

# Buddhist Councils: A Historical Study

**THESIS**

Submitted to  
Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University  
(A Central University)  
Lucknow

BABASAHEB  
BHIMRAO  
AMBEDKAR  
UNIVERSITY



प्रज्ञा शीलं करुणा  
ESTABLISHED 1996

For the Award of Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**  
In  
**HISTORY**

Submitted By:

*Pon Nyar Nanda*

ENROLLMENT NO. – 425/15

Under the supervision of

*Prof. S. Victor Babu*

Head

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
SCHOOL OF AMBEDKAR STUDIES  
BABASAHEB BHIMRAO AMBEDKAR UNIVERSITY  
(A CENTRAL UNIVERSITY)

VIDYA VIHAR, RAEBARELI ROAD, LUCKNOW-226 025 (U.P.), INDIA

**2019**

## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the work embodied in this thesis entitled “*Buddhist Councils: A Historical Study*” carried out by me under the supervision of **Prof. S. Victor Babu**, Department of History, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow is an original work and it has not been previously submitted in part or full for any other degree or diploma in this or any other University.

**PON NYAR NANDA**

**PHD STUDENT,**

**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

**BABASAHEB BHIMRAO AMBEDKAR UNIVERSITY**

**(A CENTRAL UNIVERSITY)**

**VIDYA VIHAR, RAEBARELI ROAD**

**LUCKNOW-226025**

**(Enrollment No-425/ 2015)**

**Place:**

**Date:**

## **CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the thesis titled “**Buddhist Councils: A Historical Study**” submitted by **Pon Nyar Nanda** (Enrollment No.425/15) is an original research work and has not been previously submitted in part or full for the award of any other degree or diploma in this or any other University.

The thesis submitted to the Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University Lucknow (A Central University) satisfies all the requirements as stipulated in the Doctor of philosophy regulations- 1999 as amended in 2008/2010/2013 and it is fit for submission and evaluation for the award of the Degree of *Doctor of Philosophy* of the University.

**Date:**

Supervisor

Head of department

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In preparation of this work, I owned a great deal several people who have helped me in the past as well as in the present throughout my carrier. I wish to put on record the help I received in several ways. First and Foremost, I gratefully thank to my respected and beloved supervisor, **Prof. S.VICTOR BABU, Department of History**, for his gracious and encouragement and valuable suggestion on me during the pursuit of my research work, without his support I could not have successfully brought this thesis out in the present from and manner. His priceless guidance and continuous encouragement gave me immense inspiration and energy to complete this thesis. He was generous with his time and his brilliant supervision stood me in good stead.

I'm very thankful to *Daw Nan Mya Htay* and family, *Daw Yin My Aye Thant* and family, *Daw Thwin Pa Pa* and family and *Daw Cho Oo Tin* and family who donated books for my research work. Similarly, my thank goes to all teachers and staff members of the Department of History as well as the staff of the Central Library of the University of B.B.A, Lucknow for their friendly help during my data collection and period of study. And my thankful goes to *Daw Khin Hnin Yee*, Assistant Librarian, Moenhyin Degree College, *Daw Kyi Kyi Han Aye*, Assistant librarian, West Yangon University, *Daw Lwin Lwin Maw*, Assistant librarian, University of Foreign Language.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for the kind help I have received. I'm most beholden to my esteemed and respected preceptor, *Ven. Dhammapiys*, In-Charge Sayadaw of Buddhapiya monastery, Moenhyin Township, Kachin State and *U Thun Kyi* and **Daw Hla Kyi**. I must not fail my thank to Dr,*Nandavansa*, Myanmar academic center Bodhagaya ,Biher &saranath Varanasi,u.p.

I want to mention my thank word to Daw Mya Shin , Mijjhima samgha mata ,who support me what I need .

I thank very much to venerable Dr Pandawantha ,Yangon Buddhist University (Shwe Phi Thar) who encouraged me with some valuable suggestion about my thesis .

