipātādivasena anekavibhāgaṃ vibhattiyantapadaṃ. taṃ taṃ saddaṃ, tadatthañca byākaro 'ti byācikkhati etenāti byākaraṇaṃ padako 'ti byākaraṇesu āgatapadako sallaṃ sandhāya vuttaṃ. veyyākaraṇo 'ti tadavasiṭṭhapakatipaccayādisaddavidhikosallaṃ 'ti imassatthassa viññāpanatthaṃ padadvayassa ekato atthavacanaṃ. ayaṃ aṭṭhakathāto aparo nayo te eva vede padaso kāyātīti padako 'ti. tattha padaso 'ti gajjabandhapajjabandhapadena*”¹⁵

(Translation: The text or pada (cited in the *Aṭṭhakathā*) refers to content words, classified into several categories: nouns, *ākhayātas*, verbal prefixes and prepositions. Grammar provides explanations to make those words and contents clearer. *Padako* – a person who knows the text – is said to be one well-versed in grammar-derived *pada*, while *veyyākaraṇo* refers to a person who knows grammar. The two words are used together to indicate that the person is clever in the use of lexical items with all the right affixes – according to the *Aṭṭhakathā*. In another sense, the person who recites the Vedas in the form of *pada* is said to be the *padako* who knows the words in the forms of prayers and poetries.)

In the *Veyyākaraṇa* scripture mention was made about the Buddha possessing the knowledge of grammar surpassing other grammarians:

“*bhagavāyeva loke asadiso mahāveyyākaraṇo mahāpuriso visārado parappavādamaddano. bhagavantañhi padakā veyvākaraṇā ambaṭṭhamāṇavapokkharasātisoṇadaṇḍādayo ca brāhmaṇā saccakanigaṇṭhādayo ca paribbājakā vādena na sampāpuṇiṃsu*”¹⁶

¹⁵ Dṭ. 2/279-280 mcu.

¹⁶ Nīti. pada. 173.

(Translation: Only the Blessed One, the *Mahāpurisa*, is the greatest grammarian, able to subdue the rhetoric of others, unequal in this world. Such Brahmins as Ambaṭṭha-mānava, Pokkharasāti, Soṇadaṇḍa and *Paribbājaka* like Saccakaniṅga, who are polished men of letters and grammarians, are no match to the Blessed One.)

However, nowhere in the *Tepitaka* was the Buddha praised as a person knowledgeable in the use of language or grammar. Usually, he would be revered by writers of sacred texts for his virtues and Buddhahood, as follows:

*“ekapuggalo bhikkhave loke uppajjamāno uppajjati adutiyo asahāyo appaṭimo appaṭisamo appaṭibhāgo appaṭipuggalo asamo asamasamo dipadānaṃ aggo. Katamo ekapuggalo, tathāgato arahamaṃ sammāsambuddho”*¹⁷

(Translation: The supreme person when born into the world would be second to none, with no peer, with identity unlike any person's, unparalleled, incomparable, without match, greater than any two-footed being. Who is this supreme person? It is the Buddha, the Accomplished One.)

These praises are fitting for the Buddha. For instance, the word “*asamāsamo*” (unmatched by any other) means that the Gautama Buddha is equal to all the other past and future *Sabbaññū* Buddhas who are unparalleled.)¹⁸

5. The home of the systematic study of Pali

The Buddha's teachings were first preserved in the language of Magadha. When Buddhism was disseminated to other countries where people had no knowledge of that language, young men who went into monkhood had to learn it. The language that later came to be known as Pali housed all the Dhamma-Vinaya.

¹⁷ A. 20/174/22 mcu.

¹⁸ Aa. 1/174/105 mcu.

When the Buddha's disciples reached Sri Lanka, they wrote Pali grammar based on their knowledge of Sanskrit. The Pali texts became the basis for studying the *Tepiṭaka* and *Aṭṭhakathā*. When the Lankan monks became more proficient, they started to compose the *Aṭṭhakathā* to explain parts of the *Tepiṭaka* that were not accompanied by the *Aṭṭhakathā* as well as composing further *Ṭṭkā* to explain the *Aṭṭhakathā*. Unlike any other language, Pali retains all the original meanings unchanged with time. As a deposit of the Buddha's teachings, the language has been used as a basis for verification of the translation of the *Tepiṭaka* and for comparison with other approaches adopted by Buddhists elsewhere in the analysis and production of the text.

Thus Pali was seriously studied in Sri Lanka after it was introduced by Moggaliputta Tissa Thera. The study still relied on the oral tradition, i.e. memorizing and learning by word of mouth. Only after the Fifth Rehearsal did the Lankan Thera monks decide to preserve the Buddha's teachings on palm leaves that have been passed on from generation to generation.

Monks from India, well versed in Pali, taught the language to their Lankan counterparts who subsequently translated the *Aṭṭhakathā* accompanying the *Tepiṭaka* in Sinhalese to facilitate the study and understanding of the texts. It was recorded that the Sinhalese translation attempt was made to avoid confusion with other *nikāyas*, as follows:

*“saṃvaṇṇiyati attho etāyāti saṃvaṇṇanā, aṭṭhakathā
sāpana dhammasaṃgāhakattherehi paṭhamaṃ tīṇi piṭakāni
saṃgāyitvā tassa atthavaṇṇanānurūpeneva vācanāmaggaṃ
āropitattā tisso saṃgītiyo āruḥhoyeva buddhavacanassa
atthasaṃvaṇṇanābhūto kathāmaggo. soyeva ca mahindat-
therena tambapaṇṇidīpaṃ ābhato, pacchā tambapaṇṇiyehi
mahātherehi nikāyantaraḷaddhīhi saṃkarapariharaṇatthaṃ
sīhaḷabhāsāya ṭhapito”*¹⁹

¹⁹ Vint. 1/24 mcu.

(Translation: The *Aṭṭhakathā* explains certain statements of the Buddha's teachings based on the consensus reached by the Dhamma-expert monks in the Rehearsal that they should mean so and so. There have been three Rehearsals. Mahinda Thera introduced the *Aṭṭhakathā* to Sri Lanka and subsequently Lankan monks translated it into Sinhalese to avoid confusion with other religious sects.)

The phrase “*nikāyantaraḷaddhīhi saṃkarapariharaṇattham*” (to avoid confusion with other religious sects) refers to the attempt to ensure that the explanation of the *Tepiṭaka* is not confused with that of other 17 sects that depart from the original Theravāda.

The *Tepiṭaka* continued to be preserved in Pali, but the commentary and explanation were given in the local language, just as was the case with Thailand where the Vinaya texts were taught in Thai. A little later than 900 B.E. (357) Buddhaghosācariya arrived in Sri Lanka and had the Sinhalese *Aṭṭhakathā* rendered back to Pali. The *Aṭṭhakathā* henceforth was preserved in Pali.

With the *Tepiṭaka* and *Aṭṭhakathā* now in Pali, Lankan monks were obliged to learn the language by studying its grammar and thereby became more proficient. Around 1700 B.E. (1157) they composed a lot of *Ṭīkā* and were responsible for the dissemination of these three kinds of texts to other Theravāda countries.

There are a large number of texts of Pali grammar composed by Lankan monks, because Pali is the language that the Buddha used to teach Dhamma and Vinaya. The Dhamma recorded in the *Tepiṭaka* is elaborate and complex both in lexicography (vocabulary) and *attha* (meaning). Only those with a thorough knowledge of the language could really understand the contents of the Dhamma. In Thailand alone, there are 45 volumes of the *Tepiṭaka* and more than 100 volumes of *Aṭṭhakathā*, *Ṭīkā*, *Anuṭīkā*, and *Pakaraṇavisesa*, all in Pali. Thus, it is most important to study in depth the Pali grammar before embarking on the study of more important scriptures. In the Buddha's time there was no Pali grammar. His disciples, mostly from the Brahman caste, had studied the *Tiveda* and had a good knowledge of Sanskrit before entering monkhood. Making use of their Sanskrit

background, they composed Pali grammatical texts. It is important, therefore, to have a good grasp of the Pali grammar. The Buddha himself said:

*“idha bhikkave bhikkhū duggahitaṃ suttantaṃ pariyāpuṇanti dunnikkhittehi padabyañjanehi, dunnikkhittassa bhikkhave padabyañjanassa attho’pi dunnayo hoti. ayaṃ bhikkhave paṭhamo dhammo saddhammassa sammosāya antaradhānāya saṃvattati”*²⁰

(Translation: O Bhikkhu, there are those engaged in the Dhamma-Vinaya that have not studied the *Suttanta* well, because the words have not been properly passed on.²¹ O Bhikkhu, when they were not properly passed on, the meaning and explanation could not be clearly understood. This is one of the reasons that will lead to the confusion and eventual loss of the *Saddhamma*.)

