

A Critical Analysis of Ācārya Buddhaghosa's Attitude towards Women

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Introduction

Woman has a huge contribution not only in the origin of mankind, but also in building the society. The study of the status and role of women is very important during the study of any social setup. If we review the social status of women in ancient Indian society, then it can be easily noticed that the male-dominated society was often failed in providing proper status to women and accepting their participation in the construction and development of the society. Ancient Indian authorship have also made no remarkable efforts to strengthen the social status of women. Women have always been portrayed as a dependent and a burden of men. In almost every religion and sect of the world, women are held in chains of restrictions and women have not been able to break those chains completely till the date. They have been kept marginalized in the records (religious texts) of almost every religious tradition. Study of social status of women based on Pāli-Atthakathā literature by Indian scholars and historians is almost negligible. So, the main objective of this paper is to critically analyze the status of women described in Suttanipāta-Atthakathā¹. By doing so, the social-status of women around 4th-5th century AD can be assessed and at the same time we can also infer what was the attitude of the great Buddhist scholar and litterateur Buddhaghosa towards women.

Ācārya Buddhaghosa is one of the foremost commentator of Pāli canonical literature of 4th-5th century AD. He has commented on most of the texts of Pāli-Tipiṭaka. When a commentator makes a comment on a text, it is often considered his own thought or point of view. However, at some places Ācārya Buddhaghosa has also admitted that he has only translated the Siṃhalese

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¹ This study is limited to the Suttanipāta-atthakathā. Suttanipāta is considered most important and oldest among Pāli canonical texts due to its classical form of language and narration style. And during survey of the sources I got to know that its Atthakathā contains sufficient references to substantiate my hypothesis and research problem. That is why I selected the Suttanipāta-atthakathā for this study.

Aṭṭhakathās in Māgadhī which were already available in Siṃhala² (Law. 2007. 75). But since Siṃhalese Aṭṭhakathās are no longer available and it is also not clearly known which of his works are original and which are translated, we shall assume that Buddhaghosa is the main composer or commentator of Pāli-Aṭṭhakathā literature.

Women in Vedic-literature & Pāli-Tiṭṭaka

In Ṛgvedic period, women had an important place in the society and family. Women were the focal point of the family in this era. In the Ṛgveda, the woman is described as an empress (Vidyālaṅkāra. 2017. 212). Like the son, the daughter also performed the *Upanayana* rites before *Vidyārambha* and she also studied various subjects following *Brahmacharya* (Upādhyāya. 1941. 175). Although Ṛgvedic women enjoyed liberty and freedom in the society but however, not all women had these rights and freedom. There were only few who belonged to higher-class or Royal family. This means that the position of Ṛgvedic women was also not as good as it is promulgated. Upādhyāya (1941) also states that, ‘it is surprising, however, that no desire for the birth of a daughter is ever expressed in the entire range of the Ṛgveda and her birth is even deprecated in the Atharvaveda³ (Upādhyāya. 1941. 185). From the post-Vedic period, the condition of women started to being lamentable gradually. In this period the condition of women had become so pathetic that they were kept away from academic activities (chanting or listening vedas) as well as the social evils that degrade them like polyandry, prostitution etc. became an integral part of social and economic life. The dowry (*itthidhana*) system was also prevalent in a respectable form (Vidyālaṅkāra. 2017. 236). Women, who were supremely obedient to their husbands, considered ideal and faithful wives (Sarao. 2010. 66). As a result of these types of anti-feminine mentality, the independent existence of women came to an end and her personality is considered to be owned

² Samayaṃ avilomento, therānaṃ theravaṃsapadīpānaṃ; Sunipuṇavinicchayānaṃ, mahāvihāre nivāsīnaṃ; Hitvā punappunāgatamatthaṃ, atthaṃ pakāsayissāmi. [Buddhaghosa, Ācārya. *Sumaṅgalavilāsīnī*. Tatia, Nathmal & Tiwary Mahesh (Eds.). (1974). (Vol. 1, p. 4). Nālandā: Nava Nālandā Mahāvihāra.]

