

endeavours, I shall not easily regret an attempt which has procured me the honour of appearing thus publicly ... [the Pali Text Society's] most obedient and most humble servant.

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Chips from Buddhist Workshops Scribes and Manuscripts from Northern Thailand¹

At the 4th International Conference on Thai Studies in Kunming in 1990 some colophons of old Lān²-nā Pāli manuscripts were discussed in a rather general and preliminary way². This survey can and will be supplemented now by more detailed and new information gathered in the meantime first of all while working on a catalogue of the collection of Pāli manuscripts kept at Vat Lai Hin near Lampang. This collection is among the most remarkable ones by any standard anywhere in respect of both age and quality of the manuscripts, the oldest dated of which was copied in CS 833 : A.D. 1471. Today about 140 Pāli manuscripts are found in this collection, and quite a few fragments or single folios are sad witnesses of the former existence of many, sometimes fairly old, manuscripts, for originally this collection must have been substantially larger and richer. This is not only proved by these fragments, but also by those manuscripts which have found their way from Vat Lai Hin into other libraries under unknown circumstances. Some are with the Siam Society, Bangkok³, and at least one is today in the National Library, Bangkok: no. 303/5, *tū*² 129, *ja* 82/5: Samantapāsādikā, fasc. 5, which is one of the missing fascicles of Siam Society no. 54, as proved by identical measures and identical colophons. Otherwise the holdings of older northern Pāli manuscripts in the National Library are negligible as

¹ Manuscripts are quoted either in referring to the forthcoming catalogue: *Die Pāli Handschriften des Klosters Lai Hin bei Lampang/Thailand* or to the microfilms of the "Preservation of Northern Thai Manuscripts Project" (PNTMP). – The letter ø is used for the "o ang".

² O. v.Hinüber: On some colophons of old Lānā Pāli manuscripts, in: *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Thai Studies. 11-13th May 1990. Kunming 1990, Vol. IV, p.56-77.*

³ Cf. O. v.Hinüber: The Pāli manuscripts kept at the Siam Society, Bangkok. A Short Catalogue. JSS 75.1987, p.9-74.

far as the catalogue is to be trusted. Furthermore, some of the manuscripts formerly preserved at the National Museum, Chiang Mai, and now transferred partly to the National Archives, partly to the National Library, both in Chiang Mai, seem to have belonged to Vat Lai Hin once.

Equally obscure as the reasons for the dispersion of part of this collection are the time and the circumstances under which it was brought together in this rather unassuming, though old, monastery. Hardly anything is known about its history. Fortunately, there is an inscription on one of the beams supporting the roof of the *vihāra*, which gives the year CS 1045 : A.D. 1683 as the date of the construction or reconstruction of this building. Furthermore, the person who directed the (re-)construction is mentioned by name. For the *mūla-pradhān* “initiator” (?) was Mahā Kesārapañña Cau together with his *śiṣyānuśiṣya*.

The name Kesārapañña is well known also from the colophons of 11 manuscripts preserved at Vat Lai Hin which have been copied or donated by Bra Mahā Kesārapañña Selāraññavāsī Bhikkhu between CS 1052 : A.D. 1690 and CS 1083 : A.D. 1721. As Kesārapañña is a *selāraññavāsī* “resident of the Stone Forest (Monastery)”, which is the Pāli name for Vat Lai Hin⁴, there is hardly any room for doubt that he is the person mentioned in the inscription, while a Cau Khanān (“former monk”) Kesāra of CS 1026 : A.D. 1674, and a Kesārapañña mentioned in the colophon of no. 69: Jātaka (Ekanipāta), about A.D. 1500 are obviously different people.

⁴ The names *selārañña*, *selāraññapabbata* and *vaṣ hlāy hrin meīṇ nagər jāy* occur side by side in different colophons of no. 16: Vinaya-piṭaka (Cullavagga), CS 1117 : A.D. 1755.

Kesārapañña seems to have been a keen student of Buddhist texts, though not necessarily in Pāli, for all the 11 manuscripts copied or sponsored by him are *vohāra*, “explicative translations”.⁵ Therefore it is tempting to think of him as the collector of the older Pāli manuscripts dating from the late 15th to the early 17th centuries. However that may be, during Kesārapañña’s time Vat Lai Hin seems to have enjoyed a certain reputation for the manuscripts it possessed. For a certain Nārada Bhikkhu, who copied a *vohāra* on the Buddha-apadāna (Ap 1,7-6,16) in CS 1077 : A.D. 1715, that is during Kesārapañña’s later years, explicitly states that he did so while residing at Vat Lai Hin: *meīṇa yū vaṣ pā¹ lāy hin*, PNTMP 02-020-01. Today this manuscript is in the possession of Vat Kittivong at Mae Hong Son. Otherwise only manuscripts dated from the late 18th century, which belonged to Vat Hai Lin originally, survive.

Kesārapañña’s career can be followed for 38 years between A.D. 1683 and A.D. 1721. This is not unlikely. Already in the earliest document Kesārapañña has a rather high status as evinced by the fact that he is surrounded by his “pupils and pupils of his pupils”. Consequently, he could have been between 35 and 40 years old in A.D. 1683, when the *vihāra* was (re-)constructed, and he could have been a fully ordained monk for 15 to 20 years, assuming that he entered monkhood at the earliest possible age permitted by the Vinaya, which is 15 years for the lower ordination (*pabbajjā : na ... ūnapannarasavasso dārako pabbājetabbo*, Vin I 79,5) and 20 years for the higher ordination (*upasampadā : na ... ūnavīsativasso puggalo upasampādetabbo*, Vin I 78,30) calculated from the time of conception (*gabbhavisam*, Vin I 93,23). If Kesārapañña died not too long after completing his last manuscript in A.D. 1721, he could have been about 80 years old then.

⁵ On this terminology cf. O.v.Hinüber: A Handbook of Pāli Literature. Berlin 1996 §203.

Thus his lifetime spans approximately between A.D. 1645 and A.D. 1725.

