

**The *Shan-chien-lu-p' i-p' o-sha*:
Chinese Version of the
Pāli *Samantapāsādikā* or *Sihala
Vinaya-aṭṭhakathā*?**

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At a time when scholars in the west were of the view that no Theravāda works had been translated into Chinese in ancient times, it was J. Takakusu¹ who brought to their notice that the work called '*Shan-chien-lu-p' i-p' o-sha*' (abridged as SCLPPS) had a close affinity with the Pāli Vinaya Commentary called '*Samantapāsādikā*' (abridged as Smp) belonging to the Theravāda School of Buddhism. Further, comparing SCLPPS with Smp in a lengthy article published in Japanese M. Nagai arrived at the conclusion that the former was a (abridged) translation of the latter.² Since then, the academic circle has been convinced that SCLPPS is a translation of Smp, a text translated into Pāli from a number of Sihala sources including the *Sihala-Vinaya-Aṭṭhakathā* (abridged as SVA) by Buddhaghosa of the 5th century A.C. With regard to the language of the original of SCLPPS, however, both Takakusu and Nagai were in a way forced into inconclusiveness whether it was Pāli or Sanskrit, or a mixture of both because of certain linguistic features seen in SCLPPS. R. Hikata, on the other hand, may be the first to say that the original was indeed in Pāli when he made a passing reference to SCLPPS in the introduction to his translation of the *Chieh-t' o-tao-lun (Vimuttimaggā)* into Japanese.³ This conclusion was supported with much more detailed evidence by K. Mizuno in his articles published in Japanese.⁴ From the title of his work, P.V. Bapat, the translator of the *Shan-chien-p' i-p' o-sha* into English, also seems to believe that it is a (abridged) translation of Smp.⁵ In a recent development, however, Ananda Guruge, the author of many books,⁶ has expressed his doubt about the original of SCLPPS in these words: