

**The Pali Theravada Tipitaka:
Major Events in its Transmission from 246 B.C. to 1165
A.D.**

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The Theravada Pali Tipitaka is believed by many to have been the product of the Rajagaha First Sanghiti in 485 B.C. Many scholars in recent Buddhist Studies have refuted this popular belief. The arguments in this presentation support these opinions.

Applying similes of ‘links’ in a chain – the length of the ‘chain’ being the totality of the centuries in which this Canon developed pre-Parinibbana to Parakramabahu’s unification of the Lankan Sangha, and the twenty-five historical events being synonymous with the ‘links’ that constitute almost all chains - the presentation will briefly investigate each event to assess its relative strength or weakness as a ‘transmission agent’.

The elements applied to categorize an event as simply a ‘strong’ or ‘weak’ link have had to be developed through more sophisticated exercises. The primary foundations on which each criteria has been applied to each process have been based on (a) the authentication and authority of the contents (by the application of the ‘four great indicators’ of the *‘Mahapadesa’*), (b) the protection of the Words against insertions and alterations and (c) the integrity and truthfulness of the Doctrine that the ‘coinage’ of the words were intended to convey – the words representing ‘coins’ and the Canonical texts ‘currency’ and its values.

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Guidance for judgments is provided by the Buddha Himself in the Four *Mahapadesas*, based on the seniority and authority of the Elders (*Thera parampara*), as well as the creations of the *bhanakas* and the reputations and veneration of the *acariyas* and the *poranas* and the positions that they have occupied in the *acariya sisya parampara* successions – being the only practices in the age of *srti* by which knowledge could be passed on from one generation to the next – will be assessed.

Resulting from these exercises, an overall judgment can be arrived at, specifically, about the veracity of the popular belief in *Buddha-vacana* as the Word of the Buddha and, more generally, on the authenticity of the Pali Tipitaka as the Theravada Canon in which the Buddha's Teachings have been accurately enshrined.

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