

REFLECTIONS ON THE SADDHAMMA-SAṄGAHA

by

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Saddhamma-saṅgaha (Ss.), the “Compendium of the Dhamma” or “Dhamma Manual”, is the title of a non-canonical Pāli treatise divided into 11 chapters¹. The first nine chapters deal with the history of Buddhism and of Buddhist writings in India and in Ceylon up to King Parakkamabāhu the Great (r. 1153-1186 A.D.). Chapter 10 explains the advantages accruing to those who make copies of the three Piṭakas or make images of the Buddha. Chapter 11 emphasizes the advantages of listening to the Dhamma.

N. Saddhānanda edited the Ss. in Pāli with Roman characters, probably from a Ceylonese manuscript, in the *Journal of the Pāli Text Society* for the year 1890. Of this text, B. Ch. Law made an English translation which was first printed in 1941; a second and revised edition appeared in 1963.

There may still be manuscripts of the Ss. in Ceylon; Malalasekera² thought that in the nineteenth century, in Ceylon, there must have existed several manuscripts of the Ss. with slightly variant readings of certain passages.

The National Library in Bangkok also possesses a manuscript of the Ss. The text, written in Pāli with Khmer characters³, covers two bundles of a total of 63 palm leaves, each of the 126 pages having five lines of writing. The manuscript, in good condition, bears no date that would show its age. But specialists at the National Library told me that

- 1) Law's *History of Pāli Literature*, vol. 2, p. 560, states that the Ss. has nine chapters. That appears to be an error; even Law's own translation of the Ss. has 11 chapters.
- 2) Malalasekera 1958 *Pāli Literature* 170.
- 3) That does not mean it is a Cambodian manuscript. In former days, the Thais of central Thailand used the Khmer alphabet extensively for their religious writings. The written characters of that manuscript resemble those called “Type IX” (beginning of the 18th century) in Maspero's *Grammaire* (p. 48), or those called อักษรขอมหัวดบรจ in Coedès' *ตำนานอักษรไทย*, appendix.

it was very probably written during the reign of King Rāma IV or Rāma V, perhaps between A.D. 1850 and 1910. A cursory glance through it gave me the impression that with regard to its contents and length, the National Library manuscript is more or less identical with the printed version of the Ss.

Premchit's catalogue of Chiang Mai manuscripts does not seem to list the Ss.; neither does Coedès' catalogue of Thai manuscripts in Copenhagen mention it, nor does Lafont's catalogue of Laotian manuscripts⁴, and Bode does not list it for Burma. I have had no means of discovering whether a copy of it is mentioned in the German catalogue *Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland*⁵, nor whether there is a copy of it in Great Britain or France.

As a history of Theravāda and its literature, the Ss. follows the usual classical texts and does not contain much new material, with the exception of relatively minor items; some of those clearly contain errors such as the assertion that the Abhidhamma Piṭaka had already been recited at the first convention. As for the history of Buddhism in Thailand, there may be one or two points of interest. One concerns the author and the place of origin of the Ss. and the other the contents of the tenth chapter.

Author and place of origin

The colophon of the printed version of the Ss. states⁶:

1. *Cando va sāsānākāse yo virocāti Sīhale*
Bodhento nāṇa-ramsihi Laṅkāvāsi-janambuje
2. *Dhammakittiyābhidhāno ca silācāraguṇākaro*
Pākato Sīhale dīpe gagane viya candimā
3. *Piṭakesu ca sabbattha sadda-saithādikesu ca*
Pārappatto mahāpaṇṇo Laṅka-dīpappasādako

4) It may be possible that the Ss. is hidden in this catalogue under entries such as "Saddhamma" or "Satdā saṅgha".

5) Professor Bechert, Göttingen, writes me in a letter dated 2 February 1976 that to the best of his knowledge there is no manuscript of the Ss. in Germany.

6) Dhammakitti (Saddhananda) 1890 Saddhamma Samgaho 90.

4. *Tassa sisso Dhammakitti-Mahāsāmīti vissuto
Laṅkāgamana-ussūho patvā Laṅkaṃ manoramam*
5. *Tattha puññaṃ bahum katvā laddha-therupasampadam
Punāgato sakaṃ desaṃ sampatto Yodayaṃ puram*
6. *Parama-rājābhidhānena mahārājena kārite
Laṅkārama-mahāvāse vasatā santa-vuttinā*
7. *Dhammakittiyorusāminā dhīmatā racitaṃ idaṃ
Saddhamma-saṅgahan nāma sabbaso pariniṭṭhitam.*

Malalasekera⁷ translates the colophon as follows:

“There is a Thera named Dhammakitti, who shines like the moon in Sīhala in the sky of religion, causing to blossom by his rays of wisdom the lotuses, the people of Ceylon. He is a mine of good conduct and virtue and is famed in the land of the Sīhalas like the moon in the sky; thoroughly versed in the Piṭakas and in all sciences, a man of wisdom, delighting the Island of Laṅkā. His pupil, known as the Dhammakitti Mahāsāmi, desirous of coming to Laṅkā, having come to that beautiful country, amassed much merit. After receiving the higher Ordination of an Elder he went back to his own land and there, having reached the city of Yodaya (Ayodhya?), while living in the great abode of Laṅkārama, built by the King named Paramarāja, by him, Dhammakitti Mahāsāmi, well controlled and wise, was composed this Saddhamma-saṅgaha, complete in every way”.

