

The Clues on the Silk Road in the Pali Canon, the Commentaries and the Chronicles

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Abstract

The importance of the Pali Canonical and Commentarial literatures cannot be narrowed to the religious teachings only. It, indeed, incorporates the essential information that gives light on the other subjects such as culture, history, politics, etc. The issue herein is that all the scholars draw their much attention on the Vedic and the Brahmanic texts written in Sanskrit only. Yet, it should be noted that the evidences found in the Pali literature shed lights to develop the innovative research works in the humanities. The history of the Silk Road extended to both the land and sea could be re-read by referring the relevant Pali sources. In particular, the history of the land map can be revised through the information related to the trading system and the stories of the merchants come to light with the Canon. The *Mahā Niddesa*, the *Mahā Parinibbanāsutta*, the Commentary of the *Udāna*, the Commentary of the *Petavattu*, the *Buddhavamsa* and its commentary, the *Milinda Pañha* and the Commentary on the *Dhammapada* are dealing with vital evidences regarding the trading culture. Except the above sources, a few chronicles such as the *Chakesa Dhātuvamsa*, the *Sāsanavamsa* and the *Nalāṭa Dhātuvamsa* are also giving considerable facts. This paper aims to inquire what contribution could be made by the Pali sources to review the Indic history, particularly, the Silk Road. I herein would refer three sorts of literary layers related to the Pali literature only. The key method in this research will be the analytical method and in relevant arguments, the comparative method also would be applied.

Key Words: *Pali canon, Commentaries, Chronicles, Silk Road*

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