



Research Paper

The Outcaste: Varṇa-system redefined in Pāli commentaries

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Abstract

Generally, only four categories (i.e., Brāhmin, Kśatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra) of the Varṇa-system is discussed. Apart from these four categories, there was another category which was excluded from this system and considered as Outcaste (Avaṇṇa). Generally, the people from five groups or Kulas fall under this category – Caṇḍāla-kula, Vena-kula, Nesāda-kula, Rathakāra-kula, and Pukkusa-kula. People belonging to the Outcaste category were responsible for the forbidden and inferior level of works or duties. Among all kulas of the Outcaste-category, Caṇḍāl-kula was mostly defamed. This study is an attempt to examine the changing nature of Varṇa system with reference to the social condition of Outcaste people depicted in Pāli commentarial literature.

Keywords: varṇa, outcaste, redefined, commentaries, etc.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Varṇa-system has been the mainstay of the Indian social structure since it came into existence. This system has mainly four components– Brāhmin (priest), Kśatriya (aristocrat), Vaiśya (merchant) and Śūdra (worker). The Brāhmin was placed on the top and the Śūdra at the bottom of the Varṇa-system. Position of the Kśatriyas and the Vaiśyas in this system is second and third respectively. This arrangement had been envisaged on the basis of a hymn mentioned in 90th section of 10th chapter of the Ṛgveda (10.90.12).¹ The section is classified as *Puruṣa-sūkta*. This hierarchy has also been endorsed in later-Vedic text *Manusmṛti* which is considered as *Hindū-Dharmaśāstra* (code of conduct for Vedic tradition).²

The duties or responsibilities of these all four Varṇas were determined according to the hierarchy of the Varṇa-system. The work of Brāhmin was teaching, studying, to perform rituals, and to uphold priesthood. The Kśatriyas took care of state-affairs and public

¹ Brāhmaṇāsya mukhamāsīdbāhū rājanyaḥ kṛtaḥ;
Ūrū tadasya yadvaiśyaḥ padbhyām śūdro ajāyata.
{*Ṛgvedaḥ*. Ram, T. (Ed. & Trans.). (2013). (Vol. 1, p. 875). Delhi: Vijaykumar Govindram Hasanand.}

² *Manusmṛtiḥ*. Śāstrī, H. (Ed. & Trans.). (1953). (pp. 28-29). Banaras: Chaukhambā Saṃskṛta Series Office.

protection. The main occupation of the Vaiśyas was trade, business and agriculture. And the task of the Śūdras was to remain engaged in the service of its three upper Varṇas.³ This order and structure of Varṇa-system remained intact till the later Vedic-period. Rather, the nature of this system became even more distorted in the later Vedic-period.

Like Varṇa-system and caste-system, another discriminative system called Āśrama-system was also very popular and practiced widely in Vedic-culture.⁴ It was believed that, by following the Āśrama-system happiness and prosperity can be achieved easily and it also paves the way to salvation (Mokṣa). Just as the social life was divided into four Varṇas, the religious life of an individual or householder was also divided into four Āśramas—*Brahmacharya-āśrama*, *Gṛhastha-āśrama*, *Vānaprastha-āśrama* and *Sanyāsa-āśrama*. This Āśrama-system was considered as an essential element for human's terrestrial and celestial life. But as the Varṇa-system, this system was also discriminative and based on the Varṇa-system in fact. Only three upper Varṇas i.e., Brāhmins, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas were allowed to follow this Āśrama-system. People of the fourth Varṇa (i.e., Śūdras) and women of all Varṇas were not allowed to follow this system. Most of the ancient Vedic literatures including many treatises (like *Manusmṛti*) shed extensive light on the Āśrama-system.⁵

