

- 31 Sanskrit influence, however, is evident in the *Lokapaññatti* 187, 15 (ed. E. Denis, Paris 1977) *dubbhikkhaṃ hoti sakalavutti*, thus Denis: 'absence totale de pluie' (sic!); both manuscripts have *satalavutti*, read *salākāvutti*: *-vutti* instead of *-vutta* brings the word near to *śalākāvṛtti*.
- 32 Probably 'mildew' or 'blight' (as suggested by Oldenberg-Rhys Davids, *Vinaya Texts* III 326) which is, however, not caused by insects, but by fungi.

## KECI, 'SOME' IN THE PALI COMMENTARIES

The Pali Canon and its commentaries (cties) are interdependent in so far as the cties give as precise explanations as possible of the vast number of canonical words they comment on in the three piṭakas: Vinaya, Sutta, and Abhidhamma. Both canon and cties are closed now and no further additions can be made to either. Any later explanatory work, such as *ṭīkās*, *anuṭīkās*, or anything more modern or contemporary,<sup>1</sup> does not rank as part of the genuine commentarial literature and is in fact post-commentarial.

The history of this genuine literature is somewhat complicated. It appears to have emanated from Jambudīpa (India), and was brought later to Sri Lanka by Mahā-Mahinda, son of the Emperor Asoka, there to be put into the Sinhalese language. This forms the source-material of the Pali cties as we have them today. For in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. these ancient cties were not only translated into Pali but organized and edited into a more scientific and sophisticated form principally by Buddhaghosa, Dhammapāla and, to a far lesser extent, by Buddhadatta. All these were bhikkhus living in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D., and all came from India to the Mahāvihāra in Anuradhapura to pursue their self-imposed editorial tasks there with the consent of the resident bhikkhus.

In spite of all that has been written and said, it cannot, so it seems, be repeated too often that not one of these so-called commentators is, strictly speaking, the author of any cty to which his name has been attached. Rather is it the case that all of them were translators and editors rendering into a more acceptable language and arranging in a more co-ordinated and rational order the commentarial material they found at the Mahāvihāra in the Sinhalese tongue. For this, for one thing, 'rendered no service to the bhikkhu-population living overseas'.<sup>2</sup>

In words attributed to Buddhaghosa, 'Removing the Sīhala language from them (i.e. the cties) and basing it on the *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā* without discarding whatever are correct meanings and rulings that are given in the Mahāpaccarī and other famous commentaries such as the Kurundī that can be admitted to the

tradition of the Elders resident in the Mahāvihāra, I will make the meaning clear removing any repetitions and incorrect readings; giving up only a different tongue and condensing protracted exegesis, I shall render them into the faultless language (Māgadhi) suitable to the style of the canonical texts unmixed with and uncorrupted by the views of other sects'.<sup>3</sup>

It will be observed that in this verse-passage the 'commentator', here Buddhaghosa, proposes to work not only with extreme care and circumspection, but also refers to some of the early cties. Unfortunately none of these has survived and reasons for their disappearance can be merely guess-work.

Living perhaps even prior to the compilers of the old cties were the Porāṇas, scholars who were 'undoubtedly revered teachers of old, and they must have played an important part in the formation and stabilising of the Theravāda school'.<sup>4</sup> Extracts from their teachings, expressed in both prose and verse, are scattered throughout the cties. The same material is sometimes quoted in more than one cty. Therefore it would appear that these extracts were regarded as important and probably reliable enough to merit preservation.

Even as the cties knew of their predecessors, the 'Ancients' whom they called the Porāṇā, so too they knew of what I can only assume to have been some of their contemporaries. They refer to these as *keci*, 'some', sometimes also to *aññe*, *apare*, *ekacce*, *eke*, all meaning 'others'.<sup>5</sup> Whether these 'others' were the same as or different from one another I cannot say. But I think it highly likely that they were not the same as *keci*. I think this partly because of the commentarial precision of words used, and partly because the wording of the views attributed, for example, to *eke*, is on the whole different from the type of wording used to record the statements attributed to *keci*. But only 'on the whole'.