The phrase “*duggahitaṃ suttantaṃ pariyāpuṇanti*” (learning and memorizing the *Suttanta* badly) implies a mistaken study of the *Tepiṭaka*, and the phrase “*dunnikkhittehi padabyañjanehi*” (because the words have not been properly passed on) refers to deficiency of the words used. In order to study the *Tepiṭaka* correctly, first and foremost, one needs to have a good grasp of its grammar. The students of Pali who do not understand its grammar are unlikely to attain a clear understanding of the Dhamma-Vinaya.

The Pali grammar scriptures are textbooks on word formation and sentence construction necessary for the study of the language to make possible communication and translation of meanings to others.

Thai students of Buddhism or Buddhist Studies with knowledge of Pali would be best served to use their skills to study the scriptures and the Buddha’s teachings in Pali. By avoiding using the Thai version of the *Tepiṭaka*, it is less likely for them to misinterpret or misanalyze due to

²⁰ A. 21/160/167 mcu.

²¹ Meaning that the Pali words were passed on in the wrong fashion. See AA. 2/20/28 mcu.

the incorrect translation of the texts. An incorrect analysis would result in a misconception and a misinformed transmission of Buddhist principles. It is highly advisable that those who wish to study Theravāda Buddhism have a good background of the Pali language and use their linguistic skills to study the *Tepiṭaka*, *Aṭṭhakathā*, *Ṭīkā*, and *Pakaraṇavisesa* accordingly. This will enable them to understand the Buddha's teachings in a more thorough and correct manner.

Some passages in the Thai version of the *Tepiṭaka* are not quite correctly translated, as they do not seem to correspond with the Pali original. Some Dhamma points are incorrectly explained. Some Pali scriptures that were published were not properly edited in the Pali tradition. It is, therefore, imperative to study Pali from the mainstream Pali grammar before translation is attempted. Each word must be properly perused, and careful editing must be made before publication. Without a proper knowledge of Pali, any teaching, explanation and analysis on the basis of the Thai translated version of the *Tepiṭaka* and *Aṭṭhakathā* could easily be mistaken.

6. The study of Pali in the region currently known as Thailand

Indian languages reached the region currently known as the Kingdom of Thailand since ancient times. Towns and cities were named in the Indian fashion. The language used was a mix of Thai and Indian. There are records testifying to the phenomenon. Words adopted had been used by the Indians who introduced them to the land in the first place. So, words of Indian origin have long been amalgamated into the Thai vocabulary.

Indians in the ancient times were seafarers and traders who controlled much of the trade route far and wide.²² When these merchants arrived at a foreign port, they would usually stay for some time. During these periods, they would share exotic stories about their country to the

²² Jawaharlal Nehru, **Chom Na Prawatsat Sakon** (Glimpses of World History), Trans. Phraratcharattanamoli (Dr. Nakhon Khempali). Bangkok: The Rapid Print, B.E. 2541 (1998), p. 169.

locals, and, in a sense, contribute to progress and development in these foreign places.²³

Around the 8th century of the Buddhist Era, Indians who came to the region later known as Thailand included merchants, Brahmans, Khattiya (warriors and nobles), and Buddhist monks. They brought with them Indian civilization in the forms of religion, arts, literature, government and other sciences, and imparted them to the ruling classes and people in the region. They were educated and skilled in various fields, and thus served as advisors to the rulers and noblemen, introducing much of Indian culture, religion, government and language.²⁴ With the introduction of religious beliefs and cultural practice, Pali and Sanskrit words were used to name places like towns and cities. Monarchs were named in Pali and Sanskrit.²⁵ Indian civilization became the model of arts and literature.²⁶ Literary traces are found in such names as Suvannaphūmi, Dvāravatī, Siwichai, and Sukhothai. Many Pali and Sanskrit words have been integrated into the Thai vocabulary so much that they are perceived by Thai people as Thai. When the Indians ventured to this part of the world, it had already been called Suvannaphūmi.

Pali and Sanskrit were important languages of communication. Religious stories and beliefs were inscribed on stones. The roots of the civilization on the Thai soil nowadays date back to events that took place in the ancient period and were subsequently enhanced by such external events as the visits of Indian merchants to the Southeast Asian coast.²⁷

²³ Department of Fine Arts, **Charuek Nai Prathet Thai**, Volume 1. Bangkok: Phap Phim Printing House, B.E. 2529 (1986), p. 15.

²⁴ Sisak Wanliphodom, **Khwaam Kaona Nai Kan Sueksa Boran Khadi Lum Nam Chao Phraya**, in *Warasan Mueang Boran*, 10 (4), October-December B.E. 2527 (1984), Bangkok: Victory Powerpoint, B.E. 2527 (1984), pp. 13-14.

²⁵ Summarized from Charles Higham and Ratchani Thotsarat, **Thai Duekdamban Yuk Kon Prawatsat Thueng Samai Sukhothai**, Bangkok: River Books, B.E. 2542 (1999), pp. 174-175.

²⁶ Sisak Wanliphodom and Suchit Wongthet, **Wiwatthanakan Khong Watthanatham Chak Miti Thang Prawatsat Lae Boran Khadi**, in *Su Khwaam Khaochai Watthanatham*, Bangkok: Amarin Printing, B.E. 2533 (1990), pp. 34-36.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 174-175.

The Indian languages were thus incorporated into Thai with regard to the Buddha's teachings. Pali entered the region with the Indian civilization. It does not come as a surprise, therefore, that the Indian languages have exerted so much influence in this part of the world.

The study of the Indian languages in Thailand in the past was centered on Pali and Sanskrit. Pali has been seriously taken up since the arrival of Buddhism from Sri Lanka. Thai Buddhist monks, proficient in Pali, started translating the *Tepitaka* and *Aṭṭhakathā* into Thai. However, the Thai language has evolved with time, causing some translation to depart from the original, making the need to study the original meaning from the Pali text more imperative.

On the basis of archeological evidence in Thailand, we know that the Indian languages and writings were introduced by merchants, Brahmins and Buddhist monks since ancient times. To be more precise, the study of Pali and Buddhism started in the region about 1800 B.E. (1257) with the arrival of a group of Lankan monks. This led monks from the region to travel to study Buddhism in Sri Lanka. On their return, the study of Pali was first introduced in the southern region of what is nowadays Thailand, and subsequently moved northwards and elsewhere. It prospered most significantly in the northern region which saw monks composing Pali literary texts – a tradition that continues today.

Pali then became a tool for studying Lankawong-doctrine Buddhism from the time of Sukhothai and Lanna to the Ayuttaya, Thonburi, and early Rattanakosin periods. The Buddha's teachings in Thai today were rendered from Pali by Siamese monks and laymen who were former monks.

Pali is an important medium in which the Buddha's teaching are preserved. Theravāda countries have, therefore, maintained a tradition of Pali studies and encouraged monks and novices to study the language.

In Thailand today the Buddha's teachings as recorded in the *Tepitaka* and explanations in the *Aṭṭhakathā* have been used to examine various Dhamma-Vinaya issues. Indeed, despite certain incorrect renderings from Pali to Thai, all the decisions on the Dhamma-Vinaya practices and the Buddha's words have been made on the basis of the Thai versions. This issue has often led to problems, and careful attention needs to be given in dealing with it.

In considering the Pali version of the *Tepiṭaka*, thorough knowledge of the language is obviously imperative. Since the Thai version derives from the Pali original, irregularities are best dealt with by resorting to Pali for verification. Therefore, in an earnest pursuit of Buddhist studies, monks and novices of the Theravāda tradition need to uphold the Pali *Tepiṭaka* and study the language. In order to be able to do so, one needs to study the Pali grammar before going to the *Tepiṭaka* or the Buddha's actual teachings. Pali textbooks are, therefore, essential tools for the study of Pali grammar and *Tepiṭaka* in the original, including the *Aṭṭhakathā*.