Law⁸ renders the colophon as follows:

“In Sīhala, there was a person who, like the moon, shone in the sphere of the religion, and enlightened the ‘water-born’ people residing in Laṅkā with the rays of knowledge. His name was Dhammakitti, and he was virtuous and a mine of merits. Like the moon in the sky, he was renowned in the Sīhala island. In the entire Piṭakas, and in grammar, and the like, he reached perfection. He was highly intelligent, and he brightened the island of Laṅkā. His disciple, famous as Dhammakitti-Mahāsāmi, who had endeavoured to come over

7) Malalasekera 1958 *Pāli Literature* 245.

8) Dhammakitti (Law) 1963 *A Manual* 135-136.

to Laṅkā, reached the delightful Laṅkā. There he, having performed many meritorious deeds and having received the pabbajjā (ordination) from the elder, returned to his own country, and reached the city of Yodaya. While staying in a great residence called the Laṅkāraṃa, built by the great king named Paramarāja, the eminent master Dhammakitti, pure in conduct, and wise, compiled this (work) called the Saddhammasaṃgaha, complete in all respects”.

In short, the colophon says that Dhammakitti Mahāsāmi was no native of Laṅkā. He travelled to the island, there studied under another Dhammakitti, performed meritorious deeds, was ordained or reordained, and then left the island for his home country where he stayed in a town by name of Yodaya. There he lived in a monastery called Laṅkāraṃa, which had been built by King Paramarāja, and composed the Ss.

Malalasekera⁹ thought that the author of the Ss. was “obviously a native of India and wrote his work in that country”, and since in the second half of the fourteenth century A.D. there lived in Ceylon two Saṅgharājas by name of Dhammakitti¹⁰, he was of the opinion that probably the author of the Ss. was a pupil of one of those Saṅgharājas, and that therefore the Ss. could have been composed in about 1400. I wonder if any Indian towns called Yodaya or Ayojjhā¹¹ are known to have had a Laṅkāraṃa and a King Paramarāja.

Law¹² had a different opinion: “... the book was compiled by the elder Dhammakitti of Ceylon at a great monastery called Lāṅkāraṃa built by the great king Paramarāja”. Thus, Law understood the colophon to mean that Dhammakitti, the author of the Ss. was a native of Laṅkā, and he hints that Dhammakitti composed the Ss. on the island. But this is certainly a misinterpretation of the colophon. Besides, although there

9) Malalasekera 1958 *Pāli Literature* 245.

10) See also Geiger (Bechert) 1960 *Culture of Ceylon* 70.

11) See ‘Ayojjhā’ in the *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*.

12) Law in his introduction, in Dhammakitti (Law) 1963 *A Manual* 1.

is indeed a Laṅkārama-cetiya in Anurādhapura¹³, it seems impossible to trace a town Yodaya and a King Paramarāja in Laṅkā.

The places of origin of the Ss. are not only thought to be India and Ceylon. Premchit wrote, without indicating his source, that the Ss. was composed in northern Thailand by a monk called Nanthājān¹⁴. But since Premchit's catalogue of Chiang Mai manuscripts does not seem to list even one copy of the Ss. and since, in northern Thailand, I have never met a monk or a layman who could say that he actually had read the work or a translation of it, I am under the impression that the chances of the Ss. having been composed in the Lān Nā are rather slim.

There are, however, some reasons for considering the possibility that the Ss. may have been composed by a Thai monk in Ayuthayā.

It has been established that since the fourteenth century numbers of monks and laymen from what is now Thailand, travelled to Laṅkā because it was thought that only in Laṅkā, especially at the Mahāvihāra, had the *sāsana* preserved its pure tradition. Many monks, and not only Thais, went to Laṅkā to be reordained there according to the most orthodox rites, and some stayed on and undertook to study for a period of time under Laṅkā's religious masters. After their return home, they were held in high esteem, not only because of their own correct conduct, and sometimes profound knowledge in religious matters, but particularly because after their reordination they were regarded as members of the pure line of descent from the Buddha's own disciples¹⁵.

13) Geiger (Bechert) 1960 *Culture of Ceylon* 190.

