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Some Remarks on Buddhaghosa's use of Sanskrit Grammar: Possible Hints of an Unknown Pāṇinian Commentary in Buddhaghosa's Grammatical Arguments

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This article explores hints of an unknown Pāṇinian grammatical commentary in the writings of Buddhaghosa. In addition, it speculates on the religious affiliations of the grammatical lineages that meditated Buddhaghosa's use of Sanskrit grammar and, in doing so, questions the common assumption that Buddhaghosa's knowledge of Sanskrit and Sanskrit grammar originated within a Brahmanical literary culture.

“You know my method. It is founded
upon the observation of trifles.”

Sherlock Holmes, *The Boscombe Valley Mystery*¹

The association of Buddhist schools in pre-modern South Asia with particular literary languages, such as Sanskrit or Pāli, has influenced understanding of their participation within the wider literary milieu of South Asia. Theravāda Buddhism, for instance, uses Pāli for its primary religious literature and as a result is often depicted as culturally isolated, resisting influences from Brahmanical or Mahāyānist Sanskrit.

The cultural significance of the use of Sanskrit by Theravāda monastic literati is generally explained as the result of a passive borrowing from Mahāyāna or Brahmanical groups. For instance, with respect to Buddhaghosa's use of Sanskrit, Norman states that “the author shows acquaintance with Sanskrit and Sanskrit grammarians, which would be in keeping with the traditional view that Buddhaghosa

¹ Conan Doyle 2003: 253.

was a Brahman before he became a Buddhist...”² It is rarely acknowledged that Theravāda literati may have had their own long-standing culture of Sanskrit learning and have actively engaged in the Sanskrit literary cultures of their Brahmanical and Mahāyānist contemporaries. Therefore, the assumption that linguistic usage in pre-modern South Asia was coterminous with religious identity – in this case the assumption that Sanskrit is synonymous with Brahmanism – has perhaps led to a neglect of Theravāda Buddhism as a key agent in the cross-fertilisation of a variety of languages and literary cultures in South Asia. In addition, this sense of linguistic, and therefore cultural, isolation may have contributed to the neglect of Pāli literature as a means of understanding intellectual developments in South Asian history, in particular those written in Sanskrit.

This paper begins an exploration of the Theravāda Buddhist interaction with other South Asian literary cultures. In doing so, I tread a well-worn path by investigating certain documented aspects of Buddhaghosa’s use of Sanskrit grammatical literature. I provide a new analysis of its significance by situating his use of Sanskrit grammar within a wider South Asian grammatical culture and by taking into account the possible ideological affiliations of the Sanskrit grammars he used.

Buddhaghosa’s Use of Sanskrit Grammar

Buddhaghosa’s use of Sanskrit grammar in his commentarial literature comes at an important juncture in Theravāda Buddhist literary history. According to tradition, Buddhaghosa (c. 5th century) revived the Pāli commentarial tradition and reproduced Pāli versions of the Sinhala commentaries extant in his time. Buddhaghosa’s literary activities represented an unprecedented flourish of post-canonical Pāli literature and his style of writing set the standard for commentators writing in his wake. This activity in Pāli composition and exegesis must have required an extensive array of linguistic tools such as grammars and lexicons. These tools lent grammatical authority to Buddhaghosa’s writing and his interpretation of Buddhist doctrine. This is exemplified in Buddhaghosa’s definition of the term *paṭīccasamuppāda* (“dependent origination”) in the *Visuddhimagga* (*Path of Purification*), his meditation manual, where he refers to the authority of grammar in order to refute an interpretation contrary to his own.³ Ascertaining the gram-

²Norman 1983: 129.

³Vism 1975: 518-520.

maras Buddhaghosa was using to write and interpret Pāli is therefore an important task for understanding this pivotal stage in the development of Pāli literature and the interpretation of Theravāda Buddhist doctrine.

In 1902, Franke proposed that Buddhaghosa’s grammatical analyses relied upon an early Pāli grammatical tradition.⁴ He based his assumption on a quote in the *Rūpasiddhi* (*The Construction of [Grammatical] Forms*, c.11th century), a grammatical handbook to the first Pāli grammar, the *Kaccāyana-vyākaraṇa* (*The Grammar of Kaccāyana*, c. 7th century), which lists some of the grammatical terms used by Buddhaghosa.⁵ However, Pind has proposed that this quote does not originate from a pre-Buddhaghosa Pāli grammar and that it is only a summary of the terminology found in the commentaries to the Pāli canon.⁶ He also shows that the *Rūpasiddhi-tīkā*, a commentary to the *Rūpasiddhi*, identifies the source of the quote as the *Mahānirutti* (*The Great Analysis*), an old commentary on the *Kaccāyana-vyākaraṇa*. Pind concludes that “there is therefore no reason to believe that the few grammatical terms that have no parallel in Sanskrit grammatical terminology reflect an old system of Pāli grammar. They probably represent part of a terminology that originated with the attempt to establish a canonical exegesis.”⁷

Alongside this grammatical terminology peculiar to the commentaries, it has also long been recognised that Buddhaghosa sometimes relied upon Sanskrit grammar when writing his commentaries to the Pāli canon. In particular, Buddhaghosa appears to have relied exclusively on the tradition of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (*The Eight Lessons*) of Pāṇini, the earliest and most authoritative grammar of Sanskrit (5th c. BCE). B.C. Law was one of the first to notice the influence of Pāṇini on Buddhaghosa. For instance, he pointed out the similarities between Buddhaghosa’s gloss on *indriya* (“sense organ”) in the *Visuddhimagga*⁸ with the grammatical rule A.5.2.93 *indriyam indraliṅgam indradr̥ṣṭam indrasr̥ṣṭam indrajusṭam indradattam iti vā*.⁹ More recently, Ole Pind has conducted exhaustive studies on Buddhaghosa’s use of Sanskrit grammar and has demonstrated that Buddha-

⁴Pind 1989: 34.

⁵Franke 1902: 4.

⁶Pind 1989: 35.

⁷Ibid.

⁸*Ko pana nesaṃ indriyattho nāmā ti? Indaliṅgaṭṭho indriyatṭho; indadesitaṭṭho indriyatṭho; indadiṭṭhaṭṭho indriyatṭho; indasiṭṭhaṭṭho indriyatṭho; indajutṭhaṭṭho indriyatṭho: so sabbo pi idha yathāyogaṃ yujjati.* Vism 1975: 491.

⁹Law 1946: 32-33.

ghosa refers to Pāṇinian grammar, i.e. the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* and its commentaries, when quoting the opinions of “grammar” (*saddasattha*) or “grammarians”, viz. *saddalakkaṇavidū* (“a knower of the rules of words”), *saddavidū* (“a knower of words”) and *akkharacintaka* (“a syllable ponderer”).¹⁰

However, some important implications of Pind’s work for the understanding of the history of grammatical traditions in wider South Asia have not been taken into account. For instance, from Patañjali’s *Mahābhāṣya* (*The Great Commentary*, 2nd c. BCE), a commentary on the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, up until Bhartṛhari’s *Vākyapadīya* (*Of Sentences and Words*, 5th–6th c. CE), a grammatical and philosophical work in the Pāṇinian tradition, relatively little is known about the development of the Pāṇinian grammatical tradition in South Asia. Buddhaghosa’s use of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* in the 5th century therefore potentially provides clues to the development of the Pāṇinian grammatical tradition prior to Bhartṛhari. In this regard, I focus on certain grammatical discussions that may reveal which commentarial tradition mediated Buddhaghosa’s use of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*. I speculate that Buddhaghosa’s discussions hint at the existence of an unknown commentary to the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* that may have been related, directly or indirectly, to the *Kāśikā-vṛtti* (*The Commentary from Kāśī*), a 7th century gloss on the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* of Pāṇini, and the *Cāndra-vṛtti* (*The Commentary on Cāndra*, 5th–6th c. CE?), a gloss on the *Cāndra-vyākaraṇa* (*The Grammar of Candra*), a grammar written by the Buddhist Candragomin (5th c. CE). In addition, the ideological affiliations of Buddhaghosa’s grammatical source materials have not been taken into consideration. By speculating on the grammatical cultures Buddhaghosa was interacting with, it is possible to test the common assumption that Buddhaghosa’s use of Sanskrit grammar, and often by implication the use of Sanskrit by Theravāda Buddhists at large, was linked to interactions with Brahmanism.

The Four Grammatical Discussions

In this paper, I focus on four grammatical discussions in Buddhaghosa’s commentaries, the significance of which has yet to be recognised in the context of the history of South Asian grammar. All four discussions are taken from Pind’s analysis of Buddhaghosa’s use of Sanskrit grammar.¹¹ Due to the uncertainty about the authorship of some works attributed to Buddhaghosa, Pind only anal-

¹⁰Pind 1989: 37.

¹¹Pind 1989, 1990.

ysed “the works for which the authorship is beyond doubt: *Visuddhimagga* [Vism], *Samantapāsādikā* [Sp], and the commentaries on the āgamas: *Sumaṅgalavilāsini* [Sv], *Papañcasūdanī* [Ps], *Sāratthappakāsinī* [Spk], and *Manorathapūraṇī* [Mp].”¹² The four discussions in question are (1) Vism 210, 21-28, (2) Sp 209, 27-210, 1 *ad* Vin III 16, 5, (3) Sv 43, 13-15 *ad* D 12, 9, and (4) Sp 108, 21-22 *ad* Vin III 1, 6.

