

A Synopsis for M.Phil Dissertation

Name of Candidate : Ven. U Ravika (Burma)
 Title of Research : A Study of Kalyani Pali Inscription Based on Mon Sources
 Institute : Post Graduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Study, University of Kelaniya

Introduction

In Myanmar there are many stone inscriptions in Mon, Pyu, Burmese and Pali. Kalyani Inscription was written in Pali and Mon. It was erected by king Dhammaceti of Ramasnnadesa in 1478 on the ten sand stones of which three are in Pali and the last are in Mon. The field of research for my M.Phil study will be on the Kalyani Pali inscription which consists of over 60 pages in printed Mon-Pali version. In my study, Kalyani Mon Inscription which is a translation of the Pali one and gives further details such as a list of Kalyani Simas in Ramannadesa will be a useful source of information.

To our great regret, Kalyani inscription was more or less destroyed in the genocide war against Mon waged by the Burmese king U AungZeya who founded the Konebaung dynasty in Upper Burma in 1750. It was too late for the Burmese soldiers to stop destroying the Pali inscription until it became into pieces when they came to know that it was a Pali one not a Mon. Since then Mon became a people without a country, Mon history went behind the veil and Mon sources scattered into the directions. Most of Mon heritages were set to the fire, brought to the upper Burma, Burmanised, lost or destroyed.

Fortunately the Pali inscription was copied on the palm-leaf and brought to the parts of the country since it was carved. According to the Mon accounts, a copy of Kalyani Pali inscription was sent to the king of Sri Lanka as his majesty's holy gift. The printed versions today come from these palm leaf-manuscripts, though some inadequate

printings of it were published by the government of the Union of Myanmar as it is in damaged origin.

The main purpose of this Kalyani inscription was to record the execution of king Dhammaceti's sasana purification though it partly dealt with history of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, India and Myanmar. Some events in this inscription are obviously rather remote from the historical facts. However, it is a single historical Pali stone inscription both in Myanmar and Thailand.

In Myanmar, drawing from the accounts of kalyani inscription, many books of chronicle were written. Among them the first Myanmar chronicle, Maharyazawingyi, by U Kalar is 233 years after the Kalyani inscription. The Sasanavamsadipani (The Book on the Lineage of Manastic Reform of Buddhism) by the Paramasirivamsabhidhajamaharajaguru-mahathera of Toung-U is 312 years later and Sasanalankara-sartan, a famous book of Buddhist chronicle in Myanmar by a Burmese minister, Thirimaharanda -Thingyan, is 350 years later.

Turning to Thailand, there are two chronicles written in Pali after Kalyani inscription in which the event of Buddhism were presented almost similarly. These two books are the Cammadevivamsa (the History of Mon Queen Cammadevi of Haribhunjaya) written by Ven. Bodhiramsi and the Jinakalamalini (The Garland of Flowers in the Time of the Buddha) done by Ven. Ratanapanna.

Over one and half centuries ago Kalyani Pali inscription was translated by many scholars into English, Burmese, Sinhalese, and Mon. Taw-Sein_Ko, a Burmese scholar, firstly translated the inscription into English and published it in 1892. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Abbott of Bayarbyu Temple in Pazundaung, Yangon translated it into Burmese and following this, Ashin Kelasa of Pegu, in 1962, wrote a book in Myanmar_ the Kalyani Theintaw Thamaingsar (the History of Klayani Ordination Hall). Again in 1969, Ashin Acara of Kyaikkasan Monastery in Yangon, editing the Pali text and giving footnotes, reproduced a new Burmese translation. In Sri Lanka, as far as I am concerned, two books regarding the Kalyani inscription had been published: Kalyani Inscriptions, by Gintota, Medhankankara, Colombo, in 1924 and Kalyani Shilalipi, by Buddhadatta Thero, Polwatte, Colombo, in 1928 as well.

The Mon translation of Kalyani Pali inscription was done by Bhaddantacariya Palita in 1967 and came to publication late in 1984. In contrast to the former pioneers, Bhaddantacariya tried to recover the underlying political and religious elements of the inscription which are more reliable than those of the Kalyani Mon Inscription published by the Burmese Research Society in 1958.

The Scope of the Study

As the Mon translation came late, I, a Buddhist monk of Mon, seem to be the latest one who wishes to do research on the Kalyani Pali inscription which was erected by a Mon king. The earliest candidate in this field is Patrick Arthur Pranke from the University of Michigan. In 2004, he submitted his dissertation in the title of “the Treatise on the Lineage of Elders (Vamsadipani: Monastic Reform and Writing of Buddhist History in the 18th century Burma). His work is identical to the Burmese historians by dealing with Kalyani inscription as a part of his research on Sasana-katikavata tradition.

Next come Mr. Jason Carbine, from the United State too. Drawing from the Burmese commentary- Kalyani Theintaw Thamaingsar (the History of Kalyani Sima) and Taw-Sein-Ko’s English translation, he intends to reproduce a new English translation for publication in the Journal of the Pali Text Society. In his message sent to me, I was told that he will add to his work a study of socio-historical and cultural significance of Kalyani sima which is a material one.

There is still growing interest in Kalyani Pali inscription. Venerable Abhayatissa, a pandit of Sri Lanka and a lecturer of Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka, is doing the same research as well basing on Kalyani Pali inscription and Taw-Sein-Ko’s English translation. According to him, the work is in eight months progress at the University of Kelaniya.