7. The importance of Pali in the study of Buddhism

The study of Buddhism means the study of the Buddha's teachings, which is originally preserved in Pali. In other words, a student of Buddhism should be able to study the scriptures written in Pali. The *Tepiṭaka* and the *Aṭṭhakathā* in the Thai versions are available today as a result of the efforts of Pali scholars who rendered them into Thai. Still, Pali remains important, as it serves to verify the Thai translated texts. When a query occurs as to the authenticity, one needs to go back to the Pali originals. For instance, a person asked the Buddha: “*kiṃ issariyaṃ loke*”²⁸ (What is the most prominent in the world?). A person who knows anything about Buddhism will conjecture that the Buddha would reply that “Dhamma is the most important”. In truth, his answer was “*vaso issariyaṃ loke*”²⁹ (Power is the most prominent in the world). One would wonder what power is the most prominent over and above everything else. One needs to seek an explanation in the *Aṭṭhakathā*. The Pali version says “*vaso 'ti āṇāpavattanaṃ*”.³⁰ The translation is “*vaso* (power) means extension of authority over something”, i.e. extension of the kingdom. Again, this point is not completely clear. One has to go to the explanation in the *Ṭīkā* that elaborates the commentary in the *Aṭṭhakathā*. In the *Samyuttanikāya Ṭīkā*, Item No. 77 begins the explanation with “*āṇāpavattanaṃ*” thus:

²⁸ S. 15/77/50 mcu.

²⁹ S. 15/77/50 mcu.

³⁰ Sa. 1/77/97 mcu.

“*āṇāpavattanan ’ti appake vā mahante vā yattha kathhaci attano āṇāya pavattanavasena vasanaṃ issariyattamicchanti.*”³¹

This *Samyuttanikāya Sagāthavagga-Ṭīkā* has not yet been translated into Thai. Using the knowledge of Pali, the writer attempts to translate as follows: “the phrase “*āṇāpavattanaṃ*” (extension of authority over something) refers to the fact that all kings wish to gain prominence over others and extend their kingdoms to cover other lands, big or small.”

In the explanation, there is only the predicate “*icchanti*” without a subject. In the phrase “*vasanaṃ issariyattamicchanti*” (*vasanaṃ issariyattaṃ icchanti*), even though there is no subject part, i.e. the agent (a person who wishes to have power over others), knowledge of Pali will let one know that the subject of the sentence is *rājāno* (kings). The context that lends this meaning is “*attano āṇāya pavattanavasena*” (extension of their kingdoms). Since there is no precedent translation, if a translation is felt to be inexact, one needs to examine each word. In this instance, the translator is not certain whether it refers to the extension of authority or the extension of kingdom or the use of military power to invade another kingdom. One needs to examine the text word for word and sense for sense. Using a search engine, one will find comparable passages. In the *Aṭṭhakathā*, the commentator told a story about the subjects of King Bimbisāra wanting to punish Devadatta for encouraging Prince Ajātasattu to murder the king. A statement about the king reads, “*rañño āṇāvasena karissāma*”,³² meaning “we will act according to the law of the kingdom, i.e. executing Devadatta.”³³ The author of the *Aṭṭhakathā* explained the origin of the words used in the *Tepīṭaka* about the place that the king annexed as a result of his victory as follows: in the expression “*vijite ’ti*”³⁴ *āṇāpavattidese*³⁵ the word “*vijite*”³⁶ (kingdom) means the country that

³¹ Sṭ. 1/77/47 mcu.

³² For more details, see Da. 1/150/123-124 mcu.

³³ For more details, see Da. 1/150/122 mcu.

³⁴ D. 9/166/58 mcu.

³⁵ Da. 1/166/145 mcu.

³⁶ Da. 3/84/35 mcu.

expands its boundary,” and in the phrase “*vijite ’ti attano āṇāpavattiṭṭhāne*”,³⁷ the word “*vijite ’ti*”³⁸ (land) refers to “the annexed place”. The word “*vijite*” was used twice but was translated differently by the translation team that exercised its judgment in light of the *Aṭṭhakathā*. The commentary explained that “*vijite*” is an adjunct modifying the noun, meaning “that has been conquered.” In the first example it modifies the word “...*dese*”, meaning the land that the king has conquered. In the second example it modifies the word “*ṭhāne*”, meaning the place that the king has conquered. In short, the word “*āṇā*” in “*vaso ’ti āṇāpavattanaṃ*”³⁹ is used to explain “*vaso issariyaṃ loke*”⁴⁰ (prominent power in the world), and refers to worldly power, military might, or someone with such military power as to be able to conquer or annex another land. It could refer to, for instance, the might of the non-Buddhist army that invaded and occupied a Buddhist country, as was the case of the Muslim army that invaded India and destroyed such places as Nālandā, driving Buddhism out of India for centuries. This is why the Buddha mentioned that “*vaso issariyaṃ loke*” (Power is the most prominent in the world).

There are a number of Thai translations from Pali that the present writer thinks are not accurate for the context. These need to be re-examined. For example, the following Pali passage from the *Aṭṭhakathā* reads:

*“tesu tesu janapadesu tasmim̐ tasmim̐ kale ekappahāreneva
rukkhānaṃ pupphaphalagahaṇādīni, vātassa vāyanaṃ
avāyanaṃ, ātapassa tikkhatā mandatā, devassa vassanaṃ
avassanaṃ, padumānaṃ divā vikasanaṃ rattim̐ milāyanaṃ
’ti evamādi utuniyāmo”*⁴¹

The translation team translated the passage as “in such rural areas at such times flowers and fruit, for instance, are picked only once, the wind blows, the wind does not blow, the sun is strong, the sun is mild, rain falls,

³⁷ Da. 3/84/35 mcu.

³⁸ D. 11/84/51 mcu.

³⁹ Sa. 1/77/97 mcu.

⁴⁰ S. 15/77/50 mcu.

⁴¹ Da. 2/17/27 mcu.

rain does not fall, lotus flowers bloom during the day and close at night. They are all examples of *utuniyāma* (the physical laws).⁴²

The translation does not seem to be accurate as far as the meaning is concerned, because in the word “*utuniyāma*”, “*utu*” refers to the changing seasons or parts of the year divided on the basis of climate into the rainy season, cool season, summer, spring, autumn and dry season. “*Niyāma*” refers to the physical laws on temperature or natural events related, in particular, to soil, water, air, and seasonal change. In the above Pali passage, however, “*ekappahārenea rukkhānaṃ pupphaphalagahaṇādīni*” is translated as “flowers and fruit are picked only once”. It makes one wonder what *utuniyāma* has to do with the picking of flowers and fruit. One has to understand both Pali and the nature of seasons (including other seasonally related matters).

In the phrase “*pupphaphalagahaṇādīni*” (*puppha* + *phala* + *gahaṇa* + *ādī*), *puppha* means flowers, *phala* fruit, *gahaṇa* taken, and *ādī* for instance. The expression “*rukkhānaṃ pupphaphalagahaṇādīni*” can be literally translated as “picking of flowers and fruit, for instance.” However, on examining the context, this has nothing to do with the picking of such things. In the phrase, “*tesu tesu janapadesu*” (in such rural areas) means in each area, while “*tasmim tasmim kāle*” (at such times) means each season, and “*ekappahārenea*” (executed only once) means once, as in once a year. In this light, the statement “*tesu tesu janapadesu tasmim tasmim kāle ekappahārenea rukkhānaṃ pupphaphalagahaṇādīni*” should be rendered as “Flowers blooming only once in that season at that place...are examples of *utuniyāma*”. The Thai translation is passable but not well rendered. All this is meant to emphasize the importance of Pali study in Buddhism. Knowledge of Pali is essential for understanding the Pali text and for a proper translation.

8. Using Pali to facilitate the understanding of the *Vinayaṭīṭaka*

The *Vinayateṭīṭaka* is akin to something written in stone. A problematic translation can be a cause for concern for those studying the

⁴² *Suttantapīṭaka Dīghanikāya Mahāvagga Aṭṭakathā* No. 2 Part 1, p. 101.

scripture. An example can be found in the translation of the *Vinayatepīṭaka Cuḷavagga*:

Ānanda was found to have breached the *Vinaya* in every way at the end of the First Rehearsal. All the Thera monks at the Rehearsal found him to have breached the rules on five occasions: He did not ask the Buddha to explain what the minor breaches were; he mended the Buddha’s *vassikasātīkā* (rain cloth) while standing on it; he allowed women folk to pay homage to the Buddha’s body on which their tears fell; he did not request the Buddha to live until the end of the kappa; and he led women to get ordained in the Dhamma-Vinaya.⁴³ The Pali text reads: “*idante āvuso Ānanda dukkaṭaṃ, yaṃ tvaṃ...desehi taṃ dukkaṭaṃ*”⁴⁴ (Ānanda, as a result of your act...you are found to breach the *Vinaya* rules in every way. You shall admit to the charge).