In this article I am not primarily concerned with any of these 'others' though they cannot be ignored. The names they are known by in the cties as *aññe*, *apare*, *ekacce* and *eke* are recorded by modern lexicographers only, as far as I am aware, in Helmer Smith's Index to Pj I and II.<sup>6</sup> Here too is an entry for *keci*, but so far it is included in very few other indexes to PTS publications. But I can mention three exceptions. First there is Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli's

*The Illustrator of Ultimate Meaning*<sup>7</sup> where in his Index of Words he includes an entry headed "'some" (*keci*, *apare*)'. Here he lists 24 occurrences of these two words. These amount to roughly the same total as Helmer Smith's entries under *keci* and the four words for 'others'. Secondly, and thirdly, references to 'some' appear in the indexes of words and subjects in *The Clarifier of the Sweet Meaning*<sup>8</sup> and in *Peta-Stories*.<sup>9</sup>

Otherwise a certain amount of what I have found about 'some', and 'others', I have found as it were by chance and do not propose anything at all definite or final about them here. I merely put forward these matters hoping that some day some scholar will be sufficiently interested in these 'contemporaries' of the old commentators to compile a full critical index to these 'undiscovered corners of Pali literature'.<sup>10</sup>

An assertion which, however, may be made with some confidence is that these people, scholars, teachers perhaps, known as 'some' and 'others', whoever they were, had certainly on occasions views differing from those held by the Mahāvihārins. It is apparent that these latter did not despise all their views, but held a number of them to be valid, important, and constructive or interesting enough to be inserted in the commentaries, but they hardly can have foreseen that these would have been preserved and studied centuries later in far away Europe. The recorded views of 'some' may be given without comment, thus apparently signifying agreement, or by saying 'the meaning is the same', though the reading may differ; or by criticising or rejecting.

When this happens, when there is criticism or rejection, it can be expressed as *pamādapāṭha*, an incorrect or slovenly reading, as e.g. at Pj I 207 and Pv-a 25, of *keci*; as *pamādalekha*, as e.g. at Bv-a 230, *potthakesu likhanti*, so *pamādalekho ti veditabbo*: 'they (unspecified) write in the books (manuscripts?) *pabbajitaṃ santan ti* (for *mayi pabbajite*), this is an erroneous or slovenly writing', as also noted at Sp 3,2 where scribes' errors or careless writings, *pamādalekha*, will be discarded when Sp as it has come down to us was being prepared from the older cties that were in the Sīhala tongue; as *taṃ na sundaraṃ*, 'that is not good, right or proper', as e.g. at Ud-a 253 of *keci*; as *taṃ pāliyaṃ na sameti*, 'that does not agree or tally with the text', as e.g. at Bv-a 76 of *keci*; as *taṃ na gahetabbam*, 'that is not to be adopted', as e.g.

at Ud-a 374 of *apare*; as *taṃ akāraṇaṃ*, 'that is unreasonable', as Ud-a 34 of *keci*; also as *n'atth' idaṃ kāraṇaṃ*, as e.g. at Ud-a 431 of *keci*. Thus where the reading or writing was deemed to be careless or the views put forward to be erroneous, several ways in which the Elders could show their disagreement were to hand.

On other occasions, and perhaps the more frequent, the differing interpretations of *keci* may be given without any comment and neither agreement nor disagreement is expressed. Thus at Ud-a 44 *have* is said to be a particle here. But *keci* say (*vadanti*) 'its meaning is *āhave*, in the battle' (which might well be the case). This is not disputed.<sup>11</sup>

