ColomboArts
Biannual Refereed Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities
Volume II | Issue 4 2018

Three 'Endangered Species' in Theravada Buddhist Studies

Asanga Tilakaratne, PhD.

tasanga8@gmail.com

Asanga Tilakaratne (PhD University of Hawai'i) is former Senior and Chair Professor of Pali and Buddhist Studies and founder Head of the Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. Areas of his academic specialization are Buddhist, Indian and Western philosophies, theory of knowledge, philosophy of language and philosophy of religion. Most recently (June 2018 –February 2019) he served as the visiting professor at Sitagu International Buddhist Academy, Sagaing and Mandalay, Myanmar. He has served as Commonwealth Fellow at Oriental Institute, Oxford University, and as visiting professor at Yonsei University, South Korea, Otago University, New Zealand, and Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune, India. In 2002, Prof. Tilakaratne founded the Sri Lanka Association of Buddhist Studies (SLABS), an academic and professional organization of Buddhist scholars in Sri Lanka, and currently serves as its president. In 2003 he founded, with a group of academics and professionals, Damrivi Foundation, a government registered, not for profit voluntary organization for economic, social, educational and spiritual development, and continues to function as its founder chairman.

Recommended Citation
Tilakaratne, A. (2018) Three 'Endangered Species' in Theravada Buddhist Studies. *ColomboArts Biannual Refereed Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, II (4)*
Available at: https://colomboarts.cmb.ac.lk/?p=412

ColomboArts
Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities

Three 'Endangered Species' in Theravada Buddhist Studies

Tilakaratne, A
University of Colombo
tasanga8@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper proposes to study the current situation of an ancient field of study which dates back almost to the time of the Buddha, the founder of Buddhism. Although the traditional Buddhist studies go to the antiquity, the modern western Buddhist studies started in the middle of the 19th century, a milestone of which is the start of the Pali Text Society in England in 1880s by Rhys Davids who studied Pali language in (then) Ceylon where he was an officer in the Colonial civil service. According to the tradition, Theravada was considered the most authentic Buddhist tradition which traced its origin to the immediate disciples of the Buddha, and Pali language in which the Theravada canon was written is considered the language spoken by the Buddha. The concept of 'early Buddhism' was used by the pioneering scholars such as Rhys Davids to refer to the form of Buddhism found in the Pali canon. The traditional belief about Theravada as the most authentic Buddhism and Pali language as the one spoken by the Buddha were questioned by the modern scholars from the beginning. With more recent discoveries of many different versions of the Buddhist scripture, the concept of early Buddhism is no longer applied exclusively to what is contained in the Theravada canon. This paper assesses the arguments for and against the validity and antiquity of these three phenomena; Theravada, Pali and early Buddhism, and shows that the debate is far from being conclusively over.

Keywords: Theravada, Pali, early Buddhism, relativism, skepticism

Introduction

This paper does not belong to Theravada studies proper because it does not propose to study any doctrinal or philosophical aspect of Theravada Buddhism. If at all it may be accommodated among the methodological studies, relevant Buddhist studies in general, and Theravada studies in particular. What I would like to do in this paper is to bring to the notice of the Buddhist and Theravada scholars specifically a trend prevalent in Theravada studies, if allowed to go unchallenged, will cause invalidation of the subject altogether. The paper, accordingly, is both descriptive and prescriptive.

Theravada Buddhist Studies: The Context

As Theravada is the oldest existing Buddhist tradition, Theravada has also a claim to be the oldest Buddhist academic tradition. Although this does not entail the other, in the case of Theravada, however, it so happens that it is both the oldest Buddhist tradition and Buddhist academic tradition as I will explain shortly. We all know that Buddhism as an institution started as a community of people who gathered around the Buddha and opted to follow the path shown by him. However, from what we can gather from the Sutta and the Vinaya we see the gradual evolution of this community to form an organization with people bound by a common philosophical vision and a way of behavior.

The life of such eminent disciples as Sariputta, Upali, Maha Kaccana and Ananda, in particular, betray indications that they, in addition to their being religious people with religious goals bearing on their inner purity and inner happiness, represented themselves within the community as 'learned' in the Dhamma and the Vinaya, in addition to being elders, guides, teachers, collegues [co-religionists - sabrahmacāri] etc. The rest of the sangha depended on them for the knowledge of the teaching which was an essential prerequisite of the practice. Surely there must have been organized efforts to keep what the Buddha taught without loss. Discourses such as Sangiti and Dasuttara (Digha-nikaya 33,34) seem to bear evidence to some of the early efforts by the immediate disciples of the Buddha to keep the Dhamma (and Vinaya) in some organized form, without loss. In the Alagaddupama-sutta (Majjhima-nikaya 22) the Buddha finds fault with some bhikkhus who learned the Dhamma for wrong purposes. But it is sufficient evidence to believe that study of the Dhamma existed at this early stage as a separate function among the Sangha.

According to my understanding, however, the clear beginning of what we may consider today as the 'academic' study of Buddhism is marked by the first council convened three months after the parinirvana of the Buddha. Up to this point, the disciples of the Buddha learned the Dhamma only insofar as such knowledge was needed for the practice of the Dhamma for the simple reason that without knowing what the Dhamma is one cannot be expected to practice it. The rationale behind this approach to the Dhamma was well exemplified in the following well known statements of the Dhammapada[1] (19-20): Though much he recites the Sacred Texts, but acts not accordingly, that heedless man is like a cowherd who counts others' kine. He has no share in the fruits of the Holy Life. Though little he recites the Sacred Texts, but acts in accordance with the teaching, forsaking lust, hatred and ignorance, truly knowing, with mind well freed, clinging to naught here and hereafter, he shares the fruits of the Holy Life.

Marking a turning point from this practical attitude to the Dhamma, in which learning was understood merely as a means to the soteriological end, was the Buddha's parinirvana, leaving none as the successor, and to make matters even worse (in the eyes, most probably, of many disciples who felt 'refuge-less' and started missing a personal leader), placing the Dhamma he taught and the Vinaya he prescribed in his place as the future guide (*sattha*) of the community[2]. This necessitated having the Dhamma and the Vinaya as a methodical and organized body agreed upon by all stake holders so that the authority of the teaching of the Buddha remains unchallenged. The immediate reason for the first sangayana, most probably, is this (although tradition highlights a different development as the reason[3]). As I have highlighted elsewhere[4] the meaning of the act of 'chanting together' or communal recitation (sangayana) was acceptance with unanimity what is so chanted. Another very important tradition with far-reaching effects was initiated at this meeting was to assign what was chanted to specific groups to preserve it for the sake of the future generations.

