

Sāriputta's Three Works on the *Samantapāsādikā*

In the twelfth century king Parākramabāhu I of Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka, instigated a reform of Buddhism which, famously, involved the unification of the existing *nikāyas* of the region under one *nikāya*, the Mahāvihāra. The reform influenced the shape of Theravāda throughout Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia in subsequent centuries, its impact being felt even to this day. As part of the reform, fresh emphasis was laid on the correct understanding and performance of Vinaya. This led to the production of a number of new summaries of and commentaries on earlier Vinaya works. The leading scholar of the day was the monk Sāriputta, whom King Parākramabāhu commissioned to write commentaries on a number of Buddhaghosa's works, which received particular attention during the reform. In the centuries that followed the reform under Parākramabāhu, monks from throughout Southeast Asia sought fresh ordination in Sri Lanka because of the reputation of the Mahāvihāra for learning and for correct Vinaya. Consequently the reform came to influence monastic life and scholarship throughout the Theravāda world.

The works ascribed to Sāriputta have been discussed most recently by Pecenko in his survey of Sāriputta's writings and by von Hinüber in his *Handbook of Pāli Literature*.¹ The purpose of this brief article is to augment the information supplied by them regarding the Vinaya works of Sāriputta. Among the Vinaya works ascribed to Sāriputta are the following three: the *Līnasāratthadīpanī* (Sp-ṭ), the *Pāḷimuttakavinayavinicchayaśāṅgha* (Pālim), and the *Pāḷimuttakavinayavinicchayaśāṅghaṭṭikā* (Pālim-pṭ). These all relate to Buddhaghosa's commentary on the Vinaya-piṭaka, the *Samantapāsādikā* (Sp).² The *Līnasārattha-*

¹Pecenko 1997, von Hinüber 1996.

²See von Hinüber 1996, p. 104, on the ascription of the *Samantapāsādikā* to Buddhaghosa, an ascription not found in the fifth-century Chinese translation by Samantabhadra, but given by Vajirabuddhi (c. sixth century).

dīpanī, “Illumination of the Meaning of the Hidden Essence” is a subcommentary on the Samantapāsādikā. The Pāḷimuttakavinaya-
vinicchayaṅgaha, “Compendium of Pronouncements on Vinaya Inde-
pendent of the Order of the Canonical Text” is a compilation of the
legalistic content of the Samantapāsādikā rearranged according to
subject matter.³ The identity and nature of the Pāḷimuttakavinaya-
vinicchayaṅgahaṭṭhā, “commentary on Pālim”, a description rather
than a title as such, is so far unclear from the few statements in sec-
ondary literature on the subject.⁴

These three texts are noted by Malalasekera in his *Pāli Literature of Ceylon*. He writes the following regarding commentaries on Pālim: “Two ṭīkās are extant on it in Ceylon, one old (*porāṇa*) and the other new (*nava*), but the author and date of neither is known. The Gandhavaṃsa (p. 61) says that Sāriputta wrote a ṭīkā on it himself.”⁵ Pecenko clarifies the matter: “The two ṭīkās on Pālim are most probably Pālim-ṭ [= Pālim-ṭ] ascribed to Sāriputta, and Vinayālaṅkāraṭṭhā, written by Tipiṭakālaṅkāra.”⁶ This latter is a seventeenth-century work written in Burma.⁷ Both these ṭīkās are mentioned by von Hinüber. On the former, he writes, “Pālim-ṭ which is supposed to be the autocommentary by Sāriputta (Gv 61, 32) is quoted in Maṇis [Maṇisāramaṅjūsā], composed in A.D. 1466.”⁸ Thus all three authors write about this text rather hesitantly, confirming neither Sāriputta’s authorship of this work nor its content. Furthermore, the quotation of it in Maṇisāramaṅjūsā noted by von Hinüber only sets a *terminus ante quem* of the mid fifteenth century.

³The meaning of *pāḷimuttaka* here is taken from von Hinüber 1996, p. 158 § 334.

⁴These are texts 1, 3, and 4 respectively in the list of Sāriputta’s work in Pecenko 1997: 162–63. The first text is discussed by von Hinüber, 1996, §§ 373–74, the second §§ 334–35, the last § 336.

