

## Assistance rendered by Sri Lanka for the development of the Pāli Literature

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### Pāli sound

The Lord Buddha who showed the path to get over the suffering of existence and expounded the doctrines for forty-five years and such preaching was expounded using the language we accept today, as the Pāli language.

In the Buddhist canon, the Tripitaka, the following literature was compiled together in the language recognized as Pāli. Yet during the time of Tika or during the period of writing the explanation, the Buddhist language (the present Pāli language) was used to wield by the sonance of the thantibhāsā or language. MāgadhiBhāsā or the language of the Magadha country. But, it is quite visible that the Pāli sound rendered different meanings when using it in Atuwā, explanation and in the Tikā, further explanations or demonstrations.

Today, the word Pāli brings the meaning of the language of the discourse of the Lord Buddha through the books written on Atuwā and Tikā. But, the usage of the Pāli sonance as a language was applied in the history of the recent past, in about 14 A.D. However, to acquaint the Tripitaka language such as MāgadhiBhāsā, the language of Magadha, Māgadhi, Thantibhāsā, MāgadhiNirukthi were used. The word Māgadhi, used to introduce Pāli language can be considered as the name of the geographical place, this is the most ancient name used to describe the language of the Tripitaka, the Buddhist canon.

Since Māgadhi is the language of the Magadha country, it was named Māgadhi Māgadhi designation was conferred specially by the Theravada tradition of Sri Lankan teachers. Mostly, a language is recognized by the name of the country. This is evidently seen by the famous languages, introduced today. We can contemplate the fact, that the Lord Buddha even though he was not an habitant of Magadha, he spent

most of his life in Magadha, and made the Magadha language His medium of preaching. The oldest usage is quoted in the Dipawasa thus,

“NirukthiyāMāgadhiyamama ha kathahikattumkhillapotthakete”

And in the VisuddhiMagga it is shown;

"SabhāwanirukthiyāMāgadhiyāSabbaSattānaMūlabhāsāya."

It is seen that before introducing the Pāli language as Buddha Bāashā, the dialect of the Buddha before the 4th century A.D., such as Māgadhiya-Bhāsā, language of Māgadhi, ThanthiBāsā, MāgadhiVohāra, usages of the Magadha language, had been in use. At present, Pāli has no script yet it has the power to show a meaning of the language. Many learned men say that the word Pāli is a derivative from sounds such as Pankatipā ha, Pallipalāsa and Pālipāhali. But, the accepted fact is, it is the principal text about the Tripitaka. It shows that the word Pāli is an introduction of a language. The lexicon on Pāli language, named Pāli English dictionary compiled by the great authors T.W. Rhys Davis and William Steede reveal that the sound Pāli is shown only in the Atuwācommentaries etc. but is not found in the Tripitaka. The word is only found in commentaries and not in the Pitaka, such definitions are given by various people as their analysis. When analyzing the explanations forwarded by the learned scholars on the word Pāli, its profound meaning in the main text of the Tripitaka doctrine. It is a good consideration to show that the sound Pāli is a result of the explanation of the Tripitaka.

### **The service rendered to the Pali literature.**

The service rendered to the Pali language with the condescension Emperor Asoka, in the 3d century B.C. after the third Buddhist convocation that resulted Mahā Mahinda ArahatThero with the retinue of BuddhistDharmaduta gathering introduced to the then King Devāanampiyatissa of Sri Lanka was the PāliTripitka. The Sri Lankan Pāli literature thrived on the Pāli Tripitaka footing. From their time, local learned people in Sri Lanka and foreign erudite scholars who came there created several texts in Pāli language on several topics and on different subjects. It was searched how the development of the Pāli language in Sri Lanka through the divergence and vengeance was achieved in that respect.

Result of the advent of the Mahinda ArahatThero to Sri Lanka bringing the Pāli Tripitaka to Sri Lanka.

The Pāli literature in between 3rd century B.C. and 5th century A.D.

Pāli commentary literature

Pāli text on Pali complication

Pāli texts on commentaries

Literature on Pali Gan hi Pada

Literature on Pāli clans

Pāli grammar texts

Pāliexplaining texts etc.

It is seen that during the period of Pāli development, several literary works were created. The summary of it is shown as above.

It has to be mentioned that from after the advent of Arahat Mahinda to the period up to today, immense service to the Pali development had rendered; specially even after facing many natural disasters occurred during many periods, up to the present period, it was brought with utmost protection, as mentioned in the historical chronicles. It is referred in the Tripitaka that, until the time of writing down texts, the Tripitaka was memorized by heart by the Buddhist monks and was brought down. From period to period different subject matters of Pāli were written down from generation to generation by Sri Lankan Buddhist monks which progressed.

Sutta Pi aka, Vinaya Pi aka and Abhidhamma Pi aka contains Tripitaka Buddha's teachings. We cannot confirm that the Tripitaka which is found today is the same way as it was. Since there were different speculations about Tripitaka even in Sri Lanka, resulting in several innovations which are quite visible. Therefore, to correct it and to make it complete, the great effort made by Sri Lankan erudite scholars is to be appreciated.

It is a very well-known fact that the Reverend BuddhagoshaThero who lived in Sri Lanka in the 5th century A.D. introduced KhuddhakaPāta text, which was not in use then and compiled from 15 volumes into one compendium known as the KhuddhakaNikāya. In addition, it is mentioned in the commentaries that Sri Lankan Buddhist monks accumulated other periodicals and stanzas of Tripitaka. It is the idea of critics that the fifth

text of Vinaya Pi aka, the Parivārapāli was a compilation of Reverend BuddhagosaThero who lived in Sri Lanka. It has to be mentioned that the great assistance and support bestowed by the Sri Lankan learned scholars to complete the Tripitaka was integral to the immense task.

