



The Grammatical Interpretations in the *Udāna Aṭṭhakathā* by Ācariya Dhammapāla: A Critical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Abstract: This research aims to explore the grammatical interpretations found in the *Udāna Aṭṭhakathā*, a commentary attributed to Ācariya Dhammapāla. The *Udāna Aṭṭhakathā* represents a significant work within Theravāda Buddhism. Ācariya Dhammapāla, following the Mahāvihāra tradition, wrote the commentary on *Udāna*, by giving more information and elucidation of words with grammatical interpretation. Through this library research, this research investigates the methodology utilized by Ācariya Dhammapāla in his commentaries. It highlights his method to follow the traditional grammatical rules while providing an interpretation of the canonical texts. The study draws upon primary and secondary sources to investigate Ācariya Dhammapāla's approach to grammatical interpretation. Pāli literature including canon and commentaries are considered as the primary sources. While, secondary sources represented by books, journals, articles and previous research related to the topic. As results, this research provides deep understanding on the Ācariya Dhammapāla's commentary, his methodology in writing the commentary and the grammatical interpretations in his commentary.

Keywords: *udāna, commentary, dhammapāla, interpretation*

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INTRODUCTION

The Buddha's teachings are preserved in Pāli Canon or Tipiṭaka, consisting *Vinaya Piṭaka*, *Sutta Piṭaka* and *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. Tipiṭaka contains the original teachings taught by the Buddha and his leading disciples. The collections of rules for monks and nuns are included in the *Vinaya Piṭaka*. The collections of the Buddha's discourses are included in the *Sutta Piṭaka*. The collections of higher teachings are included in the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. Lately, the contents of Tipiṭaka have been further examined and interpreted by commentators in order to give more explanations and to make clear the difficult words found in the Tipiṭaka. The commentary of canonical texts is called *Aṭṭhakathā* in Pāli.

Aṭṭhakathā literary means 'the exposition of the sense.' The term '*Aṭṭhakathā*' is composed by the combination of '*aṭṭha*' and '*kathā*'. '*Aṭṭha*' means 'meaning' or 'sense' and '*kathā*' means 'talk,' 'discussion' or 'exposition.' *Dīghaṭṭhakathā-ṭīkā*, explains the word *Aṭṭhakathā* as '*attho kathāyati etāyāti atthakathā, sā eva aṭṭhakathā, ttha-kārassa ttha-kāraṃ katvā ...*' (DAṬ. I. 19). Toshiichi Endo suggests this translation 'The meaning is spoken by [means of] that is '*aṭṭhakathā*'; '*atthakathā*' is also [spelt] '*aṭṭhakathā*' when '*ttha-*' is made into '*ttha*' (Endo, Toshiichi. 2013: 3). Therefore, the whole term of *Aṭṭhakathā* means



exposition of meanings. Its function is to give more detail information which are not available in the canon. It elucidates the words and phrases that are difficult to understand. It is proved by its prologue with the phrase ‘*atthapakāsanattham*’ (for the elucidation the meaning) (DA. I. 1). It also elucidates the difficult words grammatically and lexically. In other word, *Aṭṭhakathā* clarify some obscure points (*anuttānapadavaṇṇanā*) found in the Tipiṭaka (Gamage, 2000: 603).

There are some commentators who have done great contribution to the Theravada commentarial literature such as Ācariya Buddhaghosa Thero, Ācariya Buddhadatta Thero, Ven Dhammapāla Thero, Ācariya Upasena Thero and Ācariya Mahānāma Thero. Ācariya Buddhaghosa Thero was the oldest commentator who have composed many commentaries in 5th century B.C. Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero was the most important commentator after Ācariya Buddhaghosa Thero. Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero is traditionally believed to be the authors of the commentaries to the seven books of *Khuddhaka Nikāya*. *Udāna-aṭṭhakathā* is one of those seven books composed by him. It provides more information and elucidates the difficult words grammatically and lexically. Following the traditional Pāli grammar, Ācariya Dhammapāla Thera gives grammatical interpretations. This paper will analyze the grammatical interpretations in the *Udāna Aṭṭhakathā* done by Ācariya Dhammapāla Thera.