His age is by no means unlikely. A monk named Seen Før or simply Før says: “The Aṭṭhakaṇḍa has been copied by the Venerable Mahāsaddhā Før when he was 80 years old in the year *kā plau* CS 975 : A.D. 1613”, and in a second, somewhat confused, colophon: “The Venerable Saddhā Føn was 80 years old when he had entered the age (!) into the order for 9 years, he wrote with effort ... this text”, no. 132: Dhammasaṅgaṇi-aṭṭhakaṇḍa-pariccheda-vohāra, CS 975 : A.D. 1613⁶. A further rather unusual colophon informs us about the personal life of Seen Før. The language is an attempt to write Pāli: *braḥ mahāsaddhā seen før lagana* (read: *nagara?*) *jayapura rājadhānam* (!) *vattakāñcanarājassa mahāmacca gihikāle gharāvāse dosam passivā nikkhama pabbaji ratanabimbārāme vase jinasāsane navavasse asitāyukāle likhitāyaṃ dhammasaṅgaṇiatṭhakaṇḍaparicchedam niṭṭhitam samata* (!) “The Venerable Mahāsaddhā Før from the town Jayapura (Lampang), where a king resides, was, while he was living as a householder and as a minister of King Vattakāñcana. Having considered the state of a householder as a fault, he went forth to become a monk in the Ratanabimbārāma. This has been written after he had lived in the Buddhist order for 9 years and when he had reached the age of 80⁷. The Dhammasaṅgaṇiatṭhakaṇḍapariccheda has come to an end”.

Again, this colophon seems to contain a mistake: *lagana* for *nagara*, and much more unfortunately, the pagination of this manuscript is confused. Of course this may be due to the advanced age of the scribe,

⁶ Aṭṭha(kathā)kaṇḍa is the alternative title for the Atthuddhārakaṇḍa, Dhs § 1368-1599, cf. v.Hinüber: Handbook as note 5 above §134.

⁷ This kind of information is rare, cf.: *sāraḥ dādā sī sān vai meḷo dai 6 vassā*, no. 68: Jātaka (Ekanipāta), CS 989 : A.D. 1767: “Sāradassī has made (this manuscript) when he was (monk) for 6 years”.

but still the faulty pagination creates serious problems now for finding the beginning of the text at once.

Usually, however, these palm leaf manuscripts are paginated with the utmost care. Figures are used rarely although they do also occur in older manuscripts such as no. 86: Jātaka(Visatinipāta), first half of the 16th century, folios 20-34.

The usual procedure, however, is to apply letters in the following well known way: *ka, kā, kī ... ke, kai, ko, kau, kam, kaḥ* written on the verso of each folio. This series, which is not entirely based on the Sanskrit alphabet as there are neither *kr* nor *kḷ*, covers a set of 12 folios or 24 pages. Occasionally such a set is called *ankā*, written phonetically for *anga*⁸, in Northern Thai Pāli manuscripts. Two such sets, e.g. *ka* and *kha* form one fascicle or *phūk*. It is common to start from the *phūk* containing *ka* and *kha* and to continue up to fascicle 16: *ha, ḷa*. Sometimes a series *a, ā, i, ī*, etc. is used following *ha* and *ḷa* as in no. 110: Suttasaṅgaha (*sūḍ rəm*), CS 903/4 : A.D. 1541/2. Of course there are much longer manuscripts comprising more than 16 fascicles. Therefore this series needs extending, which is achieved by a combination of two letters: the second set of again 16 fascicles starts with *kya, khya, ... hya, ḷya*, the last fascicle being no. 32, which, however, is by no means sufficient as the upper limit for a very long text such as the commentary on the Mūlapaṇṇāsa of the Majjhimanikāya, which covers 725 pages in two volumes of the PTS edition. This equals 37 fascicles in no. 32: Papañcasūdanī (Mūlapaṇṇāsa), CS 911 : A.D. 1549. As the last fascicle, no. 37, contains the folios *jha-jhaḥ, ṇā-ṇāḥ*, in fasc. 33 the pagination starts again from the very beginning, although it would have been possible to use a third series (see below).

⁸ This division is also used in Burma: H. Bechert et alii: Burmese Manuscripts. Wiesbaden 1979. Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland, Band XXIII,1, p.XVII.

Manuscripts of this length are rare, and if they survive they are almost never complete. Consequently, the possibility of tracing a confusion such as the following one is a rare exception: no. 101: Apadāna-aṭṭhakathā, CS 899 : A.D. 1537: first fascicle extant: fasc. 16: *na, pa* (correctly: *ha, la*) ... fasc. 22: *la, kya*, fasc. 23: *khya, gya(!)*, fasc. 24: *ka, kha(!)* ... fasc. 33: *dha, na-nū*. Still, order prevails over confusion as e.g. in no. 61: Paramatthajotikā II (commentary on the Suttanipāta), early 16th century: first fascicle extant: fasc. 13: *ma, ya* ... fasc. 16: *ha, la(!)*, fasc. 17: *kya, khya* ... fasc. 27: *pya, phya, bya-byū* (end of the text). Here, the last fascicle has been extended to almost twice the normal length. This is done fairly often if the last fascicle would have been incomplete otherwise, e.g. no. 118: Yamaka, CS 859 : A.D. 1497, fasc. 21: *jhya, ñya, tya-tyai* (end of the text).

A method of avoiding a long series of letters and at the same time the danger of confusion is either to split up texts into sections or chapters such as the Aṅguttaranikāya into Eka-, Duka-, Tika-nipāta etc., which results in handy sequences, or to divide a long text somewhat arbitrarily in the middle. Thus two, very rarely three, bundles (*maḍ*) are created.⁹ The Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā is such a text split up between the Arahanta- and the Sahassavagga (Dhp-a II 201/202), which is roughly the middle of the text: E° 642 : 723 pages, C° (1898) pages 1-315 : 315-659 that is 315 : 344 pages.¹⁰ Therefore fascicle 3: *na, ca* of no. 53: Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā, about A.D. 1500, contains part of the Daṇḍavagga. It is called in the colophon: 3 *dhammapada maḍ plāy* “fascicle 3 of the last bundle of the Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā”. Consequently, the first lost fascicle started with the pagination *ka, kha* and contained the beginning of the Sahassavatthu.