³ “Prajāpatiranutīḥ sinīvālyā cīkṛpat; Straiṣūyamanyatra dadhatpumāṃsamu dadhadiha” (AV 6.11.3) – Let Prajapati, the father, be sober and agreeable at heart. Let the mother too be strong and graceful. Thus the conception would be male. Otherwise the conception would be female. [*Atharvavedaḥ*. Ram, T. (Trans.). (2013). (Vol. 1, p. 540). Delhi: Vijaykumar Govindram Hasanand.]

by the husband or any other male dominant in the house. Manu expresses the idea that a woman is never capable of being independent⁴ (Bühler. 1886. 328). Although apologists often defend Manu referring two most common verses which are in favor of women⁵. But at the same time they ignore those more than 30 verses that are extremely full of prejudicing, hatred and discriminative towards women⁶.

Although the Buddha has a positive role in upliftment of women in the society, some instances are also mentioned there in Pāli-Tiṭṭaka which reflect the negative attitude of the contemporary society towards women. There is a very common incident in *Cullavaggapāli* of Vinaya text which is always used to criticise the Buddha's attitude towards women is— primarily denial of establishment of the Bhikkhunī-Saṅgha. When Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, foster-mother of the Buddha, approaches him and expressed her desire to enter the Buddhist-Order, Buddha refused to initiate her as a nun⁷. Later, venerable Ānanda manages to convince the Buddha to accept her request and thus the Bhikkhunī-Saṅgha was established. But at the same time some strict rules were also imposed on Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and other forthcoming Bhikkhunīs in order to maintain the discipline of both Bhikkhu and Bhikkhunī Saṅgha⁸. Further we see that after Mahāparinibbāna of the Buddha venerable Ānanda was found guilty for some of his past deeds during the *first Buddhist-council*. Two out of five accusations were directly against to the equality

⁴ “Pitā rakṣati kaumāre bhartā rakṣati yauvane; Rakṣanti sthavire putrā na strī swātantryam arhati”. [Manusmṛtiḥ. Śāstrī, Hargovind. (Trans.). (1953). (p. 479). Vārāṇasī: Chaukhambā Saṃskṛta Series Office.]

⁵ (i) “Dvidhā kṛtvā-atmano deham ardhena puruṣo abhavat; Ardhena nārī tasyaṃ sa virājam asṛjat prabhuḥ”. (ii) “Yatra nāryastu pūjyante ramante tatra devatāḥ; Yatra etāstu na pūjyante sarvāstatra-a-falāḥ kriyāḥ”. [Manusmṛtiḥ. Śāstrī, Hargovind. (Trans.). (1953). (p. 10 & 113). Vārāṇasī: Chaukhambā Saṃskṛta Series Office.]

⁶ *Manusmṛtiḥ*. Śāstrī, Hargovind. (Trans.). (1953). (p. 88, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 156, 187, 232, 287, 289, 290, 466, 479, 481, 494, 497, 502, 531). Vārāṇasī: Chaukhambā Saṃskṛta Series Office.

⁷ “Alaṃ, Gotamī, mā te rucci mātugāmassa tathāgatappavedite dhammavinaye agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajja”ti. [Cullavaggapāli. Dwārikādāsaśāstrī. (Trans.). (2008). (p. 570). Vārāṇasī: Bauddha Bhāratī.]

⁸ “Sacce, ānanda, mahāpajāpatī Gotamī aṭṭha garudhamme paṭiggaṇhāti, sāvassā hotu upasampadā”ti. [Cullavaggapāli. Dwārikādāsaśāstrī. (Trans.). (2008). (p. 573). Vārāṇasī: Bauddha Bhāratī.]

of women for that the Ānanda prosecuted was. Dukkata-offence was imposed on venerable Ānanda under chairmanship of venerable Mahākassapa for getting the Buddha's body to be worshiped first by women and for allowing women to enter the Buddhist-Order⁹. In *Mahāpadānasutta* of *Dīghanikāyapāḷi*, it is clearly mentioned that the *Bodhisatta* will be born as a male¹⁰. Further in the same sutta it is informed that there are 32 signs of greatness of the Enlightened-One and he must have a male-organ is the one of them¹¹. It has been discussed in the *Cullavaggapāḷi* and *Majjhimanikāyapāḷi* also that, a woman can pass through the four stages of *Arahantaship* (ie. *Sottāpanna*, *Sakadāgāmī*, *Anāgāmī* and *Arhat*) but they cannot become an awakened-one (Kumar. 2019. youtu.be/c7ZGQLq7Amc).