It seems that the views held by *keci* or the readings taken by them are nearly always expressed by the terms *keci vadanti* and *keci paṭhanti*, 'some say' and 'some read'. But this is not a hard and fast rule or occurrence. For at e.g. Sv 662, 5 and Pj I 78, 17 the word *bhaṇanti* is used instead of *vadanti* for what *keci* say, as it is at e.g. Pj II 226, 21 to convey the views of *eke*. On the other hand *eke vadanti* occurs at Sv 150, 8 and 152, 3 as well as the less expressive *ti pi eke* and *ti eke* of Sv 84, 19 and 437, 19. Similarly there is *ti pi keci* at Pj I 46. In other Sv passages (e.g. 87, 5; 184, 23) the more normal *keci vadanti* and *keci pana vadanti* are to be found. This too is the case at Pj I 165, 15 and Pj II 26, 11 where *apare vadanti*, 'others say'. Thus it is very difficult to draw a distinction between 'some' and 'others', whether these be *eke* or *apare*, merely by referring to the commentarial terms used to record their interpretations. Thus much seems fairly clear.

The cties themselves appear to take *keci* for granted since they give no indication at all of who they were: editors, translators, research workers, or teachers, for example, or of where they lived. It is left to a *ṭīkā*, that on Sv, to give the opinion that they were residents of Abhayagiri<sup>12</sup> and therefore bhikkhus, rather than residents of the Mahāvihāra, usually regarded as the more orthodox seat of learning, and attracting Buddhaghosa and the other famous commentators to spend some years working there. Other *ṭīkā*s may well concur in the opinion that *keci* resided in the Abhayagiri.

Another question that arises is *where* do 'some read', *keci paṭhanti*? The answer appears to be *potthakesu*, 'in the books', presumably meaning 'in the manuscripts'. Most probably these

are the manuscripts of the ancient and now unfortunately no longer existing cties used by Buddhaghosa and the others. The writers of these 'manuscripts' are anonymous now, and simply appear to be denoted by the term *likhanti*, 'they write'.

Besides the examples already quoted of passages speaking of *keci*, I will give now a few more, and will begin with Pv-a<sup>13</sup> since the index of words in its translation collects all the occurrences. Thus:

Pv-a 9. *keci pan' ettha peṭā ti arahanto adhippetā ti vadanti. Taṃ tesam matimattam. Peṭā ti khīṇāsavānam āgataṭṭhānass' eva abhāvato*, 'but as to this "some" say *peṭa* is a synonym for *arahant*. This is only their imagination. For there is no possibility of return for those whose *āsavas* are destroyed'. This interpretation of *peṭa* is therefore not acceptable and is rejected.

Pv-a 14. *vehāsayaṃ tiṭṭhasi antalikkhe ti vehāsayaṃñite antalikkhe tiṭṭhasi. Keci pana vihāsayan tiṭṭhasi antalikkhe ti pāṭhaṃ vatvā vihāsayaṃ abhāsento antalikkhe tiṭṭhasī ti vacanasesena atthaṃ vadanti*, '. . . some, taking the reading, "you are standing in the sky, in the air", say the meaning is "you are standing in the air lighting up the sky"'. As no comment is made here, there is no reason to suppose the commentator took this 'reading' not as definitely wrong but as interesting or useful enough to be preserved.

Pv-a 24-25. In a short discussion on the meaning of *pahūte*, it is said 'but some read *bahuke* which is a careless reading', *pamāda-pāṭhā*. Thus there is disagreement here.

Pv-a 33. Here for the reading *kissa kammavipākena* 'some' read (*paṭhanti*) *kena kammavipākena*. No comment and the reading given by *keci* appears to be acceptable.

Pv-a 40. *Ayaṃ goṇo samuṭṭhahe*, to be interpreted commentarily as 'because of this I have thought that this (dead) ox might rise, whereas "some" read (*paṭhanti*) "I think the ox might rise" because the notion might present itself that this ox might get up suddenly'. Again no comment is made.

Pv-a 58-9. Here, instead of reading *sukhaṃ virāgāya*, 'some' read (*paṭhanti*) *sukhassa virāgena*. No comment.

Pv-a 70. The text's reading of *bhikkhūnaṃ* is for *bhikkhuno* and was said owing to a change in number. So when *keci* read *ālopaṃ bhikkhuno datvā*, it looks as if their reading were better and to be preferred.