⁹ H. Hundius: The colophons of thirty Pāli manuscripts from Northern Thailand, JPTS 14, 1990, p.54.

¹⁰ The middle of the text is easily recognizable in C°, which is printed without notes. Consequently the single pages contain a text of almost even length.

A second manuscript of this text reaches the end of the Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā on folio *bhra* of fascicle 35: no. 56 Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā, about A.D. 1500. The relevant colophon has: *dhammapada maḍ plāy ... 34 ...* with an obviously confused and erroneous pagination: the series *ṅra, ḍhra* has been corrected to *pra* (only *ṅra > pra*), which still does not seem to be correct. For fascicle 34 should have *gra, ghra* or *kra, khra*. Again, the few surviving folios do not allow any further conclusion.

The use of *pra* etc. besides *pya* etc. is certainly very rare and shared only by a second fragment, which could even be part of no. 56: Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā that is no. 55: Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā, early 16th century, fasc. 21: *thra, dra* which is the third set of pagination.¹¹

A really unique form of pagination is found in no. 6: Vinayapiṭaka (Pācittiya/Nissaggiya), CS 1073 : A.D. 1711, where the sequence is: ... fasc. 14(!): *va, ṣa*, fasc. 15: *sa, ha*, fasc. 16: *la, a*, fasc. 17: *kya, khya* etc.. The retroflex *ṣa* is never again found in any of the Pāli manuscripts of Vat Lai Hin.

Equally unique is the pagination of the last folio of as fascicle as *caḥ²* with a raised figure in no. 85: Jātaka(Pakiṇṇaka), CS 932 : A.D. 1571, fasc. 3: *na, ca-caḥ, caḥ²*. The reason for this unusual pagination is not clear. The text breaks off in the middle of a word to be continued in the next and last fasc. 4: *ja(!), jha-jho*. Perhaps the scribe tried to reproduce fasc. 3 of the original he had before him as one fascicle, but miscalculated his handwriting.

In contrast to single folios, whole fascicles are usually numbered in figures. Only very occasionally do figures and letters stand

¹¹ On the *kra* series see H. Bechert as note 8 above.

side by side: no. 34: Saṃyuttanikāya (Sagāthavagga), CS 911 : A.D. 1549: 3. *ki. na ca* “(fascicle 3 = *ki*, (folios) *na, ca*)” and again in this set, which also comprises the commentary: no. 36: Sāratthapakāsini (Sagāthavagga), CS 911 : A.D. 1549; similarly: no. 81: Jātaka (Aṭṭha-, Cattālīsa-, Paṇṇāsa-, Saṭṭhi-, Sattati-nipāta), CS 912 : A.D. 1550, no. 117: Yamaka, CS 909 : A.D. 1547, and no. 110: Suttasaṅgha (*sūḍ rōm*), CS 903/4 : A.D. 1541/2. All these manuscripts have been written by Javanapañña, the most prominent scribe of 16th century manuscripts in the Lai Hin collection. Therefore, this particular way of numbering fascicles may be a personal feature.

After having devoted so much attention to the outward appearance of these palm leaf manuscripts, the question arises whether it is really worthwhile to describe these minor details. The usefulness of this knowledge, pedestrian as it may seem or even be, is obvious to anyone engaged in working on these manuscripts and on fragmentary ones in particular. For a clear pagination is extremely helpful when it comes to reassembling scattered fascicles or single folios once the string holding them together, the “book binding” as it is, has been broken or lost, which is more often the case than not. In this respect the beautiful golden pattern painted on the mostly red, rarely black, lacquer with which the manuscripts are coated is also helpful. This, however, applies to younger manuscripts only, for older ones are coated in plain red lacquer. I once found a manuscript that had never been opened after the lacquer had been applied some 400 years ago: no. 64: Vimānavatthu-aṭṭhakathā, 16th century, was “uncut” when it was read for the first time ever on 28th July 1987.

Furthermore, as we all know from daily use, pagination is necessary to organize a book, and no reader would like to do without it. For only pagination makes a table of contents possible, which is by no means so commonplace as a modern reader might be inclined to think.

In older manuscripts tables of contents are very rare. They are found e.g. in: no. 35: Saṃyuttanikāya (Sagāthavagga), CS 905 : A.D. 1543 on the cover leaf: *naḷavagga paṭhama sin mee ki* “the first chapter called Naḷavagga ends on folio *k*”.¹² It is still more astonishing that the verses of the Sagāthavagga are counted and grouped together in sets of eight verses each in this well organized manuscript.

These attempts, or rather the very beginnings of organizing books, deserve some discussion in a much broader context. For, simple and trivial as it may seem, it is by no means a small step forward when it comes to handling, transmitting and acquiring knowledge, as the relevant material from mediaeval Europe, which has been discussed with most interesting results by W. Raible¹³, amply demonstrates. A corresponding study of the manuscript tradition in Indian culture or in cultures influenced by India would certainly be rewarding.

While not too much attention was paid to the organization of the text itself, the scribes were consistent in keeping certain rules concerning the beginning or end of the text. These rules underline the religious significance of the manuscripts. It is well known that a canonical Pāli text or a commentary should start with the formula *namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa*, abbreviated sometimes as *namo tass' atthu* or simply *nam' atthu*. This seems to be a typical Theravāda formula, if Buddhist Sanskrit texts are compared, which begin

¹² Further tables of contents are found in: no. 87: Jātaka (Viṣati-, Timsa-, Sattati-nipāta), CS 833 : A.D. 1471, which is the oldest dated Pāli manuscript; no. 69: Jātaka (Ekanipāta), about A.D. 1500; no. 76: Jātaka (Pañca-, Chakka-nipāta), CS 954 : A.D. 1592, cf. no. 94: Jātaka (Mahānipāta: Nārada), CS 938 : A.D. 1576.