Apart from these four categories of the Varṇa-system, there was another category which was excluded from this system and considered as Outcaste (*avanna/vivanna*). People of this category often lived outside the cities or the villages, far away from the people of the four Varṇas lived. Their entry into main cities or villages was forbidden. Pāli literature admits the word *Kula* to denote different groups of this category. These groups were identified on the basis of their works or livelihood. Generally, the people from five groups or Kulas fall under this category— *Caṇḍāla-kula*, *Vena-kula*, *Nesāda-kula*, *Rathakāra-Kula*, and *Pukkusa-kula*.⁶ *Venas* was bamboo-workers, *Nesādas* was hunters, *Rathakāras* was cart-makers and *Pukkusas* was flower-scavengers. (Bodhi. 2017. 687). Overall people belonging to the Outcaste-category were responsible to do the forbidden and inferior level of works such as, removing or disposing dead cattle, burning corpses, cleaning of sewage, drains and streets, involved in bamboo & wooden works and hunting.

Among all *kulas* of the Outcaste-category, *Caṇḍāl-Kula* was most defamed. People belonging to this *Kula* are often seen to be targeted in Pāli commentarial (Aṭṭhakathā) literature. This study is an attempt to examine the changing nature of Varṇa-system with reference to the social condition of Outcaste people depicted in Pāli commentarial literature. The study deals with the following issues –

- Has the condition of Varṇa-system been portrayed same in Pāli commentarial literature as portrayed there in Pāli canonical literature?

³Brāhmaṇā brāhmaṇassa sandhanaṃ paññapenti bhikkhācariyaṃ; brāhmaṇā khattiyassa sandhanaṃ paññapenti dhanukalāpaṃ; brāhmaṇā vessassa sandhanaṃ paññapenti kasigorakkhaṃ; brāhmaṇā suddassa sandhanaṃ paññapenti asitabyābhaṅgiṃ. Idha bhavaṃ gotamo kimāhā”ti? {*The Majjhima Nikāya – Majjhima Paṇṇāsakaṃ*. Sāṃkṛtyāyana, R. (Ed.). (1958). (pp. 443-44). Nālandā: Nava Nālandā Mahāvihāra.}

⁴ *Manusmṛtiḥ*. Śāstrī, H. (Ed. & Trans.). (1953). (pp. 41-52). Banaras: Chaukhambā Saṃskṛta Series Office.

⁵ Ibid. chap. 2, 3 & 4.

⁶Taṇhi koṭisatasahassadhanānampi sattabhūmikapāsādaratāle vasantānampi caṇḍāla venanesādarathakārapukkusādīnaṃ nīcakulikānaṃ omakapurisānaṃ supinantepi paribhogatthāya na nibbattati. {Buddhaghosa, Ācariyo. *The Suttanipāta-aṭṭhakathā*. Chaudhary, A. (Ed.). (1975). (Vol. 2, p. 19). Nālandā: Nava Nālandā Mahāvihāra.}

- Are there any differences seen in the condition of Outcaste people in Pāli canonical and commentarial literature?

Outcastes in Pāli commentaries

Like the Pāli-canon⁷, Brāhmins and Kśatriyas are dominant Varṇas in commentaries too. It is mentioned in the *Jātaka-Nidānakathā* that the *Bodhisatta*⁸ thought before taking birth as a man that in which clan or Varṇa it would be better to take birth. Thinking about the merits and demerits of all the Varṇas, he came to the conclusion that the Kśatriyas clan is the only surpassing Varṇa in which he should be born.⁹ In *Cittasambhūta-jātaka* the Bodhisatta *Citta-Paṇḍita* states that the *Caṇḍāla* caste is the lowest among the entire human-race. We were born as Caṇḍālas in our past-life only because of our sinful deeds. But today we are born as Kśatriyas and Brāhmins due to good deeds.¹⁰ Thus, by giving equal status to both Brāhmins and Kśatriyas here, an attempt has been made to prove them superior to other Varṇas and castes. But two things are worth noting here. The first is that, an attempt has been made to end the conflict we often encounter in the Pāli-canon between Brāhmins and Kśatriyas by bringing them at equal level. And second thing is that, in the Pāli-canon, Brāhmins are often seen targeting the Śūdras, but here the (Brāhmin) Bodhisatta is trying to create a feeling of hatred towards the Caṇḍāla-caste (i.e., Outcaste people) in the (Kśatriya) King's mind.