But despite the above anti-feminine references in *Pāḷi-Tiṭṭaka*, we cannot say that Buddha was of anti-feminine mentality. The great humanitarian and social-reformer Buddha who seeks the welfare of all beings and his associates like Ānanda who had a liberal and positive attitude towards women, noticed the pathetic condition of women and made remarkable efforts to provide them respectable and equal status in the society. Establishment of *Bhikkhunī-Saṅgha* is considered a commendable and a big revolutionary step in this direction. Many other remarkable efforts made by the Buddha in the field of women's emancipation. In *Sīṅgālasutta* Buddha narrates five ways in which a husband should maintain the responsibility to his wife¹² (Walshe, 1996. 467). While

⁹ “Idampi te, āvuso ānanda, dukkaṭaṃ, yaṃ tvaṃ mātuḡāmehi bhagavato sarīraṃ paṭhamam vandāpesi, tāsam rodantīnaṃ bhagavato sarīraṃ assukena makkhitaṃ. Desehi taṃ dukkaṭa”nti ; “Idampi te, āvuso ānanda, dukkaṭaṃ yaṃ tvaṃ mātuḡāmassa tathāgatappavedite dhammavinaye pabbajjam ussukkaṃ akāsi. Desehi taṃ dukkaṭa”nti. [*Cullavaggapāḷi*. Dwārikādāsaśāstrī. (Trans.) . (2008). (p. 636). Vārāṇasī: Bauddha Bhāratī.]

¹⁰ “Dhammatā esā, bhikkhave, yadā bodhisatto mātukucchimhā nikkhamati, appattova bodhisatto pathaviṃ hoti, cattāro naṃ devaputtā paṭiggahetvā mātu purato ṭhhammat - ‘attamanā, devi, hohi; mahesakkho te putto uppanno’ti. Ayamettha dhammatā.” [*Dīghanikāyapāḷi*. Dwārikādāsaśāstrī. (Trans.) . (2009). (Vol. 2, p. 273). Vārāṇasī: Bauddha Bhāratī.]

¹¹ ‘Ayañhi, deva, kumāro kosohitavattaguyho’ (Dvattiṃsamahāpurisalakkhaṇā). [*Dīghanikāyapāḷi*. Dwārikādāsaśāstrī. (Trans.) . (2009). (Vol. 2, p. 276). Vārāṇasī: Bauddha Bhāratī.]

¹² “Pañcahi kho, gahapatiputta, ṭhānehi sāmikena pacchimā disā bhariyā paccupaṭṭhātabbā – sammānanāya anavamānanāya anaticariyāya issariyavossaggena alaṅkāranuppādānena”. [*Dīghanikāyapāḷi*. Dwārikādāsaśāstrī. (Trans.) . (2009). (Vol. 3, p. 745). Vārāṇasī: Bauddha Bhāratī.]

preaching a *Māṇava* in *Cūḷakammavibhaṅgasutta* Buddha indicates that there is equal result for any good or bad deeds by a man or woman¹³ (Bodhi. 1995. 1053). Considering the noble-eightfold-path (*ariyo-aṭṭhaṅgiko-maggo*) as a vehicle to Nibbāna, Buddha allows to travel men and women both in this vehicle equally¹⁴ (Tin. 1998. 86). So the Buddha considered women as capable as men, at least mentally and intellectually. When king *Pasenadi* of Kosala was unhappy after getting the news about the birth of his baby-girl, the Buddha removed his cogitation¹⁵ (Tin, 1998. 212). How self-respectful and confident were women, under Buddha's compassionate canopy, is very clear by Bhikkhunī Somā's incident.¹⁶ (Tin, 1998. 291). If we consider the *Māra* as the social-evils like patriarchy or gender-bias of then society, we can easily notice that women (like Therī Somā, Khemā, Sujātā, Kisāgotamī, Chittā, Mukṭā etc. who had been protected by the Buddha and the Saṅgha) were eagerly struggling for their liberation from these social-evils. The establishment of the Bhikkhunī-Saṅgha, by allowing Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī to enter the order as very first nun, was a milestone among all the efforts made by the Buddha towards women's empowerment.