Pv-a 75. Some say (*keci vadanti*) that in each direction he produced 16 (trees) so that altogether there were 64 wish-granting trees, whereas the cty says he produced 8 trees in each of all the directions so that there was a total of 32 wish-granting trees. No comment, and perhaps of no importance whether 64 or 32 of these mythical trees appeared.

Sp 403-4 = Spk III 270 at both of which *keci's* views are given though omitted at some comparable passages, e.g. Mp III 315, Thī-a 61 168. In defining *asecanako* our two cties say *nāssa secanakan ti, anāsittako abbokiṇṇo pātekkho āveṇiko. . . keci pana asecanako ti anāsittako ojavanti sabhāven' eva madhuro vadanti*, 'what is complete or perfect needs no addition, is uninterrupted, single, unique. But some say it needs no addition, is life-giving, sweet by nature'. These views cannot be objected to and so there is apparently complete concurrence.

Ps I 171. Here four defilements are to be got rid of by the third way, the *anāgāmiṃmagga*. 'But some herein are described as getting rid of them by the first way. This does not tally with what precedes and what follows. Some speak of, *ti*, getting rid of by discarding. This is no more than a desire of theirs': *keci pana paṭhamamaggena ev' ettha pahānaṃ vaṇṇayanti. Taṃ pubbāparena na sandhīyati. Keci vibbhambanapahānan ti. Taṃ tesam icchamattam eva*.

Thus, in neither of these adjacent passages are *keci* agreed with or their views adopted. (Cf. Pv-a 9).

Ps II 351 = Spk III 95: 'Therein some say the cessation of one who has attained is when the essentials or requisites of his mind are as though they have ceased to exist': *Tattha keci nirodham samāpannassa cittasaṅkhārā va niruddhā ti*. 'But it should be said to them "His essentials for speech have also ceased to exist"', *vacīsaṅkhārā pi 'ssa niruddhā*.

So here the statement made by 'some' is regarded as incomplete and the meaning as not adequate to cover ensuing developments.

Some examples from Pj I and Ud-a have been cited already. Others are:

Pj I 46. For *jaṃghamaṃsaṃ tālapattapuṭabhāttassa saṅṭhānaṃ*, 'the flesh of the calves (of the legs) is the shape of cooked rice in a palm-leaf bag', we get *avikāsita ketakī makulasāṅṭhānan ti*

*pi keci*, 'some say the shape of an unopened *ketakī* bud'.<sup>14</sup>

No comment and, apart from *ti*, no verb.

Pj I 154. . . *tassa abhāvato asokaṃ, keci nibbānaṃ vadanti, taṃ purimapadena nānusandhīyati*, 'that is sorrowlessness; some say it is *nibbāna*, but that has no sequence of meaning with the earlier line'.<sup>14</sup>

Rejection of *keci's* views.

Ud-a 51 gives a reason for the origin of the name Ajapāla-nigrodha, while *keci* give another. There is, however, no verb here, not even *ti* as at Pj I 46, but simply *keci pana yasmā tattha. . . mahallakabrahmaṇā nivesanāni katvā sabbe vasiṃsu. Tasmā Ajapāla-nigrodho ti nāmaṃ jātan ti*.

There is no agreement and in fact Ud-a proceeds to give three more possible origins. Perhaps therefore Ud-a welcomes *keci's* contribution which at least it does not appear to reject or despise. Indeed the origin of the name seems to have been wrapped in uncertainty.

Ud-a 108. Here the cty, ascribing one meaning to the phrase *taṇhakkhaya-sukhassa* says that *ete's* interpretation depends on a change in case, while *keci ubhayaṃ pi sukhasāmaññena gahetvā etan ti paṭhanti*, 'some read this taking both as happiness through recluship. But this must be because of a very worthless reading of theirs', *tesaṃ kalam nāgghantī ti pāṭhena bhavitabbaṃ*.

Therefore rejection.