14) พระนันท์พจนานุกรม. Premchit 1974 *Catalogue* I, 4. Mr. Premchit told me personally that he had received the information regarding Phra Nanthājān from Mr. Puangkham Tuikhiao, his assistant, who in turn had copied it from an old manuscript but could not remember which one.

15) Chronicles like Jinakālamāli or Mūlasāsanā, and inscriptions like those from Sukhōthai or the Kalyāṇī inscriptions from Pegu, show numerous examples. A few of them are mentioned further on in this paper. A person who had not been ordained by monks of the pure fraternity according to the proper rites, was not considered a "real" *bhikkhu*; consequently all his religious actions were not valid—which could lead to the extinction of the Sangha.

Therefore, it is not impossible that a Thai monk by name of Dhammakitti Mahāsāmi returned from Laṅkā to Yodaya which could be identified with Ayuthayā, founded in 1351. There are in fact, in the northeastern part of the old town of Ayuthayā, the ruins of a monastery called Wat Langkā¹⁶. Wat Langkā is on the list of the Fine Arts Department¹⁷ because it has a *prāng*¹⁸. I do not know how old this *prāng* is, but a *prāng* in Ayuthayā would particularly suggest the early period of that town's history, say up to the middle of fifteenth century¹⁹. During that time Ayuthayā had two kings named Paramarāja²⁰, the dates of whose reigns are 1370-1388 and 1424-1448. After that, Ayuthayā had several more kings called Paramarāja, and "*parama*" alone forms part of the titles of many other Ayuthayān kings.

I wonder whether it is possible to prove, from such historical sources as inscriptions and chronicles, the presence of a Dhammakitti Mahāsāmi in Ayuthayā. But it is interesting to note that at about the time Malalasekera thought the Ss. was composed, i.e. around 1400, there lived in Sukhōthai a high-ranking monk whose title included the words Dharmakitti Saṅgharāja Mahāsvāmi²¹. It is not known, however, if this Dharmakitti ever went to Laṅkā or resided in Ayuthayā.

As for the title *sāmi* or *mahāsāmi*, one reads sometimes that the king of Laṅkā granted it regularly to foreign monks who came there to

16) วัดลังกา.

17) กรมศิลปากร ๒๕๑๖ ทะเบียน ๙๓.

18) ปรากฏ.

19) Diskul 1972 *Art in Thailand* 19. In the seventeenth century, the *prāng* again became popular, but that might be too late for the Ss.

20) บรรณราช. In this context it should be noted that the King of Ayuthayā who is commonly known as Indrarāja (r. 1409-1424), in inscription no. 49 is referred to as Paramarājādhipati Śrī Mahācakrabarti (Griswold 1967 *History of Sukhodaya Art* 51; ประชุมศิลาจารึก ภาคที่ ๓ หน้า ๘๕).

21) Inscription no. 9, beginning of slab 1. In: Griswold/Nagara 1974 *Inscription* 9, p. 104.

be reordained²². That does not seem altogether correct. It is true that the Kalyāṇī inscriptions record for the year 1476 A.D. a ceremony during which the king of Laṅkā conferred, on 22 foreign monks, names or titles to each of which was added the word *sami*²³, and it is certainly possible that this was a usage which had been followed since quite some time. But the same inscriptions, recording for the year 1180 the return of the Mon/Burmese monk Chapaṭa and others from Laṅkā, do not call those monks *sāmi*, the inference being that they had not been granted the title although they had stayed for somewhat over ten years in Laṅkā²⁴.

In 1344 and in 1361 two monks arrived in Sukhōthai; both had been in Laṅkā at one time or another. Their titles are given as Saṃtec Brah Mahāthera Srīradharājacūlāmūni Srirattanalāṅkādīpa Mahāsāmi²⁵ and Mahāsāmi Saṅgharāja²⁶ respectively, but there is nothing to show that they received their titles in Laṅkā or afterwards.

On the other hand, there are examples in Mūlasāsanā which show that the title *sāmi* was given to monks after their arrival from Laṅkā, and even to monks who had never been to Laṅkā. In 1331, Anumati, who was probably Sinhalese, received the name/title Udumbarapuppha Mahāsvāmi in Martāban, because the Mon king and the population were much pleased with him²⁷. And in 1341/42, a number of monks who had

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- 22) For instance in Griswold/Nagara 1972 King Lōdaiya 51 n. 10. The honorific "mahā" preceding *sāmi* or *thera*, seems to have been used rather freely at times. There are examples in inscriptions and chronicles, like the Kalyāṇī inscriptions and Mūlasāsanā, where the same person in one paragraph is called a *mahā*, and in another paragraph he is not.
- 23) Kalyāṇī inscriptions 80-81.
- 24) Kalyāṇī inscriptions 51-52.
- 25) Inscription no. 2, face 1, l.41-42. In: Griswold/Nagara 1972 King Lōdaiya 113. Inscription no. 11, face 2; in: Griswold/Nagara *loc. cit.* p. 139-144.
- 26) Inscriptions no. 4, 5, 6, 7; in: Griswold/Nagara 1973 Epigraphy of Mahadhararājā I, Part 1, p. 71-179; Part 2, p. 91-128.
- 27) Mūlasāsanā p. 226.

only been to Martaban for reordination, but not to Laṅkā, received the title *svami* or *mahāsvāmi* in Sachanālai, Ayōthayā, Chawā (Luang Phra Bāng), and Nān, because the people were likewise pleased with them²⁸.