1. A Verse of *Nirukta* (Vism 210, 21-28)

The first example is found in a passage of the *Visuddhimagga* in which Buddhaghosa provides a semantic analysis of the term *bhagavā*. After turning to the *Niddesa* (*The Descriptive Exposition*) to provide an initial analysis of the word, Buddhaghosa offers an alternative analysis in the following verse:

*bhāgyavā bhaggavā yutto bhagehi ca vibhattavā
bhattavā vantaḡamano bhavesu bhagavā tato ti.*¹³

He has fortune and has broken (free), he is associated with blessings, he has analysed and is worshipped, and he has renounced journeying among lives. Therefore, he is *bhagavā*.¹⁴

Buddhaghosa then provides a description of the various methods employed in his analysis of the term *bhagavā*. Pind translates this discussion as follows:

*tattha vaṇṇāgamo vaṇṇavipariyāyo ti ādikaṃ niruttilakkhaṇaṃ ga-
hetvā, saddanayena vā pisodarādipakkhepalakkhaṇaṃ gahetvā, yasmā
lokiyalokuttarasukhābhiniḡbattakaṃ dānasīlādipārappattaṃ bhāgyam
assa atthi, tasmā bhāgyavā ti vattabbe bhagavā ti vuccatī ti nātabbaṃ.*¹⁵

“In this case it should be known – either by adopting the rule of etymology (*niruttilakkhaṇaṃ*) which runs: ‘letter insertion, letter metathesis,’ etc. or by adopting, according to the method of grammar (*saddanayena*), the rule that consists in interpolating [the word in question] in [the word class] beginning with *pisodara* – that since he is blessed with having been perfected with regard to charity and

¹²Pind 1989: 38.

¹³Vism 1975: 210.

¹⁴Translations are my own unless otherwise specified.

¹⁵Vism 1975: 210.

morality, etc., which gives rise to mundane and transmundane happiness, he is called *bhagavan*, although [in actuality] he ought to be called *bhāgyavan*.”¹⁶

In the above passage, Buddhaghosa states that he uses two main methods in analysing the term *bhagavā*, the method of semantic analysis (*nirutti*) and the method of grammatical analysis (*saddanaya*). In specifying his methods of semantic analysis, Buddhaghosa refers above to a verse that begins “letter insertion, letter metathesis...” Pind traces this quotation to a verse in the *Kāśikā-vṛtti*, a 7th century gloss on the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* of Pāṇini, in its commentary on the grammatical rule A.6.3.109 *pr̥ṣodarādīni yathopadiṣṭam*:

*varṇāgamo varṇaviparyayaś ca dvau cāparau varṇavikāranāśau, dhātos tadarthātīśayena yogas tad ucyate pañcavidhaṃ niruktam.*¹⁷

Letter insertion, letter metathesis, the next two viz. letter modification and letter elision, and the connection of a root through the extension of its meaning – this is called the five-fold semantic analysis.

The similarities between this verse and the one quoted by Buddhaghosa indicate that Buddhaghosa was likely referring to these five methods of *nirukta* (semantic analysis) in his discussion. The rule A.6.3.109 states that the class of compounds beginning with *pr̥ṣodara* (“having a spotted belly”) is introduced as taught by learned speakers (*yathopadiṣṭam*).¹⁸ This rule accounts for a class of compounds which are formed with a number of irregularities, viz. the elision, insertion or modification of particular letters. Their formation cannot be explained through grammatical rules and, therefore, Pāṇini refers to “learned speakers” as an authority. The key point is that, since these irregular words cannot be explained through grammatical rules, their formation is to be understood by the ways in which learned speakers form them, i.e. through the elision, insertion or modification of particular letters.

In describing his method of grammatical analysis, Buddhaghosa also refers to this rule in the statement *pisodarādīpakkhepalakkhaṇam* (the rule that consists in

¹⁶Pind 1989: 41.

¹⁷KVṛ 1967: 301.

¹⁸Katre 1987: 793.

interpolating [the word in question] in [the word class] beginning with *pisodara*). Here, Buddhaghosa implies that the word *bhagavā* is to be included in the list of words beginning with *pisodara* (S. *pr̥ṣodara*) and, therefore, according to A. 6.3.109 *pr̥ṣodarādīni yathopadiṣṭam*, its form can be explained by means of elision, insertion and modification. It is clear that the methods of analysis prescribed by the discipline of *nirukta* (semantic analysis) and grammar, viz. A.6.3.109, do not differ significantly, and by quoting a definition of *nirukta* under A.6.3.109 the *Kāśikā-vṛtti* suggests that A.6.3.109 establishes the correctness of words using the techniques of semantic analysis (*nirukta*).