METHODS

This research is qualitative research with library approach. The method employed in this research is library research, which is understood as a series of activities relating to methods of collecting data, reading, taking notes and processing research materials (Zed, 2003: 3). By this method, the researcher collects the information relevant to the topic as much as possible from the library or literature. The sources must be relevant and academically justifiable in term of their validity and authenticity as scholarly sources such as books, journals, magazines, monographs, research reports, encyclopedias and other credible sources from online (Zaluchu: 2021: 255). Based on this theory, this research was carried out by collecting data both from primary data in the form of Pāli literature and from secondary data in the form of books, journals, articles and previous research that were considered related to the research topic.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero and His Works

Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero is the second greatest commentator next to Ācariya Buddhaghosa Thero (Endo, 2013: 209). He is a celebrated author, generally referred to as Ācariya (Malalasekera, 2003: 1145). *Sāsanavaṃsa* records that he lived at Badaratittha, in the country of Tamil, near to Sri Lanka (Sāsv. 37). He himself in all of his works mentioned that he was the resident monk of Badaratittha (UdA. 436). G.P. Malalasekera identified Badaratittha as South India (Malalasekera, 2003: 1146) and probably he was Tamil by birth (Malalasekera, 2014: 93). K. Arunasiri said that it is on the south east coast of India, south of Madras (Chennai) (Malalasekera, 2011: 307). According to G.P. Malalasekera, his works show that he was a



native of Kāñcipura (Malalasekera, 2003: 1146). Hiuen Tsang who visited Kāñcipura, the capital of Tamil country, in 640 A.C. learnt from monks there, that Dhammapāla was born at Kāñcipura. Accordingly, he was a clever youth of Kāñcipura and that the king gave him his daughter but Dhammapāla, not wishing to marry, prayed before a Buddha's image, then the gods took him to a place far away where he was ordained by monks (Malalasekera, 2011: 307). G.P. Malalasekera seems to believe it as the author. K. Arunasiri argued this statement for this Dhammapāla is supposed to have become the Chancellor of the Mahāyāna seat of learning Nalanda later. It may not be to the commentator Dhammapāla who was the Theravadin (Malalasekera, 2011: 307).

The exact time when he lived is unclearly known. But, from his works we can identify that he lived after Ācariya Buddhaghosa Thero. It is approvable since some of Ācariya Buddhaghosa's works are mentioned in his commentaries (UdA. 24). E. W. Adikaram had the same idea and he had shown the quotations mentioned (Adikaram, 2009: 9). Nevertheless, it is reported that Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero was the commentator of seven books of *Khuddaka Nikāya*, namely, *Udāna*, *Itivuttaka*, *Theragāthā*, *Therīgāthā*, *Vimānavatthu*, *Petavatthu* and *Cariyāpiṭaka*. The commentary of those book is named *Paramatthadīpanī*. Accordingly, the seven commentaries are named as follows: *Paramatthadīpanī nāma Theragāthā aṭṭhakathā*, *Paramatthadīpanī nāma Therīgāthā aṭṭhakathā*, *Paramatthadīpanī nāma Udāna aṭṭhakathā*, *Paramatthadīpanī nāma Vimānavatthu aṭṭhakathā*, *Paramatthadīpanī nāma Petavatthu aṭṭhakathā*, *Paramatthadīpanī nāma Itivuttaka aṭṭhakathā*, and *Paramatthadīpanī nāma Cariyāpiṭaka aṭṭhakathā* (Malalasekera, 2011: 307). In the *Sāsanavaṃsa*, it is reported thus, “*Itivuttodānacariyāpiṭakatherātherīvimānavatthupetavatthunettiaṭṭhakathāyo ācariyadhammapālatthero akāsi*” (Sāsv. 33).

However, *Gandhavaṃsa*, the Burmese work, was not aware of the name *Paramatthadīpanī* given to above commentaries. However, *Gandhavaṃsa* used ‘*Vimalavilāsini*’ for the commentaries of *Vimānavatthu* and *Petavatthu*. It is said thus, “*vimānavatthussa vimalavilāsini nāma aṭṭhakathā, petavatthussa vimalavilāsini nāma aṭṭhakathā.*” Furthermore, we come across that the *Pañcappakaranatṭhakathā*, the commentary written for the last five treatises of Theravāda *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, is also named as *Paramatthadīpanī*. But it is hardly being used for the *Pañcappakaranatṭhakathā*, perhaps due to the possibility to get confused with the above commentaries of the *Khuddaka Nikāya* (Malalasekera, 2011: 307).

Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero is also credited with the composition of following works: *Nettipakaraṇa-aṭṭhakathā*, *Visuddhimagga-ṭīkā*, *Dīgha-aṭṭhakathā-ṭīkā*, *Majjhima-aṭṭhakathā-ṭīkā*, and *Samyutta-aṭṭhakathā-ṭīkā* (Endo, 2013: 210). From *Gandhavaṃsa*, all works done by Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero can be known as follow:

“*Dhammapālācariyo nettipakaraṇatṭhakathā, itivuttakatṭhakathā, udānatṭhakathā, cariyāpiṭakatṭhakathā, therakathatṭhakathā, therīkathatṭhakathā, vimānavatthussa vimalavilāsini nāma aṭṭhakathā, petavatthussa vimalavilāsini nāma aṭṭhakathā, visuddhimaggassa paramatthamañjūsā nāma ṭīkā, dīghanikāyassa aṭṭhakathādīnaṃ catunnaṃ aṭṭhakathānaṃ līnatṭhappakāsani nāma ṭīkā, jātakatṭhakathāya līnatṭhappakāsani nāma ṭīkā, nettipakaraṇatṭhakathāya ṭīkā,*



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*buddhavaṃsaṭṭhakathāya Paramatthadīpanī nāma ṭīkā,
abhidhammaṭṭhakathāyaṭīkā līnatthavaṇṇanā nāma anuṭīkāti ime cuddasa matthe
ganthe akāsi.*”

Here, we get clear information that Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero also wrote *Visuddhimagga-ṭīkā* with the title ‘*Paramatthamañjūsā*.’ *Visuddhimagga* is a work considered as the commentary of the entire Tipiṭaka composed by Ācariya Buddhaghosa Thero. Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero then gave his comment and interpretations on that work. Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero is said to be the author of *Ṭīkā* or Sub-commentary named *Līnatthappakāsani*, commenting the Ācariya Buddhaghosa’s Commentaries to first three Nikāyas.

The same named, *Līnatthappakāsani*, is also used to name his Sub-commentary (*ṭīkā*) of *Jātakatṭhakathā*. Not only composed *Nettipakarāṇa-aṭṭhakathā*, but he further commented that work in his Sub-commentary. He also composed Sub-commentary of *Buddhavaṃsaṭṭhakathā* named as *Paramatthadīpanī*. Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero is also credited with having written *Anuṭīkā* of the Sub-commentary of the Commentary of Abhidhamma (*abhidhammaṭṭhakathāyaṭīkā līnatthavaṇṇanā nāma anuṭīkā*) (Malalasekera, 2003: 1146).

The Methodology Adopted by Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero in Writing Commentaries

Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero’s commentaries are based on the method of the ancient commentaries and five nikāyas (*pañcapi nikāye upanissāya, porāṇaṭṭhakathānayaṃ*) (UdA. p. 2). He followed the teachings or views of the residents of Mahāvihāra (*Mahāvihāravāsīnaṃ, samayaṃ avilomayaṃ*). Therefore, the methodology adopted by him is similar of Ācariya Buddhaghosa Thero, not going against the traditional system of thought of residents Mahāvihāra. All of prologue of his commentaries show that he would not stray away from the Mahāvihāra interpretations. His assurance was declared with this Pali stanza, “*Suvisuddham asaṃkiṇṇaṃ, nipuṇatthavinicchayaṃ; Mahāvihāravāsīnaṃ, samayaṃ avilomayaṃ.*” The same idea is given in the commentary of *Cariyāpiṭaka*, but in slightly different words, thus: “*Nissitaṃ vācanāmaggaṃ, suvisuddhamānākulaṃ; Mahāvihāravāsīnaṃ, nipuṇatthavinicchayaṃ.*” Mrs. Rhys Davids stated that Ācariya Dhammapāla was educated in the same university as Ācariya Buddhaghosa, therefore they have similar views. They referred to the same authorities; they have the same method of exegesis; they have reached the same style in philological and etymological science (Jayawardhana, 1994: 49).

