

History of *Paritta Suttas*

Khaing Khaing Saw*

Abstract

The *paritta* has taken root in the Buddhist society. When did it begin? How did it begin? How did it grow? This research study is directed towards the history of *parittas* with a view to answering these questions.

In this paper, regarding the *parittas* the meaning of the term is explained and the stream of *parittas* through successive periods is scrutinized. The *paritta suttas* included in *JĒtaka* literature and preached by the Buddha himself are distinguished. Regarding the history of the *paritta*, they are described in the order of period. It is believed that this research paper will be able to induce more faith in *parittas* for those incanting *parittas* after knowing the history of the *paritta* clearly.

Key words: *Paritta, JĒtaka, suttas.*

Introduction

With the advent of Buddhism, *Paritta Suttas* had arrived Myanmar Country. *Paritta*-Book is the most widely known and revered by the Buddhists. The recital of *Paritta Suttas* has been carried out not only in Myanmar but also in Śrila~kĒ, Thai, Cambodia and Laos since the ancient times up to the present day.

In Bagan Period, the practice of *Paritta* recitation was in vogue and it is proved by the archaeological evidences. In the well-known grammatical text '*Sadda NĒti*', it is mentioned that there existed *Paritta* Books (*Paritta-PoŌŌhaka*) at that time. But no further information is available in that context to judge what comprised there in *Paritta PoŌŌhakas*. It is to be deeply regretted that today, these manuscripts are not found at all. It is up to the beginning of 17th Century A.D that no writings in connection with the *Paritta Suttas* appeared. It may be due to the fragile nature of the manuscripts,

* Assistant Lecturer, Dr., Department of Oriental Studies, Yadanabon University

because the scholars had not composed them.

In 1609 AD, the elder TejodĒpa wrote a commentary on the *Paritta Suttas* entitled "*Paritta VaÓĀnĒ*". It is now termed as *Paritta* @ĒkĒ. Only in this text the number of the *Paritta Suttas* are mentioned together with the titles of the *Parittas*. It is the only exegesis extant in Myanmar. Such kind of commentary is found nowhere else in other *TheravĒda* countries like Śrila~ka, Thai, Cambodia and Loas. It is a Landmark in the history of *Paritta* literature.

The Term *Paritta*

The term '*parit*' is a loan word derived from the pĒÄi '*paritta*'. The final syllable '*ta*' of *Paritta* was dropped by means of *uttaralopa*. '*Paritta*' can be divided into *pari*+*√tĒ*. *Pari* is prefix and *√tĒ* means to protect, to prevent. '*Paritta*' is defined by the grammarians as,

"*Pari samantato sattĒnaÑ bhayaÑ
upaddavaÑ upasaggaÒca tĒyati
rakkhatĒti parittaÑ*". (Sadd-Dht, 1982:225)

"*Paritta* is so called because it wards off the harm from all directions that is going to fall on sentient beings."

Another definition in *Paritta* @ĒkĒ is-

"*BhayĒdĒhi tĒyanato rakkhanato parittanti vuttaÑ*".

"*Paritta* is so called because it protects people from dangers."

Based on these definitions, it can be stated that *paritta* is Buddha's discourse which has the power to protect people from the disease and dangers that are falling on and that will fall from all directions.

TheravĒda Buddhism and *Paritta*

According to *TheravĒda* Buddhism, a man enjoys the good or bad consequences of his good deeds or bad deeds. It is a practical way of life. In other words Buddhists are those who accept the concept of *KammavĒda*. There are points to be pondered in

was given to the *Bhikkhus*, *bhikkhus*, male lay devotees and female lay devotees were also given permission. (*Theravāda svezonkyan*, 1981: 150-151, 809-810)

Moreover, the Buddha preached *Khandha Sutta* as a way of praying for the well-being of others in connection with a monk who died of snake bite as follows.

" *Bhikkhus*, praying for the wellbeing of the four snake kings is allowed for the safety of oneself, for protection from harm and for putting a barrier of *paritta*". (V, IV, 1960: 245; A, I, 1959: 383-384)

Āyuvāhāna was a young son who was going to die seven days after birth. Under the Buddha's instruction, the Buddha and monks recited *parittas* for seven days and seven nights. The Buddha himself recited the *paritta* the whole night putting a barrier of *paritta*. As a result of the recitation of *parittas* Āyuvāhāna escaped death and lived the full span of 120 years. (*DhpA*, I, 1962: 423-424)

Teaching and recitation of *parittas* as a protection and barrier from evils and harm was a religious duty practised by the Buddha himself.