Ācārya Buddhaghosa's attitude towards Women

While elaborating the term *liṅgasampatti*, Ācārya Buddhaghosa explains that *pañidhi* (or resolution of a person to attain buddhahood) can only be accomplished by a man, not by a

¹³ “Idha, māṇava, ekacco itthī vā puriso vā paṇātipātī hoti luddo lohitaṇṇi hatapahate nivitṭho adayāpanno paṇabhūtesu. So tena kammena evaṃ samattena evaṃ samādinna kāyassa bhedā param Māraṇā apāyaṃ duggatiṃ vinipātaṃ nirayaṃ upapajjati”. [*Majjhimanikāyapāḷi*. Dwārikādāsaśāstrī. (Trans.) . (2011). (Vol. 3, p. 1305-11). Vārāṇasī: Bauddha Bhāratī.]

¹⁴ “Yassa etādisaṃ yānaṃ, itthiyā purisassa vā; sa ve etena yānena, nibbānasseva santike”ti. [*Samyuttanikāyapāḷi*. Dwārikādāsaśāstrī. (Trans.) . (2008). (Vol. 1, p. 54). Vārāṇasī: Bauddha Bhāratī.]

¹⁵ “Itthīpi hi ekacciyā, seyyā posa janādhīpa; Medhāvinī sīlavatī, sassudevā patibbatā. Tassā yo jāyati poso, sūro hoti disampati; Tādisā subhagiyā putto, rajjampi anusāsati”ti. [*Samyuttanikāyapāḷi*. Dwārikādāsaśāstrī. (Trans.) . (2008). (Vol. 1, p. 142). Vārāṇasī: Bauddha Bhāratī.]

¹⁶ “Itthibhāvo kiṃ kayirā, cittamhi susamāhite; Ñāṇamhi vattamānamhi, sammā dhammaṃ vipassato. “Yassa nūna siyā evaṃ, itthāhaṃ purisoti vā; Kiñci vā pana aññasmi, taṃ māro vattuMārahatī”ti. [*Samyuttanikāyapāḷi*. Dwārikādāsaśāstrī. (Trans.) . (2008). (Vol. 1, p. 214). Vārāṇasī: Bauddha Bhāratī.]

woman¹⁷. Term *liṅgasampattī* is described as compulsorily having a male-organ or faculty of masculinity. It means if a human-being wants to become a Buddha he must be a male (having a male-faculty or *puruṣa-liṅga*). Other humans than males including impotents and transgenders have been excluded from the process of becoming a Buddha. Only in the form of human-masculinity, one can have fulfilment of his desire to become a Buddha (Pj II. 48)¹⁸. During explaining and interpreting these conditions to become a Bodhisatta or a Buddha, Ācārya Buddhaghosa tries to establish the fact that only a male person is eligible to fulfill these conditions and able to take a strong resolution to become a Bodhisatta or a Buddha. Further it has been said that, while aspiring to become an Enlightened-One (Buddha), one should be committed to acquire five types of properties (wealths); and masculinity or birth as a male human-being must be one of those. (Pj II. 51).

While explaining the term *vītalobho*, Ācārya Buddhaghosa elaborates- ‘the greed (lobho), that sometimes occurs in mother and women of mother's age, in sister and women of sister's age, in daughter and girls of daughter's age, is said to be greed in this way’ (Pj II. 22). In the *Dhaniyasutta*, *Dhaniya-Gopa* praises his wife – “My wife listens to me, pays attention to me, is not greedy, she is living with me for a long time and is dear (sweet-hearted). I don't hear any bad-thing about her at all”¹⁹. While commenting on this gāthā (see footnote no. 19), Ācārya Buddhaghosa explains the term *alolā* – ‘a woman is fickle with five greeds – 1.food greed, 2.jewellery greed, 3.other man's greed, 4.money greed, and 5.greed to roam around. ... due to greed for the other man, if there is a favorable place, a woman can commit sinful deeds at the invitation of even her son. ... and since Dhaniya's wife has no such greeds, he calls her *alolā* i.e. non-greedy’

¹⁷ ‘Mātugāma napuṃsaka ubhato byañjanakānañhi manussajātiyaṃ ʈitānampi paṇidhi na samijjhati. Tattha ʈitena pana buddhattaṃ patthentena dānādīni puññakammāni katvā purisabhāvoyeva patthetabbo. tattha ʈatvā paṇidhi kātabbo. evañhi samijjhati”. [Buddhaghosa, Ācārya. *Suttanipāta-aṭṭhakathā*. Chaudhary, Anraj (Ed.). (1974). (Vol. 1, p. 60). Nālandā: Nava Nālandā Mahāvihāra.]