There is not much work completely done on this inscription. The former candidates have failed to use Mon sources. The study points based on Mon sources are still left untouched and some Burmese and Thai sources still wide-open. Therefore, my

study is generally proposed to appear with Mon sources since the Kalyani Pali inscription is still needed to be approached in the different sources and methods of study.

The Methodology of the Study

At first, I will classify the contents of the inscription. In original Pali text there is no table of contents classified and it goes through the process of the events. I find a book of Kalyani Mon translation written by Bhaddantacariya Palita which can be used as my basic and principal source to create a table of contents. Bhaddantacariya, the author of this book, has divided the Pali texts into thirty episodes with an introduction which are given as a table of contents. In my study these contents will be divided into four categories as to classification.

Secondly the extended study of historical and cultural significances of the inscription will be followed. For historical and social study I will depend on Mon sources as my primary elements and Burmese, Thai and English sources as secondary. This point of study may be the same as the others but the sources used are vividly different.

When I study the history of Buddhism in India, Sri Lanka, and Ramannadesa, I will discuss the historical legends with an air of myths which I dislike. To do this research the first series I would depend is Slapot Rajavam Datoh Smim, the Royal Chronicles, which was translated into German and published by FR. Schmidt in 1906 and republished in a new edition in 1923. The second, known as Paklat Chronicles, is a collection of historical texts written by anonymous in ancient times published in 1910 and 1912 in two volumes at Paklat near Bangkok, Thailand. These volumes have never been translated or studied except for a few excerpts from the second part. My study will deal with the second one which is fully related to king Dhammaceti. The third and the last series, Vam Dun Suvannabhumi, The History of Suvannabhumi Kingdom, is a printed text book by the OTMLTBC (The Organization for teaching Mon Language and Training Buddhist Culture).

After the critical study of history, I will continue my work with the study of social or cultural grounds. In this study I will, with a critical point of view, present the

foundation and architecture of the Kalyani Sima which was built according to the Mon ritual system and Buddhist vinaya rules. For the ritual or social study, two books, Vinayamahavagga Pali and Prakoh Lokasiddhi, are indispensable. Prakoh Lokasiddhi is a book of tantra-mantras showing the way how to manage a good life. Even though it has not been translated into other languages yet, it is very popular among Mon and it is taught to the monastic students at the Mon Buddhist monasteries in Mon State until the present days.

At last, I will identify the name of the places found in the inscription. Identifying the name of the places is also essential in my study. Basing on the old Mon and Pali inscriptions discovered in Burma, Thailand, Loa PDR and The Royal Kingdom of Cambodia, I will go into details about the historical sites such as Suvannabhumi, Ramannadesa, Pugama and so on which are very critical among the scholars. In this stage I will make surprise by linking some epigraphs, for example, the triple word Mi-chen or Pi-chen(Chinese), Besinga(Greece) and Vesunga(Pali) which refer to the Mon word 'Bi-cing', the name of the capital of Suvannabhumi from the 3rd century BC to the 9th century AD. Further more, Ramannadesa in my study will mean more than what the present scholars have reached.

In addition, the translation study of Kalyani Pali inscription will be postponed at the time being. I will keep continuous watch on the proceeding of other candidates while my research is being conducted. For example, in the Kalyani Pali inscription on the page 50 lines 8&9 (according to the Mon version), There are two Pali phrases: Varacakka sankhittaya and Sattarajasenayabhibhutatta. In his translation Taw-Sein-Ko took "the excellent religion" as the meaning of "varacakka" and "seven kings" as sattaraja. I am concerned about this translation thinking if varacakka means ruling and sattaraja (perhaps satturaja?) the enemy king. It may have a problem to basically consult this matter because in Sinhalese version is shown 'thiracakka' and in Kalyani Mon stone inscription is missing this part. In fine if 'the excellent religion' is taken, then the connection of 'varakkasankhittaya' with 'sattarajasenayabhibhutatta' is unlikely to be suitable. If the 'seven kings' are taken as sattaraja, then the names of them should be presented definitely. Mr. Jason Carbine and Ven. Abhayatissa, I believe, will notice

such a critical point. Therefore, I will as of now do my study of Kalyani Pali inscription and will reproduce a new English translation only if necessary.

In my work the potential contents are as follows.

1. Introduction
2. Historical background of King Dhammaceti
3. Historical background of Kalyani Sima with a list of historical sites.
4. Study of thirty classified contents of Mon translation
5. Study of the inscription in four categories
6. Study of history of Buddhism in India, Sri Lanka, Ramannadesa or Suvannabhumi (the Mainland of SEA) found in the Kalyani Pali inscription
7. Study of history of Buddhist order-sects found in the Kalyani Pali inscription
8. Study of travel and diplomacy from the Kalyani Pali inscription
9. Study of Sima, ordination hall and Upasampada, Buddhist monk ordination recorded in the Kalyani Pali inscription
10. Study of the name of places from the Kalyani Pali inscription
11. Conclusion
12. Bibliography, Appendix and index

If a new English translation is in necessary, the above study will be moved to the footnote of the translation.

Primary Sources

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9. Rajavam Sathom Kov Hamsavati (pathama), History of Suvannabhumi and Hamsavati, National Library of Rangoon(manuscript)
10. Rajavam Sathom Kov Hamsavati (dutiya), History of Suvannabhumi and Hamsavati, National Library of Rangoon(manuscript)
11. Dhatuvam Bvai Kamnon, Short History of the Relics, National Library of Rangoon(manuscript)
12. Over one hundred relevant sources are under my studying and will be presented later.