

Myths and Legends of the Sutta-Piṭaka: A Structural and Thematic Study

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Buddhism as a non-theistic religion teaches us the way that one should direct his/her attention to the emancipation. On the other hand, it does not proscribe if one wishes to fulfill his or her aspirations in this very life. When the Buddha preached he had to deliver the discourses relevant to the audience and specially, cognitive components of the listeners. At such moment, he used some similes, motifs, metaphors and stories for better understanding of the discourses. Those similes, motifs, metaphors and stories consist of folktales, legends and myths or mythical themes. It is one of techniques used by the Buddha to deliver the *Dhamma*. Myths are not lies as generally believed. As Mircea Eliade (*Myths and Reality, World Perspective Series, London, 1964, pp.18-19*) states a myth has five characteristics. All these points belong to the studies of myths which started as a prominent subject in recent years. This study carries along with the topic would be basically depended on the Sutta-piṭaka, definitely carries the Buddha's own word. It is quiet significant that the Buddha used myths and are found in the Sutta-piṭaka is not that could questioned. Why it is saying that one can not say Buddhism is beyond the myths. As it is probably said myth is not just a saying, miracle, metaphor, story or magic. In this manner, it is of course, one of symbolical techniques that Buddha used for better of *Dhamma*. In that sense, it is sure that the myths which are available in the Sutta-piṭaka start to prove the significant analyses of Buddhist teachings.

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