⁵Malalasekera 1928, reprint 1958: 191–92.

⁶Pecenko 1997, p. 170 note 45.

⁷von Hinüber 1996, § 337.

⁸von Hinüber 1996, § 336.

Both von Hinüber and Pecenko mention the edition of Sāriputta's "autocommentary" to Pālim published by K. Paññāsāra in Colombo in 1908. Pecenko notes that it is recorded in Barnett's *Supplementary Catalogue of the Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit Books in the Library of the British Museum*.⁹ The text is listed by Barnett under the published works of Sāriputta with shelfmark 014098d34(2). Neither von Hinüber nor Pecenko had access to this text, so they were not able to include descriptions of the text in their overviews.¹⁰ Unfortunately, the British Library's copy of this rare publication has been lost. The text was borrowed by a member of staff in 1989 and has not yet found its way back to the correct shelf allocation.¹¹ All is not lost for users of the British Library, however. Manuscript Or. 4957 is a Sinhalese copy of a commentary on Pālim which can be identified as Pālim-ṭṭ from the colophon.¹² Furthermore, a copy of the printed edition is held at Peradeniya University Library in Sri Lanka.¹³

⁹Pecenko 1997, p. 170. Pecenko provides slightly different abbreviations for the texts.

¹⁰von Hinüber 1996, p. 158 n. 541.

¹¹Despite the kind assistance of several members of staff of the Oriental and India Office Collection, and my own consultation with the former member of staff in question and searches in the stacks and storage of library, the book has not yet been recovered.

¹²This is not the only manuscript of the text. Those listed by W.A. de Silva in his *Catalogue of Palm Leaf Manuscripts in the Library of the Colombo Museum* (Colombo 1938) are also noted by Pecenko 1997, p. 170, n. 44.

¹³The shelfmark of the Peradeniya copy is 36402. It is bound at the back of a copy of Pālim by Ñāṇavimala Tissa published a year earlier. It is hoped that a copy is to be restored to the British Library shortly from the Peradeniya holding. I would like to express my gratitude to Peradeniya library for allowing a copy to be made, and in particular to Kusantha Kariyapperuma and Tikva Shobrook for arranging this. I am also grateful to the British Academy, for it was while in receipt of a BA small projects grant to look at certain temple manuscript collections in Sri Lanka that I was able to obtain access to this work. Regarding the quality of the printed edition, the separation of words is frequently misplaced.

The opening verse of Pālim-pṭ gives this descriptive title: Anuttānatthadīpanī, “Exposition of Uncertain Meanings”, a title that parallels that of Sp-ṭ. Both the manuscript consulted and the printed edition also provide the parallel descriptive title at the head of the colophon: (*Pālimuttakavinayavinicchayasāṅgahassa*) *anuttānapada-vaṇṇanā*, “The Explanation of Uncertain Words (for the *Pālimuttakavinayavinicchayasāṅgaha*).”

The author does not name himself in the colophon, but states that he wrote the commentary at the instigation of Parākramabāhu while living at the Jetavana :

ajjhesito narindena so 'haṃ parakkamabāhunā¹⁴
saddhammaṭṭhitikāmena sāsanujjotakārinā
ten' eva kārite ramme pāsādasatamaṇḍite
nānādumagaṇākiṇṇe bhāvanābhiratālaye
sītalūdakasampanne vasaṃ jetavane imaṃ
atthabyañjanasampannaṃ¹⁵ akāsiṃ yoginaṃ hitaṃ
yaṃ siddhaṃ iminā puññaṃ yaṃ caññaṃ pasutaṃ mayā
etena puññakammena dutiye attasambhave
tāvatiṃse pamodento sīlacāraguṇe rato
alaggo pañcakāmesu patvāna paṭhamaṃ phalaṃ
antime attabhāvamhi metteyyamunipuṅgavaṃ
lokaggapuggalaṃ nāthaṃ sabbasattahite rataṃ
disvāna tassa dhīrassa sutvā saddhammadesanaṃ
adhigantvā phalaṃ aggaṃ sobheyyaṃ jinasāsaṃ
sadā rakkhantu rājāno dhammaṃ c' eva imaṃ pajaṃ
niratā puññakammesu jotento jinasāsaṃ

¹⁴Both the printed edition and MS Or. 4957 have this hypermetric reading in the second foot, which perhaps should be emended by deleting *so* or giving the king's name as *pakantabāhunā*, a form used elsewhere.

