

Beyond the Tipiṭaka

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2016

Beyond the Tipiṭaka

A Field Guide to Post-canonical Pāḷi Literature

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Note on the 2016 ABT edition

I have somewhat updated this document, which in substance was prepared by John Bullit for Access to Insight in 2003. Diacritics have been added by Ashin Sopāka. Corrections and rearrangements have been made by myself, without notice. One major difference is the inclusion of Ven Buddhadatta's works amongst the commentaries, which is how they have always been treated by the tradition, and not in the Abhidhamma Manuals and Miscellaneous sections. I have not expanded it greatly, but have made a couple of additions, when materials didn't seem to be known to the original author.¹

Anandajoti Bhikkhu
November, 2016

¹ For comprehensive coverage of these materials see Ven. Nyanatusita's, A Reference Table of Pali Literature (Wheel BP607S).

Table of Contents

Introduction

The origins of the post-canonical texts

Why these texts matter

The authority of the texts

A Field Guide

Commentaries and Sub-commentaries

Para-canonical Texts

Chronicles and Historical Accounts

The Life of the Buddha

Abhidhamma Manuals

Miscellaneous

Sources

Preface

A quick glance through the pages of the Pāli Text Society’s publications catalog should be enough to convince anyone that there is much more to classical Pāli literature than the Tipiṭaka alone. Intermingled with the familiar Nikāyas, Vinaya texts, and Abhidhamma are scores of titles with long, scarcely-pronounceable Pāli names. Although many western students of Buddhism may be unacquainted with these works (indeed, most have never been translated into English), these books have for centuries played a crucial role in the development of Buddhist thought and practice across Asia and, ultimately, the West. In fact, in some countries they are as deeply treasured as the suttas themselves. But what are these ancient books, and what relevance do they have to the western student of Buddhism in the 21st century? Although complete answers to these questions lie well beyond the range of my abilities, I hope that this short document will provide enough of a road map to help orient the interested student as he or she sets out to explore this vast corpus of important Buddhist literature.

This article is in two parts. The Introduction provides historical background to the texts and offers some thoughts on why these texts are so valuable to the Theravāda tradition. The Field Guide is essentially an annotated table of contents, in which I borrow heavily from a variety of sources to describe each text.

Introduction

The origins of the post-canonical texts

The Tipiṭaka (Pāli canon) assumed its final form at the Third Buddhist Council (ca. 250 BCE) and was first committed to writing sometime in the 1st c. BCE. Shortly thereafter Buddhist scholar-monks in Sri Lanka and southern India began to amass a body of secondary literature: commentaries on the Tipiṭaka itself, historical chronicles, textbooks, Pāli grammars, articles by learned scholars of the past, and so on. Most of these texts were written in Sinhala, the language of Sri Lanka, but because Pāli – not Sinhala – was the *lingua franca* of Theravāda, few Buddhist scholars outside Sri Lanka could study them. It wasn’t until the 5th c. CE, when the Indian monk Buddhaghosa began the laborious task of collating the ancient Sinhala commentaries and translating them into Pāli, that these books first became accessible to non-Sinhala speakers around the Buddhist world. These commentaries (*aṭṭhakathā*) offer meticulously detailed explanations and analyses – phrase-by-phrase and word-by-word – of the corresponding passages in the Tipiṭaka.

After Buddhaghosa the catalog of post-canonical Pāli literature continued to grow with the addition of commentaries by both Buddhadatta (5th c.) and Dhammapāla (6th c.), and sub-commentaries (*ṭīkā*) by Dhammapāla on several of Buddhaghosa’s *aṭṭhakathās*. During this time, and in the centuries that followed, other writers prepared Pāli translations of additional early Sinhala texts. These ranged from poetic hymns in celebration of the Buddha, to chronicles tracing the first millennium of Buddhist history, to detailed Abhidhamma textbooks. Most of the major post-canonical works, including the sub-commentaries, were completed by the 12th c.

Why these texts matter

Post-canonical Pāli literature supplements the Tipiṭaka in several important ways. First, the chronicles and commentaries provide a vital thread of temporal continuity that links us, via the persons and historical events of the intervening centuries, to the Tipiṭaka's world of ancient India. A Tipiṭaka without this accompanying historical thread would forever be an isolated anachronism to us, its message lost in clouds of myth and fable, its pages left to gather dust in museum display cases alongside ancient Egyptian mummies. These texts remind us that the Dhamma is not an artifact but a practice, and that we belong to a long line of seekers who have endeavored, through patient practice, to keep these teachings alive.