My appreciation also goes to numerous people who extended their help and guidance to me during my long stay in India. At least not last, my sincere appreciation for guidance and kind words of encouragement from **Dr.Nyan Tun, Associate Head**, State Pariyatti Sasana University Yangon and who is also serving at Nationalities Youth Resource Development Degree College, (Yangon), who gave the best suggestion dealing with my research work. I would like to thank all my close friends and devotees who encourages me and guides me throughout the entire process. and all people who involve directly or indirectly during my research pursuit.

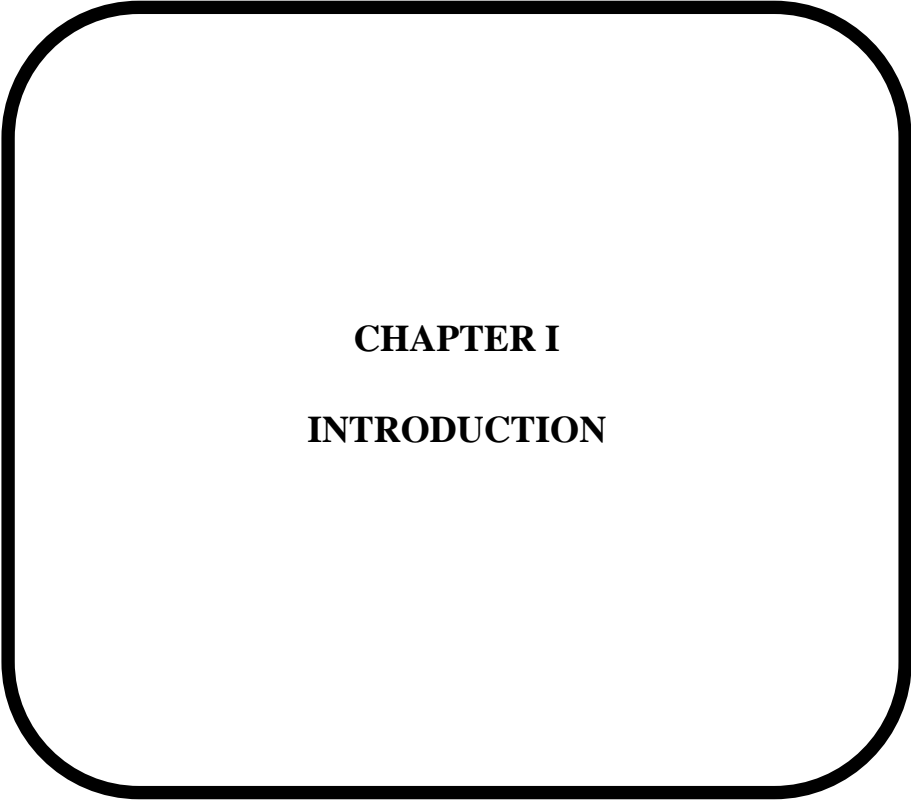
**Date:-**

**Pon Nyar Nanda**

**Place:-**

# CONTENTS

	PAGE NO.
CHAPTER I INDRODUCTION	1-20
CHAPTER II THE FIRST GREAT BUDDHIST COUNCIL	21-82
CHAPTER III THE SECOND GREAT BUDDHIST COUNCIL	83-165
CHAPTER IV THIRD BUDDHIST COUNCIL	166-201
CHAPTER V FOURTH BUDDHIST COUNCIL	202-230
CHAPTER VI FIFTH GREAT COUNCIL	231-268
CHAPTER VII THE SIXTH GREAT BUDDHIST COUNCIL	269-353
CONCLUSION	354-363
APPENDIX	364-367
BIBLIOGRAPHY	368-373