Significant for the history of grammatical thought, however, is the fact that Buddhaghosa could not have utilised the *Kāśikā-vṛtti*, since it was written in the 7th century. In addition, the fact that Buddhaghosa juxtaposes this verse on semantic analysis to a reference to A.6.3.109 may indicate that Buddhaghosa was aware of a grammatical commentary that linked this *nirukta* verse and grammatical rule in a similar way to the *Kāśikā-vṛtti*. In this regard, Pind states that “Buddhaghosa and the authors of the *Kāśikā* were conversant with a grammatical tradition where the verse was somehow attached to this specific Pāṇini *sūtra* as part of its commentary. Patañjali does not quote the verse ad loc., but this, of course, does not exclude the possibility that it belongs to a grammatical tradition antedating Patañjali.”¹⁹

While Pind’s analysis of this passage is highly praiseworthy, he does not fully recognise the significance of this finding for the history of grammatical thought in South Asia. For instance, this verse is in fact found in a grammatical commentary earlier than the *Kāśikā-vṛtti*, the *vṛtti* (gloss) to the *Cāndra-vyākaraṇa*. The *Cāndra-vṛtti* is a gloss on the rules of the *Cāndra-vyākaraṇa*, a system of grammar written by the Buddhist Candragomin most probably in the 5th century. It is now widely accepted that the *Cāndra-vṛtti* was written later than the *Cāndra-vyākaraṇa* by a monk known as Dharmadāsa. While later than the 5th century, and therefore too late to be a direct source for Buddhaghosa, the *Cāndra-vṛtti* is generally considered to be earlier than the *Kāśikā-vṛtti*. Dharmadāsa quotes an almost identical verse on *nirukta* to the one found in the *Kāśikā-vṛtti* under C. 5.2.127 *pr̥ṣodarādīni*, the equivalent rule to A.6.3.109 in the *Cāndra-vyākaraṇa*:

*varṇāgamo varṇaviparyayaś ca dvau cāparau varṇavikāranāśau, dhā-
tos tadarthātiśayena yoga etac ca tatpāñcavidhaṃ niruktam.*²⁰

¹⁹Pind 1989: 43-44.

²⁰CV 1961: 188.

Letter insertion, letter metathesis, the next two viz. letter modification and letter elision, and the connection of roots through the extension of their meaning – this is their five-fold semantic analysis.

The fact that the *Kāśikā-vṛtti* and *Cāndra-vṛtti* quote almost identical verses on equivalent grammatical rules indicates a close relationship between the texts. In addition, since Buddhaghosa also associates this verse with A.6.3.109, further evidence, important for the history of South Asian grammatical culture, on the relationship between the *Cāndra-vṛtti* and *Kāśikā-vṛtti* can be gleaned. For instance, it is well established that both of these commentaries are clearly related in some way and often are identical. However, there has been much debate on the relationship between the *Cāndra-vṛtti* and the *Kāśikā-vṛtti*, in particular with reference to the directionality of influence between the two texts.²¹ Bronkhorst outlines three scenarios that would explain the close relationship between the *Cāndra-vṛtti* and *Kāśikā-vṛtti*: “a) the former borrowed from the latter; b) the latter borrowed from the former; c) both borrowed, directly or indirectly, from a common source.”²² Since it is now widely accepted that the *Kāśikā-vṛtti* is later than the *Cāndra-vṛtti*, the first possibility can be discarded without controversy. In his article, Bronkhorst makes a strong case for the existence of an unknown Pāṇinian commentary that influenced both the *Cāndra-vṛtti* and *Kāśikā-vṛtti*. Bronkhorst also shows that the *Kāśikā-vṛtti* itself recognises the existence of former commentaries, which the *Nyāsa*, a commentary on the *Kāśikā-vṛtti*, links to unknown authors such as Cūlli, Bhaṭṭi, Nalūra etc.²³ Since Buddhaghosa’s use of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* is slightly earlier than both the *Cāndra-vṛtti* and *Kāśikā-vṛtti*, his possible knowledge of a grammatical commentary that linked this *nirukta* verse to A.6.3.109 would certainly add grist to Bronkhorst’s mill by indicating that there was an earlier Pāṇinian commentary that exhibited similar features to the *Cāndra-vṛtti* and *Kāśikā-vṛtti*. In the following three examples I investigate further hints that Buddhaghosa was familiar with a Pāṇinian commentary that was directly or indirectly linked to the *Cāndra-vṛtti* and *Kāśikā-vṛtti*.

²¹ For an overview of this debate see Vergiani 2006.

²² Bronkhorst 2002: 185.

²³ Bronkhorst 2002: 186.

2. Last Night’s Barley-Gruel (Sp 209, 27-210, 1 *ad* Vin III 16, 5)

Another example that exhibits similarities between Buddhaghosa’s grammatical analysis and the *Cāndra-vṛtti* is in the *Samantapāsādikā* (*Lovely Throughout*), Buddhaghosa’s commentary on the *vinaya*, when he discusses the sentence *atthi nāma tāta Sudinna ābhidosikaṃ kummāsaṃ paribuñjissasī ti* (“Is it possible, dear Sudinna, that you are eating last night’s barley-gruel?”). Pind translates the passage as follows:

akkharacintakā paṇ’ ettha imaṃ lakkhaṇaṃ vadanti: anokappanāmarisanatthavasena etaṃ atthi-nāma-sadde upapade paribuñjissasī ti anāgatavacanāṃ kataṃ. tassāyaṃ attho: atthi nāma – pe – paribhuñjissasī ti idaṃ paccakkhaṃ pi ahaṃ na saddahāmi, na marisayāmi (so read for *parisayāmi*)²⁴ *ti*.²⁵