[1] *Bahumpi ce sahitaṁ bhāsamāno – na takkaro hoti naro pamatto*
Gopova gāvo ganayaṁ paresaṁ – na bhāgavā sāmaññassa hoti (Dhammapada 1:19)
Appampi ce sahitaṁ bhāsamāno – dhammassa hoti anudhammacāri
Rāgañca dosañca pahāya mohaṁ – sammappajāno suvimuttacitto
Anupādiyāno idha vā huraā vā – sa bhāgavā sāmaññassa hoti (Dhammapada 1:20)
[2] *Mahaparinibbana-sutta, Digha-nikaya.II p.154.*
[3] *Pañcasatikakhandhaka, Vinaya Piṭakaṁ II (Cullavagga-pali).*
[4] *Refer to "Sangiti and Samaggi: Communal Recitation and the Unity of the Sangha" in Buddhist Studies Review vol. 17 No.2, 2000.*

Accordingly, the Vinaya was assigned to Upali Thera and his pupils who were already considered to be 'Vinaya experts'. The four *nikaya*s (because the Khuddaka was yet to be formed), Digha, Majjhima, Samyutta and Anguttara were assigned in that order to the four *thera*s and their pupils, Ananda, the pupils of Sariputta (who had predeceased the Buddha) Maha Kassapa and Anuruddha[5].

Clearly what happened at the first sangayana was to establish what may be called an 'academic' tradition which has continued up till today. This should not be understood as something totally new in the monastic life which did not exist when the Buddha was still living. There is evidence in the canon to the existence of 'learning groups' organized around the chief disciples of the Buddha while the Buddha was still living[6]. The interest in the preservation of the word of the Buddha should not come to us as a totally new innovation judging by the fact that some of the chief disciples of the Buddha were coming from Brahmin families who, we may imagine, were very familiar with the Brahminic tradition of Vedic studies. So, what may have happened at the first sangayana was officially establishing as a tradition that was already there among the key disciples of the Buddha. From this point onward, it is reasonable to imagine that the bhikkhus and the bhikkhunis (although nothing is said in the Theravada literature about the 'academic' aspect of this latter group) had the additional responsibility of learning the word of the Buddha for the sake of its preservation, which is to go beyond the needs of their immediate soteriological task. What I mean by 'academic study' in this context is this need to study the Dhamma and the Vinaya for a purpose going beyond the mere soteriological need.

How the practice started in this manner gradually evolved to become a full-fledged academic tradition represented by the term '*gantha-dhura*', the yoke of books, is a well-

[5] *Sumangalavilasini Commentary to the Digha-nikaya I. pp. 13-15.*

[6] *Discourses mention how different groups of bhikkhus, depending on their intellectual and emotional preferences, gathered around different elders among whom were those well versed in the Dhamma and the Vinaya. The Udana (Ud: 59) and the Vinaya (I 197) mention that Sona Kuṭikaṇṇa, a student of Maha Kaccana Thera, chanting the Aṭṭhaka vagga (included the Sutta-nipata) before the Buddha. Upali Thera and his pupils are known to have mastered the Vinaya. The Alagaddupama-sutta of the Majjhima-nikaya (22) mentions 'certain empty persons' (ekacce moghapurisā) who studied the Dhamma for wrong purposes. Maha Kaccana Thera was praised as the highest among those who elaborated in detail what the Buddha said in brief (saṅkhittena bhāsitassa vitthārena atthaṁ vibhajantānaṁ yadidaṁ mahā kaccāno: Anguttara-nikaya I p.23). The story of Purana Thera (Cullavagga II 289-290) alludes to the existence of the individual 'experts' in the Dhamma and the Vinaya.*

known story which I need not detail here. A peak occasion of this development is reported in the Buddhist history of Sri Lanka: the *Mahavamsa* records that the word of the Buddha was committed to writing in books (*potthakesu likhāpayuṁ*) during the reign of Vaṭṭagamini Abhaya (29-17 BCE). The commentaries refer to a very important shift of emphasis in the Buddhist monastic life and attitudes that came along with this development, namely, the victory of the 'preachers of the Dhamma, (*dhamma-kathika*), who represented the learning (*pariyatti*) or the yoke of books (*gantha-dhura*) over 'those who wore rag-robes (*paṁsukūlika*), who represented practice (*paṭipatti*) or who practiced the yoke of insight (*vipassanā-dhura*). The relevance of this incident to the present discussion is that, whatever its implications for the soteriological practice of the monastic life, it marks the existence of a full-fledged academic tradition within Theravada Buddhism as far back as the 1st century BCE.

This age-old academic tradition traces its origin to the time of the Buddha, to be more specific to the first sangayana in which the immediate disciples of the Buddha played a key role. Although the Pali canon was still in the making, it is reasonable to take what was chanted at the first sangayana as forming the basis not only for what later evolved to be the canon or the tri-pitaka of Theravadins but also of all the other traditions that broke away from it. In this sense the Pali canon claims the word of the Buddha in its earliest available form. The Sutta and the Vinaya have continued up till today in Pali language which the Theravada traditions takes to be the language spoken by the Buddha.

Here we have three basic beliefs which are central to the Theravada tradition, namely, the Pali canon as representing the earliest version of the word of the Buddha, Pali to be the language spoken by the Buddha and the third, which was not required to spell out specifically, that the tradition that traces its origin to the immediate disciples of the Buddha to be the Theravada tradition. The traditional Buddhist scholarship still asserts these beliefs and these beliefs constitute the basic assumptions of the tradition. One may think that the tradition is dogmatic to hold these assumptions. Whether the present traditional Theravada Buddhist scholarship accepts these assumptions dogmatically or not, these beliefs are what is unanimously supported in the Theravada historical and commentarial literature. Anyone who accepts the recorded historical tradition cannot draw different conclusions. Nevertheless, the fact of the matter is that the tradition has been questioned and it has been

questioned seriously. In other words, all these three beliefs basic to the Theravada studies have been questioned seriously by the modern Buddhist scholarship.

What I am going to do in the remainder of this paper is to study as to on what grounds these assumptions have been questioned and to develop some thoughts on how the Theravada scholars should respond to these developments. When I say Theravada scholars or academics it of course includes both categories, scholars who specialize in Theravada as in any other academic discipline and hence Theravada scholars in professional sense and those scholars who, in addition to being Theravada scholars or academics in professional sense, also identify with the Theravada tradition as their religion inherited by birth or adopted subsequently. This division does not mean that only those academics who are not Theravada Buddhists who question these assumptions or that the Buddhist scholars who happen to be traditional Theravada Buddhist, or Theravada scholars who are non-Theravada Buddhists, do not question these assumptions.

