

## **Mahāpadesa: A Theories of Buddhist Jurisprudence**

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Jurisprudence is the study and theory of law. Mahapadesas or Great Standards are one theory of Buddhist law. The compound mahapadesa means Great Standards or great authorities. They are used as guidelines in deciding if uncertain circumstances accord with the Dhamma and Vinaya. There are two separate types of Mahapadesas in Sutta and Vinaya Pitakas. The aim of this paper was to examine the importance of those Mahapadesas in the study of law in Buddhist perspective.

The study was based on the Sutta Pitaka where the descriptive and analytical methods were applied. Mahapadesas in the Suttas refer to the sources from whom a teaching might be accepted as the teaching of the Buddha. They are: the Buddha himself, a whole monastic community (along with its elders and experts) dwelling in a particular monastery, certain learned monks dwelling in a particular monastery, or just one learned monk dwelling in a particular monastery. For instance, If a monks says he has a certain teaching direct from the Buddha himself, his statement should be compared with the rest of the Vinaya and Dhamma; if these do not agree, it should be rejected; if they do, accepted. According to Mahapadesas the authority should be the Dhamma and the Vinaya. Here, Dhamma means justification or the yukti and Vinaya means promulgated rules that lead to the righteousness. Therefore, Dhamma and Vinaya should be the foundations of the Buddhist Jurisprudence.

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