¹⁸ Paramatthajotijā II – Buddhaghosa's commentary on Suttanipāta – published by Pāli Text Society, London – 1916 edition – page no. 48.

¹⁹ “Gopī mama assavā alolā, dīgharattaṃ saṃvāsīyā manāpā. Tassā na suṇāmi kiñci pāpaṃ...” [Dhaniya-sutta In *Suttanipāta*. Dhammarakkhita, Bhikkhu. (Ed. & Trans.). (1995). (p. 6). Delhi: Motilal Banarasidas Publishers Pvt. Ltd.]

(Pj II. 35, 36). The distorted form of maleist mentality in this comment can be clearly felt. Where women have been portrayed as greedy and adulterous.

Further, during explanation of the term ‘*tassā na sunāmi kiñci pāpaṃ*’, we can see that; it is also a sinful thing for a woman to laugh and interact with a man other than her husband or relative (Pj II. 36). It has been strongly and repeatedly emphasized that a woman should always obey her husband's command, she must be obedient to her husband in any circumstance – ‘my *obedient wife* and I’, ‘I and my *obedient wife* will both practice Buddhism’ (Pj II. 36, 42). While commenting on this gāthā²⁰, ācārya Buddhaghosa further states that – ‘it is very difficult to know the mind of a person, especially of a woman’ (Pj II. 36).

There is a gāthā in the *Khaggavisāṇasutta*, in which the term *samsaggo*²¹ has been explained as the cause of suffering – “companionship (of women) brings affection and the suffering arises due to this affection. Seeing the blame that love carries, keep away from company; walk alone like the rhino's horn”²². There are many instances in the *Suttanipāta-Aṭṭhakathā* that show malicious and discriminatory feelings towards women under the guise of this concept. There is an example of the tribulation arising from the appearance of extraordinary beauty of a naked woman by *Mahātissa-Thera* who was wandering in *Kalyāṇī* village or *Kalyāṇīgāma* for alms. There is another example of the tribulation caused by listening to the song of a woman picking flowers and singing with melodious voice (Pj II. 7). When a young man hears a beautiful and attractive woman singing aloud, he has a desire to copulate with the young woman and thus deviates from his path to liberation or cessation of suffering (Pj II. 70). Another example is related to the *Pacceka-Buddha* who took birth as a son of the king of *Vārāṇasī*. He had ‘special-knowledge’ about the difference between man and woman. Due to this, he does not like the touch of the hands of a woman, he does not like any contact of females, he could not tolerate if any

²⁰ “Cittam mama assavaṃ vimuttaṃ, (iti bhagavā); Dīgharattaṃ paribhāvitaṃ sudantaṃ. Pāpaṃ pana me na vijjati, atha ce patthayasī pavassa deva”. [Dhaniya-sutta In *Suttanipāta*. Dhammarakkhita, Bhikkhu. (Ed. & Trans.). (1995). (p. 6). Delhi: Motilal Banarasidas Publishers Pvt. Ltd.]

²¹ Contact, connection, association. [Davids, R., & Stede, W. (Eds.). (1952). *The Pāli text society's Pāli-English dictionary*. (Vol. 8, p. 117). London: Pāli Text Society.]

²² Samsaggajātassa bhavanti snehā, snehanvayaṃ dukkhamidaṃ pahoti. Ādīnavaṃ snehajaṃ pekkhamāno, eko care khaggavisāṇakappo. [Khaggavisāṇa-sutta In *Suttanipāta*. Dhammarakkhita, Bhikkhu. (Ed. & Trans.). (1995). (p. 10). Delhi: Motilal Banarasidas Publishers Pvt. Ltd.]

female maid rubbed, bathed or adorned his body parts. He also breastfed only when the lactating woman was in disguise of a male. By smelling a woman or hearing her voice, he started crying. Even when he become adult, he did not wish to see women. Due to this, people started calling him *anitthigandho or anitthigandhakumāra*²³ (Pj II. 68). This is the extremity of the anti-feminine mindset. The mentality of the commentator of Suttanipāta is not so different from Manu's who, in many places in his text *Manusmṛti*, has prohibited men to get in touch or contact with women²⁴ (Bühler. 1886. 69).