The exegetical techniques employed in the commentaries adopted by Ācariya Buddhaghosa and Ācariya Dhammapāla were critically elucidated by six methods, namely; *Sambandhato, Padato, Padavibhāgato, Padatthato, Anuyogato*, and *Parihārato* (*Atha vā chahi ākārehi saṃvaṇṇanā kātabbā Sambandhato padato padavibhāgato padatthato anuyogato parihārato cāti*) (D.T. I. 43). *Sambandhato* is the method of giving elucidation of the context of a discourse describing the time, place, the preacher and the audience when the discourse was delivered based on traditional information. *Padato* is the method of elucidation of the words



taken from the text. This method provides clear explanation on the nature of extracted words, whether they are nouns, verbs, prefixes, etc. While *Padavibhāgato* comes with the explanation on the grammatical and syntactical evaluation of the words. *Padatthato* is a method that provides traditional interpretation of the words and concepts. *Anuyogato* and *Parihārato* comprise the method of giving critical comment on certain issue and interpretation (Silva, 1799: 91).

Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero followed the same methodology used by Ācariya Buddhaghosa Thero, and he is considered as a follower and successor of Ācariya Buddhaghosa Thero. K. Arunasiri said that Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero started from the point Ācariya Buddhaghosa Thero stopped. He accomplished what Ācariya Buddhaghosa Thero could not finish. Probably, Ācariya Buddhaghosa Thero could not finish due to his failing health. Therefore, Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero continued his work to complete the writing of commentaries to the entire *Sutta Piṭaka* (Malalasekera, 2011: 308).

Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero drew material for his works from the ancient Sinhalese Commentaries (Adikaram, 2009: 9). Those commentaries are claimed to have been based on the Mahāvihāra's ancient commentaries (*porāṇa-aṭṭhakathā*). Toshiichi Endo has carefully investigated what *porāṇa-aṭṭhakathā* is. He followed his teacher, Mori, that *porāṇa-aṭṭhakathā* is the same category of sources known as '*aṭṭhakathā*' used by Ācariya Buddhaghosa in his commentaries (Endo, 2013: 212).

Both Ācariya Buddhaghosa Thero and Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero are great commentators in the Theravāda Buddhism. The works done by Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero show the great learning, much exegetical skill and a good deal of sound judgment (Malalasekera, 2011: 95). According to Rhys Davids, Both Ācariya Buddhaghosa Thero and Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero have reached the same style in philological and etymological science and they both have the same lack of any knowledge of the simple rules of higher criticism (Malalasekera, 2011: 95).

However, many scholars who have examined the commentarial literatures, regarded Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero as more independent commentator. Especially, his works of Sub-commentaries show his own creative. The Sub-commentaries are the works of free-hand, and therefore everything therein can be regarded as his own comprehension of Buddhism (Endo, 2013: 211). Having examined so far, Toshiichi Endo came to conclusion that Ācariya Buddhaghosa Thero seems to be more a traditionalist often following the Mahāvihāra tradition while Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero seems to be more liberal in introducing and adopting up-to-date interpretational trends beyond the boundaries of the Mahāvihāra tradition (Endo, 2013: 211).

G. P. Malalasekera too saw much individuality of Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero in the treatment of his subject (Malalasekera, 2011: 95). He further said that Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero's style is simpler, less garrulous, less diffuse, and shows more of the grammarian and the academician than of the exegetical compiler and fanciful etymologist. His explanation of terms is quite clear, and shows an advance over Buddhaghosa (Malalasekera, 2011: 95).

The Analysis on Grammatical Interpretations in the *Udāna-aṭṭhakathā*



Udāna-aṭṭhakathā was composed by Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero under the title *Paramatthadīpanī*. However, *Ganthavaṃsa* was not aware with the name ‘*Paramatthadīpanī*’ as the name of the commentary of *Udāna*. Therefore, *Ganthavaṃsa* used the common name as *Udānaṭṭhakathā*. The author also has given it two more names, such as *Udānassatthavaṇṇanā* and *Udānassa Aṭṭhakathā* (Jayawardhana, 1994: 167). In commenting the *Udāna*, Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero explained grammatically and philologically. It shows his greatness and fluency on Pāli grammar and linguistic. He followed traditional grammar while interpreting the words.

