

**A Critical Study on Ven.
Moggaliputtatissa's Contribution to the
Development of Buddhist Thought with
Reference to the *Kathāvatthupparakāraṇa***



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Abstract.

The great service rendered by the disciples of Theravada tradition for the development of Buddhist thought has mostly been ignored in the modern works on Buddhist philosophy. Although some passing comments are available in those works, attention is not paid to evaluate the contribution made by individual disciples for the development of Buddhist philosophy. This fact is mostly relevant to the disciples who lived before the third century B.C.. It seems that there had been some reasons for this ignorance. The most important fact among them is that the Theravāḍins' emphasis on the Buddha's authority attributed to all kinds of literature belonging to the canon whether old or new. In such a situation, the disciples are not given any authority on the canon as its full authorship is given to the Buddha himself. An interesting example regarding the authorship of the Kathāvatthupparakaḍa will clarify the matter well. It is a well known historical fact that the Kathāvatthupparakaḍa has been composed by Ven.Moggalliputta-tissa in the 3rd century B.C.. But almost all the commentaries attempt to attribute its authorship to the Buddha saying that the main topics of the text had already been given by the Buddha who saw through his divine eye the service by Ven. Moggalliputta-tissa in order to refute heretical views. Thus it seems that the Theravāḍins had always tried to safeguard the purity and the sacred nature of the canon by attributing its authorship only to the Buddha. So the authorship of the disciples over the many parts of the canon has been ignored for the sake of preserving its pristine purity. It should be noted here that unlike the Theravāḍins, the Mahāyāḍnists and most of the other Buddhist sectarians have given a prominent place to the disciples for preaching and explaining of the Buddha's doctrines. Therefore it is important to clarify the most valuable service of the disciples for the development of Buddhist philosophy in the early phase of its evolution.

The first chapter of this thesis which is considered as a preface to the main theme is an overview of the contribution made by the Buddha's immediate disciples for the development of Buddhist thought by preaching new discourses and explaining the Buddha's brief accounts in detail. In this regard the service of venerable disciples such as *Sāriputta*, *Ānanda*, *Moggallāna*, *Kaccāna* and *Dhammadinnū* has been clarified with reference to the discourses to which their names are connected. This account reveals the fact that Ven. *Moggaliputtatissa's* service is not completely a new thing but an unbroken tradition of great disciples in developing Buddhist thought from Buddha's time.

The second chapter deals with the basic teachings of early Buddhism because of two reasons. Firstly because there are different opinions of scholars regarding the basic doctrines of early Buddhism, we should clarify our position at the very outset. Second fact is that unless we point out in brief what the main doctrines of early Buddhism are we would not be able to show Ven. *Moggaliputtatissa's* contribution towards their development. Here our attention was paid to the discourses in the *Pāli Nikāyas* of the canon and the teachings or doctrines accepted commonly by both *Hinayāna* and Mahayana traditions.

The Major theories of the Buddhist Schools other than the *Theravāda* have been clarified in the third chapter with particular reference to the Personalists (*Puggalavāda*), Realists (*Sabbatthivāda*) and Transcendentalists (*Lokuttaravāda*). As these theories have been refuted by Ven. *Moggaliputtatissa* in his *Kathāvatthupparāṇa*, the reader can clearly understand the *Theravādins'*

standpoint with regard to them once he is acquainted with the theories of others.

The fourth chapter which deals with Ven. *Moggaliputtatissa's* contribution reveals the position of *Theravādins* with regard to various doctrinal propositions of the other Buddhist sects. The contribution to the field of Buddhist studies intended through this study are mainly included in this chapter. Here only the main arguments are analysed because a full account of the theories have been introduced in the former chapter.

The last chapter being a summary of the foregoing observation leads the reader to a common agreement regarding the event of Ven. *Moggaliputtatissa's* contribution towards the development of Buddhist thought.