“In this case, moreover, the grammarians (*akkharacintakā*), set forth the following rule (*lakkhaṇaṃ*): according to whether the meaning is that something is not likely to take place, or is not to be tolerated (*anokappanāmarisanatthavasena*), the future *paribhuñjissasī* is employed, when the expression ‘is it possible?’ is a sentence complement (*atthi-nāma-sadde upapade*). The meaning of the [sentence] ‘Is it possible...?’ is as follows: ‘I do not believe it, even though it is evident, nor do I tolerate it.’”²⁶

In this discussion Buddhaghosa explains the function of the expression *atthi nāma* at the beginning of the sentence in question and explains that it is used as a complement to a finite verb in the future tense to denote a sense of disbelief and censorship. Pind links the grammatical rule Buddhaghosa is referring to with A. 3.3.146 *kimkilāstyarthesu lṛṭ*.²⁷ This rule states that the future (*lṛṭ*) is used when co-occurring with [the words] “How comes it?” (*kimkila*) or [the words] meaning “Is it the case that?” (*asti*) to denote improbability or intolerance.²⁸

²⁴In opposition to the PTS edition, the reading *na marisayāmi* (Sp) should be read here since *parisayāmi* (“I surround”) does not make sense in this context and since *marisayāmi* is the reading found in Sāriputta’s *ṭīkā*. Pind (1989:57) also makes this amendment.

²⁵Sp 1975: 209-210.

²⁶Pind 1989: 57.

²⁷Pind 1989: 58.

²⁸Katre 1987: 313.

However, Pind does not speculate any further on the commentarial lineage that mediates Buddhaghosa’s use of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*. In this regard, it is significant that the examples Buddhaghosa uses at the end of his discussion, viz. *na sad-dahāmi*, *na marisayāmi*, to illustrate the sense of this expression are found in both the *Kāśikā-vṛtti* on A.3.3.146 and the *Cāndra-vṛtti* on C.1.3.112 *kimkilāstyarthayor lṛḍ*, the equivalent *sūtra* in the *Cāndra-vyākaraṇa*. Buddhaghosa’s discussion, though, has the closest similarity to the *Cāndra-vṛtti*:

*kimkilaśabde ‘styartheṣu ca satsu krodhāśraddhayor arthayor lṛḍ eva bhavati, na liṇ. kimkila tatra bhavān vṛṣalaṃ yājayisyati? na marṣa-yāmi, na śraddadhe, nāvakaḥ payāmi...*²⁹

When there is the term *kimkila* or *asti*, only the future (*lṛḍ*) conveys the meaning of anger or disbelief, not the optative (*liṇ*). [For example:] How, Sir, can you let an outcaste sacrifice! [This means] “I don’t tolerate it!”, “I don’t believe it!”, “I don’t trust it!”.

The *Mahābhāṣya* of Patañjali (1st c. BCE), the earliest commentary on the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* before the *Kāśikā-vṛtti*, does not comment on this rule *ad loc.*, so Buddhaghosa was most likely working with an unknown commentary that used the same grammatical examples for A.3.3.146 as the *Cāndra-vṛtti* and *Kāśikā-vṛtti*. Pind has shown exhaustively that Buddhaghosa is using the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* for his grammatical analysis and therefore it would seem that there existed an earlier Pāṇinian commentary that shared certain aspects with the *Cāndra-vṛtti* and *Kāśikā-vṛtti*. The possibility that the *Cāndra-vṛtti* was influenced by an earlier Pāṇinian commentary on the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* would cast further doubt on the opinion of Oberlies, who suggests that the common source of the *Cāndra-vṛtti* and *Kāśikā-vṛtti* is a lost commentary by Devanandin on the *Jainendra-vyākaraṇa* (*The Grammar of Jinendra*), a non-Pāṇinian grammar written around the 6th century.³⁰

3. A Blind Man Mountain Climbing (Sv 43, 13-15 *ad D I 2, 9*)

The third example that hints at Buddhaghosa’s use of an unknown Pāṇinian commentary is found in a discussion in the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* (*Auspicious Clarification*), his commentary to the *Dīgha Nikāya*. His discussion centres on an analysis

²⁹CV 1953: 117.