Second, almost everything we know today about the early years of Buddhism comes to us from these post-canonical books. Though the archaeological evidence from that era is scant and the Tipiṭaka itself contains only a handful of passages describing events that followed the Buddha's death,² the commentaries and chronicles contain a wealth of historical information with which we are able to partially reconstruct the early history of Buddhism. The texts illuminate a host of important historical events and trends: how the Tipiṭaka came to be preserved orally; when it was first written down, and why; how the Tipiṭaka came close to extinction; how the Buddha's teachings spread across south Asia; how and when the various schools and factions within Buddhism arose; and so on. But these are not just idle concerns for the amusement of academicians. Any practitioner, of any century, stands to benefit from understanding how the early Buddhists lived, how they put the Buddha's teachings into practice, what challenges they faced; we stand to learn from those who have gone before. And there are other lessons to be learned from history. For example, knowing that it was the actions of just a few individuals that averted the extinction of the Tipiṭaka³ reminds us that it is ultimately up to individuals like ourselves to safeguard the teachings today. Without the post-canonical texts important lessons like these – if not the Tipiṭaka itself – might have been lost forever to the mists of time.

Third, these texts – particularly the commentaries – help us make sense of the suttas and give us clues about their context that we might otherwise miss. For example, the famous Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (MN 10) is popularly cited today as evidence that all one needs to achieve Awakening is a week or two of unrelenting mindfulness practice. But the commentary (Papañcasūdanī) suggests another viewpoint. It explains that the Buddha's audience for this particular discourse (the villagers of Kammāsadamma) were already well established in their practice of mindfulness and virtue. They were not coming to meditation practice “cold” but were, in fact, unusually well prepared to receive this deep

² For example, DN 16, MN 108, and Vinaya Cūḷavagga XI and XII.

³ In the early decades of the 1st c. BCE in Sri Lanka – then the hub of Theravāda Buddhist scholarship and monastic training – several forces combined that would threaten the continuity of the ancient oral tradition by which the Pāli Tipiṭaka had been passed down from one generation of monks to the next. A rebellion against the king and invasions from south India forced many monks to flee the island. At the same time a famine of unprecedented proportions descended on the island for a dozen years. The commentaries recount heroic stories of monks who, fearing that the treasure of the Tipiṭaka might forever be lost, retreated to the relative safety of the south coast, where they survived only on roots and leaves, reciting the texts amongst themselves day and night. The continuity of the Tipiṭaka hung by a thread: at one point only one monk was able to recite the Niddesa {PLL p. 76}.

Beyond the Tipiṭaka – 5

teaching – a point not apparent from the text of the sutta itself. The commentary thus reminds us that there are some important fundamentals to be developed before one undertakes intensive meditation practice.

Finally, the commentaries often contain magnificent stories to illustrate and amplify upon points of Dhamma that are made in the suttas. For example, Dhṛ 114 takes on a much richer meaning in light of the commentary's background story – the famous parable of Kisāgotamī and the mustard seed.⁴ Commentarial stories like this one (and there are many more) offer valuable Dhamma teachings in their own right.

The authority of the texts

One might reasonably wonder: how can a collection of texts written a thousand years after the Buddha's death possibly represent his teachings reliably? How can we be sure they aren't simply derivative works, colored by a host of irrelevant cultural accretions? First of all, although many of these texts were indeed first written in Pāḷi a thousand years after the Buddha, most Sinhala versions upon which they were based were written much earlier, having themselves been passed down via an ancient and reliable oral tradition. But (one might object) mustn't those early texts themselves be suspect, since they are based only on hearsay? Perhaps, but by this argument we should reject the entire oral tradition – and hence the entire Tipiṭaka itself, which similarly emerged from an oral tradition long after the Buddha's death. Surely that is taking things too far.

But what of the credentials of the commentators themselves: can their words be trusted? In addition to living a monastic life immersed in Dhamma, the compilers of the commentaries possessed unimpeachable literary credentials: intimate acquaintance with the Tipiṭaka, mastery of the Pāḷi and Sinhala languages, and expert skill in the art of careful scholarship. We have no reason to doubt either their abilities or the sincerity of their intentions.

