

## **Theravāda Buddhism and Its Relationship with Mahāyāna:**

A Comparison between Pāli Texts and Their Commentaries

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### **1. Introduction**

Pāli or Theravāda Buddhism is considered to be fundamentally different from Mahāyāna Buddhism. However, in Pāli literature, we find certain concepts that are extremely similar to those of Mahāyāna, for example, a Bodhisattva's original vows and prediction of becoming a Buddha, the perfection of a Bodhisattva's practices, Buddha's infinite light, and the simultaneous existence of several Buddhas in each direction.

These concepts appear in later Pāli scriptures such as the *Apadāna* (Ap), the *Buddhavamsa* (Bv), and the *Cariyāpitaka* (Cp), which are included in the collection of *Khuddhaka Nikāya*.<sup>1</sup>

A comparison of these texts and their commentaries reveals certain interesting phenomena. They can be divided into three types. The first (Type-A) is that the Mahāyānic elements found in the above mentioned texts are missing in the later textual commentaries.<sup>1</sup> The second (Type-B) is that a few Mahāyānic ideas missing in these texts appear in certain later commentaries. The third (Type-C) is that Mahāyānic ideas found in these texts are interpreted based on the