Therefore, I think it remains to be proved that the author of the Ss. actually was granted the title *sāmi* or *mahāsāmi* in Laṅkā.

Concerning the ordination that the author of the Ss. received in Ceylon, Malalasekera understood the colophon to mean that he was ordained an Elder, i.e. a *thera*, but Law thought that he was (re)ordained by a *thera*. I am not quite certain who is right, but the difference might be considerable. For the Kalyāṇī inscriptions (p. 51-52) mention that in 1180 a foreign monk in Ceylon received the title or grade *thera* only after having completed ten years in the Order. Likewise, from a passage in Mūlasāsanā (p. 227) it can be seen that, in Martaban in 1341/42, monks had to be ordained for ten years to reach the grade *thera*. If this was still the usage in later times, and if Malalasekera's translation is correct, it would mean that our monk spent at least ten years in Laṅkā. But if we accept Law's translation, then the monk may have stayed in Laṅkā for just a few months, long enough to worship holy sites and to be reordained. The Kalyāṇī inscriptions (p.80-81) mention an example of such a procedure for the year 1476.

The problem arises from the expression "*therupasampadam*", or "*therupasampanno*" in the Bangkok manuscript (see below), in line 5 of the colophon. Disregarding grammatical details, the question is whether a *bhikkhu*, upon completion of his tenth year in the Order, had to undergo another ordination, called *upasampadā*, to attain the grade *thera*. I think this unlikely; I know of no example. On the other hand, at least in Thailand, the word *upasampadā*, (and *pabbajjā* : ปบจ) was and is used to designate the ordination ceremony during which a man becomes a *bhikkhu*. And in Mūlasāsanā (p. 226-227) a high-ranking monk tells two other monks, whom he had reordained five years before, who during those years had studied under him and who were then returning home, to come back to him after another five years so that he could give them the

28) Mūlasāsanā p. 227-229. An English translation of Mūlasāsanā p. 225-235 is found in Griswold/Nagara 1972 King Lōdaiya 55-65.

name/title *mahāthera*²⁹. That obviously means that a *bhikkhu* could not automatically call himself *thera* or *mahāthera* after ten years, and that a certain ceremony had to take place in order to bestow the title *thera* upon a monk. But the rather casual wording in *Mūlasāsanā* indicates that the ceremony was nothing like the solemn *upasampadā*. Perhaps the author of the colophon used the expression *therupasampadā* in a loose sense, meaning “conferring the rank of *thera*”, not “to ordain a *thera*”. That seems all the more likely since the colophon says that our monk was the pupil (*sissa*) of the Ceylonese monk; the word suggests a long stay of study under a *thera*, and not just a brief reordination ceremony by a *thera*. And it is highly unlikely that this teacher-*thera* would have accepted another monk as pupil without prior reordination into his own sect. In short, I have the impression that the passage in question of the colophon means to say that our monk came to Laṅkā, was reordained, studied the Dhamma under his teacher for a long period of time, perhaps up to ten years, and upon completion of his tenth year after the reordination, was granted the title *thera*.

The dictionary of the Pāli Text Society, s.v. *thera*, sums up a passage at *Aṅguttara Nikāya* II, 22 where “it is said that a *bhikkhu*, however junior, may be called *thera* on account of his wisdom. It is added that four characteristics make a man a *thera*—high character, knowing the essential doctrines by heart, practising the four *Jhānas*, and being conscious of having attained freedom through the destruction of the mental intoxications.” One is therefore tempted to speculate that our monk, before his reordination, may have already been a distinguished member of the Order, and that because of his high reputation, at the reordination he immediately received the grade *thera*. But I do not know if such procedure was ever practised.

The many meritorious deeds which *Dhammakitti Mahāsāmi* performed in Laṅkā certainly included the adoration of religious objects, such as the tooth relic and the holy footprint, and the cleaning of holy places. For the year 1476, the *Kalyāṇī* inscriptions (p. 77-78) mention

29) “ท่านได้ชื่อวามหาเถรเจ้า”. The printed version of *Mūlasāsanā* has in fact “return after 1 year”, but I think that must be an error.

such meritorious actions by a group of foreign monks: "...visited Anurādhapura, and adored the Ratanacetiya, Maricivatticetiya, Thūpārāmacetiya, Abhayagiricetiya, Silācetiya, Jetavanacetiya, and the Mahābodhi tree... They likewise, to the extent of their ability, removed grass, creepers, and shrubbery found growing in the courtyards of the various cetiyas, and cleaned their walls". Later, they had occasion to adore the tooth relic, and some also went to adore the Siripāda, Buddha's footprint on Adam's Peak.