Although in *paccuppanna-vatthu* of the *Tittira-jātaka*, Buddha doesn't allow caste-superiority to dominate within the Saṅgha. Once he asks the monks, "who should first be provided bed, water or food?" Monks give different answers. Some of them also suggest that Brāhmin or Kśatriya should be provided first.¹¹ Then the Buddha says that only the person in the Saṅgha will be entitled to get the bed, water, food, etc. firstly, who will be the senior most (i.e., the one who ordained priorly in Buddha-Dhamma).¹²

⁷ A detailed paper has been already published by me on nature and different aspects of the Varṇa-system depicted in Pāli canonical literature. The paper can be accessed through this link: {https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_2vmIt2A5wm0aEpc82kS7fLRn6gKC4yk/view?usp=drivesdk}.

⁸ A being destined to attain fullest enlightenment or Buddhahood. A Bodhisatta passes through many existences & many stages of progress before the last birth in which he fulfils his great destiny. The "amhākaṃ Bodhisatto" or "our Bodhisatta" of the Buddhist Texts refers to Gotama, whose previous existences are related in the Jātaka collection. These tales illustrate the wisdom & goodness of the future Buddha, whether as an animal, a god, or a human being. In his last existence before attaining Buddhahood, he is a man. {Davids, R., & Stede, W. (Eds.). (1952). *The Pāli text society's Pāli-English dictionary*. (Vol. 6, p. 114). London: Pāli Text Society.}

⁹ Buddhaghosa, Ācariyo. *Jātaka-aṭṭhakathā*. (Kausalyāyana, B. Ānanda. Trans.). Tripāṭhī, Śivaśāṅkara (Ed.). (2006). (Vol. 1, p. 81). Prayāga: Hindī Sāhitya Sammelana.

¹⁰ "Caṇḍālāhumha avantīsu, migā nerañjaraṃ pati;
Ukkusā nammadātīre, tyajja brāhmaṇakhattiyā"ti.
{Ibid. 2011. Vol. 5, p. 73.}

¹¹ "Ko nu kho, bhikkhave, aggāsaṇaṃ aggodakaṃ aggapiṇḍaṃ arahatī"ti? Ekacce "khattiyakulā pabbajito"ti āhaṃsu, ekacce "brāhmaṇakulā, gahapatikulā pabbajito"ti {Ibid. 2006. Vol. 1, pp. 291-292.}

¹² "Na, bhikkhave, mayhaṃ sāsane aggāsanādīni patvā khattiyakulā pabbajito pamāṇaṃ, na brāhmaṇakulā pabbajito, na gahapatikulā pabbajito, na vinayadharo, na suttantiko, na ābhidhammiko, na paṭhamajjhānādīlābhino, na sotāpannādayo pamāṇaṃ, atha kho, bhikkhave, imasmiṃ sāsane yathāvuddhaṃ abhivādanaṃ paccuṭṭhānaṃ añjalikammaṃ sāmīcikammaṃ kātabbaṃ, aggāsaṇaṃ aggodakaṃ aggapiṇḍo laddhabbo. {Ibid. p. 292.}

The Vedas are often praised by the Brāhmins in the Tipiṭaka (canon), while the Buddha and his disciples are usually found condemning the Vedas. But there is confusion regarding the Vedas in the Aṭṭhakathā (commentaries). There is a mixed reaction of the Bodhisattas regarding the Vedas in the Jātaka-aṭṭhakathā. Some Bodhisattas are found condemning the Vedas and some praising it. In the *Bhūridatta-jātaka*, when the Bodhisatta's brother *Ariṭṭha* praises Brāhmin and the Vedas excessively¹³, Bodhisatta thinks that *Ariṭṭha* is praising the Vedas due to his *micchā-diṭṭhi*.¹⁴ Thereafter, he strongly criticizes the Vedas and the Brāhmins too through various verses for removing the *micchā-diṭṭhi* of *Ariṭṭha*.¹⁵