An example of the Pali and translated texts is given here for consideration:

“*atha kho therā bhikkhū āyasmantaṃ Ānandaṃ etadavocum*
“*idante āvuso Ānanda dukkaṭaṃ, yaṃ tvaṃ bhagavantaṃ*
na pucchi: ‘katamāni pana bhante khuddānukhuddakāni
sikkhāpadāni ‘ti, desehi taṃ dukkaṭanti. ahaṃ kho bhante
asatiyā bhagavantaṃ na pucchim: ‘katamāni pana
bhante khuddānukhuddakāni sikkhāpadāni ‘ti. nāhaṃ taṃ
dukkataṃ passāmi, apicāyasmantaṃ saddhāya desemi
taṃ dukkaṭanti.”⁴⁵

The *Tepīṭaka* translation team offered the following rendering: “All the thera monks said to Ānanda, “Venerable Ānanda, the fact that you did not ask the Buddha which disciplinary rules are minor is a breach of the rule. You shall admit to the charge.”

Ānanda said, “Sirs, as it did not cross my mind, so I did not ask the Buddha which disciplinary rules were minor. I do not see that not asking

⁴³ For more details, see Vin. 7/443/280-281 mcu.

⁴⁴ Vin. 7/443/280-281 mcu.

⁴⁵ Vin. 7/443/284 mcu.

the question would constitute a breach of the Vinaya in every way. But I believe you, so I will admit to every charge.”⁴⁶

The translated *āpatti* against Ānanda raises a question. As a rule, the Buddha would announce practices known as *sikkhāpada* or disciplinary rules. Any monk that did not follow the rule would be considered as having committed *āpatti*. Therefore, one needs to examine the explanation in the *Aṭṭhakathā* and compare its Pali text with other Pali scriptures. Buddhaghosa Thera provided an explanation in the *Samantapāsādikā* scripture – the commentary on the charge against Ānanda – that it was not so. He said:

“*idampi te āvuso Ānanda dukkaṭaṇ’ṭi idaṃ “tayā duṭṭhu katan” ’ṭi kevalaṃ garahantehi therehi vuttaṃ, na āpattiṃ sandhāya vuttaṃ na hi te āpattānāpattiṃ na jānanti. idāneve hetam anussāvitam “saṃgho apaññattam na paññāpeti paññattam na samucchindatī” ’ṭi. desehi taṃ dukkaṭaṇ’ṭi idampi ca: ‘āma bhante, duṭṭhu mayā katan’ ’ṭi evaṃ paṭijānāhi taṃ dukkaṭaṇ’ṭi idaṃ sandhāya vuttaṃ, na āpattadesanam.*”⁴⁷

The sentence “*idampi te āvuso Ānanda dukkaṭam* (Ānanda, this matter you did not do well) is rendered in every translated version of the *Tepiṭaka* as “You have committed *āpatti* in every way”. In fact, the Thera seniors wanted to simply admonish Ānanda for not having done a good job, which had nothing to do with the *āpatti*. They knew what constituted an *āpatti*, and Mahā-Kassapa Thera then announced to the gathering that “the *Saṅgha* would not add any *sikkhāpada* to the ones that the Buddha had issued and would not remove any *sikkhāpada* that he had provided.”

Buddhaghosa Thera put it in Pali as follows: “*idāneva hetam anussāvitam “saṃgho apaññattam na paññāpeti paññattam na*

⁴⁶ Thai translation of the *Tepiṭaka* published from 1957 to 1987. The same translation is also found in the Mahamakutrajavidyalaya and Mahachulalongkonrajavidyalaya [Vin. (Thai) 7/443/384-385.].

⁴⁷ Vina. 3/413.

samucchindati”.⁴⁸ He also repeated what Mahā-Kassapa Thera had announced to the Thera monks at the Rehearsal as recorded in the *Vinayaepiṭaka Cūlavagga* (Pali) thus:

“*saṅgho apaññattaṃ na paññāpeti, paññattaṃ na samucchindati, yathāpaññattesu sikkhāpadesu samādāya vattati, khamati saṃghassa, tasmā tuṅhī. evametaṃ dhārayāmi*”⁴⁹

(Translation: The *Saṅgha* will not regulate anything that the Buddha did not regulate and will not remove any rules that the monks should follow as *sikkhāpada*. The *Saṅgha*, having agreed, remains silent, and I take silence to be consent to the resolution.)

The above statement implies that the Thera at the Rehearsal did not invent any new regulation such as charging Ānanda with the *āpatti* offence. Therefore, the version of the *Tepiṭaka* translation team that turned an admonition to a charge of *āpatti* would amount to regulating what the Buddha did not regulate. The translation on this matter departs from the real meaning and truth.

The clause “*desehi taṃ dukkaṭaṃ* (You shall confess [admit] that you have not done well in this matter) was rendered as “You shall admit to the charge of *āpatti* in every way” in every translated version of the *Tepiṭaka*. The Thera simply wanted to say that “You shall admit that you did not do a good job” and Ānanda would say that “Yes, Sirs, I did not do a good job”. It does not mean charging him with the *āpatti* offence.

The reply to the Thera reads: “*ahaṃ kho bhante asativā bhagavantam na pucchim: “katamāni pana bhante khuddānukhuddakāni sikkhāpadāni” ti. nāhaṃ taṃ dukkaṭaṃ passāmi, apicāyasmantānaṃ saddhāya desemi taṃ dukkaṭaṃ*”.⁵⁰

The *Tepiṭaka* translation team rendered the passage in Thai as follows: “Sirs, as it did not cross my mind, so I did not ask the Buddha which disciplinary rules were minor. I do not see that not asking the

⁴⁸ Vina. 3/441/413 mcu.

⁴⁹ Vin. 7/442/284 mcu.

⁵⁰ Vin. 7/443/284 mcu.

question would constitute a breach of the Vinaya in every way. But I believe you, so I will admit to every charge of *āpatti*.”

Although Ānanda admitted that he was guilty as charged, it was not an act of *āpatti*. According to the evidence, there were monks found guilty in similar incidents in which they helped sew the robe that the Buddha used for traveling purposes. However, Bhaddāli-thera did not intervene and was admonished by those monks for not doing so. He then took the matter up with the Buddha so that He might consider the mistake he had made:

“Āyasmā bhaddāli...yena bhagavā tenupasamkhami; upāsankamitvā bhagavantaṃ abhivādetvā ekamantaṃ nisīdi. ekamantaṃ nisinno kho āyasmā bhaddāli bhagavantaṃ etadavoca “accayo maṃ bhante accagamā yathābālaṃ yathāmūlhaṃ yathā akusalaṃ, yohaṃ bhagavatā sikkhāpade paññāpiyamāne bhikkhusaṃghe sikkhaṃ samādiyamāne anussāhaṃ pavedesiṃ. tassa me, bhante, bhagavā accayaṃ accayato paṭiggaṇhātu āyatim saṃvarāyā ‘ti.”⁵¹

Bhaddāli-thera went to see the Buddha. After paying homage and taking a seat in one corner, he said: “O, Blessed One, a mistake has descended upon me, being foolish, deluded, unwise, and unable to maintain the *sikkhāpada* that you have regulated for the monks to follow. May you consider the mistake that I have committed so that others will be more careful?”

When a mistake is pointed out, it must be acknowledged. A person who refuses to do so is considered a *bāla*. The Buddha said:

“dve me, bhikkhave, bālā. katame dve, yo ca accayaṃ accayato na passati. yo ca accayaṃ desentassa yathā dhammaṃ nappaṭiggaṇhāti. ime kho bhikkhave, dve bālā ‘ti. dve me bhikkhave, paṇḍitā. katame dve, yo ca accayaṃ accayato passati. yo ca accayaṃ desentassa yathā dhammaṃ paṭiggaṇhāti. ime kho bhikkhave, dve paṇḍitā ‘ti.”⁵²

⁵¹ M. 13/135/111.

⁵² A. 20/22/58-59.

The Buddha said: “O bhikku, there are two kinds of *bāla*: (1) those who do not see the mistakes as mistakes and (2) those who do not accept the fact when others point out to them that they have made a mistake.

There are two kinds of *paṇḍita*: (1) those who see the mistakes as mistakes and (2) those who accept the fact when others point out to them that they have made a mistake.”

Ānanda was a *paṇḍita*. He did not see what he did as a mistake, but he believed the Thera monks who told him so and, therefore, accepted the charge.

After much research, it is found that the Buddha called the act of committing *āpatti* offence in every way as “*āpatti dukkaṭassa*” (commit *āpatti* in every way). Some examples are:

“*na ca bhikkhave sabbamattikāmayā kuṭikā kātabbā, yo kareyya, āpatti dukkaṭassa.*”⁵³

(Translation: O Bhikkhu, monks shall not make *Kuṭī* solely from clay. Those who do are said to commit *āpatti* in every way.)