Since in the middle of the eighteenth century King Sirivijayarājasīha (r. 1739-1747) and King Kittisirirājasīha (r. 1747-1782) of Ceylon tried to restore the Buddhist religion in their country with the help of monks and religious texts sent by the king of Ayuthayā³⁰, the Ss. may easily have found its way from Ayuthayā to Ceylon on that occasion. There is no proof that the Ss. was among the works provided by Ayuthayā, but it just might have been included since the Cūlavamsa (p. 280) states that Ayuthayā sent "books on the doctrine and on monastic discipline which did not exist in the island of Laṅkā", and two more similar statements are found on p. 287. There is also the statement in the Cūlavamsa (p. 284) that King Kittisirirājasīha "invited in fitting manner the Grand therā Upāli (from Ayuthayā; H.P.) and listened with believing heart from the Dīgha-Nikāya, the Saṃyutta-Nikāya, the Saddhammasaṃgaha and from various other books..." Also, it is of interest to read in the Cūlavamsa (p. 263) that the same king, doubting the correctness of parts of the

30) Historical sources, primary and secondary, are agreed that the request from Ceylon to Ayuthayā took place in the reign of King Boromakōt (พระบรมโกศ r. 1732-1758), but they tend to disagree slightly on the number of missions exchanged between the two countries. It would seem safe to say that Ayuthayā sent monks and books on at least two occasions, that the events in question took place between 1745 and 1755, and that the rulers of both countries were highly pleased with the outcome of the missions. See for instance: Geiger 1953 *Cūlavamsa*, vol. 2. p. 253-254, 279-289; Paranavitana 1932 *Religious Intercourse* 212; Dhani Nivat 1965 *History of Buddhism* 19; พระราชพงศาวดารฉบับพระราชหัตถเลขา for C.S. 1115=A.D. 1753. There is also a work by Pieris, which I could not consult, about an embassy to Siam in 1750, in *JCBRAS* (18) 1903.

Mahāvamsa, had the Ceylon version of this work compared with and corrected by a copy from Ayuthayā. Obviously, scholarly writings from Ayuthayā were held in high esteem in Ceylon at that time.

Prince Damrong's work on the founding of the Siamese sect in Ceylon³¹ states (p. 137-138) that the Mahāthera Upāli, who headed the first mission to Ceylon, took a number of books with him; but only two titles are mentioned: Kammavācā and Mahāvamsa. According to the same source (p. 231-235), on a later occasion 96 or 97 works were sent, the titles of which are indicated, but the Ss. is not included. Perhaps the Ss. had already been among the books that Upāli had taken along with him because it is one of the three works mentioned which Upāli read out (or had read out) to the king of Ceylon.

There can hardly be any doubt that Ceylon then was short of even elementary works of its own scholars. Malalasekera³² noted: "Oldenberg says that all the copies of the Dīpa-vamsa which he saw bore marks of being copies from one Burmese original. (Dīp., Introd., p. 11). And Turnour (Journ. As. Soc. Bengal, vi, p. 790) says that his copy was obtained from MSS brought to Ceylon from Siam".

To conclude the discussion, I reproduce below the colophon of the Bangkok National Library manuscript of the Ss.³³:

- (1) *Cando va sanākāse yo virovija Sihale*
Bodhento nāna-ramsihi Sakkāvāsi-janamb[u]jje
- (2) *Dhammakityābhidhūno ca silūcāragunokaro*
Pākaṭo Sihale dipe gagane viya candimā
- (3) *Piṭakesu ca sabbattha sadda-satthādikesu ca*
Pārappatto mahāpañño Laṅkā-dipappasādako
- (4) *Tassa sisso Nānakitti-Mahāsāmiti vissuto*
Laṅkāgamana-ussāho patvā Lankaṃ manorammam
- (5) *Tattha puññaṃ bahum katvā laddha-therupasampanṇā*
Gato sakaṃ desaṃ sampatto Yodayaṃ puraṃ
- (6) *Parama-rajā[dh]idhānena mahājanena kārite*
Laṅkārama-mahāvāse vasato santa-vuttinā
- (7) *Dhammak(i)[i](y)orusāminā dhimatā racitaṃ idaṃ*
Saddhamma-saṅgahaṃ nāma sabbaso pariniṭṭhitaṃ.

31) ตำรัง ๒๕๐๓ เรื่องประวัติขุทธาน

32) Malalasekera 1958 *Pāli Literature* 4 n. 1.