**CHAPTER I**  
**INTRODUCTION**

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 CLASSIFICATION AND CONDIFICATION OF *DHAMMA* AND *VINAYA*

As regards Buddhist Canonical literature, it was compiled in a gradual process, eventually assuming its present form. It must have been continuously concerned with the preservation of the authentic teachings of the specific domains of the Buddhist tradition. This became all the more urgent after the Buddha's demise, when the authority of the transmitted teachings had to be harmoniously universally accepted, without dispute. There had to be not only collective rehearsal of the teachings periodically, but also each time a collective sanction as regards authenticity. The importance of this function of *samgiti*,

Even during in the life time of the Buddha, classification of the *Dhamma* in accordance with the length of the discourses, the subject matter they dealt with, the kind of audience they were meant for etc., must have been carried out. The terms like *Dhammakathika*, one who discourses, *Vinayadhara*, one who has memorized the *Vinaya* etc., suggest that even in those early days attempts had already been made to systematize the Buddha's Teachings, co-ordinate and correlate the numerous Teachings of the Buddha by classifying them and arranging them in some form of system. Such systematization was obviously inevitable if only to facilitate memorization since only verbal transmission was employed to pass on the Teaching from the Master to the disciples or to the people.

Although there is evidence that the art of writing was definitely known and well established during the Buddha's time, no scriptures as such were then put down

in writing and recorded in any form of script. According to custom, the teaching of each spiritual teacher was regarded as sacred and imparted only to those who had shown genuine interest in the Teachings of religion, unlike other educationists of the day who used written treatises for vocational or literary education, chose only this method of personal communication and popular preaching. The method of oral transmission played a vital part in religious Teachings at the monasteries where not only the resident monks got their education but also religious discourses were given to the laity.

The teachers taught their pupils not just to remember the words and lines of the discourses of the Buddha; the students had explained to them the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences in the discourse, together with the method of learning it by rote and the proper manner of its recital. It was mentioned in *Mahavagga*<sup>1</sup> that is found an account of how *Samanera Sona*, the novice under *Uppajjhaya Mahakaccana* recited, on the injunction of the Buddha, the whole *Atthakavaggika* section of the *Vinaya*, in accordance with the accepted norm of rhythm and tune for proper recitation. He was praised by the Buddha for his good performance, saying that his manner of recital testified to the fact that he remembered and understood the true meaning of '*Atthakavaggika*'.

That, from the earliest days, some form of classification and systematization of the Teachings had taken shape already was apparent from Textual references such as the *Vinaya* accounts of a clear cut distinction and division of the Teachings into *Sutta*, *Vinaya* and *Dhamma* and the experts specializing in one particular branch of scripture being given separate seats and beds etc. But it was only at the time of the

---

1. *Vinaya*.III.56, Department of Religious Affairs, Rangoon,1956.

convening of the First Council that formal compilation of the Teachings as a whole and arrangements into separate divisions took place.

## **1.2 THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE BUDDHIST COUNCIL, SANGAYANA**

The word '*Sangayana*' is a combination of two Pali words (*sam-* together+ *gayana-* chanting) which mean reciting together or chanting together. There is also another Pali term '*Sangiti*' which means the general convocation of the Buddhist Sangha in order to settle questions of doctrine and to fix the text of the Scriptures. Both convey the same meaning and many Western writers on Buddhism prefer to use the word '*Sangiti*'. Whatever may be the case, it is clear that the word itself suggests that the chanting of the Teachings of the Buddha cannot be performed by a single person or a single community. It requires the sincere co-operation of all interested parties.

As mentioned earlier, *Sangayana* implies the meaning of chanting the *Dhamma* together. Can this be done by a King or monarch? Certainly not. What are they then for? They are meant for supporting the *bhikkhus* and lay people who participate in the proceedings of the *Sangayana*. When we look at the history of Great Buddhist Councils, we will find that the kings were only supporting personalities and the Arahants, the Disciples of the Buddha were responsible for the complete functioning of those respective *Sangayana*.