“*na bhikkhave nahāyamānena bhikkhunā rukkhe kāyo ugghaṃ setabbo, yo ugghaṃ seyya, āpatti dukkaṭassa*”⁵⁴

(Translation: O bhikkhu, when monks bathe, they shall not rub themselves against a tree. Any monk who does so shall be said to commit *āpatti* in every way.)

“*na bhikkhave bhikkhuniyā attano paribhogatthāya dinnam aññesaṃ dātabbam yā dadeyya, āpatti dukkaṭassa*”⁵⁵

(Translation: O bhikkhu, food that a *dāyaka* offers to an individual bhikkunī to eat, she shall not give it to others. Any bhikkunī who does so shall be said to commit *āpatti* in every way.)

⁵³ Vin. 1/85/56.

⁵⁴ Vin. 7/243/1.

⁵⁵ Vin. 7/421/253.

When one compares the above examples against the rule of *āpatti* that the present writer wants to raise, it can be seen that the Buddha used the same wording. All 604 items of *sikkhāpada* about *āpatti* (514 for bhikkhu and 90 for bhikkhunī) in *Mahāvagga* and *Cūlavagga* scriptures that carry the meaning of “committing *āpatti* in every way” use the wording “*āpatti dukkaṭassa*”.⁵⁶

The charge of *āpatti* against Ānanda was consistently translated by the *Tepiṭaka* translation teams in every version from 1957 to 1987. Even the Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya version gave the same translation because of the expression “*idante āvuso Ānanda dukkaṭam, yaṃ tvaṃ... desehi taṃ dukkaṭam,*”⁵⁷ especially the word “*dukkāṭam*”. If this sentence was translated as: “Ānanda, as a result of your not doing a good job... you shall admit that you did not do so,” the question would not be raised as to why the Thera monks wanted to charge *āpatti* against Ānanda. Some even went as far as saying that Mahākassapa-thera regulated something that the Buddha had not regulated, i.e. charging *āpatti* in every way.

In order to settle this issue, one needs to make an examination based on the *suttānuloma* and *Ācariyavāda*. *suttānuloma* refers to supporting statements from the *Tepiṭaka* that support the word “*dukkāṭam*”. It does not mean “*āpatti in every way*”. An examination of the evidence in the *Tepiṭaka* reveals that the word “*dukkāṭam*” does not mean “*āpatti in every way*”. The researcher wishes to give some examples here:

In the *Dīghanikāya Sīlakkhandhavagga* scripture the Buddha told a story about *Mahābrahmā* chiding a bhikkhu for bringing a question to him when he should have gone to the Buddha, as follows:

“*atha kho so Mahābrahmā taṃ bhikkhuṃ bāhāyaṃ gahetvā ekamantaṃ apanetvā taṃ bhikkhuṃ etada voca “... ahaṃ ’pi kho bhikkhu na jānāmi, yatthime cattāro mahābhūtā aparisesā nirujjhanti, seyyathīdaṃ paṭhavīdhātu āpodhātu tejodhātu vāyodhātū ’ti, tasmātiha bhikkhu tuṃhevetam dukkaṭam tuyhevetam aparaddham, yaṃ tvaṃ bhagavantam*

⁵⁶ For more details, see Winyakkamachantika: Sikkhaphakkama Bali Plae, Bangkok: Winyan Printing House. B.E. 2547 (2004), Introduction, 2-186.

⁵⁷ Vin. 7/443/280-281.

*abhimuñcivā bahiddhā pariyetthim āpajjasi imassa pañhassa veyyākaraṇāya, gaccha bhikkhu tameva bhagavantam upasaṅkamitvā imam pañham puccha, yathā te bhagavā byākaroti, tathā naṃ dhāreyvāsīti*⁵⁸

(Translation: Suddenly, *Mahābrahmā* took hold of the Bhukku’s hand and led him to another side of the place, saying...”Even I do not know where the four *Mahābhūtarūpa* [primary elements] – *paṭhavīdhātu* [earth element], *āpodhātu* [water element], *tejodhātu* [fire element], and *vāyodhātu* [air element] – are completely extinguished. Therefore, bhikkhu, in this regard you forgot the Buddha and sought the answer from outside. You have made a wrong move. You have made a mistake. Go, bhikkhu, go to seek the audience with the Buddha and ask Him about this problem and you shall take note of what He will answer.)

The phrase “*tuyhevetam dukkatam*” (You have made a mistake in this matter, i.e. instead of asking the Buddha, you went out of your way to ask others) is true for all the incidents in the *Tepiṭaka*. No Bhikkhu was charged with committing *āpatti* in every way for not asking the Buddha about something.

The *Samyuttanikāya Saḷāyatanavagga* scripture tells a story about how the Buddha answered the question posed by a former warrior. He had heard from his martial masters that if a warrior died in battle, he would be reborn in the Sarajita heaven. The Buddha gave the following answer:

“apica tyāham byākarissāmi. yo so gāmaṇi yodhājīvo saṅgāme ussahati vāyamati, tassa taṃ cittaṃ pubbe gahitaṃ dukkaṭaṃ duppaṇihitaṃ “ime sattā haññantu vā bajjhantu vā ucchajjantu vā vinassantu va mā vā ahesuṃ iti vā” ’ti, tamenam ussahantaṃ vāyamantaṃ pare hananti pariyāpādentī, so kāyassa bhedaṃ paraṃ maraṇā sarajito nāma nirayo, tattha upapajjatīti.”⁵⁹

⁵⁸ D. 9/495/222.

⁵⁹ S. 18/355/279.

(Translation: Now, I will reply to you, master of the house. When a warrior goes to battle, he puts his mind on the wrong thing. He starts on the wrong footing, thinking that these are animals that shall die, shall be stabbed, cut to pieces, crushed, or destroyed. His opponents kill him striving toward those goals. After his death, he will be reborn in the hellish Sarajita.)

The phrase “*tassa taṃ cittaṃ pubbe gahitaṃ dukkaṭaṃ duppaṇihitaṃ*” (the warrior from the beginning clings to the thought of not doing something good [*dukkataṃ*], i.e. he starts with the wrong thought) cannot be considered or translated as committing *āpatti* in every way, because this is a matter concerning ordinary people and has nothing to do with the *āpatti* in every way. The *Aṭṭhakathā* explains the word “*dukkataṃ*” as follows: in “*dukkataṇ ’ti duṭṭhu kataṃ*”⁶⁰ the word “*dukkataṃ*” means that the warrior does not do a good deed.

In the *Khuddakanikāya Itivuttaka* scripture, the Buddha talked about how a bhikkhu with *sīla*, dhamma, and a beautiful mind was a true Arahant. The story was summarized in verse that such a bhikkhu would never do anything bad physically, verbally, and spiritually. The saying in Pali is as follows:

“*yassa kāyena vācāya manasā natthi dukkaṭaṃ*
taṃ ve “kalyāṇasīlo” ’ti āhu bhikkhuṃ hirīmanaṃ”⁶¹

(Translation: Every Buddha calls a bhikkhu who commits no physical, verbal or spiritual wrong and who has *hiri* governing his mind a person with beautiful *sīla*.)

The word “*dukkataṃ*” in this verse may refer to actions of a bhikkhu, but it does not mean “*āpatti* in every way” because there is no such thing as mental/spiritual *āpatti*. The *Aṭṭhakathā*, which may be considered the principle on which the Ācariyavāda is based, provides

⁶⁰ Sa. 3/355/165.

⁶¹ It. 25/97/315.

an explanation that “*dukkaṭaṇ ’ti duṭṭhu kataṃ, duccharitaṇ’ti attho*.”⁶² This can be translated as “the word ‘*duṭṭhu kataṃ*’ referring to the fact that a person does not do a good deed is explained as ‘a person conducts himself poorly’.” Evidently, if the word “*duṭṭhu kataṃ*” is used without the word “*āpatti*”, it does not refer to *āpatti*; rather, it refers to a poor act. The scripture that illustrates the incident of Ānanda provides the explanation in line with the *Suttānuloma* and *Ācariyavāda* found in other scriptures.