Parittas in the Life time of the Buddha

In the life time of the Buddha, *Paritta Suttas* were preached to protect the human beings from harm.

Khandha Sutta

This *sutta* was preached by the Buddha in connection with a monk who died of snakebite. This *sutta* was taught to the monks for recitation as a *paritta* to ward off the snake harm (V, IV, 1960: 245; A, I, 1959: 383-384).

Āyuvāhāna Sutta

The Buddha was residing on *Gijjhakūṭa* hill near *Rājagaha*

city. Upon the supplication of the king of VessavaÓÓa, the Buddha preached *ÆÔÈÈÔiya Sutta* to the disciple monks to ward off the disturbance of *Peta* (ghosts) and *Bh|ta* (demons) (*D*, III, 1957: 59).

A~gulimÈla Sutta

This *paritta* was taught by the Buddha to A~guliamÈla for saving the life of the lay woman who was in the throes of difficult child-birth. By reciting this *paritta*, A~guliamÈla could cause a safe delivery to the woman in trouble (*M*, II, 1957: 306).

Dhajagga Sutta

During the life time of the Buddha, there were monks who practised religious meditation in solitude under the jungle trees. To keep them free from fears and to enable them to practise meditation, the *Buddha* preached to them *Dhajagga Sutta* which extols the attributes of the *Buddha*, *Dhamma* and *SaÑgha*. By keeping these three attributes in mind, they would be cleansed of any feeling of fear (*S*, I, 1957: 220).

Bojjha~ga Sutta

Bojjha~ga Dhamma was preached by the Buddha to MahÈkassapa and MahÈmoggalÈna who were suffering from severe illness. By listening to the discourse, the two elder monks were cured of their diseases. When the Buddha himself was suffering from flatulence, the Buddha had that *sutta* recited by Cunda *Thera* and the Buddha was relieved of the flatulence by listening to it (*S*, III, 1965: 71-73; *A*, I, 1959: 299).

These are recorded in the three *GilÈna Suttas* in the *SaÑyutta NikÈya* (*S*, III, 86-87). In the *A~guttara NikÈya AÓÔhakathÈ* (*AA*, II, P. 210 and the *MahÈniddeśa aÓÔhakathÈ*, *Bojjha~ga Sutta* is found as one of the *Parittas*.

Paritta being protection from evils and harm, the *mettÈ* (loving-kindness) and *saccÈ* (truth) are found to be used as *paritta*,

since they also provide protection and security. These usages, as proved by the following *JĒtakas* are known to have been used before the appearance of the Buddha. These *JĒtakas* were *KulĒvaka JĒtaka*, *Telapatta JĒtaka*, *Mora JĒtaka*, *Khandha JĒtaka*, and *VaŌŌa JĒtaka*.

Ratana Sutta

VesĒĪĒ city was devastated by the three catastrophes of famine, epidemic diseases and harm from ogres and ghosts as a result of which there occurred a great loss of life and property. Therefore the Buddha himself made a visit to *VesĒĪĒ* city and taught Ānanda the *Ratana Sutta* and had him recite the *Ratana Sutta*. By the power of the *Ratana Sutta*, all kinds of evils and harm were dispelled (*KhpA*, 1960: 138; *SnA*, I, 1958: 267).

Metta Sutta

While the Buddha was residing at the *Jetavana* monastery in *SĒvatthi* city, five hundred monks were practising religious meditation in *Himavanta* forest. They were frightened by god spirits, as guardian spirit of a tree. The Buddha taught the monks *MettĒ Sutta* to be recited as *paritta* to ward off the interference by the gods (*KhpA*, 1960: 198-200; *SnA*, I, 1958: 193).

KulĒvaka JĒtaka and Paritta

In *KulĒvaka JĒtaka*, in the kingdom of *Magadha*, *MĒgha*

and his party from *Macala* village carried out deeds of merit by building *zayat* (public rest houses), *tanzaungs*, monasteries, wells and tanks. They repaired roads and bridges. They also observed *paŌcasĒla* (the five precepts). *Macala* village was peaceful. The village headman, receiving no bribery, lied to the king of their good deeds. The king ordered that *MĒgha* and his party be killed by trampling to death with elephants. But the power of *sĒla* (morality) and *mettĒ* of the young men caused the elephants to run away

trumpeting, without daring to approach them. When they were examined and questioned whether they had potion, manta, magic square and amulet, their mantra was found to be

"*Ayam ahmĒkaÑ mantova parittaŌca vuddhica*" (JA, I, 1959: 214-215)

"performing meritorious deeds of building and repairing of bridges, roads, water tanks, rest-houses, digging wells etc, and observance of the five precepts and cultivation of loving-kindness towards all living beings".

