

Organization and management of Buddhist verbal knowledge tradition

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The present study is an attempt to understand the features of knowledge organization and management in Buddhist verbal tradition. I hypothesize here that no knowledge will be survived without a proper knowledge organization and management. The study is based on *tipitaka*, commentaries, sub commentaries and related literature. Information gathered from these sources was compared with modern knowledge organization methods expounded in the western world in order to prove the validity of ancient Buddhist methods.

Outcome of the study can be summarized as follows:

Lord Buddha's teachings form a vast corpus of knowledge that has been prevailing for centuries in the form of *pitakas* (baskets of knowledge). Buddha's verbal teachings were retained in their memories by his close disciples. The steps had been taken at Councils (*sangayana*) to preserve this memorized knowledge for future generations. It is clear that learned *Bhikkhus* gathered at these Councils have used a number of methods for the purpose. Collection of scattered knowledge, presentation of collected knowledge using bibliographical features in the form of *suttas*, systematic classification of knowledge and formation of particular groups of *Bhikkhus* in order to ensure the existence of verbal tradition for the benefit of future generations are some of these methods. Altogether, they form the foundation of Buddhist knowledge management.

Recorded knowledge in a physical format is the basis of modern knowledge organization systems. Collection of recorded formats, organization of the contents therein and dissemination of the same are basic features of such systems. However, it is interesting to note that the corpus of ancient Buddhist knowledge in spite of its verbal tradition used modern bibliographic control methods for organization and dissemination purposes. It is apparent that irrespective of the tradition of existence or the time of origination knowledge organization and management have universal features.

Long before the introduction of modern classification and cataloguing methods in the western world, the Buddhist knowledge tradition had been using such methods successfully. This suggests that for the continuation, preservation, use and dissemination of a verbal tradition even such methods were instrumental.

The organization of *tipitaka* is entirely based on a sound classification system which is divided into main classes, sub classes and sections. The structure of *suttas* in *tipitaka* is enriched with cataloguing features. Even today the study of *tipitaka* is impossible without an understanding of these particular knowledge organization and management features contained in it. Creation of a strong verbal tradition for the perpetual continuity of Buddhist teaching through the formation of groups of reciters or *bhanakas* is also one of the important management features contributed to the preservation of *dhamma*.

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