Early Buddhism

The concept of early Buddhism is not known to the traditional students of Buddhism. Nor was it a category conceptualized during the premodern period. It came into vogue starting from the late nineteenth century when the Western scholars started studying Buddhism. As we know Pali texts started appearing in the West starting from the latter part of the nineteenth century[7] and the systematic introduction of Pali texts to the West was started with the establishment of Pali Text Society in 1880 by Rhys Davids who came to Sri Lanka, then Ceylon, as a junior member of the British Colonial administration, and studied Pali from Sri Lanka monks. Rhys Davids appears to be the first to use the concept of early Buddhism. As early as 1881 delivering Hibbert lecture series in America he announced the birth of Pali Text Society and said: "The sacred texts of the early Buddhists have preserved to us" (as quoted by Jaini in 2001, p.33). The Pali canon and early Buddhism were coextensive for these early scholars. Early Buddhism was to be found in the Pali canon.

The initial need to think in terms of early Buddhism may have been the perceived difference between what the Western visitors saw in the day-to-day practice of the lands where

[7] *Refer to de Jong's (1976) A Brief History of Buddhist Studies in Europe and America for a discussion on this matter.*

Buddhism was the traditional religion and what they found in the texts. Subsequently the use of the term was more refined to signify a distinction between the canonical discourses and the commentaries and sub-commentaries and other related texts which were considered later. Going beyond this classification, even a finer distinction was made within the Pali canon itself, some texts or some sections of the texts to have earlier and some to have later origins[8] thus limiting the concept of early Buddhism only to some sections of the texts or to some texts in the Pali canon. With Buddhist scholarship expanding to sources other than those in Pali, particularly to the translations of the agama literature found in classical Chinese sources, the concept of early Buddhism started having candidates other than the Pali canon.

To illustrate this shift in Buddhist scholarship we may refer to two distinguished Sri Lankan Buddhist scholars, both are now no more, K.N. Jayatilleke and D.J. Kalupahana. When Jayatilleke published his main study of Buddhist philosophy he named it 'Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge' without any further explanation. His primary source was the discourses in the Pali canon and only very sparsely he referred to commentaries[9]. Jayatilleke's book was published in 1963, and he did his studies in London in late 1940s and 1950s. Kalupahana, on the other hand, who did his studies in London in late 1960s studied classical Chinese and made use of that knowledge to refer to Chinese Agama translations to support his arguments. Thus for Kalupahana early Buddhism included not only Pali sources but also Classical Chinese sources. In his study of Nagarjuna Kalupahana refers to the Chinese translation of the Kaccayanagotta-sutta in order to establish the authenticity of the sutta in the Pali canon[10].

With these new developments, on the one hand, the concept of early Buddhism shrunk because it was understood not to refer to the entire Pali canon but only some parts of it, and, on the other hand, it became expanded to include the Chinese Agama literature and other

[8] Refer to G.C. Pandey's Studies in the Origins of Buddhism, Allahabad, 1957 for an exercise of this nature.

[9] Rune Johansson, psychologist turned Buddhist scholar who studied under K.N.Jayatilleke in 1960s at Peradeniya is even a better example for this method. His Psychology of Nibbana, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1969) does not refer to any of the commentaries, and based on only some selected texts of the Sutta-pitaka. His subsequent works too follow the same method.

[10] Refer to his Nagarjuna: The Philosophy of the Middle Way, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986). p.94. Note # 23.

sources considered as early.

The story of [the fate of] early Buddhism does not end here. The more recent development is regarding the very concept of early Buddhism. A representative of the scholars who have questioned the validity of the concept of early Buddhism is Steve Collins, one of the leading Buddhist scholars whose recent demise is a great loss to the field of Buddhist studies[11]. Collins identifies three periods in the history of Buddhism, namely, (i) early, pre-Asokan Buddhism, (ii) the 'long Middle Ages' from Asoka in the 3rd century BC till the period of modernization, and (iii) modernization. Describing the early pre-Asokan period Collins says:

> For the first period there is some archeological evidence from Northeast India in the mid-1st millennium BC, from which we may be able to draw conclusions about urbanization and state-formation as contexts for early Buddhism. But for early Buddhism itself we have only the evidence of texts, all of which are from a much later period. In my view any attempt at delineating what early Buddhism was, and still more 'What the Buddha Taught' are fantasies, wish-fulfilment exercises which select materials from the later evidence and project them back to the Buddha[12].

In this statement Colin's argument to support his view is that texts are from much later period. About the Buddhist canonical texts we have the evidence from the *Mahavamsa* which says that the word of the Buddha was committed to writing during the reign of Vaṭṭagamini Abhaya (29-17 BCE)[13]. But for critics like Collins this is textual evidence about textual evidence which was recorded in the *Mahavamsa* roughly about five centuries after the event. Since at least some of the Pali texts recorded in the 1st century BCE could date back to the parinirvana of the Buddha what the *Mahavamsa* recorded can be dated back to one thousand years. Furthermore, the palm-leaf manuscripts available for us today are hardly older than three hundred years[14]. So the argument is: how can we talk about two

---

[11] See Charles Hallisay (2018) "Exploring the Buddhist Middle Way from a Middle Ground: In Memoriam Steven Collins" in Sophia (2018: 57 # 2) pp. 203-206. for a discussion of his contribution to Buddhist studies and other academic fields.

[12] " 'Theravada Civilization(s)'? Periodizing its History", paper published along with "The Theravada Civilizations Project: Future directions for the study of Buddhism in Southeast Asia" by Juliane Chober and Steve Collins in Contemporary Buddhism: An Interdisciplinary Journal 13.1 (pp.157-166).

[13] Mahavamsa 33: 100-101.

[14] According to Richard Gombrich (2005) many of the palm-leaf manuscripts found in Myanmar and Sri Lanka have been copied in the 18th or 19th centuries. A considerable number of manuscripts in Thailand belong to the 16th century. The

thousand five hundred years of history based on evidence not older than three hundred years? The end result of this skepticism is that ultimately we are not in a position to say anything definitively about the teaching of the Buddha. As Collins would assert again in a more recent writing, 'we cannot have any historically certain, or even reliable, knowledge of what Buddhism was'[15]. Hence his allusion in the above-quoted passage to Walpola Rahula Thera's celebrated work, *What the Buddha Taught*, as betraying some kind of naïve sense of certainty on our knowledge of what the Buddha taught.