¹³ W. Raible: Die Semiotik der Textgestalt, and: Zur Entwicklung von Alphabetschrift-Systemen. Is fecit cui prodest, both: Heidelberg 1991: Abhandlungen/Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse. Abhandlung/Bericht 1.

with: *namaḥ sarvabuddhabodhisatvebhyaḥ*¹⁴, *namo bhagavatyai prajñāpāramitāyai* (Prajñāpāramitā texts), *namaḥ śrī vajrasatvāya* (Guh-yasamājatantra), *namas sarvajñāya*¹⁵, etc.

However, even in Theravāda the beginning of a sacred text is not as uniform as printed editions both oriental and western have it.¹⁶ The *namo tassa* ... is preceded by *subham atthu svasdī jayastu antarāyaṃ namo tassa* ..., no. 34: Saṃyuttanikāya (Sagāthavagga), CS 911 : A.D. 1549 “may it be auspicious! hail! may there be victory over danger (?)”. The commentary to this text has: *svasdī jeyya mahālābho. karuṇā*^o, no.36: Sāratthapakāsinī (Sagāthavagga), CS 911 : A.D. 1549 “hail! victory! great gain!”. This set has been copied by Javanapañña at Dā Søy, who also wrote no. 90: Jātaka (Kusarāja), CS 913 : A.D. 1551 beginning: *1. svasdī. jayastu antarāyaṃ. idan te* ... “(fascicle) 1. hail! may there be victory over danger(?)”.¹⁷

A further manuscript also copied at Dā Søy begins: *namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa. jayatu sugatasāsanam* and ends: ... *samattā ti. 4. svasti namo buddhāya jayatu sugatasāsanam*,

¹⁴ A probably unique opening formula is: *namaḥ sarbbajñāya. purbbācāryyebhyo* ..., Adhikamāsavinichāy, CS 940 : A.D. 1578, cf.: Catalogue of Palm-Leaf Texts on Microfilm at the Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai University. Chiang Mai 1986, 06-108.

¹⁵ This is found in a Sanskrit text from 9th century Ceylon: O. v.Hinüber: Sieben Goldblätter einer Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā aus Anurādhapura. Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen. I. Philologisch-historische Klasse, Jahrgang 1983, Nr. 7, p.193/[7].

¹⁶ Cf. also the unusual beginning of the Peṭakopadesa; O. v.Hinüber as above note 5 § 167.

¹⁷ *svasti* is also used at the beginning of Buddhist texts in Ceylonese manuscripts, though written at the left margin next to the pagination *ka*: C.E. Godakumbura: Catalogue of Ceylonese Manuscripts. Copenhagen 1980. Catalogue of Oriental Manuscripts, Xylographs etc. in Danish Collections. Vol. I, p.L, and O. v.Hinüber as above note 15.

no. 40: Aṅguttaranikāya (Dukanipāta), first half of the 16th century, similarly: *namo tass' atthu. jayatu jinasāsanam. manorath*^o, Siam Society no. 55: Manorathapūraṇī (Ekanipāta), CS 893 : A.D. 1531 copied at Dā Søy. No formula at all is found at the beginning of Lai Hin no. 42: Aṅguttaranikāya (Sattakanipāta), CS 949 : A.D. 1587, which ends: ... *samattā. jayatu sugatasāsanam. svasti. namo buddhāya*. This manuscript has been copied at Chiang Mai. Two parts of the commentary, which belongs to this set, begin: *svasti namo buddhāya. jayatu sugatasāsanam*, no. 46: Manorathapūraṇī (Chakkanipāta), CS 949 : A.D. 1587, Chiang Mai; no. 48: Manorathapūraṇī (Sattakanipāta), CS 949 : A.D. 1587, Chiang Mai.¹⁸ And finally, a further manuscript copied at Dā Søy begins: *svasdī. namo buddhāya. jayatu sugatasāsanam. dukanipāta*^o, no. 44: Manorathapūraṇī (Dukanipāta), first half of the 16th century, cf. the end of the colophons in no. 31: Papañcasūdani (Mūlapaṇṇāsa), CS 895 : A.D. 1533 from Mei: fasc. 17: *jayatu sāsānam*, fasc. 18: *svastī bahavatu* and *svastī hotu*.

Only two manuscripts begin simply with: *namo buddhāya*, no. 9: Vinaya (Mahāvagga), CS 1116 : A.D. 1754 from Lampang, and no. 88: Jātaka (Tiṃsanipāta), about A.D. 1500: *svastī namo buddhāya. tiṃsanipāte*

The opening formula *namo buddhāya. pañca buddhā namām' aham*, no. 19: Samantapāsādikā (Cullavagga), CS 950 : A.D. 1588, and correspondingly no. 125: Thūpavaṃsa, CS 1084 : A.D. 1722 is rather surprising at first sight. For, as is well known, the number of Buddhas current in Theravāda is the six predecessors of Buddha Gotama as enumerated in the Dīghanikāya, no. XIV. Mahāpadānasuttanta, DN II 1-54 and in addition the Buddha Gotama himself: *namo bhagavato namo sattannam sambuddhānam*, Vin II 110,19 = AN II 73,9, quoted Ja II

¹⁸ The first folio is only on the microfilm of the Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai University, no. 145.17.

147,24, or Buddha Gotama and his 24 predecessors as described in the Buddhavaṃsa, where the list has been extended by three names in chapter XXVII, which is a later addition as already noticed in the commentary (Bv-a 295,31). This set of 28 Buddhas became popular in South-East Asia.

Five Buddhas, on the other hand, do not figure prominently in Pāli texts, although there seems to be some archaeological evidence for this group from Amarāvati and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa in South India.¹⁹ This group, which is totally different from the better known five Buddhas in Mahāyāna: Vairocana (centre), Akṣobhya (east), Ratnasambhava (south), Amitābha (west), Amoghasiddhi (north)²⁰, comprises the five Buddhas of the present *bhaddakappa*: Kakusandha, Koṇāgamana, Kassapa, Gotama: DN III 2,21-28 together with Metteyya, DN III 76,25 foll. mentioned in the Cakkavattisihanādasuttanta, Dīghanikāya no. XXVI. Thus the colophons also preserve some traces of this set of five Buddhas.