Another new thing is seen in Pāli commentaries. In various Jātakas, we see a Brāhmin doing all the abominable and neglectful things for which a person is labelled as lowly and wicked. *Setaketu* Brāhmin does all kinds of deception and lies to get the grace of the king. *Setaketu* was living in the Royal Garden of Benārasa-king with his 500 ascetic companions. When *Setaketu* came to know that the king will visit the garden today, he gathered all the ascetics and said –

“Friends, the king is coming today. If the king is pleased, then we can live happily throughout our life”. Then he instructed them to perform the toughest penance-asceticism which the king would be pleased to see. After that he set himself at the door of the hut on a chair with a head-rest, put a book with a brilliant-coloured wrapping on a painted stand, and explained texts as he was inquired about by four or five intelligent pupils.”¹⁶

Similarly, in *Bhūridatta-jātaka* we see a hunter-Brāhmin of Vārāṇasī who used to hunt wild animals like ‘deer and pig’¹⁷ with his son *Somadatta* for his family's livelihood.¹⁸ The word *Nesādabrāhmaṇo* (hunter-priest) has been used here for that hunter-Brāhmin. He is also seen cheating another Brāhmin.¹⁹ His son *Somadatta* says, ‘lest that Brāhmin deceive you’.²⁰ It seems that, at that time even Brāhmins could feel free to cheat, trick and even kill someone in the greed of money –

“Thus, he weakened the Bodhisatta, made a basket with vines, and put the Satta in it. He (the Bodhisatta) did not fit inside the basket because his body was big. Then he (the *Ālambāyana*²¹ brāhmin) hit from the heel, pushed into

¹³ Ibid. 2017. Vol. 7, p. 53.

¹⁴ Wrong-views; one who holds wrong views. {Davids, R., & Stede, W. (Eds.). (1952). *The Pāli text society's Pāli-English dictionary*. (Vol. 6, p. 156). London: Pāli Text Society.}

¹⁵ Buddhaghoso, Ācariyo. *Jātaka-aṭṭhakathā*. (Kausalyāyana, B. Ānanda. Trans.). Tripāṭhī, Śiṣaśāṅkara (Ed.). (1995). (Vol. 7, pp. 54-66). Prayāga: Hindī Sāhitya Sammelana.

¹⁶ Rājāno ca nāma sakiṃ ārādhavā yāvātāyukaṃ sukhaṃ jīvitum sakkā, ajja ekacce vaggulivatam caratha, ekacce kaṇṭakaseyyam kappetha, ekacce pañcātapam tappetha, ekacce ukkuṭikappadhānamanuyuñjatha, ekacce udakorohaṇakammaṃ karoṭha, ekacce mante sajjhāyathā”ti vicāretvā sayam pakkasāladvāre apassayapīṭhake nisīditvā pañcavaṇṇaraṅgasamujjalavāsanaṃ ekam potthakam vicitravaṇṇe ādhāraṇe ṭhapetvā susikkhitehi catūhi pañcahi māṇavehi pucchite pucchite paṇhe kathesi. {Ibid. 2007. Vol. 3, p. 470.}

¹⁷ Imasmim ṭhāne migam vijjhimhā, imasmim sūkara”nti. {Ibid. 2017. Vol. 7, p. 22.}

¹⁸ Tadā eko bārāṇasīdvāragāmaṃvāsī brāhmaṇo somadattena nāma puttana saddhim araṇṇam gantvā sūlayantapāsavāgurādīhi odḍetvā mige vadhitvā maṃsam kājenāharitvā vikkiṇanto jīvikam kappesi. {Ibid. p. 14.}