It is three months after the final passing away of the Buddha and five hundred senior monks assembled in a cave on the hill in *Rajagaha*, North India. They were all Arahants who had dispelled the cloud of ignorance and have totally overcome all craving. They have assembled to select and recite the teachings of the Buddha.

Ven. *Mahakassapa* said, “Come, friends, let us recite together both the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* before what is not *Dhamma* flourishes and the *Vinaya* is thrust aside; before those who teach what is not *Dhamma* become powerful and those who teach the *Dhamma* become weak, those who teach what is not *Vinaya* become powerful and those who teach *Vinaya* become weak.”<sup>2</sup>

Ven. *Mahakassapa* was presiding at the council. He is also the catechizer. He is going to ask questions leading to the recital of the body of *Vinaya* which comprises the rules of discipline to regulate the conduct of the disciples of the Buddha admitted into the Order of the *Sangha*. The question will first cover the circumstances under which each rule was laid down asking where the rule was promulgated, concerning whom, the subject of the rule and other details. The Ven.*Upali* will be the Respondent.

Ven.*Mahakassapa* brought the assembly to order as follow ‘*sunatu me avuso samgho*’ which means ‘let the assembly, friends, hear me. If it pleases the assembly, I will question Ven.*Upali* regarding the *Vinaya*.’

It seems agreeable to the assembly so it remains silent. Then, Ven.*Upali* puts a proposal to the assembly, saying ‘let the assembly, Sirs, hear me. If it pleases the assembly, when questioned by Ven.*Mahakassapa* regarding the *Vinaya*, I will reply.’

In this manner, Ven.*Mahakassapa* questioned Ven.*Upali* regarding *Vinaya* and as questioned Ven.*Upali* replied. After the recitation of *Vinaya* had been completed Ven.*Mahakassapa* put a proposal to the assembly and asked Ven.*Ananda* about *Dhamma*. Ven.*Ananda*, cousin of the Buddha has been mastered both *Vinaya* and *Dhamma*. The Buddha had declared that Ven.*Ananda* was the foremost among His disciples who were learned in the *Dhamma*, who was skilled in mindfulness, who

---

2 . Ven.Buddhaghosa, *Samantapasadika*.p.5, Department of Religious Affairs, Rangoon, 1965

was upright in conduct, who was established in enduring and who was well-versed in ministering. That Great Council was named the First Great Council, *Sangayana*.<sup>3</sup> Such Great Councils were held for Six Times in Theravada Buddhist countries in the history.

### 1.3 THE PALI CANONICAL TEXTS

As stated earlier, there was no written record of the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* left by the Buddha when he passed away: whatever he had bequeathed to humanity in the way of his teaching was stored up in the extraordinary memory of his distinguished disciples, the accomplished Ones. After the passing away of the Buddha, these great disciples decided to bring together all the Teachings, retained separately and in specialized sections in the memory of the talented experts by reciting them all together. Besides this general consideration there was also an immediate reason for the need to collect and preserve the Teaching as a whole in its pristine purity.

On his way to *Kusinara*, after hearing of the Buddha's passing away, the great disciple Ven.*Mahakassapa* met a certain elderly *bhikkhu* named *Subhadda* who had gone forth only in his old age. Seeing some members of the community weeping miserably at the thought of the Buddha's demise, this old monk said to them in impatience: "Enough, friends, do not weep, do not lament. We are well rid of the Great *Samana* who always said: "This is allowable, this is not allowable." But now we will be able to do as we please and we won't do what we don't like." When he heard this, Ven.*Mahakassapa* was greatly alarmed, because he saw at once in this utterance an immediate danger to the Teaching. *Bhikkhu Subhadda* was attacking the very basis

---

3 . Ibid., 7.

for *Vinaya*, the disciplinary rule, without which the *Dhamma*, the Teaching would soon cease to exist.