¹⁵*Sa* missing from MS Or. 4957.

*ime ca pāṇino sabbe sabbadā nirūpaddavā
niccaṃ kalyāṇasaṃkappā pappontu amataṃ padanti.*¹⁶

At the request of Parākramabāhu, king of men,
who desires the duration of the true Dhamma and causes the
illumination of the religion,
While residing at the delightful Jetavana which he had built,
adorned with a hundred terraces,
Surrounded by different types of trees, a place enjoyed in
meditation,
Completed with cool waters, I composed this, complete in
meaning and expression, for the benefit of practitioners.
The merit achieved through this and the other produced by me
As a result of this act of merit, in my next embodiment
May I, enjoying myself in the Tāvatiṃsa heaven, delighting in
moral precepts, good conduct and virtues,
Free from attachment to the five senses, achieve the first
spiritual goal ;
Thereafter, in my final embodiment, after seeing Metteyya, the
bull of sages,
The highest individual in the world, the protector who delights in
the benefit of all beings,
Having attained the highest goal, may I make the religion of the
conqueror shine forth.
May the kings always protect the Dhamma as well as mankind
here,
Devoted to acts of merit, illuminating the religion of the
conqueror,
And may all these beings, at all times free from distress,
Constantly of good intention, attain the deathless realm.

¹⁶Transcribed from Paññāsāra 1908, p. 151. The final stanza does not occur in MS Or. 4057.

The naming of Parākramabāhu as initiator and Jetavana as the residence in the first part of this colophon are two familiar markers of texts by Sāriputta. Similar statements are found at the end of other texts by him, in some cases the ascription being further confirmed by some additional dedicatory verses by one of Sāriputta's direct pupils.¹⁷ The mention of Parākramabāhu certainly confirms a date of the twelfth century. From the colophon there seems to be no reason to doubt the ascription of authorship to Sāriputta, for whom King Parākramabāhu I built the Jetavana monastery at Polonnaruva. However, the way in which the *ṭīkā* author refers to the author of Pālim in the third person, *āha* or *vadati*, e.g. *kulaputtanti ācārakulaputtaṃ sandhāya vadati*,¹⁸ etc., is a little disconcerting since at first sight it suggests distinct authors for the two works, a point to which we shall return below.

The opening of the text, which is very brief compared with that of Sp-ṭ but contains some similar wording, seems fairly neutral regarding authorship :

*mahākārūṇikaṃ buddhaṃ dhammaṃ tena sudesitaṃ
saṅghaṃ ca vimalaṃ vanditvā sugatorasaṃ
anukampāya yogīnaṃ kate vinayasaṅgahe
karissāmi samāsenā anuttānatthadīpaniṃ.*¹⁹

After worshipping the Buddha, greatly compassionate, and the
Dhamma well taught by him,
As well as the immaculate Saṅgha, born of the Sugata,
I shall in brief compose an Exposition of the Uncertain Meanings
in the Compendium of the Vinaya, which was composed out of
consideration for practitioners.

¹⁷Pecenko 1997, pp. 166–68, notes the similarity between the colophons of Pālim, Sp-ṭ, and Mp-ṭ, which is extensive. All state that they were written at the request of Parākramabāhu I at the Jetavana Vihāra.

¹⁸MS Or. 4957 folio 58. Paññāsāra 1908, p. 69.

¹⁹MS Or. 4957 reads from *saṅghaṃ: saṅghaṃ vimalaṃ seṭṭhaṃ vanditvā saṅga* and then there is a break until part way into the first paragraph of the text.

However, the impersonal *kate vinayasangahe* (“the Compendium that was composed”) might be interpreted as indicating that the text is an autocommentary, for it was the practice of the period for a commentator to compose some kind of homage to the author of a text at the start of his commentary, and, given the contemporaneity of the two works and the fame of Sāriputta, we would expect the identity of the author of Pālim to be known to the author of Pālim-ṭ. Therefore, if the two authors were distinct we would expect a more elaborate reference to the author of Pālim.