The cties are a most wealthy mine of all kinds of information. Now that it is hoped to mark the PTS centenary in 1981 by the translation of at least a few cties—others it is hoped will follow as the years go by—it will be not only appropriate but necessary that some of the riches in this body of information may be explored and exploited. For by this means it may become more possible to add to our precise knowledge of what the Pali Canon is intending to say and thus to our powers of interpreting it correctly.

Moreover it seems important to discover far more about the contents and methods of the cties themselves. For example the following topics spring to mind:

1. I have briefly discussed various commentarial methods of defining canonical words in CSM, pp.xvii foll.: by giving canonical quotations; by citing other readings (not necessarily those adopted

- by 'some' or 'others'); by providing enumerations of different kinds of the same item or by saying that such-and-such words may have a varying number of 'folds', *vidha*, from two upwards, or by the device of ascribing multiple meanings to a word, *sadda*. Unfailingly it is asserted which one is intended 'here', that is in the canonical context being investigated and clarified in order to eliminate the substitution of a wrong meaning for the right one.
2. Interest in grammar, including conscious changes in case and grammatical terms used.<sup>15</sup>
  3. Knowledge of Sanskrit grammar and words.
  4. Additions to and alterations from the Teaching of the Canon.
  5. New words and new names not found in the Canon.
  6. Number of times Buddhaghosa or the others gave their own views, and if this was done only when a cty gives no explanation of a canonical term.
  7. The religious and social history of Ceylon, its culture and customs as described in many of the cties.
  8. The arts of story-telling and versifying.
  9. Similes and metaphors used.
  10. Style of writing, including assonance.
  11. Lists of sayings and readings attributed to the Porāṇas, to 'some, and to 'others'.
  12. Material concerning Gotama as bodhisatta and Buddha, and the meaning of the terms.

Many more points in commentarial literature would re-pay investigation, and I should think the total size of the findings would be vast. In this article I have only scratched a minute part of the surface of what future work on the commentaries might be and might yield.

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*Notes*

- 1 Such as *Guide to Conditional Relations*, London, PTS, 1979, by U Nārada Mūlapaṭṭhāna Sayadaw, to elucidate ChS edn. of *Paṭṭhāna* of which he translated vol. I under the title *Conditional Relations*, London, PTS, 1969.
- 2 Sp 1 foll.

- 3 For the sake of brevity I have combined here words and phrases which, though not always quite identically stated in Buddhaghosa's introductory verses to Sp Sv Ps Spk Mp As, occur in them all.
- 4 E. W. Adikāram, EHBC, p.23.
- 5 For references in Pj I and Pj II to all of these see Helmer Smith's General Index to Pj I and II in his *Suttanipāta Commentary*, London, PTS, 1917, pp.800 foll.
- 6 See previous note.
- 7 His trsln. of Pj I.
- 8 Trsln of Bv-a by I. B. Horner, SBB XXXIII, London, 1978. Some of these references to *keci* have been collected elsewhere (*JIAS*, Vol. 1 No. 2. pp.52-56, (1979).
- 9 Trsln of Pv-a by U Ba Kyaw and Peter Masefield, SBB XXXIV, London, 1979.
- 10 I am indebted to Dr Lily de Silva's General Introduction to her fine edn. of Sv-pt, and her discussion giving references to Sv at the beginning of the Section headed 'Some valuable information from DAṬ'. See vol. I, pp. lviii foll.
- 11 See below where a few examples are given from other cties.
- 12 Sv-pt I 160; 164; 289; II 155, residents at Uttaravihāra; Sv-pt I 207; 316 at Abhayagiri. It is assumed here, also in *DPPN*, s.v. both these names, that the two were merely different names for one and the same monastic residence. For the references in this note, see Sv-pt, vol. I, pp. lix foll.
- 13 Referred to on p.89 above.
- 14 Trslns as at MR & I11 46; 168.
- 15 See e.g. Gram. Indexes to Sp, Mp, Th-a; also Indexes to Spk and Ud-a under the Pali names of the cases, and MR & I11 under the English names in Index of Words and Subjects. For some changes in case see CSM, pp.xxxiii foll.