

The First Draft Journal, Issue 2, 2020



The First Draft
Journal

of Philosophy, Religion,
Science, and Art

(The personal journal dedicated to publish a
short essay written suddenly within some
minutes by the way of handwriting)



Issue 2, May, 2020

Language of the Buddha



The Buddha is a human being, and human beings have to have some certain language. The language is a tool created by human beings to let other human beings know what is running in the mind of their own.

Some days ago, some people write in their Facebook that there is a scholar of Buddhism saying that the Pali language might not be the language really used by the Buddha. According to

this scholar, we do not know what is the language used by the Buddha when he talks with people in India some thousands of years ago. And this scholar thinks that from the historical evidence concerning the culture of ancient India, the Pali language could be the new tool created for recording the teaching of the Buddha by his followers long after his death.

I am not interested in Buddhism in terms of history. So, after hearing the problem of the real language used by the Buddha, I do not feel anything. I am interested in Buddhism in terms of philosophy. And the difference between history and philosophy lies in that we have the *different truths* between the historian and the philosopher. When I read the writing of the historians of Buddhism and Buddhist texts who try to argue that the Buddha never speaks the

Pali language, I understand that what kind of truth that these people need to see. Unfortunately, that kind of truth is never interesting for me. Suppose we can know exactly that the Buddha never uses the Pali language, the question is: what is the benefit of this kind of knowledge. Can this knowledge help us improve the learning of Pali language? No! Can this help us more understand the teaching of the Buddha which has been recorded in the Pali text? No again!

In my opinion, Buddhism is nothing more than the things that we have seen in the *Tipitaka* of each school of Buddhism. I never think that we can know the historical Buddha and his historical Buddhism. It seems that the thing that the historians of Buddhism need to know is the historical Buddhism which is the Buddhism that uses or does not use the Pali language. In philoso-

phy, we think that the good question is very important because from the good question we would have the good answer. And we understand that the good answer is the one that we would be benefited from it in some way.

In my opinion, the question "what is the language used by the Buddha" is not a good question. This question is not different from the questions like what kind of food the Buddha eats each day in his life. What is the benefit of these questions? I don't know!

A thing that I would like to say in this short writing is: (1) the language used by the Buddha is not important, and (2) what important is the meaning or the contents that exist inside the texts. We have different versions of the *Tipitaka* in the world in the form of the translations. I do not think that when

we have translated the Pali text into Thai language, the *Thai Tipitaka* would have the value less than the original Pali texts. And there might not be some people in this world saying that do not read the Thai Tipitaka because the Buddha never speaks Thai.

O, my goodness!

Somparn Promta

6 May, 2020