In addition to this there is an extremely short text comprising only a single folio, which mentions these Buddhas by name: *namo jeyyaḥ itī pi so bhagavā buddha Kukkusindho ... Koṇāghamano ... Kassapo ... siri Sakyamunī Goḍaṇ siri ariyaḥ Maṭṭī*, Siam Society no. 52.

Only two Buddhas are mentioned by name in the colophons. They are, of course, Gotama and Metteyya, who are conspicuous in the wishes expressed by the scribes at the end of their manuscripts after finishing their work.

¹⁹ M. Bénisti: Les stūpas aus cinq piliers. BEFEO 58.1971, p.131-162, cf.: G. Terral: Pañcabuddhabyākaraṇa. BEFEO 55.1969, p.125-144.

²⁰ Hōbōgirin *s.v.* *butsu*.

Mostly, and particularly so in the older manuscripts, the wishes expressed by the scribes are of a rather general nature. As is well known, Buddhists are and always were concerned about the eventual disappearance of the *sāsana*. In a famous passage in the Cullavagga, Vin II 256,9-16 the Buddha is supposed to have said that the *dhamma* might last for a whole millennium, but, once women were admitted to the order, that period would be reduced to 500 years. About 500 years after the supposed date of the *nirvāṇa*, at the latest, this period was extended ultimately to 5000 years.²¹ Being aware of the fact that they contribute by their work to the subsistence of the *dhamma* the scribes express their respective wishes in very few words in the older colophons: *sān vai pen mūlasnā braḥ buddha cau hā ban vassā*, no. 61: Paramatthajotikā II (Commentary on the Suttanipāta), early 16th century. There are slight variations such as the use of *plī* instead of *vassā*, no. 102: Buddhavaṃsa, CS 913 : A.D. 1551, *braḥ gotama cau* and *plī*, no. 54: Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā, CS 883 : A.D. 1521, or *bija sāsna* instead of *mūlasāsna*, no. 68: Jātaka (Ekanipāta), CS 989 : A.D. 1627, fasc. 15: “I have made (this manuscript) as a root/germ for the teaching of the Exalted Buddha (that it may last) five thousand years”. This formula appears in six manuscripts of the Lai Hin collection and in slightly different wording in a seventh: *sān ḍvay tan vai buddhasāssnā hā ban vassā*, no. 111: Paṭhamasambodhi, CS 936 : A.D. 1574 “I have made (this manuscript) myself for the teaching of the Buddha (that it may last) five thousand years”. Furthermore, the following colophon from the collection of Vat Sung Men at Phrae may be quoted here: *atthakathā uparipañṇāsa mahā-saṅgharāja cau ārām vaṇ pan² sān upatthambhaka sāsna braḥ buddha cau hā ban vassā. culasakkarāja dai 912*, PNTMP 01-04-231-00: Papañcasūdanī (Uparipañṇāsa), CS 912 : A.D. 1550 “Commentary on the Uparipañṇāsa (of the Majjhimanikāya). The Venerable Saṅgharāja of

²¹ E. Lamotte: Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien. Louvain 1958, p.210 foll.; 215 foll.; Samantapāsādikā 1291,18-26. – Further: J. Nattier: Once Upon a Future Time. Studies in a Buddhist Prophecy of Decline. Berkeley 1991.

the Vaṅ-Pan-Monastery had (this manuscript) made to support the teaching of the Exalted Buddha (that it may last) five thousand years. CS 912”.

In the second half of the 16th century this extreme brevity was abandoned in favour of a marginally enlarged version: *vai pen mūla sāsānā bra gotama cau taṃ dau hā ban vassā*, no. 58: Itivuttaka-aṭṭhakathā, CS 906 : A.D. 1544 “I (made this manuscript) as a root for the teaching of the Exalted Gotama that it may last five thousand years”. This wording survives in altogether seven manuscripts copied between A.D. 1544 and A.D. 1592, and more than a century later very much abbreviated as: *taṃ dau 5 ban vassā*, no. 97: Jātaka (Vessantara/Māleyya), CS 1076 : A.D. 1714, cf. also: *sān vai kap vara buddhasāsānā taṃ dau 5000 vassā lee*, PNTMP 07-04-005-00: Dhammasaṅgaṇī, CS 991 : A.D. 1629 from Vat Phra Singh at Chiang Mai.

During the early 17th century the formula was further enlarged: *sān vai pen upatthambhaka sāsānā braḥ cau trāp 5000 vassā*, no. 113: Sammohavinodanī (Commentary on the Vibhaṅga), about 1600 “I made (this manuscript) to support the teaching of the Exalted One so that it may reach 5000 years”, cf. the earlier, similar colophon of the Papañcasūdanī quoted above, and: *sān vai kap sāsānā bra buddha cau trāp 5000 vassā*, no. 20: Samantapāsādikā, CS 1001 : A.D. 1639, or: *vai beṭṭ prayojnaḥ pen mūla kee sāsānā bra buddha cau rau taṃ dau theiṅ 5000 bra vassā*, no. 50: Dhammapada, CS 973 : A.D. 1611: “I have deposited (this manuscript) for the use as a root of the teaching of our Exalted Buddha that it may reach eventually 5000 years”. Here it is tempting to think of *prayojnaḥ* as an abbreviation, if the following colophon is compared: *sān vai pen mūla sāsānā bra gotama cau hā ban vassā beṭṭ cāk hū pen prayojnaḥ kee kulapuḍ daṅ lāy*, no. 74: Jātaka (Duka-, Tika-, Pañca-nipāta), CS 922/3 : A.D. 1560/1 “I made (this manuscript) as a root for

the teaching of the Exalted Gotama (that it may last) five thousand years, for the use to many sons from good families”.

By the end of the 17th century the scribes seem to have preferred still another wording: *beṭṭa jotaka sāsānā hā ban vassā*, no. 5: Vinayaṭṭhaka (Pārājika), CS 1055 : A.D. 1693 “that the teaching may shine for five thousand years”. This formula occurs four times between 1693 and 1754, and once even earlier during the 16th century: no. 117: *Gūlhatthadīpanī*.²²

Thus it seems that the preference for certain expressions changed in the course of time. It should be kept in mind, however, that the material is rather limited, and consequently does not allow any certain conclusions based on statistics. Furthermore, regional variation cannot be excluded. The latter seems to apply for: *sān vai beṭṭa sāsānā ciratthitakāla hā² ban vassā*, no. 45: Manorathapūraṇī (Tikanipāta), CS 949 : A.D. 1587 “I made (this manuscript) for a long duration of the teaching for five thousand years”, and: *sān vai sāsānupatthāmbhaka ciratthitakāle*, no. 49: Manorathapūraṇī-ṭīkā (Tikanipāta), CS 948 : A.D. 1586. Both manuscripts have been donated by the same person, perhaps at Chiang Mai, for the following set, in which a similar formula has been used, was copied there: *beṭṭ sāsānā ciratthitakāle*, no. 41: Aṅguttaranikāya (Chakkanipāta), CS 949 : A.D. 1587, Chiang Mai, fasc. 7, together with: *beṭṭ sāsānā ṭṭhitakāla*, no. 46: Manorathapūraṇī (Chakkanipāta) CS 949 : A.D. 1587, Chiang Mai. Again, this set was donated by one person. As all four manuscripts have been copied almost at the same time and as all of them use the same formula not traced in other manuscripts so far, this might have been a wording typical for Chiang Mai at that period.

²² This is a commentary on the Sammohavinodanī, cf. CPD (Epilegomena) 3.9.3 and 1.3.6.4.

In addition to these general remarks, personal wishes are seldom expressed in the older manuscripts, but with increasing frequency in newer ones. Donors and scribes alike wish to be reborn during the time of the future Buddha Metteyya. A rather early instance of this particular wish is: *nibbānapaccayo hotu me cuṅ pen praḥcaiyah kee ehibhikkhu nai sāmnaḥ braḥ ariyah metteyyah tan an cak mā pen braḥ buddha bāy hnā nī*, no. 99: Apadāna-aṭṭhakathā, CS 899 : A.D. 1537 “may this be the basis for the *nibbāna* for me that it is the foundation for the *ehibhikkhu* (*-upasampadā*) in the assembly of the Exalted Noble Metteyya, who will come to be Buddha in future”. The ordination by *ehi bhikkhu* “come, monk” can be gained only from a Buddha. Therefore it was considered a very special distinction, so much so that it is believed that a monk’s robe (*cīvara*) would appear magically on a monk ordained in this particular way, a *ehibhikkhucīvara*.²³

It is only by the year A.D. 1700 that this wish becomes more frequent: *khəm hū han hnā bra siriya* (read: *siri ariya*) *mettaiy cau an cak mā dām raḍ tras sabbaññu cak mā bāy hnā nī*, no. 5: Vinayapīṭaka (Pārājika), CS 1055 : A.D. 1693 “I pray to see the face of the Noble Metteyya, who will come to reach enlightenment and omniscience in future”. During the 18th century wordings such as the following become popular: *beṭṭ prayojnaḥ catusaccapaṭivedha pracaīy nai sāmnaḥ bra mettaiy cau cak mā brāy hnā*, no. 6: Vinayapīṭaka (Pārājika), CS 1073 : A.D. 1711, fasc. 8 “useful as a foundation to penetrate the four (noble) truths in the assembly of the Exalted Metteyya, who will come in future”. This wording occurs six times altogether between A.D. 1693 and A.D. 1849, and with some changes in wording in three further manuscripts:

²³ Cf. CPD s.v. – The wish for an *ehibhikkhuupasampadā* occurs again in the Pāli colophon to no. 99: Sivijayapañhā, CS 1201 : A.D. 1839: ...*anāgatakāre arahantā rahtheyyaṃ ariyah metteyyabuddhasantike ehibhikkhupaccaya-bhāvāyaṃ paccayo hotu saṅsāle sansaranto...* This again is a rather unsuccessful attempt to write in Pāli.

prāthnā au yān bhavaḥkyah (read: *bhavakkhaya*) *nai sāmnaḥ bra metteyya cau*, no. 1: Pātimokkhasutta, CS 1123 : A.D. 1761 “my wish is the extinction of rebirth in the assembly of the Exalted Metteyya”, and again in no. 7: Vinayapīṭaka (Pācittiya), CS 1088 : A.D. 1716, fasc. 8. In fasc. 3 of the same manuscript a different scribe remarks: *prāthnā au yān bhava nai ...* “my wish is the rebirth in ...”, which is almost certainly a mistake for *bhavakkhaya*. For this scribe is also a bit careless in his wishes elsewhere when he writes in fasc. 7: *gām prāthanā khə hū khā dai rū dhamma ḍvay hmür ban khan* “my wish is that I come to know the *dhamma* in its 11,000 sections”. This is hardly modesty on the part of the scribe, who rather left out the figures 8 (*hmür*) and 4 (*ban*): it is well known that the *dhamma* has 84,000 sections (*khanda*, Sumaṅgalavilāsini 24,18 etc.).

Only once and at an early date is the wish of penetrating knowledge disconnected from the four noble truths and the wish to be reborn in Metteyya’s presence: *sān vai kap buddhasāsnā pañcasahassāyuka saddhādika sabbaññutañāṇ paṭivedhapaccayo hotu*, no. 64: Vimānavatthu-aṭṭhakathā, 16th century (?) “made for the teaching of the Buddha (that it may reach) the age of 5000 years, may it be the foundation for deep faith and for penetrating into the knowledge of omniscience”.