And what of their first-hand understanding of Dhamma: if the commentators were scholars first and foremost, would they have had sufficient meditative experience to write with authority on the subject of meditation? This is more problematic. Perhaps commentators like Buddhaghosa had enough time (and accumulated merit) both for mastering meditation and for their impressive scholarly pursuits; we will never know. But it is noteworthy that the most significant discrepancies between the Canon and its commentaries concern meditation – in particular, the relationship between concentration meditation and insight.⁵ The question of the authority of the post-canonical texts thus remains a point of controversy within Theravāda Buddhism.

⁴ The commentary tells how Kisāgotamī, distraught by the death of her son, carried his corpse from door to door, in search of a cure for his ailment. Finally she met the Buddha, who promised a cure if she would simply fetch a few mustard seeds from a household that had never been touched by death. Unable to find any such household, she eventually came to her senses, understood the inevitability of death, and was at last able to let go of both the corpse and her grief (the full story of Kisāgotamī's life is retold in *Great Disciples of the Buddha*, Bhikkhu Bodhi, ed. (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1997)).

⁵ See BR p.145.

It is important to remember that the ultimate function of the post-canonical texts is – like that of the Tipiṭaka itself – to assist the student in the quest for *nibbāna*, the highest goal of Buddhist practice. Concerns about authorship and authority recede when the texts are subjected to the same healthy skeptical attitude and empirical approach that should be familiar to every student of the suttas. If a commentary sheds light on a murky corner of a sutta or helps us understand a subtle point of Vinaya or of Abhidhamma, or if the chronicles remind us that we hold the future history of Dhamma in our hands, then to that extent they help us clear the path ahead. And if they can do even that much, then – no matter who wrote them and from whence they came – these texts will have demonstrated an authority beyond reproach.⁶

A Field Guide

In the following guide, I have arranged the most popular post-canonical titles thematically and by date (Common Era). Authors' names are followed by the date of authorship (if known). The authors of these texts were all monks, but for the sake of concision, I have dropped the honorific “Ven.” from their names. Each non-commentarial title is followed by a brief description. Many of these descriptions were lifted verbatim from other sources (see Sources, below). Page numbers from these sources are given in the braces { }. Most of these titles have been published in romanized Pāli by the Pāli Text Society (PTS); the few for which English translations are available are noted, giving the translator, date of translation, and publisher.

For the purposes of this guide, the post-canonical texts may be grouped into the following categories:

Commentaries and Sub-commentaries

Source Text	Commentary (<i>Aṭṭhakathā</i>)	Sub-commentary (<i>Ṭīkā</i>)
Vinaya Piṭaka		
Pātimokkha	Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī a.k.a. Pātimokkha-Aṭṭhakathā (Buddhaghosa; 5th c.)	Vinayatthamañjusa (Buddhanāga; 12th c.)
Pārājika, Pācittiya, Mahakkhandhaka, Cūḷakkhandhaka, Parivāra	Samantapāsādikā (Buddhaghosa; 5th c.)	Vajirabuddhi-ṭīkā (Vajirabuddhi; 11-12th c.) Sāratthadīpanī (Sariputta; 12th c.) Vimativinodanī (Mahākassapa of Cola; 12th c.)
	<i>Vinayavinicchaya</i> (Buddhadatta; 5th c.). <i>A summary, in verse form, of the first four books of the Vinaya {HPL p. 177}.</i>	<i>Uttaravinicchaya</i> (Buddhadatta; 5th c.). <i>A summary, in verse form, of the Parivāra, the fifth and final book of the Vinaya {HPL p. 167; PLL p. 33 ¶25}.</i>

⁶ See “‘When you know for yourselves...’: The Authenticity of the Pāli Suttas,” by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