Thus *mettĒbhĒvanĒ* is known to be *paritta* and bestows prosperity. When the king found out the truth, all the property of the headman who slandered was given to MĒgha and his party. Referring to this *JĒtaka*, the *paritta* was the observance of the five precepts, carrying out social welfare, charity and cultivation of loving-kindness towards all living beings and sentient beings.

Telapatta JĒtaka and Paritta

In *Telapatta JĒtaka* (JA, I, 1959: 417-425), king Brahmadata of BarĒnasĒ city had a son who was a *Bodhisatta*. On account of *Pacceka Buddha's* (Lesser Buddha's) spoken words, the prince went to the *TakkasĒĒ* in *Gandhara* Kingdom. The Silent Buddhas recited *parittas* and gave him *paritta* sand and cotton thread to enable the prince to pass through this forest without any harm. On the way, he had to pass through a forest infested with *Yakkhasa*, the ogresses who seduced with five senses of pleasure. The prince's five companions fell to the seduction of the ogresses and lost their lives on the way. The prince could keep his composure by controlling the five senses of pleasure. The ogress tried to seduce the prince by coming daily to the rest-house near the city gate where the prince was staying. The king of *TakkasĒĒ* became enamoured with the ogress on sight and so he took her as his queen. At night the king was seduced by the ogress and the ogress devoured all the people in the palace. But the *Bodhisatta* stayed awake that night with *paritta* sand on his head and made a barrier with *paritta* thread. When the king of *TakkasĒĒ* passed away being devoured by the ogress, the

people of *TakkasĒĒ* elected the *Bodhisatta* as their king as he was steady in mind, stable in character and endowed with intelligence and wisdom. This *JĒtaka* story tells the power of *paritta* and the use of *paritta* sand and thread in the time prior to the appearance of the Buddha.

Mora JĒtaka and Paritta

In this *JĒtaka* (*JA*, II, 1959: 34; *JA*, IV, 1959: 333-342), the peacock, (*Bodhisatta*), could stay alive without harm for seven successions of kings by the power of *paritta*. The peacock took the protection of *paritta* by worshipping the Buddha and the sun Lord daily at sunrise and sunset. One day Queen *KhemĒ* said to king of *BĒrĒĒasĒ* that she wanted to listen to the sermon of the golden Peacock. The king sent a hunter to catch the golden Peacock. Although the hunter attempted to catch the Peacock, he was unable to catch it due to the power of *paritta*. The queen died in grief as her wish was not fulfilled.

The king of *BĒrĒĒasĒ* bore a grudge against the golden Peacock. He inscribed on a gold plate that those who ate the flesh of the peacock, that lived on the summit of *DaĒĒaka* hill in the forest of *Himavanta* would live without aging and dying and put it in a golden box (*JA*, II, 1959: 32). Other succeeding kings tried to catch the Peacock but were met with failure. The seventh succeeding king sent the hunter to catch the golden Peacock by using a decoy of a peafowl. The peacock, being infatuated with the peafowl, forgot to recite *paritta*, and was easily ensnared by the hunter.

There are two versions of *Mora JĒtaka*. They are *Mora JĒtaka* and *MahĒmora JĒtaka*. The *gĒthĒs* of the *paritta* are presented in *Mora JĒtaka*. But in *MahĒmora JĒtaka* there are 17 *gĒthĒs* of the dialogue between Peacock and the hunter.

According to this *JĒtaka* story, the four *gĒthĒs* beginning with "*UdetayaÑ*" are said to be the *paritta*. This story describes the power of *paritta*. If the mind is lost in lustful desire, one loses the benefit of the *paritta*. It is necessary to recite the *paritta* daily so that one may enjoy the protective power of *paritta*.