³⁰Oberlies 1996: 285-286.

of the expression *acchariyaṃ āvuso* (“How wonderful, friend!”) in which he outlines the sense of the term *acchariyaṃ* (“How wonderful!”). Pind translates his discussion as follows:

*tattha andhassa pabbatārohanam viya niccam na hoti ti acchariyaṃ.
ayaṃ tāva saddanayo.*³¹

“In this case *acchariyaṃ* means something unusual (*na...niccam*), like for instance a blind man who goes mountain climbing. This, in the first place, is the grammatical derivation.”³²

Pind correctly links this discussion to A.6.1.147 *āścaryaṃ anitye*, which states that the word *āścaryaṃ* is introduced with the initial increment *suT̥* (*s*) inserted before the phoneme *c* to denote something unusual (*anitye*).³³ As an example of using *acchariyaṃ* in the sense of something unusual, Buddhaghosa refers to a blind man mountain climbing. This example is not found in either the *Kāśikā-vṛtti* on A.6.1.147 or the *Cāndra-vṛtti* on C.5.1.142 *pāraskarādīni nāmni*, the corresponding rule to A.6.1.147 in the *Cāndra-vyākaraṇa*. Again, this example is not used by Patañjali in his *Mahābhāṣya ad loc.*, and therefore Buddhaghosa was most likely borrowing from examples in a later Pāṇinian commentary. However, in both the *Kāśikā-vṛtti* and the *Cāndra-vṛtti*, a similar example, *āścaryaṃ citram adbhutam andho nāma parvatam āroksyati* (“It is wonderful, strange and astonishing that a blind man climbs a mountain!”) is quoted under A.3.3.151 *śeṣe lṛḍ ayadau* and C.1.3.116 *śeṣe lṛḥ* respectively. These grammatical rules state that the future tense (*lṛt*) is used, when co-occurring with an item other than *yacca*, *yatra* or *yadi*, to express wonder (*citrikaraṇa*).³⁴ In this connection it is significant that, unlike the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, the *Cāndra-vyākaraṇa* does not use the term *citrikaraṇa* to denote wonder but *āścarya* instead. Again, Patañjali does not refer to the example of a blind man mountain climbing in his comments on A.3.3.151 either. It is possible, therefore, that the example of a blind man mountain climbing became a standard representation of *āścarya* (astonishment) after Patañjali in the grammatical literature that Buddhaghosa and the authors of the *Cāndra-vṛtti* and *Kāśikā-vṛtti* were familiar with.

³¹ Sv 1886: 43.

³² Pind 1989: 67.

³³ Katre 1987: 693.

³⁴ Katre 1987: 314.

4. A Cowherd Near the Ganges (Sp 108-109, 21-22 *ad* Vin III 1, 6)

The final example considered here as evidence of Buddhaghosa’s use of a grammatical source that is no longer accessible occurs in a passage in the *Samantapāsādikā* discussing the word *Verañjāyaṃ* (“near Verañjā”) in the sentence:

*tena samayena buddho bhagavā Verañjāyaṃ viharati Naḷerupuci mandamūle mahatā bhikkhusaṃghena saddhiṃ pañcamattehi bhikkhusatehi.*³⁵

At that time the blessed Buddha was dwelling near Verañjā at the foot of the Naḷeru *nimba* tree³⁶ with a great *saṅgha* of five hundred monks.

In his discussion of this passage, Buddhaghosa analyses *Verañjāyaṃ* as *samīpatthe bhum mavacanam*, a locative (*bhum mavacanam*) in the sense of proximity (*samīpatthe*). Buddhaghosa continues to discuss the two locatives, viz. *Verañjāyaṃ* and *Naḷerupucimandamūle*, in the following way:

*tattha siyā yadi tāva bhagavā Verañjāyaṃ viharati, “Naḷerupuci mandamūle”ti na vattabbaṃ, atha tattha viharati “Verañjāyaṃ” ti na vattabbaṃ, na hi sakkā ubhayattha ten’eva samayena apubbaṃ acari-maṃ viharitun ti; na kho paṇ’ etaṃ evaṃ datṭhabbaṃ. nanu avo-cumha “samīpatthe bhum mavacanam” ti, tasmā yathā Gaṅgāyamu-nādīnaṃ samīpe goyūthāni carantāni “Gaṅgāya caranti, Yamunāya caranti”ti vuccanti evaṃ idhāpi yadidaṃ Verañjāya samīpe Naḷeru-pucimandamūlaṃ tattha viharanto vuccati “Verañjāyaṃ viharati Naḷerupucimandamūle” ti.*³⁷

In this connection, if the Blessed One was dwelling just in Verañjā, one should not say “at the foot of the Naḷeru *nimba* tree”. Then [if he] was dwelling there (i.e. at the foot of the Naḷeru *nimba* tree),

³⁵Vin 1881: 1.

³⁶According to Malalasekera, Naḷerupucimanda was “a grove near Verañjā where the Buddha spent part of his time on his visit to Nerañjā [sic]. Buddhaghosa explains that the chief tree to be found there was a *pucimanda* or *nimba*-tree at the foot of which was a shrine dedicated to a *yakkha* named Naḷeru.” Malalasekera 1960: 38.

