

## **An Analytical Study of the Background Which Had Been Urged in India for the Necessity to Translate Sinhala Commentaries Into Pali**

Sampath Suranga Jayasinghe  
Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies,  
Nagananda International Institute for Buddhist Studies  
jssuranga@gmail.com

We must pay our respect to Mahavira Bhikkhus, who protected and developed the commentaries that have been written for the Pali canon. These Sinhala commentaries were translated into Pali in the 5th century AD. At that time, the Mahayana tradition had been widely spread in India. This research is focused on studying the reasons which arose the utility of Theravada commentaries in that environment in India that was vastly spread with Mahayana tradition. In this study, archaeological and literature resources are used. Venerable Revata, who guided the greatest commentator, Venerable Buddhaghosha, to translate Sinhala commentaries into Pali, lived in a temple that was close to Mahā-bodhi in India. There are some Chinese records that prove this temple where Venerable Revatha has been lived. In the 7th century AD, A Chinese traveller named Hyun-Syang wrote about a Sinhala temple which is close to the Mahā-Bodhi tree in India. Was this the temple that Venerable Revata lived in? Had this temple any connection with Mahavira in Sri Lanka? if so, why did the Bhikkhus in Sinharama temple tend to turn Sinhala commentaries into Pali language? These kinds of questions arise regarding the information about the Sinhala temple in India. Epigraphy, which has been placed in a museum and Chinese records, is crucial when searching for answers to the questions that have been mentioned. In that epigraphy, there is a sentence that says, “A Sri Lankan king named Meghawarna has built this temple for the Bhikkhus of his country”. It is significant to see that, this information has been described in Chinese texts. This text also elaborates that the Mahayana tradition was powerful at that time. Therefore, the Sinhala temple situated close to the Maha-Bodhi tree was the residence of so many Theravadins from any country. There was a motive to develop Theravada tradition in India, taking this temple as their head department. In order to fulfil their aspiration and also, for the usage of the people in other countries, they translated Sinhala commentaries into Pali language in need of spreading a Theravada interpretation of Buddha’s teachings.

**Keywords:** Sinhala commentaries, Maha-Bodhi, Chinese records, Sinharamaya, Pali