Besides this *Ācariyavāda*-level illustration, some *Aṭṭhakathā* texts do not provide an explanation about the use of “*duṭṭhu kataṃ*” in the sense of a poor act. For instance, the *Sumaṅgalavilāsini* Commentary tells a story about Pūraṇa Kassapa, using the word “*duṭṭhu kataṃ*” as follows:

“*pūraṇo ’ti tassa satthupaṭiñṇassa nāmaṃ kassapo ’ti gottaṃ so kira aññatarassa kulassa ekūnadāsasataṃ pūrayamāno jāto, tenassa “pūraṇo” ’ti nāmaṃ akaṃsu. maṅgaladāsattā cassa “dukkaṭaṇ” ’ti vattā natthi*.”⁶³

(Translation: The word “*pūraṇo*” refers to the name used when he declared himself “*satthu*”, while the word “*kassapo*” means “*gotta*” [clan]. Story was told that Kassapa was one of 100 full “*dāsa*” of a family; that is why he was called “*pūraṇa*”. Nobody referred to him as “doing a poor deed” because he was a good “*dāsa*”.)

This final example is evidence at the level of the *Ācariyavāda*. The word “*duṭṭhu kataṃ*” cannot possibly be translated as *āpatti* in every way, because Pūraṇa Kassapa was not a Buddhist monk. When Pali users see the word “*duṭṭhu kataṃ*”, they tend to readily assume out of habit that it referred to *āpatti*. In this matter, some scriptures of semantic nature provide explanation of the word as follows:

In the expression “*dukkaṭa, dukkata*” du-precedes radical *kr/* *kar*, meaning something evil, immoral, a bad act. The phrase “*Asobhaṇaṃ kataṃ dukkaṭaṃ*” means a bad act committed

⁶² Ita. 97/351.

⁶³ Da. 1/151/130.

by a person or *dukkata*, while “*du ninditaṃ karaṇamassa dukkaṭaṃ*” refers to a blameworthy act called *dukkata*. The word saw “*k*” doubled and “*r*” deleted, changing the element “*ta*” to “*ṭa*” and resulting in “*dukkata*”⁶⁴

Admittedly, as far as the *Tepitaka* translators are concerned, *Tepitaka* translation is one way to study the Pali Canon. In all Theravāda Buddhist countries, those who wish to study the *Tepitaka* need to have knowledge of Pali advanced enough to pursue the *Aṭṭhakathā* and *Ṭīkā* in Pali as well as its grammar.

Incorrect translation of the *Tepitaka* will considerably effect the dissemination of the knowledge in printed form.⁶⁵ Ānanda’s admission of guilt is not to *āpatti* but merely to misconduct, a behavioural failure in the eyes of 499 Thera monks.

9. Using Pali to understand the translated version of the *Suttantapitaka*

It is not always possible to verify the Thai translation against the Pali original, which is evidence at the Suta level. One needs to go further to such other explanatory texts as the *Aṭṭhakathā*, *Ṭīkā*, and *Pakaraṇavīsesa*. These are secondary scriptures at the *Ācariyavāda* level. There is a Pali passage in the *Tepitaka* which sees the same Thai translation everywhere. A closer examination against other texts at the *Pakaraṇavīsesa* level sheds a different light. The passage in question relates a story of a village headman, named Asibandhakaputta, talking to the Buddha thus:

“*brāhmaṇā bhante pacchābhūmakā kāmaṇḍalukā sevālamālikā udakorohakā aggiparicārakā, te mataṃ kālaṅkataṃ uyyāpentī nāma, saññāpentī nāma, saggaṃ nāma okkāmenti. bhagavā pana bhante arahaṃ sammāsambuddho*

⁶⁴ Abhidhānannā, translated to Thai and edited by Phra Maha Sompong Mudito, p. 133

⁶⁵ For more details, see Mettānando Bhikkhu, **Het Koet Pho. So 1, Volume 2: Wikhro Korani Pathom Sangkhayana Lae Phiksuni Song**, Bangkok: S.P.K. Paper and f form, B.E. 2545 (2002), pp. 74-75.

*pahoti tathā kātuṃ, yathā sabbo loko kāyassa bhedaṃ paraṃ
maranā sugatiṃ saggam lokaṃ upapajjeyya.”⁶⁶*

Every Thai translated version of this passage reads: “O, Blessed One, Pacchābhūmma Brahmans carrying water pitchers, wearing weed garlands, bathing every morning and evening, and indulging in fire, bring dead animals back to life, lead them to the righteous path of knowledge and enable them to go to heaven. O, Blessed One, the Enlightened One, can all the beings on earth after their death be made to reborn in a blissful heaven?”

In the translation, the Pacchābhūmma Brahmans were able to bring the dead back to life, teach them all the righteous things and enable them to be reborn in Heaven. Yet, the question put to the Buddha was “Can the dead be reborn in Heaven?” and not “Can they bring them back to life?”, or else, this would mean that these brahmans had the ability to bring the dead back to life.

It does not seem correct to translate the Pali word “*uyyāpentī*” as “bring back to consciousness”. The element “*u*” means “up, outside”, and “*yāpentī*” “to let go”. It may be acceptable to render the word “*saññāpentī*” as knowing the righteous things, for the element “*saṃ*” means “righteous” and “*ñāpentī*” “to make someone know”. In the *Aṭṭhakathā*, the authors changed the word to “*upari yāpentī*” (to go up, NOT to bring back to consciousness) and changed the word “*saññāpentī*” to “*sammā ñāpentī*” (to enable someone to know righteous things), and this seems correct. The question remains about bringing the dead back to life and teach them righteous things. Consulting other texts, one will find an explanation in the *Netti Aṭṭhakathā*, a scripture at the *Ācariyavāda* level, taken directly from the *Samyuttanikāya Aṭṭhakathā*, using different wording as follows:

“uyyāpentīti upari yāpentī, saññāpentīti sammā yāpentī.”⁶⁷

The word “*uyyāpentīti*” means “to let go upward” and the word “*saññāpentīti*” refers to “to let go righteously”.

⁶⁶ S. 18/358/281 mcu.

⁶⁷ Nettia.118 mcu.

In short, the Pacchābhūma Brahmans could make the dead be reborn in a blissful Heaven rather than bring them back to life and teach them righteous matters. In addition, one also needs to study grammar scriptures that explain the etymology of words. In those texts the authors usually cite examples from the *Tepiṭaka*; for instance, in the *Saddanīti Dhātumālā* the radical “*yap*” is explained followed by an example from the same *Sutta*:

“*yapa yāpane yāpanaṃ pavattanaṃ. tena so tattha yāpeti (mātukucchiggato naro)*⁶⁸. *yāpayati. yāpanā. tattha yāpetīti idaṃ yādhātussa payogatte sati kāritapadaṃ bhavati. tathā hi “uyyāpentī nāmā” itī*⁶⁹ *pāli dissati.*”⁷⁰

(Translation: “*yapadhātu*” is used to denote a state of something, while “*yāpana*” means the state of being. That is to say, in this state he lives in the womb on such food,⁷¹ for “*yāpana*” denotes the state of being. The word “*yāpeti*” in the example is a “*karitapada*” illustrating the element “*yā*”. In Pali “*uyyāpentī nāmā*” means “allowing to go up to heaven”.)⁷²

The *Saddanīti Dhātumālā* is a very important grammatical work. The Pali version is 518 pages long, while the Thai translated version is 995 pages long. The work is a tool for grammatical studies in addition to the usual texts and is very useful for translation. The sentence “*tena so tattha yāpeti mātukucchiggato naro*”⁷³ is taken from the *Indaka Sutta* in which the Buddha explained the development of human birth, from *kalala*, in the form of a minuscule round speck, the size of oil drop at the end of the sheep hair after it is shaken off three times,⁷⁴ to *abbuda*, a very fine

⁶⁸ S. 15/235/248.

⁶⁹ S. 18/358/281.

⁷⁰ *nīti. dhātu.* 435.

⁷¹ S. (Thai) 15/235/338 mcu.

⁷² *nīti. dhātu.* (Thai) 842.

⁷³ S. 15/235/248 mcu.

⁷⁴ Sa. 1/235/284, Sṭ. 1/235/326 mcu.

form developing after 7 days of *palala*, having a pale reddish color, with a white tin appearance⁷⁵, to *pesi*, a piece of flesh, and to *ghana*, a lump of flesh with five nodes after 5 weeks (these nodes being two arms, two legs, and one head).⁷⁶ Then appear hair and nails. Whatever the mother eats or drinks will be ingested by the fetus in the womb.

Such stories have been mistakenly passed on from one group to another. They took the radical “*yā*” (meaning to go) for the radical “*ñā*” (meaning to know). Similarly, the Buddha said, “*bhikkhū duggahitaṃ suttantaṃ pariyāpuṇanti dunnikkhittehi padabyañjanehi.*”⁷⁷ Many bhikkhus learn the *Suttanta* that has been mistakenly memorized. In other words, they start learning the *Tepiṭaka* on the wrong foot, because the words have been mistakenly passed on. These words and learning are therefore defective.