As soon as the cremation was over, he assembled the bhikkhus and urged that a Council be called to collect and recite together the words of the Teacher. He said, "Come friends, let us recite together both the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* before what is not the *Dhamma* flourishes and the *Dhamma* is disregarded; before what is not the Discipline flourishes and the Discipline is disregarded; before these who teach what is not the *Dhamma* and what is not the Discipline become powerful and those who teach the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* become powerless."

The *bhikkhus* consented to his proposal and requested him to organize the Council after selecting 500 Arahants to form the Convocation. The selected members of the *Sanghas* consisting of 499 Arahants and Ven.Ananda who had not yet become an Arahant, then met in *Rajagaha* for the *vassa* period of the Rains, during which the Convocation was held.

The first month of their stay in Rajagaha was devoted to repair of the dilapidated monastic buildings. King Ajatasattu, by then an ardent devotee, lent every support to the bhikkhus in their preparations to make the *Sattapani* Cave on the side of the mountain *Vebhara*, the venue for Convocation of the elders.

At last the repairs and preparations were over. The time drew nearer for the assembly to meet in the Sattapani Cave. Ven.Ananda spent much of the night before the meeting in contemplating of the body. He was striving to attain the Arahantship, without which it would not be proper for him to join the company of the Arahants. Just as dawn approached for the great day, He laid himself down on the bed, despaired of his failure to achieve Arahantship. But before his head touched the pillow and as his feet left the round, during that short interval of time, his mind was

released from all moral intoxicants with no further clinging. Ven.*Ananda* went to take part in the proceedings of the convocation as a full-fledged Arahant like the rest of the members.

Ven.*Mahakassapa*, acting as the President, opened the Convocation by addressing the elders: "Friends, what shall we recite first, the *Dhamma* or the *Vinaya*?" The elders replied, "Venerable Sir, the *Vinaya* is the very life of the Dispensation of our Master so long as the *Vinaya* endures, the Dispensation endures; therefore, let us recite the *Vinaya* first."

With the unanimous consent of the assembled bhikkhus, the Ven.*Upali* was placed in charge of reciting the *Vinaya*, because while the Buddha was still living, he considered the Ven.*Upali* as being the most pre-eminent in matters connected with the learning of *Vinaya*. He had said, "Bhikkhus, *Upali* is the most pre-eminent amongst my bhikkhu disciples in the retention of *Vinaya*."

Ven.*Mahakassapa* seated himself in the president's seat and questioned Ven.*Upali* on the *Vinaya*. 'Friend *Upali*, where did the Buddha lay down the first parajika, defeat rule? At *Vesali*, Sir.' On whose account? On account of *Sudinna*, son of *Kalandaka*. In connection with what subject? In connection with Sexual intercourse."

Then Ven.*Mahakassapa* questioned Ven.*Upali* on the subject of the first Parajika, the occasion, the person, the rule, the corollaries, on what constitutes an offence and what does not. In the same way, her interrogated him about the other three Parajikas- the second on stealing, the third on killing of human beings, and the fourth on making false claims to spiritual attainments. Ven.*Upali* explained whatever was asked of him.

Then having classified these four *Parajikas* under the chapter on *Parajika*, the Convocation established the thirteen *Sanghadisesa* rules, the two rules called *Aniyata*, the thirty rules called *Nissaggiyapacittiya*, the ninety-two rules called the *Pacittiya*, the four rules called the *Patidesaniya*, the seventy five rules called the *Sekhiya* and the seven rules for the settlements of questions that have arisen *Adhikaranasamatha*."

Whatever Ven.*Mahakassapa* asked Ven.*Upali* had explained. At the conclusion of the explanation of the questions, the 500 Arahants recited together the *Vinaya Pitaka* as a whole according to the exact way in which the compilation had been fixed.

After reciting the *Vinaya*, Ven.*Mahakassapa* next paid his attention to the *Dhamma*. The congregation approved of his proposal to put Ven.*Ananda* in charge of reciting of the *Dhamma*. Then Ven.*Mahakassapa* questioned Ven.*Ananda* on the *Dhamma*: "Friend *Ananda*, where was the *Brahmajala sutta* preached?" "Ven.Sir, at the King's mansion at *Ambalattika* between *Rajagaha* and *Nalanda*. On account of whom? On account of *Suppiya*, the wandering ascetic and the brahman youth *Brahmadatta*. On what subject? On praise and blame?"

In this manner, Ven.*Mahakassapa* interrogated Ven.*Ananda* about the source of the *Brahmajala* discourse, the occasions and the persons concerned. After that he interrogated him about *Samannaphala* discourse in the same way. In this manner he interrogated Ven.*Ananda* on all the appropriate discourses in all five *Nikayas*, the main collection of the Buddha's teaching.

Ven.*Mahakassapa* brought the proceedings of the congregation to an end with the resolution: "Friends, let the assembled bhikkhus hear me. If it is agreeable to the assembly, let not what is undeclared in the Teaching be declared, and let not what is declared be deleted. Let the community of bhikkhus remain devoted to the training

rules according as they have been declared." The resolution was unanimously passed by the Sangha and the convocation terminated.<sup>4</sup>

All that was compiled at this First Council constituted the Buddha's words or Training. A unique system of classification was employed by the Canonical compilers to reduce the immense accumulation of the Buddha's words into manageable divisions or sections for easy memorization and study.

All forms of Buddha's teaching fall into a single category that of having a uniform taste. Throughout the interval of forty-five years from the time of realizing perfect enlightenment until he passed away, whatever the Buddha had said as instruction, injunction, or teaching to devas and human beings, has only one taste, one flavor that of emancipation, *vimutti sara*.

What was said during the interval between the first and last statements constitute the intermediate words of the Buddha which is later known as Pitaka. The word 'Pitaka' is a term used with reference to learning and a receptacle such as a vessel or a basket. All teachings that were compiled and rehearsed at the Council were sorted out and placed in three separated baskets, namely the Vinaya Pitaka, the Discipline basket in which Vinaya learning was kept; the Sutta Pitaka, the Discourses basket, the Sutta learning was kept and the Abhidhamma Pitaka, the Higher teaching basket, in which the Abhidhamma learning was kept. The teachings kept handily in such separate baskets are then handed on from generation to generation till the present time.

### **1.3.1 THE FIRST GREAT BUSSHIST COUNCIL**

#### **(a) Objectives and Reasons**

---

4 . Samantapasadika.p.9

Seven days after the passing away of the Buddha, the Enlightened One, those monks who were learners much grieved and lamented over their irreparable loss. At that time, an old monk called *Subhadda* who was the barber of *Atuma* who went forth when he was old, and who was angry when the Buddha refused to accept the meal he had prepared, spoke thus to the monks: “Enough, your reverences, do not grieve, do not lament, we are rid of this great recluse. We were worried when he said, ‘This is allowable to you. This is not allowable to you’. But now we will be able to do as we like and we won’t do what we don’t like.”

When Venerable *Mahakassapa* heard these words, he said: “Come, let us, your reverences, chant *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* before what is not *Dhamma* shines out and *Dhamma* is withheld, before what is not *Vinaya* shines out and *Vinaya* is withheld, before those who speak what is not *Dhamma* become strong and those who speak *Dhamma* become feeble, before those who speak what is not *Vinaya* become strong and those who speak *Vinaya* become feeble.” Hence, the necessity for holding the Great Council to recite, classify and arrange all the teachings of the Buddha.

**(b) The leading Mahatheras**

- (1) Ven. *Mahakassapa* presided over the Council
- (2) Ven. *Ananda*, the ever present attendant and cousin of the Buddha recited the *Suttas* and the *Abhidhamma*.
- (3) Ven. *Upali* recited the *Vinaya*.

**(c) Number of Attendants**

- Five hundred Arahants.