When Walpola Rahula Thera published his work in 1959 he would not have imagined that the title of his book would carry a sense of arrogance or that it would be understood as making an emphatic statement of *What the Buddha Taught*. He must have simply accepted the textual tradition that was preserved in this country for about two millennia and presented in his work what these texts consistently and coherently contained as what the Buddha taught. The question is: is the situation as bleak as Collins would have us to believe?

A leading scholar of Buddhism who has questioned this skepticism and relativism is Professor Richard Gombrich. His approach to this issue is twofold: one is by way of defending a method to understand the origin of the teaching of the Buddha and to interpret the Buddhist texts. And the other is a critique of the very liberal way of interpreting texts as 'anything goes'. The method he uses is historical method. His more recent work deals mainly with this method following which he wishes to establish that the early Buddhist texts present a coherent philosophy which must have been thought by one person. In *How Buddhism Began* (second edition 2006) Gombrich elaborates on the historical method according to which the context or the historical context is crucial in understanding the teachings of the Buddha, and applies this method to understand Buddhism. The sub-title of the book, *The conditional genesis of the early teachings*', amply clarifies this point. His subsequent work, *What the Buddha Thought* (Equinox, UK 2009), is a clear reference to Walpola Rahula Thera's work and meant to answer those who question the possibility of knowing what the Buddha taught. Gombrich believes that the historical approach provides

oldest manuscript so far available is one of four leaves found in Kathmandu, Nepal, dated to the 800 CE. which may have been copied from a North Indian original several centuries back. Two Indian inscriptions containing several lines of canonical text have been dated to the 5th century CE or close to it. These lines are in a Middle Indo-Aryan dialect very close to Pali.

[15] *Collins (2013) [page 4, not numbered]*

a way to understand the basic teachings of the Buddha as 'dependently arisen', or as responses to the main teachings of the Upanisadic traditions and other Indian traditions, in particular, the teachings of *Brahadaranyaka-Upanisad* (p.31).

In responding to the interpretational relativism which holds that a text is open for any number of interpretations Gombrich says:

> That extreme form of relativism which claims that one reading of a text, for instance of a historical document, is as valid as another, I regard as such a contraction of knowledge. I wish to take the Buddha's middle way between two extremes. One extreme is the deadly oversimplification which is inevitable for beginners but out of place in a university, the over-simplification which says that 'the Buddha taught X' or 'Mahayanists believe Y', without further qualification. The other extreme is deconstruction fashionable among social scientists who refuse all generalization, ignore the possibilities of extrapolation, and usually leave us unenlightened (*How Buddhism Began*).

Against this form of relativism in interpretation Gombrich proposes that there must be one right way to understand what the Buddha thought and taught.

In responding to the skepticism amounting to rejecting any knowledge of Buddhism Gombrich has to say the following:

> It [*What the Buddha Thought*] argues that we can know far more about the Buddha than it is fashionable among scholars to admit, and that his thought has a greater coherence than is usually recognized. …Incidentally, since many of the Buddha's allusions can be traced in the Pali versions of surviving texts, the book establishes the importance of the Pali canon as evidence. (Preface)

Gombrich's research aims to establish that the system of thought found in the Pali canon is systematic and coherent, and hence it must have been thought out by one mind, and that should be the Buddha. It is not my purpose here to reproduce Gombrich's arguments. My purpose here is to highlight the on-going academic debate on early Buddhism and the Pali canon. The type of skepticism held by scholars such as Collins is based on questioning the authenticity of the Pali canon. But what this skepticism fails to explain is the existence of the Pali canon and its continuation through history. Is it a result of some kind of conspiracy on the part of the Buddhist monks in India or in Sri Lanka? There is no doubt that the texts

originated at some point of time. But how did that happen? Did the texts come out of nowhere? What was the basis for these texts? Theravada has an answer for this question. But although it may not explain how all texts came into existence, at least this story tells us how the main set of texts came into being. If the basic dhamma and Vinaya were collected at the first council we can understand how Abhidhamma developed based on the Dhamma and how 'abhivinaya' (although it is not called so), namely *Parivara-pali*, came into existence based on the *Ubhato vibhaṅga* and *Khandhaka*. If we do not accept this traditional story the other possibility would be to attribute some mischievous plan to the early groups of monks to hoodwink the posterity to believe that there was a person called Buddha who taught these ideas.

Particularly we cannot ignore the practical aspect of the teaching, generations of people practicing the path and claiming to get results. This practical element is something unique to the Pali canon. Although what is preserved in classical Chinese belongs to early schools, these texts were translated into Chinese motivated mainly by the desire to know what the Indian and hence early tradition was. The content may have been incorporated to some extent into the subsequent Chinese religious life. But in most of the cases, these texts have remained as library collections playing virtually no role in actual religious life of the people who preserved them. Theravada Pali canon is different. It has an unbroken history of two millennia of continued practice at varying intensities for meditation, teaching, listening, memorizing etc.

To believe the tradition without critical inquiry is equally wrong as to reject it totally. I do not think that anyone should believe the story told in the accounts of the 1st sangayana that the entire three pitakas were recited at the first council. Historically it is a loss for the students of Buddhism to not to have the names of those who were responsible for compiling the canonical texts. With a text like Anguttara-nikaya which is clearly a result of great a compilation effort, it is ridiculous to think that the Buddha taught his disciples the collections of ones, twos etc. Abhidhamma texts with their detailed, precise and intricate analyses might have taken years to develop among different groups of teachers and pupils. In the over enthusiasm of the Theravada to make the entire Abhidhamma the word of the Buddha – buddha-vacana- we have been deprived of the knowledge of a great analytical tradition of monastic scholars.

The problem is not that the modern scholarship analyses the literary formation and the content of the Pali canon which is early phase of Buddhism. The real problem is when critical scholarship goes beyond the boundaries of constructive scholarship and tend to be dismissive and nihilist. Before dismissing the Pali canon on the basis of the relative recentness of the palm-leaf manuscripts, one has to explain how those manuscripts came into being. If they have been copied from earlier ones where did those earlier ones come from? Finally, either we have to go to the early beginnings of the texts right from the parinirvana of the Buddha or we have to accept a conspiracy theory. The interesting and intriguing story of Purana Thera in the Cullavagga account of the first council clearly points to the possibility of the existence of 'versions' of the word of the Buddha already during the life time of the Buddha. Evidence of this nature recorded in the Theravada history, notwithstanding that it is potentially harmful to Theravada, cannot be ignored easily. Therefore any effort to Dissolve the very idea of early Buddhism is to take away the heart of Theravada Buddhist studies. The task of the Theravada Buddhist scholar is not to grasp the traditional view tenaciously but to subject it to logical scrutiny with an overall constructive attitude to the system.

