

Life of the Buddha & Great Disciples

Sources

Vinaya

- Khandakas

The Khandakas contain mainly procedural rules for the monks and nuns. The first chapter, though, is a detailed account of the first months after the Buddha's enlightenment. The last chapter tells of the two councils that were held after the Buddha's death.

- Sutta-vibhanga

The Sutta-vibhanga includes the origin story for each of the main rules for monks and nuns as well as details for each rule.

Suttas

- Five Nikāyas

The five nikāyas (Dīgha Nikāya, Majjhima Nikāya, Saṃyutta Nikāya, Aṅguttara Nikāya, Khuddaka Nikāya) contain the doctrinal teachings. Throughout can be found biographical information about the Buddha and his disciples. The Dīgha Nikāya and Majjhima Nikāya especially have a lot of narrative content as well as the Udāna and Sutta Nipāta (found in the Khuddaka Nikāya).

Ancient Commentaries

The ancient commentaries to the Vinaya and Suttas contain three broad types of material:

- Narrative origin stories for the discourses and biographical information
- Word definitions
- Explanations and analysis that sometimes adds new concepts and ideas, from time to time even contradicting the original sources

The ancient commentaries fill in biographical information of the Buddha and his disciples, especially childhood and previous births.