In the erstwhile society, the male-class was so dominant that the word 'son' had become synonyms with the word 'child'. Only a few examples are found in the Aṭṭhakathā literature where the birth of a daughter has been outlined and highlighted, but often there are examples of celebrating the birth of a son only – 'daughters and *sons*, all of them together are called *puttā*' (Pj II. 38); 'she gave birth to a *son*' (Pj II. 89, 188); 'who have *sons* is happy with his *sons*'; 'he who has *son* mourns because of his *son*' (Pj II. 45); 'do not wish for any of these four types of *sons*', 'do not even wish for a *son*' (Pj II. 63, 66); 'she entered the maternity-house and gave birth to a *son*' (Pj II. 59); 'then he went to another state with his *son* and wife' (Pj II. 61); 'at that time the king of Vārāṇasī had twenty thousand mistresses, but he did not get a *son* from any one'(Pj II. 79); 'the queen saw in her dream that she went to the garden and got a *son* (newly born baby-boy), she then rejoiced- "I received a *son*" (Pj II. 80); 'in the past, two Bodhisattas emerged at the period of *Kassapa-Buddha* and they later born in *Devaloka*. After completing twenty thousand years, the elder-one born as *son* of the King of Vārāṇasī and the younger-one born as *son* of a priest in Vārāṇasī' (Pj II. 86). There are plenty of such examples where the birth of a son is glorified and celebrated. This shows that the importance of women in the erstwhile society was very low and pathetic and discussions on the betterment of their conditions is almost absent in the Pāli-Aṭṭhakathā literature.

²³ A Bodhisatta who did not like the smell of women. [Malalasekera, G. P. (1937). Dictionary of Pāli proper names. (Vol. 1, p. 76). London: John Murray.]

²⁴ (i)Svabhāva eṣa nārīṇāṃ narāṇāmiha duṣaṇam; atoarthāna Pramādyanti pramadāsu vipāścitaḥ. (ii)Avidvāṃsamalaṃ loke vidvāṃsamapi vā punaḥ; pramadā hyutapathaṃ netuṃ kāmakrodhavaśānugam. (iii)Mātrā svastrā duhitrā vā na viviktāsano bhavet; balavānindriyagrāmo vidvāṃsamapi karṣati. [*Manusmṛtiḥ*. Śāstrī, Hargovind. (Trans.). (1953). (p. 88). Vārāṇasī: Chaukhambā Saṃskṛta Series Office.]

As it is clear from the facts and references mentioned above, in Pāli canonical literature we get mixed views towards women. After emergence of Buddha at the end of the post-Vedic period, on the one hand we get to see a notable improvement in the condition of women, on the other hand the impact of the discriminatory attitude of then society towards women also reflects clearly in Pāli canonical literature. This discriminatory attitude of society towards women emerges even more strongly in latterly post-canonical literature or Pāli-Atthakathā literature. The severity of the patriarchal mindset of the society can be seen once again in the Pāli-Atthakathā literature as it can be found in the post-Vedic literature. We find that the commentator of the Suttanipāta, like the malevolent author of the Atharvaveda, is glorifying the birth of a boy rather than a girl. Just as the Manu shows a discriminatory attitude towards women and mentally harasses them as well as instructing men to stay away from women in Manusmṛti, Ācārya Buddhaghosa also demonstrates the same sentiment in Suttanipāta-Atthakathā.

Conclusion

The declination in status of women in ancient Indian society can be clearly felt in most of the Pāli commentarial literatures. While women are allowed to be attained the Arahantaship and Buddhahood in the Pāli-Tiṭṭaka , they have been restricted from becoming even a Bodhisatta in later Pāli commentaries. In Pāli-Tiṭṭaka , both good and bad conditions of women are mixed-up, but in the Pāli-Atthakathā, the condition of women is often pathetic. If we observe the status of women in post-Vedic literature and that of post-Canonical (Pāli-Atthakathā) literature, the situation looks similar. Thus, it can be said that the condition of women was very pathetic in the post-Vedic period, after that their condition improved during the Buddha-period by the efforts of great social reformer Buddha and his associate Ānanda. But after the Buddha's Mahāparinibbāna, the condition of women gradually started deteriorating and by the 4th-5th century AD, their condition was again the same as it was in the post-Vedic period. Buddhaghosa was a great Buddhist scholar. Further more in-depth study is needed to investigate why women appear marginalized in his Atthakathās.

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