Khandha JĒtaka and Paritta

Khandha paritta is described in *CĀavagga PĒĀi*, *A~guttara NikĒya Pali*, and *Khandha JĒtaka*. *Khandha JĒtaka* story illustrates the hermits' escape from snakebite by the development of loving kindness to all beings. When the *Bodhisatta* was still immature in the exercise of *paramĒ* (the perfection), he was residing in the forest of *Himavanta* with his disciple hermits. When the *Bodhisatta* was informed of the death of a hermit by snakebite, he said that it was due to lack of developing loving-kindness to others. He instructed the hermits to develop loving kindness towards *Virĵpakkha*, snake king, etc. From that day on, the hermits prayed for the snakes' well-being and cultivated loving-kindness towards the snakes and so they enjoyed the protection of the *paritta* from the harm of snakes (JA, II, 1959: 132). Descriptions given in *Vinaya CĀavagga PĒĀi*, *A~guttara NikĒya* and *JĒtaka PĒĀi* are found to be the same in story and *gĒthĒs*. 'Khuddaka Vatthu' is mentioned in *Vinaya CĀavagga PĒĀi* and *AhirĒja Sutta in A~guttara NikĒya AŌŌhakathĒ*. The only difference is the name of the *JĒtaka*. By this *JĒtaka* cultivation or development of loving-kindness towards all living beings is *paritta* or protection from harm.

VaŌŌa JĒtaka and Paritta

VaŌŌa JĒtaka describes that *Bodhisatta*, quail declared on oath and escaped from death. The forest where the quail lived was consumed by forest fire one day. It could not fly away from the forest fire like other birds. Its parents had fled in fright leaving the hatchling. The *Bodhisatta* quail was helplessly alone. Then the quail uttered an oath of truth (*saccĒ*) by reciting the following *gĒthĒ*:

"I have got wings yet I cannot fly;
I have got legs yet I cannot walk;
my parents have left.
By this utterance of truth,

may the forest fire be extinguished?"
(CpA, 1959: 228; JA, I, 1959: 228)

The forest fire was extinguished by the declaration of oath. Regarding the oath of truth uttered by the quail, **Cariya Pitaka AÔÔhakatthĒ** mentions **VaÔÔapotaka Cariya** but the **JĒtaka AÔÔhakatthĒ** mentions **VaÔÔaka JĒtaka**. The former mentions 11 *gĒthĒs* and the latter mentions only 4 *gĒthĒs* as in *Paritkyi* text.

Paritta in MilindapaÔha Period

After the *parinibbĒna* of the Buddha, recitation of *paritta* remained as an important religious duty. About five hundred years after the *parinibbĒna* of the Buddha, there appeared two great persons who really understood and believed in Buddhism. They were a monk called NĒgasena and a king called Milinda. These two persons thought deeply and asked questions and gave answers to many difficult religious matters. The dialogues between these two persons were collected and became well known as *MilindapaÔha* text. In this text NĒgasena explained recitation of *parittas* and how to recite *parittas* effectively in questions and answers (*MaccupĒsamuttipaÔha*).

In that collection, the seven *paritta suttas* namely *Ratana Sutta*, *Metta Sutta*, *Khandha Sutta*, *Mora sutta*, *Dhajagga Sutta*, *ŒĒnĒtiya Sutta* and *A~gulimĒla Sutta* were mentioned. This statement, shows that recitation of *parittas* was used by the devout Buddhists as a protection from all harms and suffering, in the early first century A.D (*Mil*, 1960: 151-153).

Parittas in Buddhaghosa Period

Buddhaghosa appeared in 5th century A.D. He compiled many commentaries on Buddhist Scriptures. Most of the difficult discourses of the Buddha were explained in detail by Buddhaghosa. In the exposition of the commentaries Buddhaghosa mentioned the names of the *parittas* when occasion arose. *Ratana Sutta*, *Khandha Sutta*, *Mora Sutta*, *Dhajagga Sutta* and *ŒĒnĒtiya Sutta* are found in **PĒrajika AÔÔhakathĒ** (VA, I, 1956: 129) and **Visuddhimagga**

AÔÔhakathĒ (VsmA, II, 1962: 44). *ĀĒnĒiĒya Paritta*, *Isigili Paritta*, *Dhajagga Paritta*, *Bojjha~ga Paritta*, *Khandha Paritta*, *Mora Paritta*, *Metta Paritta* and *Ratana Paritta* are found in **A~guttara AÔÔhakathĒ** (AA, III, 1958: 358; AA, II, 1957: 210). *Metta Sutta* and *Ratana Sutta* are found in **PĒthika Vagga AÔÔhakathĒ** (DA, III, 1954: 81), **UparipaÔÒÈsa AÔÔhakathĒ** (MA, IV, 1957: 79), **A~guttara AÔÔhakathĒ and Sammoha VinodanĒ AÔÔhakathĒ** (AbhA, II, 1957: 411). Thus there were eight *suttas* which were used in reciting *parittas* in the fifth century A.D. when Buddhaghosa appeared.