**(d) Place**

- At *Sattapani* Cave in *Rajagaha* (modern Rajgir in Bihar)

**(e) Supporting King**

With the support of King *Ajatasattu* who was the most devoted follower of the Buddha and a powerful king of North India.

**(f) Time**

The Council was held three months after the passing away of the Buddha, in the eight years of King *Ajatasattu*'s reign and in the year one Buddhist Era. The Council lasted for seven months.

**(g) Method of Holding the Council**

The five-hundred monks who assembled together at Sattapani Cave in Rajagaha recited, classified and arranged all the teachings of the Buddha.<sup>5</sup>

### **1.3.2 THE SEACOND GREAT BUDDHIST COUNCIL**

**(a) Objectives and Reasons**

A century after the Lord had attained *Parinibbana*, *bhikkhus* who were *Vajjis* of *Vesali* promulgated ten points at Vesali saying “the practice concerning a horn for salt is allowable; the practice as to five-finger breadths is allowable; the practice concerning ‘among the villages’ is allowable; the practice concerning what is customary is allowable; the practice concerning unchanged milk is allowable; it is allowable the drink unfermented toddy; a piece of cloth to sit upon that has no border is allowable; gold and silver are allowable.”

When Ven.Yasa, the son of Kakandaka heard about these points, he sent for the Senior Arahants of the Order and they all decided to hold a Council to decide this doctrinal question. Hence the holding of Second Great Buddhist Council.

**(b) Leading Mahatheras**

- Ven.Yasa, Ven.REvata and 120 years old Ven.Sabbakami

---

5. Aung Htut, U, Pathama Thingayana Sardan, Vol.II, 3, Takkathopyinnyar padaythar sarsaug, Rangoon, 1967.

**(c) Number of Attendants**

- 700 Arahants

**(d) Place**

- At Vesali (the present village of Basai in North Biha)

**(e) Supporting King**

- King Kalasoka

**(f) Time**

About 448 B.C. i.e. 100 years after the demise of the Buddha. This council lasted for eight months.

**(g) Method of Holding the Council**

The 700 Arahants recited, classified and arranged all the teachings of the Buddha.

### **1.3.3 THE THIRD GREAT BUDDHIST COUNCIL**

**(a) Objectives and Reasons**

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C, there existed many schismatic monk-groups or schools. The following is an account of these schismatic schools according to the Commentary.

“One hundred years after the passing away of the Buddha, the so-called Vajjiputtaka monks declared for laxer rules of the Order and founded the Mahasangiti School from which, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century after the Buddha. Five other schools sprang up making six in all. From the original school of Buddhism, which by reason of its having been rehearsed by 500 Theras or Elders, three months after the demise of the Buddha was called Theravada, they had already seceded 11 schools, the most

important among them being Sabbatthivada school-making 12 in all. Thus, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C, the number of schools raised up to eighteen schools.

In order to suppress a number of heresies whose exponents were causing dissensions, in order by their loose teaching and living, and also to recite, classify and arrange all the teachings of the Buddha, it was held expedient to convene the Third Great Buddhist Council.

**(b) Chairmanship**

- Under the chairmanship of the Elder Ven.Moggaliputta Tissa

**(c) Number of Attendants**

- 1000 Arahants including Arahant Majjhantika and ARahanta Mahadeva

**(d) Place**

- At Pataliputta, the present Patna

**(e) Supporting King**

- Emperor Asoka

**(f) Time**

About 235 B.E. This Council lasted for nine months.

**(g) Method of Convening the Council**

The thousand Arahants recited, classified and arranged all the teaching of the Buddha. The Ven.Mahatheras Moggaliputta Tissa added 500 dialogues on “Points of Controversy” to the original 500 dialogues, making 1000 in all.

### **1.3.4 THE FOURTH GREAT BUDDHIST COUNCIL**

**(a) Objectives and Reasons**

The Mahavamsa (Ceylonese Chronicle) says: “Then, the mostwise bhikkhus who had passed down the Tipitakadhara and the Commentaries thereon orally in

former times, since they saw that the people were less righteous, assembled and in order that the true doctrine may endure, they wrote them down in Books.”