Given that there appear, then, to be these three texts pertaining to the Samantapāsādikā written by Sāriputta, a further consideration also naturally arises as to why one person would be responsible for three separate works on the same text. In particular, what would be the purpose of an autocommentary on his own text, especially given that he had already composed a commentary (Sp-ṭ) on the full text (Sp) from which his Pālim was extracted?²⁰ It is reasonable to assume that the subcommentary to Sp should have provided ample opportunity to comment on its content. In order to answer this question let us briefly review the character of those two texts.

It has already been noted that the Līnasāratthadīpanī is a subcommentary on the Samantapāsādikā. As such it contains commentary not only on the legalistic content of the Samantapāsādikā, but also on the framework stories that contextualize the rules within the Buddha's life. The Līnasāratthadīpanī often contains further narrative or draws out the narrative to explain the context or thought processes underlying what people say or do in the main text.

The Pālimuttakavinayavinicchayaṅgaha, as has been described above, is a compilation of the legalistic content of the Samantapāsādikā rearranged according to subject matter. As such it contains no material not found within the Samantapāsādikā itself, with the exception of a few connectives. These are added where two excerpts from Sp on a related

²⁰The style of Pālim is quite lucid. This is in no way similar to the style of Sanskrit *kārikā* texts, which require an autocommentary to be comprehensible.

topic are extracted from different narrative locations. Simple connectives replace the narrative framework so that it can be used as a straightforward legal handbook that reads smoothly in complete sentences. In order to achieve this sentences are also altered slightly. For example, in the *pabbajjāvattu* the list of physical and other defects that debar someone from ordination into the Saṅgha immediately precedes the rule that a boy may not be ordained without the permission of his parents. They are connected as follows: *iti imehi pabbajjādosehi virahitopi na bhikkhave ananuññāto mātāpitūhi putto pabbājetabboti vacanato mātāpitūhi ananuññāto na pabbājetabbo*. Here the second section of the quotation, given unitalicized, is *buddhavacana* from the Mahāvagga of the Vinaya-piṭaka as quoted in Sp while the first section is purely connective and the third section replaces the narrative phrase *sikkhāpadaṃ paññāpesi* from Sp that no longer makes sense in the narrative-free context and order of Pālim. In contrast, Pālim reproduces the subsequent passage on what is meant by parental permission verbatim from the *Rāhulavattukathā* of Sp.²¹ The sections of Pālim are self-contained accounts on discrete topics of Vinaya including all the supplementary legalistic clarification provided by Sp on that particular subject. The material included is entirely “legalistic”. All peripheral material such as narrative framework is excluded.²²

The *Pālimuttakavinayavinicchayasaṅghassa anuttānatthadīpanī* is a commentary on the above handbook. It provides commentary on terms occurring in the discussion of matters of Vinaya only. As far as I can ascertain, its content is entirely drawn from Sp-ṭ, again with the exception of a few connectives. So, where a passage of Sp-ṭ comments on the purely legal matters found in Sp, it is included in Pālim-pt, but

²¹PTS edition pp. 1011–12.

²²In my reading of this text so far I have found all passages, other than the connective phrases, in either the Vinaya-piṭaka or the Samantapāsādikā. Von Hinüber observes, “As far as this can be ascertained at present, Pālim uses only Vin with Sp. Quotations from the old Aṭṭhakathā seem to be borrowed from Sp” (1996, p. 158 § 334).

following the order of Pālim. Thus Pālim-pt has the same relationship to Sp-t as Pālim does to Sp. For example, in the *pabbajjāvattu* of Pālim mentioned above, Pālim-pt opens with a few words not found elsewhere, then continues with :

an extract from Sp-t's commentary on *pañcābādhavattu* (Sp-t B^e 3.241ff. ; Pālim-pt, Paññāsāra ed., pp. 69–70);

a single sentence from Sp-t on *rājabhaṭṭādivattu* (Sp-t B^e 2.122 ; Pālim-pt, Paññāsāra ed., p. 70, lines 29–30);

a short extract from Sp-t on *dhaniyavattu* (Sp-t B^e 3.243 ; Pālim-pt, Paññāsāra ed., pp. 70–71);

a page from Sp-t's *hatthachinnādikathā*, identified as such (Sp-t B^e 3.204 ; Pālim-pt, Paññāsāra ed., pp. 71–72);