Beyond the Tipiṭaka – 7

Sutta Piṭaka		
Dīgha Nikāya	Sumaṅgalavilāsini (Buddhaghosa; 5th c.)	Dīghanikāya-ṭīkā (Dhammapāla; 6th c.)
Majjhima Nikāya	Papañcasūdanī (Buddhaghosa; 5th c.)	Majjhimanikāya-ṭīkā (Dhammapāla; 6th c.)
Saṃyutta Nikāya	Sāratthappakāsini (Buddhaghosa; 5th c.)	Saṃyuttanikāya-ṭīkā (Dhammapāla; 6th c.)
Aṅguttara Nikāya	Manorathapūraṇī (Buddhaghosa; 5th c.)	Sāratthamañjusa-ṭīkā (Sariputta; 12th c.)
Khuddaka Nikāya		
Khuddakapāṭha	Paramatthajotikā (I) (Buddhaghosa; 5th c.)	
Dhammapada	Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā (Buddhaghosa; 5th c.) (trans.: E.W. Burlingame, 1921, PTS)	
Udāna	Paramatthadīpanī (I) Udana-Aṭṭhakathā (Dhammapāla; 6th c.)	
Itivuttaka	Paramatthadīpanī (II) Itivuttaka-Aṭṭhakathā (Dhammapāla; 6th c.)	
Suttanipāta	Paramatthajotikā (II) Suttanipāta-Aṭṭhakathā (Buddhaghosa; 5th c.)	
Vimānavatthu	Paramatthadīpanī (III) Vimānavatthu-Aṭṭhakathā (Dhammapāla; 6th c.)	
Petavatthu	Paramatthadīpanī (IV) Petavatthu-Aṭṭhakathā (Dhammapāla; 6th c.)	
Theragāthā	Paramatthadīpanī (V) Theragāthā-Aṭṭhakathā (Dhammapāla; 6th c.)	
Therīgāthā	Paramatthadīpanī (VI) Therīgāthā-Aṭṭhakathā (Dhammapāla; 6th c.)	
Jātaka	Jātakatthavaṇṇanā Jātaka-Aṭṭhakathā (Buddhaghosa; 5th c.) (trans.: various, 1895, PTS)	
Niddesa	Sadhammapajotikā (Upasena; 5th c.)	
Paṭisambhidāmagga	Sadhammapakāsini (Mahānāma; 6th c.)	
Apadāna	Visuddhajanavilāsini (unknown)	
Buddhavaṃsa	Madhuratthavilāsini (Buddhadatta; 5th c.) (trans.: I.B. Horner, 1978, PTS)	
Cariyāpiṭaka	Paramatthadīpanī (VII) Cariyāpiṭaka-Aṭṭhakathā (Dhammapāla; 6th c.)	
Nettipakaraṇa	Netti-Aṭṭhakathā (Dhammapāla; 6th c.)	Līnatthavaṇṇanā (Dhammapāla; 6th c.)

Beyond the Tipiṭaka – 8

Peṭakopadesa		
Milindapañhā		Milindaṭṭikā
	<i>Nettipakaraṇa, Peṭakopadesa, and Milindapañhā are considered para-canonical, being late additions, unknown to the commentaries. See below.</i>	
Abhidhamma Piṭaka		
Dhammasaṅgaṇī	Atthasālinī (Buddhaghosa; 5th c.) (trans.: Pe Maung Tin, 1920, PTS)	Līnatthapada-vaṇṇanā (Ānanda Vanaratanaṭṭissa; 7-8th c.)
Vibhaṅga	Sammohavinodanī (Buddhaghosa; 5th c.) (trans.: U Nārada, 1962, PTS)	
Kathāvatthu	Pañcappakaraṇa-aṭṭhakathā	
Puggalapaññatti	Pañcappakaraṇa-aṭṭhakathā	
Dhātukathā	Pañcappakaraṇa-aṭṭhakathā	
Yamaka	Pañcappakaraṇa-aṭṭhakathā	
Paṭṭhāna	Pañcappakaraṇa-aṭṭhakathā	
	<i>Pañcappakaraṇa-aṭṭhakathā (Buddhaghosa; 5th c.) This commentary covers the last five books. English translations exist for the portions concerning the Kathāvatthu (B.C. Law, 1940, PTS), Dhātukatha (U Narada, 1962, PTS), and Paṭṭhāna (U Narada, 1969, PTS)</i>	<i>Abhidhammāvātāra (Buddhadatta; 5th c.). An introductory summary of the Abhidhamma. Rūpārūpa-vibhaṅga (Buddhadatta; 5th c.). A “short manual on Abhidhamma” [HPL p. 195].</i>

Para-canonical Texts

Nettipakaraṇa and Peṭakopadesa (Mahākaccāyana?; circa 1st c.). “The Book of Guidance” and “Instruction on the Piṭaka,” respectively. These books are introductions to the teachings of Buddhism. The source material derives directly from the Sutta Piṭaka {HPL pp. 100,117-18}. These two books appear in the Khuddaka Nikāya of the Burmese and Sri Lankan Tipiṭaka (but not in the Thai), (trans.: Ñāṇamoli, 1962 & 1964, PTS).