³⁷Sp 1975: 109.

one should not say “in *Verañjā*”, since it is not possible to dwell in both places at that same time simultaneously (*apubbaṃ acarimaṃ*). However, one should not understand it in this way (*evaṃ*) as I have stated that “the locative is in the sense of proximity”. Therefore, since one states that herds of cows, wandering *in the vicinity* of the [rivers] Ganges and Yamuna, wander *at* the Ganges (*gaṅgāya*) and Yamuna (*yamunāya*), so here also one says “dwelling there at the foot of the *Nāleru nimba* tree in the proximity of *Verañjā* (*verañjāyaṃ*)”.

As Pind points out for this example, there is no justification for the use of a locative in the sense of proximity in the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*. However, Pind traces the use of the term *sāmīpya* (“proximity”) to an analogous discussion in the *Mahābhāṣya* (MBh II 218, 14-19) on A.4.1.48 *pumyogād ākhyāyām*,³⁸ in which Patañjali makes the statement *tatsāmīpyāt: gaṅgāyāṃ ghoṣaḥ* (“Since there is proximity with that, [as in the example] ‘The cowherd colony is near the Ganges’”).³⁹ However, elsewhere in the *Mahābhāṣya*, Patañjali provides a three-fold definition of the locative (*adhikaraṇa*) when explaining the locative case of *saṃhitāyām* (“in the domain of continuous utterance”) in the grammatical rule A. 6.1.72 *saṃhitāyām*.⁴⁰ He states that *adhikaraṇam nāma triprakāram vyāpakam aupasleṣikam vaiṣayikam iti* (“the locative is of three types, namely *vyāpaka* ‘pervasive’, *aupasleṣika* ‘having close contact’ and *vaiṣayika* ‘relating to a particular sphere or domain’”).⁴¹ Therefore, it is possible that for Patañjali *sāmīpya* (“proximity”) was not a fully fledged category of locative, but rather a sub-category of *aupasleṣika* (“having close contact”) or *vaiṣayika* (“relating to a particular sphere or domain”), since he also provides the example *gaṅgāyāṃ gāvaḥ* (“the cows are near the Ganges”) as a counter-example to *vyāpaka* (“pervasion”) in a discussion on A. 1.4.42. *sādhakatamaṃ karaṇam*.^{42, 43} It is possible then that Buddhaghosa utilised these strands of discussion in the *Mahābhāṣya* to analyse the term *Verañjāyaṃ* in the *vinaya* as a locative expressing proximity.

³⁸ Katre 1987: 367.

³⁹ MBh 1965: 218. “[The affix ... *ñiṣ* ... is introduced after ... a nominal stem ... (denoting a masculine name) to designate a female by virtue of her relationship with the male (represented by that masculine name) as a wife (*pumyogāt*).”

⁴⁰ Katre 1987: 674.

⁴¹ MBh 1991: 74.

⁴² Katre 1987: 87. “...*karaṇa* ... denotes the means *par excellence* (*sādhaka-tamam*) (in relation to the verbal stem).”

⁴³ MBh 1962: 332.

However, the first evidence of “*sāmīpya*” (proximity) as a distinct category of locative is found in the *Cāndra-vṛtti*. When commenting on the rule C.2.1.88 *saptamī ādhāre* (the seventh case occurs in the sense of locus), the *Cāndra-vṛtti* provides examples to illustrate the functions of the locative:

*ādhāre saptamī vibhaktir bhavati. (1) kaṭa āste (2) ākāśe śakunayaḥ (3) tileṣu tailam (4) gaṅgāyām gāvaḥ (5) adhītī vyākaraṇa ity ādhāra eva saptamī.*⁴⁴

The seventh case occurs in the sense of locus. [For the examples] “he sits on the mat”, “the birds are in the sky”, “the oil is in the seeds”, “the cows are near the river”. “he is proficient in grammar”, the seventh case is only in the sense of locus.

That the example *gaṅgāyām gāvaḥ* (“The cows are near the Ganges”) here is used to represent proximity is revealed by the Pāli grammatical tradition. For instance, the *Moggallāna-vutti*, a commentary on the 12th century Pāli grammar, the *Moggallāna-vyākaraṇa*, uses the *Cāndra-vṛtti* as a basis for its own discussions on the locative case. It adopts the first four examples, including an equivalent for *gaṅgāyām gāvaḥ*, from the *Cāndra-vṛtti*. Its own commentary, the *Moggallāna-pañcīkā* analyses these four examples as representing (1) *opasilesika* (S. *aupaśleṣika*, “having close contact”), (2) *vesayika* (S. *vaiṣayika*, “relating to a particular sphere or domain”), (3) *vyāpaka* (“pervasive”) and (4) *sāmīpika* (“having proximity”).⁴⁵

I have shown elsewhere⁴⁶ that it is likely that the Moggallāna tradition of Pāli grammar used commentaries to the *Cāndra* tradition of Sanskrit grammar, so that its analysis of these examples is probably taken from the *Cāndra* tradition itself. Therefore, according to the *Moggallāna* tradition of Pāli grammar, the example *gaṅgāyām gāvaḥ* in the *Cāndra-vṛtti* represents a locative in the sense of proximity. It is possible then that Buddhaghosa, instead of relying on the *Mahābhāṣya*, also adopted this classification of the locative, along with its example of “cows near the Ganges”, from a later Pāṇinian commentarial tradition that shared this feature with the *Cāndra-vṛtti*.