33) Letters in brackets [] indicate doubtful readings. Letters in parentheses () are my own additions.

For the purpose of this paper, there is no need to go into the details of the differences between the colophon of the printed edition of the Ss. and that of the Bangkok manuscript, because they are sufficiently similar. All the same, I should like to comment on a few points.

Some of the differences between the two colophons are due to the different handling of the Pāli language in the various parts of Asia. An obvious example is the different use of *i* and *ī*. Another example may be the expression *sanākāse* ("in the sphere of religion") in the Bangkok manuscript (l.1); this is perhaps not just an error by the scribe, because *sanā* is sometimes used as an abbreviation of *sāsanā*, a local variant of *sāsana*. That abbreviation is commonly found in old texts from northern Thailand. But in the context of the colophon, it should probably be *sāsanākāse* in order to comply with the metre of eight syllables.

A much more serious difference is that the colophon of the printed edition calls the author of the Ss. both times Dhammakitti, whereas the Bangkok manuscript first calls him Ñāṇakitti and later Dhammakitti. But it may be that Ñāṇakitti is just an error for Dhammakitti.

A very interesting difference is that the printed edition (l.1) has *Laṅkāvasi*, "the people living in (the territory of) Laṅkā", and that the Bangkok manuscript reads *Sakkāvasi*, "the people living in (the territory of) Sakka (or: Sakkā?)". This reminds one that Sakka was believed to be the powerful protector of Laṅkā, and also that the early Ceylonese kings were thought to be related to the great Sakya clan, i.e. to be members of the Buddha's own family. But I am not certain that the meaning of *Sakkāvasi* has to be sought in those old traditions.

Also of interest is the expression *janambuḷe*, viz. *janamb[u]jje* in the Bangkok manuscript. It seems to be the basis for Malalasekera's translation "lotuses" and Law's translation "water-born people". Possibly both thought less of *jana* ("people"), but rather of *jala* ("water"), and that in turn recalls the expression *jalābujayoni* (*jalāmbujayoni* is a Thai variant), one of the four different kinds of birth according to orthodox opinion, which—whatever the explanation in dictionaries—I was

told in Thailand means “born surrounded by liquids”, i.e. like human beings. The expression *janambuje* in the colophon remains to be explained properly.

I wonder if a comparison between several manuscripts of the Ss. would show that the kind of Pāli in which it is composed is “Thai Pāli” rather than “Ceylonese Pāli”.

The tenth chapter

The tenth chapter of the Saddhamma-saṅgaha is not very long; I reproduce it below *in extenso* according to Law’s translation³⁴:

CHAPTER X

The Account of the Advantages of Writing the Three Piṭakas

Thereafter an account of the advantages of copying the three Piṭakas should be related. Moreover, the Exalted One lying on the bed of his Parinibbāna, addressed the thera Ānanda, and said:

“Ānanda, the Doctrine and the Discipline which I have set forth and laid down for you all, let them, after I am gone, be the Teacher unto you.”³⁵ “There are eighty-four thousand units of text propounded by me during forty-five years from the time of my Enlightenment up to the attainment of the Parinibbāna. I am to go alone, now I alone instruct and admonish you, but, after I am gone, these eighty-four thousand units of text, like eighty-four thousand Buddhas, will instruct and admonish you.”

Thus he formulated eighty-four thousand excellent units of Dhamma, called his own body of Norm, which by themselves had taken the place of the Teacher, as eighty-four thousand excellent self-born Buddhas.

34) Dhammakitti (Law) 1963 *A Manual* 94-99. The two footnotes which occur in his translation, here rendered as footnotes 35 and 36, are Law’s and not mine. Various words which are printed in italics in Law’s translation, are here printed in ordinary type. Otherwise, no changes have been made.

35) See Mahāparinibbāna-Sutta (Ch. VI) of the Dīgha Nikāyo, Vol. II. *Yo vo Ānanda mayā Dhammo ca Vinayo ca desito paṇṇāto, so vo mam’accayena satthū.* .

This has been said by the Exalted One:

1. Each letter (in the Piṭakas) should be considered as equal to a Buddha-representation. Therefore, a wise man should write down the three Piṭakas.

2. If the three Piṭakas last, the Sambuddhas to the extent of eighty-four thousand will also last.

3. Each letter in the Buddha's teaching (contained) in the scriptures should be considered as having merit equal to a Buddha representation.

4. Therefore, a wise man, who wishes for the threefold wealth, should write down, or cause it to be written down in a book, or in a memorial in honour of the Dhamma.

5. He who writes down the Dhamma, known as the three Piṭakas, fulfils the ten items of meritorious deeds and the threefold right conduct.

6. He also fulfils thoroughly the Good Norm in three ways, namely, in knowledge, in practice, and in realisation of the teaching.