Milindapañhā (author unknown; beginning of the Common Era). “Questions of Milinda.” A record of the dialogues between King Milinda (the Bactrian Greek king Menander, r. 2nd c. BCE, who ruled over much of what is now Afghanistan) and the elder monk Nāgasena concerning key points of Buddhist doctrine. {QKM p. 4} The text was probably based on a Sanskrit work composed around the beginning of the Common Era, and was translated into Pāli in Sri Lanka before the 4th c. CE; some additions were probably made later. {PLL p. 26 ¶20; HPL p. 94} This book appears in the Khuddaka Nikāya of the Burmese and Sri Lankan Tipiṭaka (but not in the Thai). First translated into Sinhala in 1777 (trans.: I.B. Horner, 1963, PTS).

Paritta (editor and date unknown). This ancient collection consists of material excerpted directly from the Tipiṭaka: twenty-four short suttas and several brief excerpts, including the three refuges, the precepts, ten questions for the novice monk, and a review of the

thirty-two parts of the body. In Buddhist countries monks often recite passages from the Paritta during important ceremonial gatherings (special full-moon days, cremation ceremonies, blessings, dedications of new temples, etc.) The Paritta texts have long been regarded as conferring special powers of protection upon those who hear or recite them. (trans.: many; see, for example, *The Book of Protection*, by Piyadassī Thera, 1999, BPS)

Suttasaṅgaha (author unknown; before 10th c.). This is an esteemed collection of materials mainly from the Tipiṭaka, but with some excerpts from the commentaries (which is probably why it never made it to the Burmese canon at the 6th council). It appears to have been made as a sort of manual for preachers, containing passages on the Gradual Path (Anupubbakathā).

Chronicles and Historical Accounts

Dīpavaṃsa (author unknown; after 4th c.). The “Island Chronicle.” This book, the first known book written in (and about) Sri Lanka, details the early Buddhist history of the island, from the Buddha’s legendary first visits through the conversion of the island by Ven. Mahinda (3rd c. BCE) {HPL p. 53}.

Mahāvaṃsa (Mahānāma; 6th c.). “The Great Chronicle.” A history of Sri Lanka from the first visits by the Buddha up until the turn of the 4th c. The text is based on the Dīpavaṃsa, but contains new material drawn from the Aṭṭhakathā (commentaries). {PLL p. 36 ¶28} This text has long served as a key reference for Buddhist historians and scholars. (trans.: W. Geiger & Mabel H. Bode, 1912, PTS).

Cūḷavaṃsa (various authors). “The Lesser Chronicle.” A continuation of the Mahāvaṃsa, extending from the turn of the 4th c. until the fall of the last Sinhalese king of Kandy (1815). {PLL p. 44 ¶38} Its contributors were: Dhammakitti (12th c.), an anonymous author prior to the 18th c., Tibbotuvave Buddharakkhita (18th c.), and Hiddakuve Sumangala (1877). Many historians now consider the Cūḷavaṃsa to be an integral part of the Mahāvaṃsa, the artificial distinction between the two Chronicles having been introduced in the late 19th c. by the great Pāḷi scholar Wilhelm Geiger {HPL p. 81}. (trans.: Mrs. C. Mabel Rickmers, 1929, PTS).

Vaṃsatthappakāsinī (author unknown; 6th c.). Commentary of the Mahāvaṃsa. Since the Mahāvaṃsa itself is an expansion of the shorter Dīpavaṃsa, the Vaṃsatthappakāsinī is usually considered a sub-commentary (ṭīkā) {PLL p. 42 ¶35}.

Mahābodhivaṃsa (Upatissa; 11th c.). This account of the sacred bodhi tree of Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka, is mostly a compilation of material from older texts, including the Mahāvaṃsa {PLL p. 36-37 ¶29}. This book is venerated in Sri Lanka and “has given rise to well over fifty subsidiary titles in both Pāḷi and Sinhala” {HPL p. 78}.⁷

Thūpavaṃsa (Vācissara; 12th c.). A chronicle of the Mahāthūpa (Great Stūpa) in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka {HPL p. 163}. This work is “merely a compilation of pieces

⁷ The bodhi tree at Anuradhapura continues to be an important destination for millions of Buddhist pilgrims. This gigantic tree is said to be a direct descendant of a cutting that was taken from the original bodhi tree under which the Buddha gained enlightenment, and was brought (ca. 240 BCE) by Ven. Sister Saṅghamittā on a missionary expedition to Anuradhapura.

from Nidānakathā [the introduction to the Jātakatthavaṇṇanā], Samantapāsādikā, and Mahāvaṃsa with its ṭīkā [Vaṃsatthappakasīnī]” {PLL p. 41 ¶34}.