⁴⁴CV 1953: 181.

⁴⁵MP 1931: 72. *ādhāro cāyaṃ catubbidhā opasilesika-vesayikā-bhivyāpaka-sāmīpika-bhedato ti yathākammaṃ ūdāharati kaṭe iccādi*. “And this locus is four-fold, through the division into close contact, belonging to a particular domain, pervasion and proximity. He explains the examples respectively.”

⁴⁶Gornall, forthcoming.

5. Ideology of Grammar

These hints at the commentarial lineage that mediated Buddhaghosa’s use of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* bring into question the ideological connections of his use of Sanskrit grammar. For instance, as I showed in my introduction, Buddhaghosa’s use of Sanskrit grammar has been used to support the view that he was a Brahmin who converted to Buddhism. The Sanskritisation of post-canonical Pāli has also been described as the result of the interaction of Theravāda Buddhism with Brahmanical education systems. While Brahmanical culture may well have been a factor in Buddhist knowledge of Sanskrit grammar, this should not overshadow the existence of Buddhist education systems and Buddhist claims on the Pāṇinian grammatical tradition. For instance, Deshpande has observed that alongside the Brahmanical claims on the Pāṇinian tradition, some Mahāyāna Buddhists considered Pāṇini to be Buddhist and inspired by Avalokiteśvara.⁴⁷ He states that “beginning perhaps with the *Kāśikā-vṛtti*, we may then say that the Buddhist Pāṇinians gradually dispensed with the ‘Vedic’ ideology connected with the purposes of Pāṇinian grammar and studied it for its very practical utility: to learn and describe the language.”⁴⁸

Furthermore, it is significant, as Pind has shown, that Buddhaghosa’s own commentators almost always explain his grammatical analyses by reference to the *Kāśikā-vṛtti* and possibly the *Cāndra-vṛtti*.⁴⁹ Dharmadāsa, the author of the *Cāndra-vṛtti*, was almost certainly a Buddhist. In addition, Jayāditya, one of the authors of the *Kāśikā-vṛtti*, is often stated to be a Buddhist too.⁵⁰ However, this is a point of controversy and the issue is still largely unclear.⁵¹ In any case, Buddhists during this period were highly involved in Sanskrit grammar and therefore it is quite possible that the Theravāda Buddhist participation in Sanskrit grammatical culture was articulated by Buddhist communities rather than Brahmanical communities. In addition, if my hypothesis proves correct and Buddhaghosa did in fact utilise a source that was common to both the *Kāśikā-vṛtti* and the *Cāndra-vṛtti*, it is possible that this source also sprang from Buddhist literary culture.

⁴⁷ Deshpande 1997: 454.

⁴⁸ Deshpande 1997: 461.

⁴⁹ Pind 1989, 1990.

⁵⁰ Radicchi 2002: 165.

⁵¹ “About the authors of the *Kāśikā-vṛtti*, i.e. Vāmana and Jayāditya, there is controversy about whether they were Buddhists.” Deshpande 1997: 456.

Taking such hints in Buddhaghosa’s commentaries as keys to an alternative intellectual history, it is possible to speculate that the early application of Sanskrit grammar to the Pāli language may be linked with Sanskrit-using Buddhist traditions with which the authors of the *Cāndra-vṛtti* and *Kāśikā-vṛtti* were also familiar. Such an alternative view of Buddhaghosa’s engagement with other Buddhist groups would support Kalupahana’s opinion that Buddhaghosa represents a “syncretic” Theravāda. He states that Buddhaghosa’s great knowledge of other Buddhist sects seeps into his writing and that he introduces many doctrines of sects such as the Sarvāstivāda and Yogācāra into Theravāda material. He imagines an alternative Theravāda history in which “the Theras, who according to Buddhaghosa, invited him to write the commentaries, were actually the monks who were keeping a vigilant eye over the manner in which he interpreted the teachings.”⁵²

6. Conclusions

Buddhaghosa’s references to grammar indicate an engagement by the Theravāda *saṅgha* with a pan-South Asian grammatical culture. His use of Sanskrit grammar in the 5th century comes at a pivotal juncture in the history of the Sanskrit grammatical traditions and his commentaries show how Pāli literature can be used to investigate this period. An analysis of the commentarial lineages he may have been working with reveals that his use of Sanskrit grammar does not prove that he interacted with Brahmanical groups but may rather reflect an openness to other Buddhist literary cultures. Moreover, the Theravāda literati also cultivated their own traditions of Sanskrit grammar, which were separate from both Brahmanical and Mahāyānist usage. Therefore, much work is needed to provide a more nuanced understanding of the Theravāda Buddhist participation in South Asian literary cultures and the influence it had on the later Pāli tradition.

⁵²Kalupahana 1970: 167.

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