Parittas prevalently used in Myanmar

Since the arrival of Buddhism in Myanmar, the people have got acquainted with *parittas*. It is stated in **SĒssanavaÑsa padĒpika** that *Sona* and *Uttara* who led the Buddhist mission to Thaton, (*SuvaÓÓabh|mi*) recited *paritta* (SĒs-Vp, 1923: 42). It is also described in the introduction to *BĒhirañidĒna* of *ParĒjika AÔÔhakathĒ* (VA, I, 1956: 1-52) that *Sona* and *Uttara* preached *BrahmajĒla Sutta* in order to frighten away the ogres and the demons belonging to the class of ghosts. The earliest list of the *paritta suttas* was found from an archaeological excavation near the ancient city of *Tharekhittaya* (*Tekkatho Pyinya Badaytharsarsaung*, Vol.3, Part I, 167). It was a broken piece of a stone pillar. *Mora Sutta* and *Ma~gala Sutta gĒthĒs* were found inscribed on the first pillar. The scholars surmised that at least five *paritta suttas* were inscribed on the stone pillars.

Ratana Paritta was inscribed on the second pillar. Judging by the script used, it belonged to the sixth century A.D. The research scholars remarked that the purpose of erecting such stone pillars with *Paritta* inscribed on them at the gate of the city was to ward off all dangers. (*Tekkatho Pyinya Badaytharsarsaung*, Vol.3, Part I, 167)

There was the practice of reciting and listening to *parittas* in the Bagan period as testified by stone inscription records. King *Kyansittha* had *MahĒthera ArahaÑ* and 4108 members of the *SaÑgha* recited *parittas* in commencing the palace construction.

(*Mon Kyauksar Baungchoke*, 1965: 31). In A.D. 1190, minister *Thinkhasu* invited the Saṅgha and had them recite the *parittas* in building a temple in A.D. 1190. It is also known that when the princess *Asawlat* built a temple (*Bagan Kyauksar Letywayesin*, 1958: 13-14) in A.D. 1261, she invited the Saṅgha to recite *parittas*. (*Bagan Kyauksar Nyuntbaungkyan*, 1958: 90) Preaching of *Ma-gala Sutta*, *Metta Sutta*, *Ānāpāna Sutta* and *Mahāsamaya Sutta* were written on the walls of *Nagayon Temple* (*OBEP Vol. 1*, 1969: 318), built by king *Kyansitha* in 1090 AD. The names of *devas* from *Ānāpāna Sutta* can be seen on the walls of *Ānanda pagoda* (*OBEP Vol. 1*, 1969: 760). The Buddha was depicted preaching *Ratana Sutta* on the wall of *Lokahteikpan Temple*. (*OBEP Vol. 1*, 1969: 318) Based on the stated evidences, *Ma-gala Sutta*, *Ratana Sutta*, *Metta Sutta*, *Ānāpāna Sutta* and *Mahāsamaya Sutta* are found to be used in reciting *parittas* in the Bagan period.

Parittas of Paritta ṚkṚ Age

Due to the loss of literary records, the information about the *parittas* were unknown from the Bagan period to the early part of the 17th century. Only in A.D. 1609, the existence of *paritta suttas* became known when *paritta ṚkṚ* compiled by the Venerable *Tejodēpa* appeared. That *ṚkṚ* contains nine *paritta suttas* (*Ma-gala Sutta* to *Bojjha-ga Sutta*). But *VaṬṬa Sutta* was not found at all. Some of the *gĒthĒs* of *PubbaṬha sutta* from *P.11 sutta* text are found in *Paritta ṚkṚ* (*ParitṚ*, 1990: 107). It was then stated as generating '*MettĒbhĒvanĒ* compiled by ancient elders.