7. Each letter in the teaching of the Lord of the world should be considered as having merit equal to a Buddha-representation.

8. Therefore, a wise man who wishes for the threefold wealth, should write down a letter of the three Piṭakas, or cause it to be written down.

9. All the three Pitakas comprise four hundred crore and seventy-two letters.

10. Those, who write down the Pitakas, do like the making of four hundred crore and seventy-two images (of the Buddha).

The advantage of writing the three Pitakas should be related by quoting here the advantage of making an image which, in praise of an image in Kosala, the Exalted One declared in detail:

11. "Those, who write down a letter of the three Piṭakas like the making of an image of the Teacher, are reborn in all the worlds with charming bodies and with radiance as the sun.

12. Those who cause a letter of the Piṭaka to be written down, do not undergo their existence either as women or as eunuchs, and the like, having the characteristics of both sexes, but they are born perfect throughout.

13. Those who cause a letter of the Piṭaka to be written down, do not even suffer death by accident, or by a poisonous weapon, or by the mantras, and the like, or by the enemy kings, (for) they are led by kindness.

14. Those who cause a letter of the Piṭaka to be written down, are reborn with the most excellent beauty either in a noble Brāhmaṇa family, or in a famous Khattiya family, but they are not born in an inferior or a low family.

15. Those who cause a letter of the Piṭaka to be written down, do not undergo their existence as petas (spirits) in the world hereafter, nor are they born dumb, paralysed, blind or deaf. They are set free from the four purgatories.

16. Those who cause a letter of the Piṭaka to be written down, do not suffer in the womb, or even at the time of their birth. Even the mothers who give birth to them, do not suffer.

17. Those who cause a letter of the Piṭaka to be written down, prosper always in happiness, wealth, enjoyment, fame and the rest; even in all respects, they grow.

18. Those who cause a letter of the Piṭaka to be written down, are not besmeared with dirt, phlegm, and the like, when they are born in the womb, but they remain pure like precious stones on a clean garment.

19. Those who cause a letter of the Piṭaka to be written down, grow even happily in the womb, and when they come out of their mothers' wombs, they descend even as from the preacher's chair.

20. Those who cause a letter of the Piṭaka to be written down are honoured, like the thousand-eyed (Sakka), with ambrosia (by the gods). Likewise, they, honoured by the chief kings, became the excellent and sovereign kings.

21. Those men who cause a letter of the Dhamma to be written down, if they, after having given up their existence as men, come back to life as gods, obtain the excellent and beautiful celestial abodes.

22. Those who write down a letter of the three Piṭakas, rejoice exceedingly (always) and everywhere, (entertained) by the excellent heavenly music of the lovely women, and they feel the highest happiness for a long time.

23. Those who cause a letter of the Piṭaka to be written down, reach the highest state in the highest deva-world, if they so desire, when they, at the completion of their existence, fall away therefrom.

24. Having obtained the Sambuddhahood which, in the three existences, is the only essential object, the Enlightenment by oneself, and the state of a disciple of great might, they gain the highest bliss of nibbāna (perfect beatitude).

25. The givers of book-band, clothing, bowl, pen-holder, "thread for sewing", or soot, become possessed of the highest wisdom.

26. Those who themselves write, those who make others to write, and those who approve of it, will in future be the wise disciples of Metteyya, the Conqueror.

27. Whatever is wished for, prayed for, or delighted in, those who write or pay others (for writing), will gain all at ease in future."³⁶

Here ends the Chapter, called the "Account of the Advantages of Writing the Three Piṭakas" in the Saddhammasamgaha, compiled for the serene joy and emotion of the pious.

36) The source cannot be traced.

There are various aspects under which the tenth chapter of the Ss. could be studied. To mention just a few: (a) Are there elements of Mahāyāna thinking? (b) Could one distinguish between earlier and later Theravāda concepts? (c) Are there traces of additional local ideas, and could they be connected with a definite region at a certain period? Law remarked in a footnote that much of what is laid down in this chapter cannot be traced; perhaps one should formulate: cannot be traced to one of the better known or orthodox sources.

I do not want to enter here into a discussion of the aspects mentioned, highly interesting as they are, but rather to raise a few points that might be of particular interest as regards Thailand.

The idea that the Tipiṭaka contains 84,000 units is well known in Thailand; not, however, that the Buddha himself had mentioned that number. Possibly the whole matter goes back to Ānanda who, in Ānandatheragāthā (Theragāthā, Khuddakanikāya), states that he learned 82,000 Dhammakhandas from the Buddha, and another 2,000 from Sāriputta. The idea is not confined to Theravāda. Writings of the Mahāyāna (Saddharmapuṇḍarīka, etc.) also mention 84,000 units. The problem of how to count correctly to arrive at the proper number has occupied many a learned man, including Buddhaghosa³⁷.