Good knowledge of Pali is necessary for studying and examining the true meaning of passages of this nature. Without such knowledge, misinterpretation may easily ensue.

10. Pali in the *Abhidhammapiṭaka* as aid in understanding the translated version of the *Suttantapiṭaka*

The explanation in the *Abhidhammapiṭaka* helps to better understand the words in the Sutta that the Buddha taught in the *Neyyattha* manner. For instance, the Buddha taught the Dhamma and explained its contents at the same time. Such a practice was the model of all *Aṭṭakathā* commentaries. Words were first put forward, followed by explication. Consider an example from the *Abhidhamma*:

“*cattārome bhikkhave puggalā santo saṃvijjamānā lokasmiṃ katame cattāro, ugghaṭitaññū vipacitaññū neyyo padaparamo. ime kho bhikkhave cattāro puggalā santo saṃvijjamānā lokasminti.*”⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Sa. 1/235/284, St. 1/235/326 mcu.

⁷⁶ Sa. 1/235/285 mcu.

⁷⁷ A. 21/160/167 mcu.

⁷⁸ A. 21/133/153 mcu.

(Translation: O bhikkhu, there are four kinds of people to be found in this world, i.e. (1) *ugghaṭitaññū* [a person of quick intuition], (2) *vipacitaññū* [a person who understands after clarification], (3) *neyya* [a person who is guidable], and (4) *padaparama* [a person who can be taught the words of the text.]

After this passage, the Buddha elaborated, 42 pages later, thus:

“katamo ca puggalo ugghaṭitaññū, yassa puggalassa saha udāhaṭavelāya dhammābhisamayo hoti, ayaṃ vuccati puggalo ugghaṭitaññū.

katamo ca puggalo vipacitaññū, yassa puggalassa saṃkhittena bhāsitaṃ vitthārena atthe vibhājīyamāne dhammābhisamayo hoti, ayaṃ vuccati puggalo vipacitaññū.

katamo ca puggalo neyyo, yassa puggalassa uddesato paripucchato yoniso manasikaroto kalyāṇamitte sevato bhajato payirupāsato evaṃ anupubbena dhammābhisamayo hoti, ayaṃ vuccati puggalo neyyo.

katamo ca puggalo padaparamo, yassa puggalassa bahumpi suṇato bahumpi bhaṇato bahumpi dhārayato bahumpi vācayato na tāya jātiyā dhammābhisamayo hoti, ayaṃ vuccati puggalo padaparamo.”⁷⁹

(Translation: What is an *ugghaṭitaññū*? He is a person who is enlightened as soon as he is taught the Dhamma. Such a person is called an “*ugghaṭitaññū*”.

What is a *vipacitaññū*? He is a person who is enlightened when detail is given about the dhamma. Such a person is called a “*vipacitaññū*”.

What is a *neyya*? He is a person who is gradually enlightened after much perseverance, memorizing, questioning and

⁷⁹ Pug. 36/148-151/152.

reflecting, and being in the company of good people. Such a person is called a “*neyya*”.

What is a *padaparama*? He is a person who will not be enlightened in this life despite so much learning, and teaching. Such a person is called a “*padaparama*”.)

The terms referring to these four kinds of people, especially *padaparama*, have undergone a change in meaning, probably because most Thai Buddhists have studied the text copied from the *Suttantapīṭaka* in which the Buddha explained each topic in terms of *Neyyasutta*. In other words, the Sutta needs further elaboration for teaching purposes. Initially, the Thai Buddhist academic circle may not have known that the explanation is available in the *Abhidhammapīṭaka* under the heading “*Puggalapaññatti*”, nor did they study the meanings in the *Aṭṭhakathā* and *Ṭīkā*. Instead, a “*padaparama*” is explained as a person who has much “*pada*”, i.e. much fuss, a person who goes about slowly and who does not take things seriously. The notion has been taken up to mean a person who knows just the word of the text but not its meaning, an ignorant person who will remain so for a very long time.

In the *Abhidhammapīṭaka* there is a “*niddesa*” or exposition in which a “*padaparama*” is explained as a person who will not get enlightened in this life despite much learning, and teaching.

The authors of the *Aṭṭhakathā* everywhere will cite the passage from the *Abhidhammapīṭaka Puggalapaññatti* to support their commentary thus:

“*yassa puggalassa bahumpi suṇato bahumpi bhaṇato bahumpi gaṇhato bahumpi dhārayato bahumpi vācayato na tāya jātiyā dhammābhisamayo hoti, ayaṃ vuccati puggalo padaparamo*”⁸⁰

(Translation: Any person who, despite much listening, talking, learning, memorizing and teaching many people, but is unable to attain the dhamma in this life, is called a *padaparama*.)

⁸⁰ Pug. 36/148-151/152.

The *Ṭikā* authors explained the meaning of *Padaparama* in their texts, providing greater clarity to the “niddeśa” in the *Abhidhammapiṭaka Puggalapaññatti* as follows:

*“na tāya jātiyā dhammābhisamayo hotīti, tena attabhāvena maggaṃ vā palaṃ vā antamaso jhānaṃ vā vipassanaṃ vā nibbattetuṃ na sakkoti. ayaṃ vuccati puggalo padaparamo ’ti ayaṃ puggalo byañjanapadameva paranaṃ assāti padaparamoti vuccati”*⁸¹

(Translation: The words “*na tāya jātiyā dhammābhisamayo hotīti*” [but unable to attain the Dhamma in this life] is explained as “unable to attain the “*magga-phala*” or at least do the *samādhi-vipassanā* by oneself. In the expression “*ayaṃ puggalo byañjanapadameva paranaṃ assāti*” [such a person is called a *padaparama*], there is an analysis to the effect that the person is so called because he has only the word with him.)

In particular, the phrase “*ayaṃ puggalo byañjanapadameva paranaṃ assāti padaparamoti vuccati*” means “such a person is called called a *Padaparama* because he has only the word with him”.

The word “*byañjanapada*” does not mean “such a person has only the word, the letter or the *pada* with him”. Rather, it means that he knows only the word or the *pada*. The *Ṭikā* authors who analyzed the term “*padaparama*” gave the following explanation:

*“pajjati attho etenāti padaṃ, pajjate ñāyateti vā padaṃ tadattho. padaṃ paramaṃ etassa, na saccābhisamṃbodho ’ti padaparamo”*⁸²

⁸¹ Dt. 2/79, Mt. 2/170, St. 2/10.

⁸² St. 1/251 mcu.

(Translation: The substance, i.e. the meaning, is attained. In other words, a person shall obtain knowledge through the word. Therefore, the word is called the *pada*, something that which makes it possible to know the substance. The word is something that makes it possible for such a person to know the substance but without knowing the *sacca*. Thus, he is called *padaparama*, a person who has something that makes it possible to know the substance.)

They went on to elaborate what is meant by *pada* in the word “*Padaparama*”, a person who has the essential *pada*:

“*ayaṃ vuccati padaparamo 'ti ayaṃ puggalo chabbidhaṃ byañjanapadaṃ chabbidhaṃ atthapadanti idaṃ padameva paramaṃ assāti padaparamo 'ti vuccatīti attho*”⁸³

(Translation: The words “*ayaṃ vuccati padaparamo 'ti*” [such a person is called *padaparama*’] can be analyzed in this manner: a person is called *padaparama*, because he has a *pada*, i.e. six kinds of word-*pada* and six kinds of *attha-pada*.)

The six kinds of word *pada* are *akkharapada*, *byañjana*, *nirutti*, *niddesa*, and *ākāra*, while the six kinds of *atthapada* are *saṃkāsaṇa*, *paḥāsaṇa*, *vivaraṇa*, *vibhajana*, *uttānīkaṇa*, and *paññatti*. The explanation can be found in *Sāyanettapakaraṇa*.⁸⁴

11. The use of Pali to gain a better understanding of the translation of *Aṭṭhakathā*

Incorrect Thai translation of the Pali original could lead even those with the knowledge of Pali to pass over the Pali scriptures without giving due attention, adopt the translation, and pass it on to others. A notable problematic statement deserves careful consideration here:

⁸³ Sṭ. 1/250-251 mcu.

⁸⁴ For more details, see netti. 23-24/6 mcu.