Dāṭhāvaṃsa (Dhammakitti; 13th c.). A poem recounting the early history of the sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha, from the time of its removal from the Buddha’s funeral pyre until the building of the first temple in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka (4th c.) {HPL pp. 40-41}. This work is based on material found in the Mahāvaṃsa along with additions that were “probably culled from local tradition of Ceylon” {PLL p. 41 ¶34}.⁸

Samantakūṭavaṇṇanā (Vedehatthera; 13th c.). “Description of the Adam’s Peak.” A poem in 796 stanzas that deals with the story of the Buddha’s life and the legends of his three visits to Sri Lanka, including his third visit, during which it is said he left the print of his left foot on the summit of what is today known as Adam’s Peak {PLL p. 43 ¶36}.⁹ (trans.: A. Hazelwood, 1986, PTS)

Hatthavanagalla-vihāraṃsa (author unknown; 13th c.). The life story, in prose and verse, of the Buddhist king Sirisaṅghabodhi (r. 247-249) of Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka {HPL p. 55}. First translated into Sinhala in 14th c.

Saddhamma-saṅgaha (Dhammakitti Mahāsami; Thai; 14th c.). An outline of the literary and ecclesiastical history of Buddhism, including the first four councils, the first writing of Tipiṭaka, and the writing of the ṭīkā (sub-commentaries). The source material for this book comes from the Tipiṭaka and the Aṭṭhakathās {HPL p. 129-30}.

Cha-kesadhātuvaṃsa (unknown Burmese author). A short history of the construction of six stūpas that enshrine the hair relics that the Buddha personally gave to six arahants {HPL pp. 36-37}.

Gandhavaṃsa (unknown Burmese author; 19th c.?). A catalog of ancient Buddhist commentators and their works {PLL p. 48 ¶44.5}.

Sāsanavaṃsa (Paññāsāmin; Burmese; 19th c.). A history of Buddhism in India until the third Council, and then in Sri Lanka and other countries to which Buddhist missions had been sent. The source texts for this work include the Samantapāsādikā, Dīpavaṃsa, Mahāvaṃsa, and the Burmese chronicles {PLL p. 49 ¶44}. (trans.: B.C. Law, 1952, PTS)

The Life of the Buddha

Jinālaṅkāra (Buddharakkhita; 12th c.). This poem of 278 verses gives an account of the Buddha’s life up until his enlightenment {PLL p. 41 ¶34.3}.

Anāgata-vaṃsa (Mahākassapa of Cola; 12th c.?). The life story of Metteyya, the next Buddha, told in verse {HPL p. 9}.

⁸ The Tooth Relic – now enshrined in the Sacred Temple of the Tooth in Kandy, Sri Lanka – is still a favorite destination for pilgrims.

⁹ Adam’s Peak, in the central forests of the island, continues to be a celebrated pilgrimage spot for Sri Lankan Buddhists.).

Beyond the Tipiṭaka – 11

Jinacarita (Medhankara; 13th c.). An account of the life of the Buddha, told in a poem of 472 verses {HPL p. 64}. (trans: Ānandajoti Bhikkhu: The Life of the Victorious Buddha, 2006).

Pajjamadhu (Buddhapiya Dipankara; 13th c.). A poem of 104 stanzas in praise of the Buddha's physical beauty and wisdom {PLL p. 44}.

Jinakālamālī (Ratanapañña; Thai; 16th c.). This account of the life of the Buddha begins with his birth in a previous life as the Indian King Sattutāpa, and continues through successive lives until his final birth as Siddhattha Gotama. It also includes descriptions of the Buddha's visits to Sri Lanka, the establishment of Buddhism there, and the early rise of Buddhism in Thailand. {HPL p. 65} (trans.: N.A. Jayawickrama, 1962, PTS).

Abhidhamma Manuals

Saccasaṅkhepa (Cūḷa-Dhammapāla; South Indian; 7th c.). "Elements of Truth." A "short treatise on Abhidhamma" {HPL p. 125; PLL p. 34 ¶26}.

Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha (Anuruddha; 10th c.?). A summary of the Abhidhamma, used to this day as an introductory text to Abhidhamma. (trans.: S.Z. Aung and Mrs. C.A.F. Rhys Davids, 1910, PTS; an excellent modern English translation of this text is in Bhikkhu Bodhi's A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma, 1993, BPS).

Nāmarūpa-pariccheda (Anuruddha; 10th c.?). An "introduction to the study of Abhidhamma," in verse form {HPL p. 99}.

Paramattha-vinicchaya (Anuruddha; 10th c.?). An "Abhidhamma text" {HPL p. 113}.

Khemappakaraṇa (Nāmarūpa-samāsa) (Khema; 10th c.). A "short manual on the Abhidhamma" {HPL p. 73}.

Mohavicchedanī (Mahākassapa of Cola; 12th c.). A manual on the mātikās (topics) of the seven books of the Abhidhamma. One of the last Pāḷi works written in India {HPL pp. 97-98}.

Nāmacārādīpakā (Chappata; Burmese; 15th c.). A "work on Abhidhamma" {HPL p. 193}.

Miscellaneous

Vimuttimagga (Upatissa; 1st c.). "The Path of Freedom." A short manual summarizing the path of Buddhist practice. The original Pāḷi text was long believed to have been lost; for centuries, discussions about the text therefore relied on a 5th c. Chinese edition. A Pāḷi edition was published in 1963, but it back-translated {HPL p. 175-6}. (trans.: Ehara, Soma Thera, and Kheminda Thera, 1967, BPS)

Visuddhimagga (Buddhaghosa; 5th c.). "The Path of Purification." An important manual of Buddhist meditation, based on both the Pāḷi Tipiṭaka and the ancient Sinhala commentaries. This was Buddhaghosa's first opus, written at the behest of the elders of the Mahāvihāra community "in order to test his abilities prior to entrusting him with the weighty and responsible task of translating the Sinhala commentaries into Pāḷi" {EHBC p.

4}. The Visuddhimagga’s emphasis on meditation practices that are scarcely mentioned in the suttas (the kasiṇa meditations) fueled a controversy concerning the relationship between jhāna and vipassana that persists to this day {BR p.145}. (trans.: Pe Maung Tin, 1923-31, PTS; Ñāṇamoli Thera, 1956, BPS)

Paramatthamañjusa (Dhammapāla; 6th c.). Commentary on the Visuddhimagga. This, the earliest of all the tīkāś, “explains in detail the brief references found in the Visuddhimagga...[,] provides a storehouse of traditional interpretations” of Dhamma, and provides discussions on Pāli grammar {HPL p. 111-13}.

Khuddasikkhā (Dhammasiri; after 11th c.) and Mūlasikkhā (Mahāsāmin; after 11th c.). These are short summaries on monastic discipline, meant to be learned by heart {PLL p. 35 ¶27}.

Upāsaka-janālaṅkāra (Sihala Acariya Ānanda Mahāthera; 13th c.). “A Pāli manual dealing with the Buddha’s teachings for laymen” {HPL p. 168}.

Sārasaṅgaha (Siddhattha; 13th c.). A “manual of Dhamma” in prose and verse {HPL p. 141}.

Sandesakathā and Sīma-vivāda-vinicchaya-kathā (both by an unknown Burmese author; 19th c.). These two works “throw interesting sidelight on the relation between Ceylon and Burma.” {PLL p. 48 ¶44}

Pañcagatidīpanī (author and date unknown). A poem of 114 stanzas that describes the five forms of rebirth: in hell, as an animal, as a hungry shade (peta), as a human, or as a celestial being (deva) {PLL p. 45 ¶40}.

Saddhammopāyana (author and date unknown). A collection of 629 short verses in praise of the Dhamma {PLL p. 46 ¶41}.

Telakathā-gāthā (author and date unknown). “The Oil-Cauldron Verses.” A poem whose 98 stanzas “are ascribed to a Thera [senior monk] who was condemned to be thrown into a vessel full of boiling oil. He had been falsely accused of indirectly rendering help in an intrigue of the wife of King Tissa... The boiling oil cannot injure the Thera and he pronounces” stanzas that “deal with death and thought of death, of transience, of suffering, and of the unreality of the soul, etc.” {PLL p. 46 ¶41}.

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Beyond the Tipiṭaka – 13

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