Theravada and Pali Language

The other two aspects that have come under scrutiny of the modern Buddhist scholars are Theravada and Pali language. The recent academic discussions and debates on These two issues have been mainly on two matters: one is on Theravada and Pali as proper names: when were Theravada and Pali called Theravada and Pali and by whom? The second matter with regard to Pali is its historicity: is it the language spoken by the Buddha? Is the present Pali canon a 'translation' from an original canon existed in even earlier more ancient dialect? For Theravada, the issue has been whether or not there is any identifiable phenomenon called Theravada? The general flavour of these discussions is characterized by skepticism and hence leading to dismissal of the validity of these concepts.

On the word 'pali' to refer to Pali language, there has been much scholarly discussion recently. As all scholars agree, initially 'pali' is not a term denoting a language. In the commentaries it was used to refer to specifically the word of the Buddha. The language attributed to the Buddha in the commentaries is Magadha. The belief is that the Buddha

spoke in Magadha dialect. In the Buddhist world today no one uses 'magadha' to refer to the canonical language. This has been replaced by 'pali'. The question is when did this happen and who is responsible for it. The view proposed by such scholars as K.R. Norman and Oskar von Hinuber is that the Europeans started this usage and it was followed by the Theravadins, making it another instance of the European influence on the Buddhist studies. Von Hinuber refers to *Sangharājasādhucariyāva* written in Sri Lanka in 1779 as the earliest instance of using 'pali' as a language name. He also refers to a report written in 1672 by Charles Angot who mentions that a French missionary named M. Laneau in Thailand studied this language[16]. According to these scholars initially this was a misunderstanding which later became established.

I do not need to go into this debate which is now becoming a thing of the past. Kate Crosby (2004) in her paper (which is based on her doctoral research) "The Origin of Pali as a Language Name in Medieval Theravada Literature[17]" reviews the history of the whole debate among the European scholars on this matter and provides conclusive evidence to establish Pali as a language name is not a result of misunderstanding on the part of Europeans, but it was a natural development among the Theravada scholars, who used this word which initially referred to the word of the Buddha, to refer to the language of the word of the Buddha. She cites *khuddsikkhā Abhinavatīka* of Sangharakkhita Thera who was a pupil of Sariputta Thera of the Polonnaruva period as the earliest clear reference to Pali as a language although she points out to an even earlier instance of Dhammapala using it in his sub-commentary to Buddhaghosa's *Sumangalavilasini*.

The scholarly debate on the name of Pali language appears to be over. But the significance of this debate in the present context is how scholarly debates in the Theravada studies are formed and how the things should not be taken for granted which is an undesirable characteristic of Theravada studies in the traditional Theravada settings.

A similar scholarly discussion is taking place on the term Theravada: when was this term

[16] Crosby (2004).
[17] *Journal of the Centre for Buddhist Studies Sri Lanka*, vol.II 2004. Pp.70-116.

used to refer to the Theravada tradition as a whole[18]? Collins traces the recent history of the term:

The modern use of the term seems to derive originally from the British civil servant George Turnour in Sri Lanka in 1836; the first use of the phrase 'Theravada Buddhism' seems to have been by the Thai Prince Chudadharn at the Chicago World's Parliament of Religions in 1893 (though it was not used there by the much more influential speaker Anagarika Dharmapala), and by the western monk Ananda Maithreya (Allen Bennet) in an article in the *Bulletin de l'Ecole frainciase d'extreme-orient* in 1907 (he wrote of *'le pur Bouddhisme de l'ecole Theravada'*). The single most important factor in establishing the world's current usage was the decision by the World Fellowship of Buddhists to use the term (as opposed to others such as *Hinayana* or *Southern Buddhism*) taken at a meeting in 1950[19].

In this view, the term was first used by George Turnour who was a British civil servant in Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) in 1836. This is just after two decades from the British take-over of the country. Now, did Turnour invent this term on his own which is most unlikely. Where did he get it? Isn't it more reasonable to think that he got it from an already existing tradition? Collins refers to Anagarika Dharmapala at Chicago and his non-use of the term. As I have highlighted elsewhere[20] Dharmapala had a global vision of Buddhism (which Kemper 2015 calls 'universalism') following which he represented not Theravada or Sri Lanka but all Buddhists all over the world. He started his inaugural speech at Chicago by saying that he brought good wishes of more four hundred million Buddhists all over the world. Whatever that may be, what is more important to me in this debate, as I will discuss again shortly, is the reductionism which deprives Theravada of any definitive content or continuity.

The term, as all know, occurs in the discourses such as the Ariyapariyesana-sutta (Majjhima-nikaya 22) clearly not in this later sense. But its presence even in a different sense makes its later metamorphosis more understandable for the later users did not have to invent a new

[18] Todd LeRoy Pereira in his chapter (in Skilling 2012 pp. 443-571) on "Whence Theravada? The modern genealogy of an Ancient term" discusses in detail the early 20th century developments that led to the replacement of 'hinayana' by 'theravada'.
[19] Collins 2013 p.2 (not numbered).
[20] Tilakaratne 2015.

term. But when did the tradition started using it to refer to itself is a question? In the first sangayana the term used to refer to the event was 'theriya' (belonging to *thera*s). In the subsequent commentarial literature the term is used to refer to the literal meaning of the term, the view or the standpoint of the elders. In the Samantapasadika introduction Buddhaghosa uses this term in this sense when he said:
tathāpi antogadhatheravādaṁ – saṁvaṇṇanā samma samārabhissaṁ[21].

In a discussion of Theravada tradition and its identity (in the second IATBU conference keynote speech) Professor Oliver Abenayaka identifies three meanings of the term Theravada. One is the early canonical use of the term in the discourses such the Ariyapariyesana-sutta where it means certainty. The second is the commentarial use of the term to refer to the views of individual Theravada elders. A representative instance of this use is Buddhaghos'a four criteria (apadesa), namely, *sutta, suttānuloma, ācariyavāda* and *attano-mati*. The first three respectively mean the discourses of the Buddha, what is in accord with the discourses, and commentaries. And the fourth is the views of individual elders (one's own view) which is named Theravada (views of the elders). In the degree of authority, Buddhaghosa maintains, Theravada occupies the lowest position.