If *sabbaññutañāṇa* is to be taken in its true meaning, this wish, of course, implies that the scribe wants to become a Buddha in future. This desire is rarely expressed in clear and unambiguous words as in the following colophon of a manuscript copied in Central Thailand and written in Khmer script: *suvanṇarājena bhikkhunā sabbaññubuddha-bhāvapatthentena imaṃ likhāpitam vipullasaddhāya*, National Library, Bangkok, no. 6290 (126-5/6): Dasajāṭaka (=Jātaka: Mahānipāta), BS 2203 : A.D. 1660 “the monk Suvanṇarāja, who wishes to attain the state of an omniscient Buddha, had this written in deep faith”. Otherwise this

seems to be a wish of authors rather than scribes, e.g.: *aham tu uttamaṃ bodhiṃ, pāpuṇeyyam anāgate / taṃ patvā akhile satte, moceyyaṃ bhavabandhanā*, PNTMP 02-04-179-00: Kaccāyanarūpadīpanī, CS 950 : A.D. 1588. Here, the author Ñāṇakitti (15th century) is speaking, and not the scribe of this manuscript, which is kept at Vat Sung Men in Phrae today.

Equally rare is the wish to become an Arahant: *hū pen praccai taṃ dau arahattamagga*, no. 74: Jātaka (Tikanipāta), CS 922 : A.D. 1560, fasc. 5 “that it may be the basis for the route towards Arahantship”.

The scribe of no. 16: Vinaya (Cullavagga), CS 1117 : A.D. 1755 wants to display his erudition by replacing *paṭivedha: beṭṭhā prayojnaḥ catusaccapaṭisambhidāñāṇa pracai nai sāmnaḥ bra metteyya cau*, fasc. 8. However, the common expression found already in canonical Pāli (Paṭisambhidāmagga II 57,3) is *saccapaṭivedha*, whereas *paṭisambhidā* is not normally used in this connection, with the exception of ... *paṭisambhidāhi arahattam pāpuṇi. saha saccapaṭivedhena ...*, Mil 18,18.

Nevertheless, the wish for *paṭisambhidā* in the presence of the future Buddha seems to make more sense than the one for *paṭivedha*. For the latter can be gained any time during the 5000 years of the duration of the *dharmā*, while *paṭisambhidā* is possible only during the first thousand years after a Buddha has re-established the teaching, and consequently the next opportunity will be at the time of Metteyya.²⁴

Individual wishes are also presented in a more personal form e.g. if a scribe says: *tan dai au bai ryan kdī khyan kdī lau kdī au bai fan*

²⁴ Cf. E. Lamotte: Le Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse de Nāgārjuna (Mahā-prajñāpāramitāsāstra). Louvain 1970. Tome III, p.1614foll. and Samantapāsādikā 1291,19.

kdī hū pen phala kee khā hū sān, no. 66: Petavatthu-aṭṭhakathā, CS 876 : A.D. 1514 “whenever somebody takes (this manuscript) with him to read it, to copy it, to recite it, or takes it with him to hear it (i.e. to have it read out to him?), then this will be merit for me, who has made (the manuscript)”, and similarly: *daiy tan dai dai² du kdī khūn cai kdī cuñ pen pur kee khā dūn*, no. 109: Paritta, CS 1039 : A.D. 1677 “whoever wants to see (this manuscript) or learn it by heart, should do so, for it is certainly merit for me”. By this ingenious wish the donor or scribe managed and still manages to accumulate merit even while these manuscripts are used for research.

In both cases it is by no means clear to whom the merit will ultimately go, to the donor or to the scribe, or to both of them. For, leaving aside the somewhat ambiguous *sān* “to produce”²⁵, which can be employed by both, scribes and donors alike, the subject of the corresponding sentences is rarely expressed explicitly. Therefore the long colophons typical for Javanapañña, which have been discussed and translated by H. Hundijs²⁶ state to whom exactly the merit of the donation is going to belong: *cuñ hū dai lokiya lee lokuttarasampatti kee dāyak phū (hū) sān nan dūn. rau anumodanā dṅvay lee*, no. 36: Sāratthapakāsinī (Sagātha-vagga), CS 911 : A.D. 1549 “that there may be success in the mundane and supramundane attainments for the donor, the person who had (this manuscript) made. We give our blessings”. This makes it sufficiently clear that the merit will go to the *upāsikā* Gāṃ Bā, one of the rather numerous female donors of manuscripts.

²⁵ In the colophons to a manuscript of the Mahājanakajātaka in the National Library, Bangkok (No. 6290), copied in A.D. 1660 the verb *sān* has been used in the Thai colophons as an equivalent to *likhāpita* of the Pāli colophons of the same manuscript. Both colophon series have been written by the monk Suvaṇṇarāja.

²⁶ H. Hundijs as above note 9, p.70, no. 8.

At the same time it is obvious that more than one person is involved in the donation. This fact is still more evident in a second colophon from Javanapañña's hand: *mahāthera hlvañ cau pen upatthambhaka gam anumodanā đvay lee cuñ hū pen praciay kee lokiya lokuttarasampatti kee phū hū sāñ*, no. 119: Yamaka, CS 909 : A.D. 1547, fasc. 7 "the Venerable Mahāthera gives his blessings as the supporter that ...". The person who gives his blessings is called *upatthambhaka* "supporter". At the same time, he is not the scribe of this manuscript, for only the colophon, not the text itself, has been copied in Javanapañña's very characteristic hand. Thus altogether three people participated in donating this manuscript.

Occasionally quite a few people have contributed in one way or another to have a manuscript made. As many as twenty people are named or mentioned indirectly in no. 103: *Buddhavamsa-aṭṭhakathā*, CS 913 : A.D. 1551. This number is quite exceptional, although sometimes an anonymous group of people, and possibly a large one, is mentioned: *nák puñ đán hlāy jāv meiy mī mahāsāmī cau puññaramsī pen pradhān*, no. 29: *Majjhimanikāya* (*Mūlapaṇṇāsa*), CS 895 : A.D. 1533 "numerous inhabitants of Meiy, who want to make merit, together with the Venerable Mahāsvāmī Puññaramsī as a leader²⁷".

The *Buddhavamsa-aṭṭhakathā* not only names all these many people who worked together but also, remarkably, describes their respective parts in the making of this manuscript. The Mahāthera Ratana is called *ādikammasādhaka* or *sabbādikammasādhaka*, and he is the only monk mentioned in these colophons. Lay people named are sometimes specified as *p(r)accayadāyaka*. This means that they have given the money necessary to write the manuscript, which consists of a set comprising the *Buddhavamsa* and its commentary, the

²⁷ On the title *mahāsvāmin*: H. Pentz: Reflections on the *Saddhammasaṅgaha*. JSS 65.1.1977, p.264foll.