Pāli A hakathā (commentaries) literature

Veritably, the golden era of the Sri Lankan Pāli literature commences in the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Specially, Reverend BuddhagosaThero supplied Pāli commentaries mostly to the texts of the Tripitaka during this era. Reverend BuddhagosaThero who came from India was revered as an erudite scholar and was highly respected by other Buddhist monks and he was recognized by the Anubuddhas, second Buddha, for the excellent service done towards the upliftment of the Pāli literature; also he was respectfully venerated considering that he will be the Maithrī Lord Buddha. In addition to BuddhagosaThero, there was another Buddhist monk who rendered a renowned service to the Sri Lankan Pāli literature, Badaratitthavāsī Dham mapalaThero. He was given special respect as well. It can be shown that the Pāli commentary literature which was developed widely can be considered as a special feature of the Sri Lankan Pāli language from the teachers of commentaries, Rev. BuddhagosaThero and Rev. MahānāmaThero could be included to the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D. approximately with UpasenaThero and MahānāmaThero could be included around the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Thus it is evident that approximately from 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D. to 10<sup>th</sup> Century A.D., about 500 years, the Pāli commentary Literature was developed for such a long period of time.

To explain the meaning of the Pāli Tripitaka, the assistance rendered from the light of these commentaries is not necessary to fathom further, but it is difficult to comprehend it fully without a commentary. To understand the Tripitaka texts such as Dhammapada, Theragāthā, Therīgāthā, Katha vatthu, JāthakaPāli etc. the commentaries are necessary to understand and there will be difficulty without those. Also, the value of these commentaries are quite colossal considered towards the literature.

Pāli A hakatha literature (Literature of Pali commentaries)

Actually the golden era of Sri Lanka Pāli literature commences from 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Specially, Venerable BuddhagosaThero who prepared many commentaries.

PāliTīkāGrantha (texts of further commentaries of Pāli)

Further to the texts of PāliTikāCommenatiries, texts explaining several further explanations, called Tikā were compiled. From these texts it is expected mainly to explain the areas most explained in the Atuwācommentaties to explain in detail the points referred in the doctrine.

The commentary of Vinaya vinicchayaTikāva called Vinaya sārattadīpanī, Khuddakasikkhātīkavā of Sumangalappasādanī, Pālimuttaka Vinaya Vinicchaya called VinayalankāraTikā.

The AbhidhammāvathāraTikā alias Abhidhammatthavikāsanī, Abhidhammatthavibāvinī or AbhidhammatthasangahaTikā were written down for Abhidhamma. These Tikā were compiled in Sri Lanka and were of great specialty from the Abhidham- ma Tikā, the Sri Lankan Buddhist way of thinking is and the Sri Lankans development is quite visible; such visibility illustrates the Sri Lankan identity through the Buddhist way of life to the world.

VinayonāmaSāsnassaĀyu~, (discipline is the age of dispensation.) This teaching is grasped by Sri Lankan monks very well, and a great effort is taken to study the Vinaya (discipline) and to find the meaning of the Vinaya in Sri Lanka, as well; another example is the availability of many books on this subject. It also seems that there are many books such as Vinaya Vinicchaya, KhuddhakaSikkha, Simālankāra etc. available for perusal of the highest ordained monks on this subject Vinaya. The completion of Tripitaka Pāli in the 20th century A.D.; this had brought many ideas of conflict on discipline and as lengthy a settlement was arrived.

There are many texts written on Abhidharma as a subject, Abhidharma is somewhat deep as a philosophical field it need many manual compositions, it will be a great assistance to a new learner. In the Sri Lankan Pali Literature there are Abhidharma manual compositions to be seen where the concepts of the AbhidhammaPitaka is given in a summarized for namely, Abhidhammāvātāra, Rupārūpavibhāga, Sacchasakhepa, Nāmarūpasamāsa, Abhidammatthasangaha, Nāmarūpapariccheda etc. Out of these Abhidammatthasangaha is very popular among the students here in Sri Lanka as well as in Buddhist Burma.

PāliWasakathāSāhithya (literature on Pali Chronicles)

In Sri Lanka there are important chronicles, developed from the Anuradhapura period viz. Dīpawasaya, Mahāvasaya, Dāhāvasaya, Bodhiwasaya, Thūpawasaya, Hatthavanagallavihāravasaya, etc. Specially, in the history of dispensation, history of politics, socio cultural intelligence, these information found on the Sri Lankan Pāli literature are sources of great importance more than any other historical sources in the world. The information gathered from these Pāli chronicles has illuminated and assisted when preparing the historical system not only in Sri Lanka but in India as well. There is another specialty in these texts. That is the literary value in it.

Following the two traditional schools of grammar in Sri Lanka, Kacchāyana and Moggallāyana several texts of grammar have originated with the Pāli media. There exists several fundamentally compiled in Sanskrit to teach ChandasVuta and Alankāra in the Sanskrit poetics. To fill this gap, which is not found in the Pāli literature, Reverend Sa agharakkhitaThero who lived in the Polonnaruwa era, compiled Vuttodaya for Chandas text and Subodhālankāra for Alankāra text. These volumes were written with Pāli stanzas following Sanskrit poetry tradition but should say that it has secured the independence of the Pāli tradition,

It is very evident to see that the large number of texts and books centering Pāli language, written by Sri Lankan Buddhsit monks living here and by the Buddhist monks who come from other foreign countries coverall the subjects. From the above information, it is clear that the contemporary Indian literature all the areas are represented in Pāli literature in Sri Lanka where an independence is accorded, which no other country in the world could possess.

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