Moving on to the third meaning of the term Abenayaka refers to several instances in the commentaries, sub-commentaries and Dipavamsa which he interprets as examples of this particular use: Let me quote this passage completely:

> The third meaning is employed in the commentaries, chronicles and the sub-commentaries. The Samantapasadika states that the Arahant Mahinda learned all the commentaries with Theravada from the Arahant Moggaliputta Tissa. The Venerable Buddhaghosa informs us that he compiled the Samantapasadika inclusive of the Theravada. The Dipvamsa records that the collections of the First Council are called Theravada, since they were carried out by the Elders. The Dipavamsa further informs that the Arahant Moggaliputta Tissa taught the complete Theravada and the entire Vinaya-pitaka to the arahant Mahinda. The Mahavamsa too recounts that the First Council is called Theriya since it was done by the Elders. According to the Mahavamsa, the Venerable Buddhaghosa studied both Theravada and commentaries

[21] *Samantapasadika* I p.2.

> at the Mahavihara in Anuradhapura. While elaborating the phrase *sāṭṭhakathaṁ sabbaṁ theravadaṁ* in the Samantapasadika, the Saratthadipani, the sub-commentary on the Vinaya, clarifies that it means the Pali canon inclusive of the commentaries that was determined in the first two councils[22].

Of the evidence provided by Abenayaka, except for the Dipavamsa and the Saratthadipani, the occurrence of the term Theravada in the rest cannot be interpreted as exclusively referring to the entire Buddhist literature including the Pali canon. 'Theravada' in such contexts could well be the views of the respected elders in the tradition as Buddhaghosa would usually maintain. However, two examples from the Dipavamsa and the Saratthadipani seem to support better Abenayaka's interpretation. The question, however, is: while relegating 'theravada' to 'one's own view -*attano-mati* – which is the lowest in the degree of authority, how is it possible that the same tradition opts to go by that name? One possible way to explain this would be to make a distinction between the doctrinal tradition of Buddhaghosa and the historical tradition represented by the Dipavamsa. When Buddhaghosa interpreted 'theravada' as referring to *attano-mati* he was viewing the phenomenon from a point of view of the Dhamma. The Dipavamsa, and subsequently the Saratthadipani following the Dipavamsa, may have referred to a historical tradition in which Theravada was acquiring a broader definition which subsequently got established as the name of the entire tradition.

According to Rupert Gethin who made a minute study of the instances of the occurrence of this term in the commentaries Buddhaghosa does not use the term to refer to the organization or the doctrine as a whole[23]. Nor does Buddhaghosa identify himself with a tradition called Theravada for the most obvious reason that such an institution called Theravada did not exist for him. As I have shown in an earlier discussion[24], notwithstanding our trust in Gethin in this matter, what is more important is whether or not Buddhaghosa identified himself with the interpretive tradition he is adhering to. On this matter there cannot be a doubt. In

[22] "The Theravada Tradition: Its Identity" (2009) in *The Journal of The Association of Theravada Buddhist Universities*, ed. Ven. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami. Vol 1- 2009/2552. p.4.
[23] "Was Buddhaghosa a Theravadin?" in Peter Skilling and others (2012), How Theravada is Theravada? Exploring Buddhist identities (Thailand: Silkworm Books).
[24] "Theravada Tradition: An Outline of its History, Doctrines and Practice", a paper presented at the conference on Buddhist Teresian Mysticism at Avila, Spain in 2017.

his commentaries Buddhaghosa makes frequent references to the tradition of the Mahavihara which he was following and he pays glowing tribute to that tradition[25]. We cannot easily reject the story of the origin of the Visuddhimagga: Buddhaghosa was required to write a text incorporating the entire Mahavihara way of interpretation. Buddhaghosa considered his work as central to all the other commentaries[26]. This shows that there was a textual and interpretive tradition which was very much settled even to the extent that the commentators of the caliber of Buddhaghosa came to Sri Lanka to study and translate it for the sake of the 'international community of the bhikkhus' (*dīpantare bhikkhujanassa*[27]). It is this same tradition that was transmitted to the Southeast Asia in the 11th century (CE) and got established and developed further in that region.

Another historical example of the existence of a homogeneous Dhamma and Vinaya tradition in the Theravada world is the phenomenon of 'purification of the sangha' executed by the kings with the support of the Sangha. The first of its kind was done, according to the Theravada history, by King Asoka in India in the 3rd century BCE. Subsequently such acts were done, based on the Theravada Vinaya tradition, by kings in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia which received the Sri Lanka tradition. Maha Parakramabahu in the 12th century in Polonnaruva did one such purification with far-reaching effects. Subsequently the practice was followed by many rulers in Southeast Asia, in particular, in Myanmar. These acts of purification of the Sangha presuppose the existence of a well settled tradition of the Dhamma and the Vinaya which cannot be taken as just created abruptly by Asoka in India or Parakramabahu in Sri Lanka and the associated monks for the particular purpose exclusively.

The conclusion is, there is no doubt that there was a well-articulated and well-defined system in the Theravada world. Whether it was called Theravada or '*Mahāvihāra-vāda*' becomes less important from that point of view. Furthermore, why the tradition was not called by a specific name has something to do with the location of Sri Lanka as an island

[25] Refer to the introduction and the concluding remarks of the Visuddhimagga.
[26] Refer to the introductory stanzas of the commentaries of all the four nikayas.
[27] *Saṁvaṇṇanā sīhaladīpakena – vākyena esā pana saṅkhatattā*
na kiñci atthaṁ abhisambhunāti – dipantare bhikkhujanassa yasmā: *Samantapasadika Vinayaṭṭhakathā* I p.2.

without any rival (Mahayana or Vajrayana) Buddhist schools[28]. There was not any particular need for the Sri Lanka Theravadins or the Theravadins in the Southeast Asia to assert themselves Theravadins for naming requires differentiation[29].

Theravada Tradition

This discussion of 'theravada' (Theravada as a term) has automatically led us to a discussion on Theravada as a tradition. As we just saw, whether it was called Theravada or not, that there was a well-articulated systematic set of teachings and canonical and non-canonical literature containing such teachings from the beginning we cannot deny. In its present usage Theravada refers to an organization comprising men and women, both monastic and household, spread around the world, with innumerable branch organizations and institutions. In addition to this larger organizational aspect Theravada refers to the following four inter-related phenomena: a set of teachings that constitute the philosophical core of Theravada, a corpus of literature that contain these teachings, a tradition of interpretation of those teachings, and a form (or forms of) practice based on or even not based on such teachings. In this last category I would include, in addition to the very important and presently wide-spread practices of Theravada meditation, sociological, anthropological and cultural behaviours and practices of different Theravada groups.