¹⁹ Imam brāhmaṇam vañcetvā gaṇhāmetam maṇiratana”nti. {Ibid. p. 25.}

²⁰ Idāni panesa brāhmaṇo taññeva vañcessati. {Ibid.}

²¹ Ālambāyana – Originally the name of a spell taught to an ascetic by a Garuḍa king who had unwittingly torn up by its roots a banyan tree which grew at the end of the ascetic's walk. The ascetic

the basket, took the basket and reached a village and made a loud noise in the middle of the village that those who want to see the snake-dance should come.”²²

The caste-struggle or fight of social-supremacy depicted in Pāli canons, can also be seen in Pāli commentarial literature. But here the nature of that fight is seen somehow different. Before understanding this fight, it would be appropriate to consider the erstwhile social status of the Outcaste-people mentioned in the *Jātaka-aṭṭhakathā*. In ancient times, when King *Brahmadatta* ruled in *Vārāṇasī*, the Bodhisatta was a famous Ācārya and imparted education to five hundred disciples. *Setaketu*, the principal disciple of the Bodhisatta, was very proud of being a Brāhmin. Once while going out of the town, *Setaketu* seen a Caṇḍāla accidentally, he asked the Caṇḍāla that who he is. The Caṇḍāla replied –

“I am a Caṇḍāla.” He (*Setaketu*) feared the wind after striking the Caṇḍāla’s body might touch his own body, so he cried, “Curse you, you ill-omened Caṇḍāla, get to leeward,” and he went quickly to windward...²³

From this example, the then social status of the Outcaste-people can be easily inferred. The word like *caṇḍāladāsiputto*²⁴ suggests that either a maid’s son must have been called a Caṇḍāla or a Caṇḍāla women would have been always referred to as a maid. Outcastes were hated to the extent that they were asked to stay away from the population.²⁵ Thus, settlements of the Outcaste-people used to be outside the cities or villages²⁶ so that the people of the four Varṇa would not see them. If any of them had just a look on them, then s/he had to wash her/his eyes immediately. In *Mātaṅga-jātaka* and *Cittasambhūta-jātaka* we see, when the merchant-daughter of *Vārāṇasī* looks a Caṇḍāla accidentally, she abuses him, immediately returns home and rinses her eyes with fragrant water.²⁷

taught it to a poor brahmin of *Banārasa* who had gone into the forest to escape his creditors and who ministered to the ascetic. The Brāhmin became known as *Ālambāyana* after he learnt the spell. Having learnt it he left the forest and was walking along the banks of the *Yamunā*, when he came across a host of *Nāgas*, sitting, after their sports, round the *Nāga-gem* which grants all desires. The *Nāgas*, hearing the man repeat the charm, fled in terror, believing him to be the *Garuḍa*, and he took possession of their jewel. Soon after, *Ālambāyana* met an outcaste Brāhmin with his son, *Somadatta*, and on their agreeing to show him the *Nāga King*, *Bhūridatta*, he gave them the jewel. With the help of his spell *Ālambāyana* tamed *Bhūridatta* and went about giving exhibitions of the *Nāga's* skill. *Bhūridatta* was finally rescued by his brother *Sudassana* and his sister *Accimukhī*. {*Malalasekera, G. P. (1937). Dictionary of Pāli proper names. (Vol. 1, p. 289). London: John Murray.*}

²² Iti so mahāsattam dubbalaṃ katvā vallīhi peḷaṃ sajjetvā mahāsattam tattha pakkhipi, sarīrassa mahantatāya tattha na pavasati. Atha naṃ pañhiyā koṭṭento pavesetvā peḷaṃ ādāya ekaṃ gāmaṃ gantvā gāmamajjhe otāretvā “nāgassa naccaṃ daṭṭhukāmā āgacchantū”ti saddamakāsi. {*Buddhaghosa, Ācariyo. Jātaka-aṭṭhakathā. (Kausalyāyana, B. Ānanda. Trans.). Tripāṭhī, Śivaśāṅkara (Ed.). (2017). (Vol. 7, p. 31). Prayāga: Hindī Sāhitya Sammelana.*}