In explaining the words ‘*evaṃ me sutam*’ he followed Ācariya Buddhaghosa Thero’s descriptions found in the *Dīghanikāyaṭṭhakathā* (DA. I. 26). *Evaṃ* is used in several meanings such as: with respect to comparison (*upamā*), with respect to imparting (*upadesa*), with respect to approval (*sampahaṃsana*), with respect to reproach (*garahaṇa*), with respect to acceptance of a statement (*vacanasampatiggaha*), with respect to a mode (*ākāra*), with respect to pointing out (*nidassana*), with respect to emphatic affirmation (*avadhāraṇa*), with respect to a question (*puccha*), in the sense of the meaning of the word “*idaṃ*” or “*this*” (*idamattha*) and with respect to measure (*parimāṇa*).

Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero has elucidated the grammatical unit of the words given in the canon. ‘*Evaṃ*’ in this case is indeclinable particle (*evanti nipātapadam*). ‘*Me*’ is noun or a term consisting of substantive (*Metiādīni nāmapadāni*) (UdA. 5). ‘*Me*’ here is a personal pronoun with ‘*amha*’ as its base, singular in number and in form of instrumental case, which has the meaning ‘by me.’ If go through grammar, the ‘*me*’ can occur as ‘dative’ and ‘genitive’ cases also. But, in this context, ‘*me*’ is the ‘instrumental case’ which sometime can appear as ‘*mayā*.’ However, in the Pāli texts, the words ‘*evaṃ mayā sutam*’ is hardly used, but in the Sanskrit Buddhist texts, ‘*evaṃ mayā śrutam*’ is often used. Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero understood this grammatical pattern. He also said in his commentary that the word ‘*Me*’ has three usages, such as *mayāti attho*, *mayhanti* and *mamāti attho* (UdA. 11).

The word of ‘*viharati*’ or ‘lives’ is explained thus, ‘*vi*’ is prefix and ‘*harati*’ is a verb (*viharatīti ettha vīti upasaggapadam*, *haratīti ākhyātapadanti*) (UdA. 11). If it is analyzed further, ‘*harati*’ has ‘*hara*’ as its base and ‘*ti*’ as its suffix, which means –to take. Therefore, ‘*viharati*’ is combined by ‘*vi+hara+ti*.’”

When he explained about grammatical pattern on ‘time’ or ‘occasion (*samaya*)’, he referred to ancient text (*Porāṇā*). Occasion which is expressed in different expressions such as ‘*yasmiṃ samaye* (locative case), *tena samayena* (instrumental case), or *ekaṃ samayaṃ* (accusative case), has the same meaning as locative. Therefore he said that the meaning is to be understood to be *yasmiṃ samaye* (locative case), even when *ekaṃ samayaṃ* (accusative case) is said (UdA. 23).

Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero in his works often gave definition of the words which are not available in the canonical texts. The following definitions are taken from his works, especially from *Udāna-aṭṭhakathā*. ‘*Bodhirukkhamūle*’ is a word formed of three words (*Bodhi+rukkha+mule*). In the commentary, Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero explained that ‘*Bodhi*’ has two meanings such as the knowledge associated with the paths (*maggāñāṇaṃ bodhīti vuttam*), omniscience (*sabbaññutaññāṇaṃ*). Since it was here that the Buddha attained both of



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these *bodhis*, the tree also named as ‘Bodhi tree’ (*Tadubhayampi bodhim bhagavā ettha pattoti rukkhopi bodhirukkhoteva nāmaṃ labhi*). Another alternative reason is also given that, since he awoke in the seven factors of enlightenment, the Blessed One is Bodhi, and that tree also gained the named ‘Bodhi tree’ on account on by him whilst in the process of awakening (*Atha vā satta bojjhaṅge bujjhīti bhagavā bodhi, tena bujjhantena sannissitattā so rukkhopi bodhirukkhote nāmaṃ labhi, tassa bodhirukkhassa*) (UdA. 27).