What I see as problematic is sometimes Theravada is presented without making adequate distinction between the different aspects of it. In particular, there is a tendency to present as Theravada whatever that is found in Theravada societies. This may be true from sociological or anthropological points of view. But it is important to be clear about the limits. At times this way of presenting Theravada is supported by anti-essentialist argument, namely, to maintain that there is something fixed called Theravada is to assume some sort of essentialism which is to be avoided. No doubt, anti-essentialism is closer to Buddhism, particularly in its understanding of reality including human being as non-substantial. Both the no-soul view and no-God view are rooted on Buddhist anti-essentialism is well known. However, if this position is driven to its extreme it become self-defeating because there will

[28] This does not mean to deny that some elements of these two traditions were present in the country. How Abhayagiriya was open to the Mahayana and Vajrayana texts and teachers is well known. But Abhayagiriya was not Mahayana as sometimes believed.

[29] Anyhow it would be important for modern Theravada scholars to inquire as to how the pre-modern Sangha in Sri Lanka or in the Theravada world called themselves if they had to use a name at all.

not be a room to talk about something called Theravada Buddhism or the teaching of the Buddha in the absence of which chaos becomes inevitable. What Richard Gombrich says in a slightly different context may be relevant here:

Those Buddhist traditions, which have lasted for over two and a half millennia and extended over a vast geographical area, are so diverse that some scholars scoff at the very notion that one can talk about 'Buddhism', and insist on using the word in scare quotes, if it has to be used at all. I disagree. Granted, Buddhism itself, as a human phenomenon, is subject to the Buddha's dictum that 'All compounded things are impermanent'. It would be astonishing if over such a long time, as it moved to different regions and cultures, it had not undergone vast changes; the same has happened to every human tradition. But the historian should be able to trace every branch of the tradition back to another branch, until we arrive at the trunk and root, the Buddha himself[30].

Gombrich uses the metaphor of going from branches to the trunk of the tree. This is equally applicable to Theravada. While it is possible to talk about different forms of Theravada, the very possibility of being able to talk about Theravada assumes that there is some basic thing called Theravada. If Theravada does not have a core, particularly when it comes to its soteriology, Theravada loses its purpose, will be ineffective, and consequently no longer will be Theravada. Hence Theravada needs to be rescued from this self-defeating relativism.

Pali Language

Apart from the debates about 'pali' as a name for a language (which we discussed above), there is a wider debate about the status of Pali language. This debate is centered around the traditional notion of Theravadins that Pali is the language spoken by the Buddha. The Theravada notion of Pali which initially was called Magadhi is characterized in the later Pali literature[31] in the following stanza:

Sā māgadhī mūlabhāsā – narā yāyādikappikā
Brahmāno cassutālāpā – sambuddhā cāpi bhāsare

(This Magadhi is the root language; it is the language which the human beings at the

[30] Gombrich (2009) pp. 1-2.

[31] *Digha-nikaya Abhinava-tika* introductory verses (Chaṭṭha-sangayana CD Rom). Also found in the *Payogasiddhi* introductory verses.

beginning of the aeon, Brahmas, those who have not heard any speech, and the Fully Enlightened Ones would speak.)

There is no evidence to show that this traditional belief was ever questioned by the Theravada tradition although there are indications in this very statement that it was, most probably, proposed by the Theravadins to counter the Brahmanic view that theirs was the language of gods (*daivī vāg*). Therefore, the contemporary Theravada tradition has to be appreciative of the recent scholarship, largely Western, for initiating critical studies of these beliefs. The point, however, is to have a realistic assessment as to what should be retained and what should be removed from the set of traditional beliefs.

Geiger, one of the early scholars of Pali, holds a view closer to the traditional Theravada view. He says:

> I consider it wiser not to hastily reject the tradition altogether but rather to understand it to mean that Pali was indeed no pure Magadhi, but was yet a form of the popular speech which was based on Magadhi and which was used by Buddha himself. It would appear therefore that the Pali canon represents an effect to reflect the *Buddhavacanam* in its original form[32].
>
> More recently writing an essay on Pali language to the Pali Text Society edition of Geiger's *A Pali Grammar* Richard Gombrich provides three inter-connected responses to the question 'what is Pali?
>
> Pali is the language of the earliest Buddhist scripture as preserved in one (conservative, but not static) Buddhist tradition (p. xxiii).
>
> Pali is the form of Prakrit (or Middle Indo-Aryan, which is the same thing) used in first writing down the Theravada Buddhist Canon, an event took place in Sri Lanka in the 1st century B.C. (p. xxviii).
>
> Pali has undergone changes and development over the centuries: least in morphology (grammatic inflection) but quite noticeably in phenetics, syntax, style and vocabulary. As von Hinuber has put it, Pali is not so much a "dead" language as an artificial language that has been repeatedly reshaped. (p. xxx).

What the scholars such as Gombrich wish to allow Pali to be is that it is not the language the Buddha spoke but one related to it and very close to it. This scholarly understanding is

[32] *Pali Literature and Language* (original German edition 1916) Tr. Batakrishna Ghosh. 1943/1976.

a result of studying the different stages and different genres of Pali literature including the Pali canon. In particular, scholars have observed various mixed linguistic characteristics in the canonical language. If we understand the Buddha's refusal to translate his word into Sanskrit ("chandas") and subsequent approval of learning the Dhamma in the disciples' own language (*saka nirutti*) it is understandable how the word of the Buddha might have got mixed characteristics. In this manner it is quite possible that disciples memorized the word of Buddha with slight variations in word order, vocabulary etc. Buddhaghosa's commentaries testify to the existence of variant readings[33]. These may have been continued from early periods or found their way into the texts even after they were written down. If we accept that the entire Dhamma was not rehearsed at the first or even at the second sangayana, which means that the Pali canon gradually was compiled by later disciples, then the present Tripitaka might not be the exact word of the Buddha, though undoubtedly, it is the closest we can get. This could be so even if what we have today is what was written down in the first century BCE in Sri Lanka because writing down itself is not a guarantee that there would not have changes, omissions or inadvertent commissions in the process of continued copying.