“*paraṃ vā attabhūtaṃ dhammakāyato aññaṃ paṭipakkhaṃ vā tadanatthakaraṃ kilesacoragaṇaṃ mināti hiṃsatīti paramo, mahāsatto*”⁸⁵

(Translation: or *pāramī* shall destroy other enemies from the *dhammakāya* that is *attā* or bandits being *kilesa* that will bring destruction to that person; therefore, it is called *parama*.)⁸⁶

Aggavaṃsa-Thera, the author of the *Saddanīti*, explained the term “*bhūta*”, citing the problematic sentence as an illustration:

“*paraṃ vā attabhūtaṃ dhammakāyato aññaṃ paṭipakkhaṃ vā tadanatthakaraṃ kilesacoragaṇaṃ mināti hiṃsatīti paramo*”⁸⁷

(Translation: In other words, the person who purges other parties, i.e. other Dhamma, of the *dhammakāya* that is inherent in self or *Paṭipakkha* Dhamma that acts as *kilesa* bandits bringing destruction, is called *Parama*, meaning the Bodhisatta.)⁸⁸

For the Pali phrase “*paraṃ vā attabhūtaṃ dhammakāyato aññaṃ paṭipakkhaṃ vā tadanatthakaraṃ kilesacoragaṇaṃ mināti hiṃsatīti*”, the Mahamakutrajavidyalaya version provides the following translation: “or *pāramī* shall destroy other enemies from the *dhammakāya* that is *attā* or bandits being *kilesa* that will bring destruction to self”.

This translation has had repercussions, because Phra Maha Soemchai Jayamaṅgalo has adopted it as the basis for his concept of *dhammakāya* being *attā* as follows:

⁸⁵ cpa. 324-325.

⁸⁶ *Suttantapiṭaka Khuddakanikāya Cariyāpiṭaka*, Volume 9, Part III, Mahamakutrajavidyalaya Version, pp. 570-572.

⁸⁷ **Sathanitipakon Thatumala**, Bhumipalo Bhikkhu Verson, Bangkok : Bhumipalo Bhikkhu Foundation Printing House, B.E. 2523 (1980), p. 487.

⁸⁸ Aggavaṃsa-Thera, **Saddhanīti-Dhatumala Khamphi Lakphasa Bali Maha Waiyakon**, Bangkok: Thai Rai Wan Kan Phim Limited Partnership, B.E. 2546 (2003), p. 939.

Dhammakāya is also *attā*, as stated by the author of *Paramatthadīpanī Aṭṭhakathā to Suttantapiṭaka Khuddakanikāya Cariyāpiṭaka*, page 324:

“*paraṃ vā attabhūtaṃ dhammakāyato aññaṃ paṭipakkhaṃ vā tadanatthakaraṃ kilesacoragaṇaṃ mināti himsatīti paramo*”

It was translated as: “In other words, *pāramī* shall destroy other enemies from the *dhammakāya* that is *attā* or shall destroy bandits being *kilesa* that will bring destruction to that *dhammakāya* that is *attā*; therefore, it is called *parama*.”⁸⁹

It has been referenced and quoted widely, including such dissertations as “Teachings on *pāramī* Creation of Wat Phra Dhammakāya.”⁹⁰

On the other hand, the translator of the *Saddanīti Dhātumālā* rendered the following “*paraṃ vā attabhūtaṃ dhammakāyato aññaṃ paṭipakkhaṃ vā tadanatthakaraṃ kilesacoragaṇaṃ mināti himsati*” as “In other words, the person who purges other parties, i.e. other Dhamma, the *dhammakāya* that is inherent in self or *paṭipakkha* Dhamma that acts as *kilesa* bandits bringing destruction to them.”

The word “*Bhūta*” derives from the radical “*bhū*”. It has several meanings, one of which is “to take place”.

“*bhūtasaddo pañcakkhandha-amanussadhātuvijjamāna-khīṇāsavasattarukkādīsū dissati. ... (“yo pana bhikkhu anupasampannassa uttarimanussadhammaṃ āroceyya) bhūtasmiṃ pācittivan” ’i ādīsū*⁹¹ *vijjamānesu*.”⁹²

⁸⁹ Phra Maha Soemchai Jayamaṅgalo, **Ariyasat 4**, Bangkok : T.P. Press, B.E. 2538 (1995), p. 145.

⁹⁰ For more details, see Sorakan Si-tong-on, Khamson Rueang Kan Sang Barami Khong Wat Thammakai”, **M.A. Dissertation**, in Buddhist Studies, B.E. 2547 (2004), Bangkok: Graphic Art Printing, B.E. 2548 (2005), pp. 244-245.

⁹¹ Vina. 2/69/143.

⁹² ma. 1/3/34.

(Translation: The term “*bhūta*” is used to mean *pañcakkhandha*, non-human, elements, living entities, becoming, an arahant, animals and plants...It means “having” in the following sentence: “Any bhikkhu who boasts of having *uttarimanussadhamma* (superhuman power) to an *anupasampanna* (novice and layperson) shall be guilty of *āpatti Pācittīya*”, for instance.)

“(nanu evaṃ Ānanda mayā paṭikacceva akkhātaṃ ‘sabbeheva piyehi manāpehi nānābhāvo vinābhāvo aññathābhāvo. taṃ kutettha Ānanda labbhā, yantaṃ) jātaṃ bhūtaṃ saṅkhataṃ (palokadhammaṃ, taṃ vata mā palujjīti netam thānaṃ vijjati) ti ādisu⁹³ bhūtasaddo uppāde dissati.⁹⁴”

(Translation: The term “*bhūta*” is used to mean “having happened/come into being” as in the following [Ānanda, didn’t I tell you that separation, abandonment, and change from something loving and favourable to something else are all inevitable? So, what can you hope to seek from this *saṅkhāra*?) Whatever has happened, has come into being, or has been shaped by various factors [will eventually break down as a rule. It is not possible to wish for it not to do so], for example.

The *dhammakāya* here, as a result of the detailed study of the entire *Cariyāpiṭaka-Aṭṭhakathā*, means a group of Dhamma, a collection of dhamma, i.e. *dāna*, *sīla*, *nekkhamma*, *paññā*, *virīya*, *khanti*, *sacca*, *adhiṭṭhāna*, *mettā*, and *upekkhā*, dhamma that the Bodhisatta has practiced for four *asaṅkheyya* and 100,000 *kappa*. This quality is inherent in the Bodhisatta like virtues that already exist in the person. One could also say these qualities are self-inherent.

⁹³ D. 10/183/106. The Pali words in brackets are something that the writer puts in for greater clarity.

⁹⁴ Mt. 1/3/101. The Pali words in brackets are something that the writer puts in for greater clarity

The term “*attā*” means self. It can be transliterated as *attā* in Thai. In the Pali phrase “*attabhūta*” was translated as “that is *attā*”. However, there are three separate places where the term “*attā*” is used:

1. “*param sattaṃ attāni mavati bandhati guṇavisesayogena*”⁹⁵: It was translated as “*Pāramī* will bind other animals to oneself through virtuous deeds”. The question may be raised as to why it was not translated as “bind...to the *attā*”?

2. “*param vā ativiya sīlādiguṇagaṇaṃ attano santāne minoti pakkhipati*”⁹⁶: It was translated as “or” *Pāramī* will immensely reap such virtues as *Sīla* into one’s *Santāna*”. Again, one needs to ask why it was not translated as “into the *Attā*’s *Santāna*”?

3. “*param vā attabhūta dhammakāyato aññaṃ paṭipakkaṃ vā tadanatthakaraṃ kilesacoragaṇaṃ mināti hiṃsati*”⁹⁷: It was translated as “or *pāramī* shall destroy other enemies from the *dhammakāya* that is **attā** or bandits being *kilesa* that will bring destruction to that person”. In a similar vein, why not translate this as “that is in the self”?

Conclusion:

Cases will arise when those who have studied the Thai translated version of the scriptures have queries in their minds. If they have good knowledge of Pali, they may go to the sources and compare the translation to the original text word for word and sense for sense. If they are not so equipped, they may organize seminars calling on people with similar interests, especially those with some Pali background. This will constitute an intellectual Buddhist pursuit for as correct a knowledge of the Dhamma-Vinaya of Theravāda Buddhism, through a study of the *Aṭṭhakathā*, *Ṭīkā*, *Pakaraṇavisesa* and Pali grammar, as is possible. Such activities will advance the Saddhamma further, providing further light to Buddhists and contributing to the further dissemination of the Buddha’s teachings.

⁹⁵ Khu. carivā. a. 324-325.

⁹⁶ cpa.324-325.

⁹⁷ cpa.324 mcu.

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