

A CRITICAL INVESTIGATION OF PĀLI SUB-COMMENTARIES IN UPPER MYANMAR: FROM 12th TO 15th CENTURY C.E.

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This paper, through critical and historical approach, focuses on the *pāli* sub-commentaries which flourished in Upper Myanmar from 12th to 15th century C.E. The reason to reconstruct them is the controversial statements of previous scholars as to the period when the first sub-commentary was written and the lists how many texts were therein. Like other Theravada countries in South and South-east Asia, Myanmar, especially Upper Myanmar plays a significant role in the *Pāli* sub-commentarial literature. The respective contributions of Myanmar Buddhist scholars consist of various works such as commentary (*Aṭṭhakathā*) sub-commentary (*Ṭīkā*), and sub-sub-commentary (*Abhinava-Ṭīkā*) and so forth. The long tradition of *Pāli* sub-commentarial works have flourished in Upper Myanmar since 12th century C.E during the Bagan Dynasty. From that period onward, Myanmar scholars have been contributing many sub-commentaries on canonical and non-canonical commentaries. Of them, Saṃpyiṅ, Saddhammajotipāla, Caturaṅgabala, Nāgita and Ariyavaṃsa were pre-eminent sub-commentators. The *Pāli* scholarly works in Upper Myanmar could be traced from different accounts in the Burmese and *Pāli* chronicles in Myanmar. In this regard, Pagan inscription and *Ganthavaṃsa*, the history of the Books, have recorded the names of sub-commentaries. Modern scholastic surveys are not much focused on such works due to lack of proper information of the original sources, *Pāli* sub-commentaries. But a few works are controversial, for instance either the first *ṭīkā* was the *Kārikā ṭīkā* or the *Nyāsappadīpikā* well-known as Saṃpyiṅ *ṭīkā*. Consequently, for foreign researchers, the studies on the subject are still being hampered. *Pāli* sub-commentaries printed in Burmese editions and their related chronicles will become the primary sources for the present work, some Burmese inscriptions and palm-leaf manuscripts will also be used. For secondary sources, this research will use the related works contributed by modern Buddhist scholars in the subject area. The aim of this paper is to clarify some points requiring elucidation about the sub-commentaries. It will be a supplement of ‘*Pāli Literature of Burma*’ by Mabel Haynes Bode for the *Pāli* sub-commentarial literature of Upper Myanmar during the period. To reach the aim, new findings of this paper will remark on the *Pāli* sub-commentaries as a critical investigation.

Keywords: Pāli Sub-commentary, Upper Myanmar, Nyāsappadīpikā