²³ “Caṇḍālohamasmī”ti vutte tassa sarīraṃ paharivā āgatavātassa attano sarīre phusanabhayena “nassa, caṇḍāla, kālakaṇṇī, adhovātaṃ yāhī”ti. {*Ibid. 2007. Vol. 3, p. 467.*}

²⁴ The Caṇḍāla who is son of a maid. {*Ibid. p. 468.*}

²⁵ “Ayaṃ tumhākaṃ jātiyā doso, gacchatha katthaci deseva pabbajitvā jīvathā”ti. {*Ibid. 2011. Vol. 5, p. 68.*}

²⁶ Tadā mahāsatto bahinagare caṇḍālayoniyam nibbatti. {*Ibid. pp.51.*};

Tadā ujjeniya bahi caṇḍālagāmakā ahoṣi. {*Ibid. pp.66.*}

²⁷ “Adiṭṭhapubbayuttakaṃ vata passāmī”ti gandhodakena akkhīni dhovivā. {*Ibid. pp. 51-52.*}; “Caṇḍālaputtā”ti sutvā “apassitabbayuttakaṃ vata passimhā”ti gandhodakena akkhīni dhovivā nivattiṃsu. {*Ibid. p. 66.*}

If any person from the Brāhmin-varṇa used to eat their pickings, he was expelled from his caste.²⁸ The word *duṭṭha* (wicked) was used for Outcaste people.²⁹ The language of the Outcastes also used to be different. They were also discriminated on the basis of language.³⁰ And as far as their livelihood is concerned, they depended on the food given by others.³¹ Although there is also evidence of well-educated and savant Caṇḍāla (*caṇḍāladāsiputto paṇḍito*)³² in the Jātakas, but they either acquired education by self-study or by concealing their identity.³³ Because *Vedādhyayana*³⁴ was not allowed for them. Here we find that people of all four Varṇas were disgusted with Outcastes. And the priests (Brāhmins) were also provoking the Kings (Kṣātriyas) against them from time to time.³⁵

Before arriving at any conclusion, we need to consider some more facts. In the *Viḍūḍabhavattḥū* of *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā*, we see that the Kṣātriyas who were proud of the purity of their blood are clashed with each other so fiercely on the issue of the purity of the blood that the Sākya-dynasty came to an end.³⁶ Here we can observe an interesting fact that being a part of the Varṇa-system and living with all the three Varṇas, the Śūdras seem calm amidst all this boasting and turmoil. They were probably doing their duty silently which was given to them (i.e., the service of three of its upper Varṇas). However, we also come to know from the Pāli commentaries that the Śūdras did not respect even the Śūdras or lower caste people. *Mahānāma Sākya*'s maid speaks profanity to *Viḍūḍabha*³⁷ because he was a maid-son.³⁸ As we usually see that even women themselves do not respect women, it is something like that.

²⁸ Atha ne brāhmaṇā “Imehi caṇḍāluccitṭhakaṃ pīta”nti abrāhmaṇe kariṃsu. Te lajjitā bārāṇasito nikkhamitvā majjharatṭhaṃ gantvā majjharaṇño santike vasīṃsu. {Ibid. p. 63.}

²⁹ Duṭṭha-Caṇḍāla. {Ibid. p. 52.}

³⁰ “Caṇḍālabhāsā”ti {Ibid. p. 67.}

³¹ Jānāsi maṃ tvam paradattūpajīvim. {Ibid. p. 55.}

³² Ibid. 2007. Vol. 3, p. 467.

