

According to the Sri Lanka timeline, the Mahayana Canon might have been burnt twice in the course of history. In China, we find that several major sutras have different versions such that they are different in words and lengths. There were various Mahayana sutras that spread to China at various times. For example, the Lotus Sutra, there are many different versions of it existing in China today, and there is no doubt that there are new chapters written by later scholars that are not the original teachings of the Buddha.

However, the Pali Canon (Theravada Canon) has always been well-preserved and re-examined in the Buddhist Councils for more than 2,500 years.

Major events before Venerable Buddhaghosa arrived Sri Lanka (Ceylon):

Kings of Ceylon	Relevant Events
Devanampiya - Tissa: B.C. 307 - 267	Arrival in Ceylon of the Arahant Mahinda bringing the Pali Canon
Dutthagamani 161 -137	Many names of Gt. M. (Great Monastery) elders, monks and Bhikkhus
Vattagamani 104 - 88	Bhikkhus all disperse from Great Monastery to Southern Ceylon
	Restoration of king after 14 years and return of Bhikkhus to Gt. M.
	Foundation of Abhayagiri Monastery by king.
	Abh. M. (Abhayagiri Monastery) secedes from Gt. M.
	Committal by Gt. M. of Pali Tipitaka to writing for first time
Nikaya-Sangraha (trsl.) pp.10-11	Abh. M. adopts "Dhammaruci Nikaya of Vajjiputtak

	Meeting of Gt. M. Bhikkhus decides that care of te
EHBC, p.78	
Bhatikabhaya B.C. 20 - A.C. 9	Dispute between Gt. M. and Abh. M. over Vinaya a
EHBC, p.99	
Khanirajani-Tissa 30 - 33	60 Bhikkhus punished for treason.
Gajabahu I 113-135	Abh. M. supported by king and enlarged.
6 kings 135 -215	Mentions of royal support for Gt. M. and Abh. M.
Voharika-Tissa 215-237	King supports both monasteries.
	Abh. M. has adopted Vetulya (Mahayana?) Pitaka
	King suppresses Vetulya doctrines
	Vetulya books burnt and heretic Bhikkhus disgrace
	Corruption of Bhikkhus by Vitandavadins (heretics
Gothabhaya 254-267	Gt. M. supported by the king
	60 Bhikkhus in Abh. M. banished by king for uphol
	Secession from Abh. M.; new sect formed
	Indian Bhikkhu Sanghamitta supports Abh. M.

Jettha-Tissa 267-277

King favors Gt. M.; Sanghamitta flees to India

Mahasena 277-304

King protects Sanghamitta, who returns. Persecuti

Sanghamitta was assassinated.

Restoration of Gt. M.

Vetulya books burnt again.

Mahanama 412-434

Bh. Buddhaghosa arrives in Ceylon.