Chapter 10 compares the merit gained by making copies of the Piṭakas to the merit gained by making Buddha images. This may indicate that at the time the Ss. was written, it was common knowledge that the founding of Buddha images was a source of great merit. But acquiring merit by writing down the holy texts must have been something rather new or less well known, otherwise the author would not have had to emphasize that one single letter of the texts brings as much merit as an entire image of the Buddha.

The general conception that a person who acquires merit can dispose of it according to his personal wish, was not unknown in Sukhōthai nor in other Buddhist countries. When King Lü Thai (Mahādharmarāja I) became a monk in 1361, he made the following resolve: "As the fruit

37) Lamotte 1958 *Bouddhisme indien* 162-163. Professor Bechert, Göttingen, kindly brought the passage in Lamotte's book to my attention.

of the merit which I (am earning) by being thus ordained in the religion of Our Lord, I do not thirst for the advantages of a cakravartin or of an Indra or of a Brahmā : I am fully resolved to become a Buddha... ”³⁸. And in *Divyāvadāna*, a Buddhist Sanskrit work, it is told that a boy who had nothing to offer to the Buddha but the sand he was playing with, wished to become a *cakkavatti*. In a later rebirth he became King Asoka³⁹. The Ss. therefore does not propound an entirely new idea, but rather develops and emphasizes a certain angle of earning merit in stressing the fulfilment of wishes by those who copy the Piṭakas and, as an implication, of the wishes by those who make Buddha images.

It can be observed that in the old Lān Nā Thai certain inscriptions on Buddha images and colophons at the end of palm leaf manuscripts contain such wishes as the following “By the force of the merit gained through copying this text (or : making this image) and giving it to the *sāsana*⁴⁰, I wish to attain the three happinesses⁴¹; or : to become an arahant under the future Buddha Metteyya; or : to be reborn in a princely family; or : to be free from danger (*abhaya*); or : to attain *sotāpatti*; etc.” Sometimes it is even wished that the merit be transferred to augment the merit of a deceased person, and even the merit of animals whom the wisher had wronged or trained (horses, elephants, buffaloes) during their lifetime. Therefore, it is possible that the wishes in those inscriptions and colophons were caused by the influence of the Ss. or similar literature.

Likewise, it may perhaps not be impossible that the huge production of Buddha images in central and northern Thailand was caused in part by the Ss. or related literature which heavily insists on the merit to be gained by making images—a flourishing economy and a greater skill, or improved techniques on the part of the craftsmen, alone do not seem to be suffi-

38) Inscription no. 4, in : Griswold/Nagara 1973 Epigraphy, Part 1, p. 142-143.

39) Fleet 1906 Tradition, Part 2, p. 882 ff.

40) “Giving it to the *sāsana*” is often omitted because it was understood that religious texts and Buddha images were never kept at home, but had to be offered to a monastery, i.e. to the *sāsana*.

41) Happiness in the world of the humans, in the world of the gods, and Nibbāna.

cient reasons for the making of an enormous number of images over the centuries. There must have been a certain spiritual impulse, and this might very well have been engendered by one or several renowned religious treatises.

Whether there was, stimulated by the Ss. or similar works, an increase in the copying of the Piṭakas, is a matter of conjecture; palm leaf manuscripts do not usually attain an age of more than 200 years in Thailand. Still, it is a fact that both old central and northern Thailand produced many scholarly works on religious subjects, and that there were always persons who gladly sponsored the copying of texts.

Addendum

It was only some time after I had submitted this paper to the Honorary Editor of the *Journal of the Siam Society* that I had a chance to read two articles which refer to the Saddhamma-saṅgaha: G. Coedès, "Notes sur les ouvrages palis composés en pays Thai", (in: *BEFEO* [15.3], 1915, p. 39-46); and H. Saddhātissa, "Pāli Literature of Thailand" (in: L. Cousins *et al.* [eds.], *Buddhist Studies in Honour of I.B. Horner*, Dordrecht, 1974, p. 211-225). Obviously, Coedès' article is not widely known; Malalasekera, Law, and Saddhātissa do not mention it. But already Coedès (p. 43), and after him Saddhātissa (p. 213), thought that the author of the Ss. was a Thai monk who wrote his treatise in Ayuthayā. In his article, Coedès seems to refer to the same document which above I have called the "Bangkok Manuscript"; 1915 would therefore be a *terminus ante quem* for this otherwise undated manuscript.

"Notes sur les ouvrages palis composés en pays Thai" (in: *BEFEO*, [15.3] 1915 p. 39-46); and H. Saddhātissa, "Pāli Literature of Thailand" (in: L. Cousins *et al.* [eds.], *Buddhist Studies in Honour of I.B. Horner*, Dordrecht, 1974, p. 211-225). Obviously, Coedès' article is not widely known;

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