

**Commentary as a Tool for the Emendation
of Canonical Readings: A Critical survey on lemmas and
their exegeses in *Therīgāthā Aṭṭhakathā***

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This study critically scans the commentarial lemmas and the interpretations in order to reach better emendations of some terms in current Tipitaka editions. The term lemmas here stand for the canonical terms that have been quoted for the purpose of interpretation in the commentaries. Most of current academic Buddhist studies, which are done in Sri Lanka with reference to the Pali commentaries, can be divided into two categories. The first of those often refers to the Pali commentaries to elucidate the abstruse meaning of canonical readings while the second category takes the commentaries as an isolated source material to investigate the semantic, pragmatic, aesthetic, grammatical and historical aspects of them. However, none of these shows the optimal efficacy of a Pali commentary. This paper proves with substantial evidence, the trustworthiness of the use of commentarial exegeses as a substantial tool to rectify the existing contaminated readings of the Pali canon. Significantly, this paper attempts to draw the attention of Buddhist academia to utilize the commentarial exegeses in the process of critical emendation, which enables to enhance the quality of academic Buddhist studies in Sri Lanka.

Even though the Pali Canon is available in several editions such as Buddha-Jayanti (Sri Lanka), *Chaṭṭhasaṅgīti* (Myanmar), and PTS (England), etc, obvious fact is that each of these editions has their own idiosyncrasy regarding some readings. Sometimes, the same Canonical term is recorded in aforementioned editions in a different way. For instance, we can pay our

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attention to a certain term occurs in *Tapokamma-sutta* of *Samyutta-Nikāya*. This particular term is recorded in these three editions as *vammani*, *dhammani* and *ajahmani* respectively. In order to minimize these types of anomalies, the commentarial interpretations are of paramount significance. Therefore, one of the major objectives of this study is to systematically evaluate the commentarial exegeses. However, due to the breadth of the scope this paper pays the particular attention on the lemmas and their pertinent interpretations in the *Therīgāthā* Commentary.

It is apparent that all of the existing editions of *Therīgāthā* have paid a satisfactory attention on its commentary. In addition, those who have hitherto translated text have also considerably been influenced by its commentarial exegeses. Some editors have been hasty to reach arbitrary substitutions without a substantial basis. However, many of them have not used this commentary in optimized manner in order to reach more trustworthy emendations of *Therīgāthā*. Thus, this paper attempts to fill that gap paying adequate attention to the other parallel canonical, commentarial proofs and corresponding Sanskrit accounts.

Keywords: Enhancement of Buddhist studies, Emendation, Lemmas, Commentarial Exegeses, emendation

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