Madhuratthavilāsini. The sum paid for the palm leaves was 8,000 *pé* and for copying the text 54,000 *pé*, *Buddhavamsa*, fasc. 1.²⁸ Interestingly, a (female?) ascetic named Yü gave some money too: *phā khāv yū*, *Buddhavamsa*, fasc. 7, which at the same time is an early reference to these ascetics wearing white clothes. The leading donor who is mentioned most frequently is: *upāsikā jū nāñ pā² gām* "the lay woman named Pā Gām". She is called *paccayadāyikā* and *upatthambhaka* "supporter". This means that the relevant terminology was neither fixed nor uniform. For when Javanapañña is called *upatthambhaka*, no. 57: *Itivuttaka*, CS 908 : A.D. 1546, fasc. 3, or: *then cau sur inda pen upatthambhaka*, no. 43: *Manorathapūraṇī* (*Ekanipāta*), CS 891(?) : A.D. 1529 or 1589(?), most likely both monks acted in the same way as did the Mahāthera Ratana, who is the *ādikammasādhaka*: both, Javanapañña and Ratana, gave their blessings (*anumodana*). There even seems to be a third expression used in the same context: *silananda pāñ kvāv kvañ hū sāñ thera anomadassī cau pen mūla lām bāñ*, no. 18: *Samantapāsādikā* (*Pārājika/ Saṃghādisesa*), about A.D. 1500 "Sīlananda from Pāñ Kvāv Kvañ had (this manuscript) made. The Thera Anomadassī was the *mūla*. In Lampang".

Only in the colophons of the *Buddhavamsa* manuscript, however, are the activities of the *ādikammasādhaka* briefly described: *jāk jvar nák pur đañ hlāy*, no. 102: *Buddhavamsa*, CS 913 : A.D. 1551, fasc. 1 "he persuaded many people, who want to make merit", and: *mahāthen ratana đai gā lāñ nák puñ đai deyyadhamma cāñ khyan lee*, *Buddhavamsa*, fasc. 4 "the Mahāthera Ratana has received the sum (to be used for buying) palm leaves; those, who want to make merit, have donated (the sum to be used for) copying". Evidently Ratana urged lay people to provide the funds necessary to acquire the writing materials and

²⁸ On the prices of manuscripts: O. v. Hinüber as above note 2, p.72; cf. also M. A. Stein : A Sanskrit Deed of Sale concerning a Kashmirian Mahābhārata MS., JRAS 1900, p.187-194.

to pay for the scribes. Only one of these scribes has been honoured by mentioning his name: *8 pai ācān seen doṅ sān ḍvay hatthakamma*, Buddhavaṃsa-aṭṭhakathā, fasc. 19 “eight folios have been made by Ācārya Seen Doṅ by his own hand”. This, of course, is an extremely modest contribution to a manuscript comprising eighteen and a half fascicles corresponding to 444 folios. Therefore it seems likely that Ācārya Seen Doṅ, who copied only the very last eight folios of this text, was some important person, perhaps not receiving any fee as the other scribes, but contributing either for sake of his own merit or to give special weight to this donation. All other scribes are passed over in silence.

Thus the *ādikammasādhaka* or the *mūla* seem to have been both the initiator of the meritorious work and also perhaps some kind of spiritual advisor, who gave their blessing upon its completion. It would be interesting to know what exactly was going to happen once a manuscript was finished and ready to be deposited in a monastery. Some kind of ceremony is a likely guess. And it may have been only during this supposed ceremony that the colophons were added, for they are occasionally written in a hand clearly distinct from that of the copyist. In this respect no. 32: Papañcasūdanī (Mūlapaṇṇāsa), CS 911 : A.D. 1549 is particularly instructive because the colophons in Javanapañña’s hand have been added after the scribe had finished the Pāli text and had written the title on the cover leaf of fasc. 20. The long colophon has been written around the title of the text: “The Venerable Saṃgharāja and the Layman called Samudda and his wife called Keev Maṇi had (this manuscript) made in the year *kāḍ rau* CS 911. Persons, who take (this manuscript) with them to use it and do not know the meaning or the wording (of the text) exactly, should not try to introduce changes or make additions, for that is not good. After having been used (this manuscript) should be brought back immediately, – commentary on the Mūlapaṇṇāsa – for it was difficult, to make it. Therefore there should be success for me, who

had (this manuscript) made, in the mundane and supramundane attainments, and it should help people”.

The length of this colophon occurring a couple of times with some variations in manuscripts connected with Javanapañña is rarely matched: “(This manuscript) has been made by the Venerable Ānanda as the leading initiator (*gau saddhā*) as a root for the teaching and as a fountain for attaining omniscience. Until that time I should not (be reborn) as deaf nor as blind nor as a sick person, but as somebody who knows the Tipiṭaka in every rebirth, who is reborn because of the three (meritorious) causes²⁹, who is a wise and able person. I should not be reborn as a poor person, I do not want to be negligent in respect to the Exalted Buddha, the Exalted Teaching, the Exalted Order in future rebirths”, no. 98: Sivijayapañhā, CS 947 : A.D. 1585.³⁰

It would be interesting to know whether these long texts were perhaps recited when a manuscript was ceremoniously commissioned. However, from the colophons alone, only a very little can be guessed about the procedure for a donation. Perhaps some text such as the *ānisaṅ piṭak* contains some relevant information. This, however, is a topic extending far beyond the colophons.

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Note: This is the enlarged version of a paper read at the 5th International Conference on Thai Studies, London, on 7th July 1993.

²⁹ On *tihetukapaṭisandhi* that is *alobha*, *adosa*, *amoha*: Paṭis II 72,18foll. with Paṭis-a III 571,4-8, cf. Vism 104,11 (with Vism-mht), As 285,10, Vibh-a 162,23.

³⁰ This colophon has been discussed by H. Hundius as above note 9, p.133foll., where the date is given erroneously as CS 942 following a mistake made by the scribe.