Salin Sayadaw wrote *Paritkyi Nissaya* in M.E. 1174, A.D. 1812 in the Konbaung period. *VaṬṬa Sutta* is found to be described in the text. Therefore this *sutta* was an additional *sutta* to the nine *suttas* of *Paritta ṚkṚ* in later period.

The following description is found in *Paritkyi Nissaya* text compiled by *Salin Sayadaw* (*Paritkyi Nissaya*, 1960: 263); Wishing to eulogize on the attributes of the three *Ratanas*, the power of truths, and the merits of virtuous physical, oral and mental deeds with *Pubba-ha Sutta*, all the *gĒthĒs* beginning with "*Yaṅ dunnimittaṅ*" and ending with "*Sahasabbhehi ṬṬibhi*" are included. On account of

this description, it can be assumed that Salin Sayadaw did not consider *Pubba~ha sutta* as a *paritta sutta*. The Venerable Ādiccavañsa compiled *Paritta Sa~gaha* in M.E. 1298. It is instructed to recite the *paritta suttas* in ten separate days. *Pubba~ha Sutta* is not included in such a distribution (*Parit Sa~gaha*, 1936: cha). It is instructed to recite *Pubba~ha Sutta* as a eulogizing prayer in conclusion after all the *paritta suttas* have been recited. Salin Sayadaw and the Venerable Ādiccavañsa are found to be in agreement for the exclusion of *Pubba~ha Sutta*.

Later “*Se-saung-twe*” treatises appeared which comprise ten items. These texts became standard text for monastic schools, where the students had to learn first *Thinbongyi* or Myanmar Primer. After learning *Thinbongyi*, the students learned *Paritta Suttas* by heart. Therefore Myanmar people learned *paritkyi* from childhood as monastic students and recited and listened to it in adult age. Thus *parittas* are found to be the PĒĀi literature that are closest to the Buddhist society. *Se-saung-twe* comprises of 11 *paritta suttas* including *Pubba~ha Sutta*. Based on *Se-saung-twe* texts, it is considered that there are 11 *paritta suttas*. Twante Sayadaw who compiled *Paritkyi Nissaya* in A.D. 1911 and the Venerable VĒseŌhĒbhivañsa who compiled the new *Paritkyi Nissaya* in 1966 AD did not say anything about *Pubba~ha Sutta* but wrote it as one *paritta sutta*. Three and a half *gĒthĒs* beginning with “*Sunakkhatañ*” from ***A~guttara NikĒya*** (A, I, 1959: 299; AA, I, 1959: 244-245) and *gĒthĒs* composed by ancient elders were collected and it is called *Pubba~ha Sutta*. Up to now the *parittas* that Myanmar people are using are 11 in number including *Pubba~ha Sutta*.

In addition to P. 11 *Sutta*, there are other *parittas* written by ancient elders. *DhĒraŌa Paritta*, *Ngayantmin Paritta*, *ParimittajĒla Paritta*, *Cakka Paritta*, *Sambuddhe gĒthĒ* are some examples of such *parittas*, and they are also called *Parittas*, because they also protect human beings from dangers.

Conclusion

Buddha appeared for the welfare of all living beings. *Buddhavacana* called *PiŌaka* preached by the Buddha for 45 years

of Buddhahood was the *Dhamma Ratana* for the welfare of all living beings. In other words Buddha wishes no misery and suffering for all living beings. In accordance with this wish, Buddha showed ways for all living beings to be liberated from misery, harm and suffering. Reciting *parittas* was one of these ways.

Regarding the *parittas* the meaning of the term is explained and the stream of *parittas* through successive period is scrutinized. Actually *parittas* existed in India before the appearance of the Buddha. It was directed towards warding off danger and harm. Therefore Buddha who did not wish danger and harm falling on living beings did not forbid but allowed the recitation of *parittas* to ward off danger. Buddha not only allowed the disciple monks to recite *parittas* but also he recited *parittas* himself to provide on against harm for the human beings. These episodes are early recorded in the *PiÓaka* literature. Buddhists chant *paritta gÈthÈ* in order to ward off danger or harm, and for protection against calamity. Why do the *paritta gÈthÈ* possess protective power? The content of eleven *Paritkyi suttas* in essence are of five kinds. They are (1) the attributes of the Three Gems, (2) making solemn vows, (3) cultivating *mettÈ* (loving-kindness) (4) protection of Buddha, Arahants, gods and *brahmas* and (5) the power of *dhammapÈti* listening to the *dhamma*.

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