One could argue for a 'pure' Pali canon deriving support from Buddhaghosa's interpretation of 'saka-nirutti' as meaning the Magadha dialect used by the Buddha. Geiger too accepts the Buddhaghosa's interpretation on the ground that the Buddha who did not approve translating his word to Sanskrit would not allow translating it into any other dialect[34]. Although this is not the proper context to go into this interpretational matter, the possibility of a canon comprising the exact word of the Buddha clearly goes against all historical evidence. Even if we were to accept that that the disciples studied the Dhamma in the Buddha's own dialect It does not explain the presence of mix characteristics in the canonical language including non-Magadha uses. What is needed at the present stage is to study the issue non-dogmatically. There is no doubt that Pali language has undergone changes. For instance, Geiger outlines four stages of its evolution, namely, Pali in the *gatha*s, canonical Pali, Pali in the post-canonical literature and Pali in the later artificial poetry[35]. For the disciples of a tradition which rejected the Vedic conception of sacred language it is nothing

[33] Refer to Gombrich (2005)
[34] Geiger (1943/1978) p.7.
[35] Geiger (1943/1978) *Pali Literature and Language*.

but natural that they were more concerned about the meaning of what the Buddha said than its wording itself. Presently, however, the Theravada tradition is guided by the Buddhaghosian tradition of attributing sacredness to the Pali language[36]. Although here we are dealing with a sentiment of a long-held tradition, academically, at least, it is not correct to interpret the early with the late.

Concluding Remarks

Early Buddhism, Theravada and Pali are three key terms in the Theravada studies. All three are related and connected to one another. Jeopardization of one is to jeopardize all three. As the present review shows, on the one hand, there is a growing skepticism and relativism in the field to the extent of denying any definitive content for the key concepts we discussed. On the other hand, we have the traditional scholarship, mostly but not exclusively, characterized by the unequivocal approval of the tradition lock stock and barrel. Both attitudes to be given up as extremes.

The message of this study is not that Theravada scholars should wage war against the critical scholarship pertaining to the three concepts discussed above. What needs to be done is to employ the techniques of the same critical scholarship to counter the relativism and skepticism that have developed in the field to the point of self-destruction. It should be the responsibility of the higher learning centers of Pali and Buddhist studies in Sri Lanka as well as the world over to orient their studies and research to face this challenge successfully.

References

(All references of Pali works are to Pali Text Society editions.)

Abenayaka, Oliver. (2009) "The Theravada Tradition: Its Identity" in *The Journal of the International Association of Theravada Buddhist Universities*. Ed. Ven. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami. Vol.1. Mahamakut Buddhist University. (2009/2552).

Collins, Steven. (2013) "Theravada Civilizations? Periodizing its History". Accessed on-line through *Contemporary Buddhism: An Interdisciplinary Journal*. 13.1 Routeledge, on 27.07.2018.

Collins, Steven. (1998) *Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities: utopias in the Pali imaginaire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[36] See Asanga Tilakaratne (1993) for a discussion on this matter.

Crosby, Kate. (2004) "The Origin of Pali as a language Name in Medieval Theravada Literature" in *Journal of the Centre for Buddhist Studies in Sri Lanka*, vol. II 2004.

De Jong, J.W. (1976) *A Brief History of Buddhist Studies in Europe and America*. New Delhi: Bharat Bharati.

Geiger, Wilhelm. (1943/1978: German original in 1916) *Pali Literature and Language*, tr. Batakrishna Ghosh, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers (Pvt) Ltd.

Geiger, Wilhelm. (2005) *A Pali Grammar*. Ed. K.R. Norman. Oxford: Pali Text Society.

Gethin, Rupert. (2012) "Was Buddhaghosa a Theravadin? Buddhist Identity in the Pali Commentaries and Chrocicles" in *How Theravada is Theravada?: Exploring Buddhist Identities*. Ed. Peter Skilling, Jason Carbine, Claudio Cicuzza and Santi Pakdeekham. Chaing Mai: Silkworm Press, 2012.

Gombrich, Richard. (2005) "What is Pali?" in *A Pali Grammar*. Ed. K.R. Norman. Oxford: Pali Text Society.

Gombrich, Richard. (2006 second edition) *How Buddhism Began: The Conditional Genesis of the Early Teachings*. UK: Routeledge.

Gombrich, Richard. (2009) *What the Buddha Thought*. UK: Equinox.

Hallisay, Charles. "exploring the Buddhist Middle Way from a Middle Ground: In Memoriam of Steven Collins" in Sophia 2018 vol. 57 # 2.

Jaini, Padmanabh S. (2001) *Collected Papers on Buddhist Studies*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited.

Johansson, Rune. (1969) *Psychology of Nirvana*. London: George Allen and Unwin.

Kalupahana, D.J. (1986) *Nagarjuna: The Philosophy of the Middle Way*. Albany (NY): State University of New York Press.

Kemper, Steven (2015) *Rescued from the Nation: Anagarika Dharmpala and the Buddhist World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Norman, K.R. (1983) *Pali Literature*, Weisbaden.

Pande, G.C. (1976 3rd reprint) *Studies in the Origins of Buddhism*. Allahabad: New Delhi: Indian Press.

Pereira, Todd LeRoy. (2012) "Whence Theravada? The modern genealogy of an ancient term" in Peter Skilling *et al* (2012)

Skilling, Peter. Jason Carbine, Claudio Cicuzza and Santi Pakdeekham (Ed) (2012) *How Theravada is Theravada?: Exploring Buddhist Identities*. Chaing Mai: Silkworm Press, 2012.

Tilakaratne, Asanga. (1993) "The Development of Sacred Language in the Buddhist Tradition" in *Premier Colloque Etienne Lamotte*. Brusselles.

Tilakaratne, Asanga. (2000) "Sangiti and Samaggi: Communal Recitation and the Unity of the Sangha" in *Buddhist Studies Review* vol. 17 No.2, 2000.

Tilakaratne, Asanga. (2012) *Theravada: the View of the Elders*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Tilakaratne, Asanga (2015) "Anagarika Dharmapala and his Vision of a Global Buddhism" in *Anagarika Dharmapala and India-Sri Lanka Relations: 150th Birth Anniversary Commemorative volume*, ed. Sandagomi Coperahewa, Centre for Contemporary Indian Studies (CCIS), University of Colombo, 2015. pp.60 – 78.

Tilakaratne, Asanga. (2017) "Theravada Tradition: An Outline of its History, Doctrines and Practice". Presented at the conference on 'First World Encounter Teresian Mysticism and Inter-religious Dialogue: Theravada Buddhism and Teresian Mysticism' at Universidad Dela La Mistica, Avila, Spain, July 27-29, 2017.