³³ Jātiṃ paṭicchādetvā brāhmaṇamānavavaṇṇena takkasilaṃ gantvā sippaṃ uggaṇhissāmā”ti. {Ibid. 2011. Vol. 5, p. 67.}

³⁴ Vedādhyayana literally means ‘learning and studying the Vedas’. A detailed description of who and how to read Vedas is given in the Manusmṛti – {*Manusmṛtiḥ*. Śāstrī, H. (Ed. & Trans.). (1953). (pp. 53-56). Banaras: Chaukhambā Saṃskṛta Series Office.}

³⁵ “Jāti narāṇaṃ adhamā janinda, caṇḍālayoni dvipadākaniṭṭhā;

Sakehi kammehi supāpakehi, caṇḍālagabbhe avasimha pubbe.

{Buddhaghoso, Ācariyo. *Jātaka-aṭṭhakathā*. (Kausalyāyana, B. Ānanda. Trans.). Tripāṭhī, Śivaśaṅkara (Ed.). (2011). (Vol. 5, p. 73). Prayāga: Hindī Sāhitya Sammelana.}

³⁶ Buddhaghoso, Ācariyo. *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā*. (Dwārikādāsaśāstrī, Swāmī. Trans.). Singh, Paramānanda (Ed.). (2000). (Vol. 1, p. 494). Vārāṇasī: Bauddha Ākara Granthamālā.

³⁷ Son of King Pasenadi and Vāsabhakhattiyā (Vāsabhakhattiyā). When the boy was quite young, Pasenadi conferred on him the rank of Senāpati. When Viḍūḍabha was seven years old, he wished to visit his maternal grandparents (in Kapilavatthu), but Vāsabhakhattiyā persuaded him against this. When he reached the age of sixteen, accompanied by a large retinue, he set out for Kapilavatthu. The Sākya sent all the younger princes away, there being thus none to pay obeisance to him in answer to his salute. On the day of his departure, one of his retainers overheard a contemptuous remark passed by a slave woman who was washing, with milk and water, the seat on which Viḍūḍabha had sat. This was reported to him, and, having discovered the deceit which had been practised on his father, he vowed vengeance on the Sākya. {Malalasekera, G. P. (1937). *Dictionary of Pāli proper names*. (Vol. 2, p. 876). London: John Murray.}

³⁸ Buddhaghoso, Ācariyo. *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā*. (Dwārikādāsaśāstrī, Swāmī. Trans.). Singh, Paramānanda (Ed.). (2000). (Vol. 1, p. 482). Vārāṇasī: Bauddha Ākara Granthamālā.

Through the table given below, we can comparatively consider the Varṇa-system described in the Pāli canons and its commentaries –

| Pāli canons | Pāli commentaries |
|--|--|
| Brāhmaṇa-Kśatriya fight | Brāhmaṇa-Outcaste fight |
| Kśatriya & Vaiśya fight with brāhmins | Kśatriya & Vaiśya fight with Outcastes Kśatriya fights Kśatriya itself |
| Śūdras– fluently mentioned/targeted Outcaste– occasionally mentioned/targeted | Śūdras– occasionally mentioned/targeted Outcaste– fluently mentioned/targeted |
| Brāhmaṇa & Kśatriya are prominent | Brāhmaṇa & Kśatriya are prominent here too |

II. CONCLUSION

In the Pāli commentarial literature, we find that the Brāhmins were also doing all the low-labelled works, but here the above three Varṇas were fighting together with the Outcastes. On the one hand, the Brāhmin-Bodhisatta is seen inciting the Kśatriya-king against the Outcastes, while the Vaiśya-society starts hating them so much that if they look at any Outcaste-person by mistake, they have to wash their eyes. Śūdras seem to perform their duty silently during this period and sometimes Śūdras can also be seen targeting the lower caste or Outcaste people. This is the subject to further study that what was the reason behind these changes taking place in the ancient social structure.

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