Sp-t on the *paṇḍakavattu*, introduced as the *abhabbapuggala-kathā* (Sp-t B^e 3.257 ; Pālim-pt, Paññāsāra ed., p. 72);

Sp-t on the *ubhatobyañjanakathā* (Sp-t B^e 3.262 ; Pālim-pt, Paññāsāra ed., pp. 72–73), etc.

This continues right up to the final sentences of the chapter, which come from the *anāpucchāvaraṇavattu* (B^e 3.256, Paññāsāra ed., p. 84), with the exception of the last few words: *sesam ettha suviññeyyam eva*. The order of these extracts parallels the order of the extracts of Sp in Pālim.

We can conclusively state then that the content of Pālim-pt is by Sāriputta. Given that Pālim is a rearrangement of the Samantapāsādikā attributed to Buddhaghosa, and contains no original material by Sāriputta, and that Pālim-pt is a rearrangement of the material in Sp-t, it is perhaps inappropriate to refer to Pālim-pt as an “autocommentary”. The referent of the third person used in it is Buddhaghosa, the ascribed author of the Samantapāsādikā from which Pālim is extracted. While it is possible that a scholar other than Sāriputta made this rearrangement, this seems unlikely given the features of the opening verse and colophon discussed above.

In composing or compiling these three Vinaya texts, Sāriputta makes the Samantapāsādikā more accessible in three very different

ways, serving quite separate purposes. With the first he provides a full commentary on Sp. With the second he extracts and rearranges the Vinaya material of Sp into a systematic handbook. With the third he extracts and reorders the commentary on Sp, including only what is relevant to the terminology of the Vinaya material included in Pālim, and following its order. For understanding matters of Vinaya it is Pālim and Pālim-pṭ that are most accessible.

Finally, what, if any, is the relationship between Pālim-pṭ and the Vinayālaṅkāraṭīkā (Pālim-nṭ), written by Tipiṭakālaṅkāra in seventeenth-century Burma? Vinayālaṅkāra is a revised commentary on Pālim rather than a completely new composition, for it uses Pālim-pṭ fully, following its order throughout, even where the borrowing is not explicitly identified as such. In places it shortens Pālim-pṭ, typically by leaving out the quotation marker *ti* and the attributions to earlier commentaries that Sāriputta had provided. Its inclusion of slight differences from Sp-ṭ found in Pālim-pṭ means that it is drawn from Pālim-pṭ directly, rather than being a fresh extraction from Sp-ṭ. The Vinayālaṅkāraṭīkā relies far more heavily on Pālim-pṭ than one would anticipate from its opening verses, where the author states that he has taken the essence from various older *ṭīkā*s: *ñānāsattthehi sāramādāya*. However, the text supplements Pālim-pṭ in two significant ways.²³ Firstly, it provides grammatical analysis of terms found in Pālim. Secondly, it includes lengthy extracts from Kassapa's Vimativinodanī. The Vimativinodanī is slightly later than Sāriputta's works, and often rejects his opinions.²⁴ It is where the Vimativinodanī offers a different interpretation from that of Sāriputta that it is included in Vinayālaṅkāraṭīkā.

From the usage of Pālim-pṭ in Pālim-nṭ we can see that it was exported to Southeast Asia, as were many other works by Sāriputta, and

²³My description of the Vinayālaṅkāra is based only on a full reading of the *pabbajjāvattu* as well as short sections from throughout the text, so there may be further significant features and source texts not observed here.

²⁴von Hinüber, 1996 § 338.

continued to be preserved there at least as late as the seventeenth century. From that time on, its contents were largely preserved in the *Vinayālaṅkāraṭīkā*, as well as, of course, remaining embedded piecemeal in Sp-ṭ from which it was extracted.

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