While ‘*Mūle*’ means near or in the vicinity (*Mūleti samīpe*). ‘*Mūle*’ is used in several usage such as in respect to roots (*mūlamūle dissati*), to a specific cause (*asādhāraṇahetumhi*), and with respect to vicinity (*samīpe*). However, in this case, ‘*Mūle*’ is used with respect to vicinity (UdA. 27). Therefore, *bodhirukkhāmūle* should be understood as near the root of Bodhi tree.

The word ‘*āyasmā*’ is very often used indicating respected person. It is commonly translated into English as ‘Venerable.’ Modern grammarians are not 'sure about the base of this word. However, Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero gave his interpretation as ‘lovely word’ (*āyasmāti piyavacanam*) (UdA. 27). Probably he followed Ācariya Buddhaghosa Thero’s interpretation that ‘*āyasmā*’ is ‘lovely word’ and ‘reverential address’ (*piyavacanametam, gāravavacanametam*) (DA. II. 483). Actually, if we go back to canon, ‘*āyasmā*’ is similar to ‘*bhante*.’ In the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, the Buddha advised that senior monks shall address more junior monks by their name, their clan or as ‘friend’, whereas more junior monks shall address their senior as ‘*Bhante*’ or ‘*āyasmā*’ (*Theratarena, ānanda, bhikkhunā navakataro bhikkhu nāmena vā gottena vā āvusovādena vā samudācaritabbo. Navakatarena bhikkhunā therataro bhikkhu ‘bhante’ti vā ‘āyasmā’ti vā samudācaritabbo*) (D. II. 154).

When commentator related past stories, ‘*Kira*’ is usually used in the beginning of the story. Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero said that ‘*Kira*’ is a particle in sense of hearsay; its connection is to be understood as ‘has arrived, it is said’ (*Kirāti anussavanatthe nipāto, tassa anupatto kirāti sambandho veditabbo*) (UdA. 72). It should be compared with the definition given by Ācariya Buddhaghosa Thero. In the commentary of Jātaka, the commentator said that ‘*Kira*’ is report by hearsay, in which one does not know by oneself (*anussavavasena vadati, na pana sayam jānāti*) (JA. III. 195).

When commenting “*yato kho te, bāhiyā*”, Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero gave other options of the words ‘*yato kho te*.’ He said, ‘*yato*’ can be changed by ‘*yadā*’ or ‘*yasmā*’ (*Tattha yatoti yadā, yasmā vā*). While ‘*te*’ can be changed as ‘*tava*’ (*Teti tava*), and the word ‘*Tato*’ can be changed by ‘*tadā*’ or ‘*tasmā*’ (*Tatoti tadā, tasmā vā*) (UdA. 92).

In Pāli, joining words in order to make one meaning is often used. Some words are combined into one word by euphonic combination (*sandhi*). In the commentary too, Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero described combined words. For example, ‘*pacchābhatta*’ is described as ‘*bhattakiccato pacchā*’ or ‘following the business of the midday meal.’ ‘*Piṇḍapātapāṭikkanto*’ as ‘*piṇḍapātapariyesanato paṭinivatto*’ or ‘turning back from seeking almsfood.’ It is on account of this pair of words, also, it is spoken as ‘*katabhattakicco*’ (UdA. 97).

CONCLUSION

Commentary plays pivotal role in giving more detail information and the elucidation of the unclear words. Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero was one of great commentators in Theravāda



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tradition after Ācariya Buddhaghosa Thero. He is considered as a follower and successor of Ācariya Buddhaghosa Thero, who wrote commentaries on seven of *Khuddaka Nikāya* under the title *Paramatthadīpanī*. *Udāna Aṭṭhakathā* is one of the great exegetical texts done by Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero. In composing that commentary, he used the similar methodology used by previous commentator, following the traditional interpretation and view of the resident monks of Mahāvihāra. However, Ācariya Dhammapāla Thero seems to be independent in which sometime he goes beyond the limit of traditional belief. He is more liberal in introducing and adopting up-to-date interpretational trends. His works show his great knowledge on Pali grammar. When commenting the words, he often analyzed words grammatically. He defined some words which their detail are not available in the canon. But sometimes he followed previous interpretation and definitions given by previous commentator. Nevertheless, he was a great commentator endowed with good grammatical knowledge as well as good comprehension on Buddhism.

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