On account of the aforesaid reasons, it was expedient to convene the Fourth Great Council.

**(b) Chairman Ship**

- Under the chairmanship of Ven.Mahathera Rakkhita

**(c) Number of Attendants**

- 500 bhikkhus

**(d) Place**

- At Aloka Cave in the village of Malaya (modern Matale)

**(e) Supporting King**

- King Vattagamani Abhaya

**(f) Time**

- About 29-13 B.C

**(g) Method of Convening the Council**

All the teachings of the Buddha were reduced to writing, and the scripts checked over 100 times.

### **1.3.5 THE FIFTH GREAT BUDDHIST COUNCIL**

**(a) Objectives and Reasons**

In order to have a uniform edition of the Tipitakas and to record them on marble slabs which cannot be easily worn out, it was held necessary to convene the Fifth Great Buddhist Council.

**(b) Leading Mahatheras**

(1) Mahathera Jagarbhivamsa,

(2) Mahathera Narindabhidhaja,

(3) Mahathera Sumangalasami,

**(c) Number of Attendants**

- 2,400 bhikkhus

**(d) Place**

- At Mandalay

**(e) Supporting King**

- King Mindon

**(f) Time**

In 1871 (2414 B.E).the marble recording took a considerable length of time and the recitations of the Tipitakas lasted for five months.

**(g) Method of Convening the Council**

(1) The bhikkhus recited the Tipitakas at the Royal Palace.

(2) The Texts were recorded on 729 marble slabs as follows: -

- Vinaya texts- 111 slabs,

- Suttas texts- 410 slabs and

- Abhidhamma texts- 208 slabs<sup>6</sup>

### **1.3.6 THE SIXTH GREAT BUDDHIST COUNCIL**

**(a) Objectives and Reasons**

In order to resolve the errors and omissions made by the scribes in repeatedly copying the Five Nikayas with the intention of purifying the texts, scrutinizing, editing, reciting and arranging all the teachings of the Buddha and finally in order to

---

6. Munidhaja, U; Pancamasamgayana mawgun sar.4. Rakhinethargyi sarpay, Yangon, 1995.

print these edited Tipitaka books and distribute these works all over the world by promoting the teachings of the Buddha.

**(b) Leading Mahatheras**

- (1) Mahathera Revata known as Nyaungnyan Sayadaw,
- (2) Mahathera Nagavamsa known as Bagara Sayadaw,
- (3) Mahathera Javana known as Pakkhuku Sayadaw,
- (4) Mahathera Sobhana known as Mahasi Sayadaw,
- (5) Mahathera Vicittasarabhivamsa known as Mingun Sayadaw

**(c) Number of Attendants**

- 2,500 bhikkhus

**(d) Place**

- At Mahapasana Cave, Rangoon

**(e) Supporting Authority**

The government of the Union of Burma led by U Nu, the Prime Minister and the people of Burma.

**(f) Time**

The inaugural meeting of the Council was held in the full moon day of Visakha in 1953 (2498 B.E) and finished in 1965 the full moon day of Visakha in May,2500B.E.

**(g) Method of Convening the Council**

The Great Council had been collaborated both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhist countries including related Buddhist organizations. At the grand opening ceremony respective delegations and leaders of the countries such as Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Japan, China, Korea, Viet Nam,

Sikkim, Indonesia, Malaysia and leaders of related delegation from Buddhist organizations participated. About 5,00 bhikkhus in Burma who are well versed in study and practice of the teachings of the Buddha took responsibility of re-examination of the texts and edited them with all available original versions around Theravada Buddhist countries including Pali Text Society (PTS) version. By clarifying the texts and purified them and recited at the Great Council and printed all edited treatises as the version of Chattha Sangayana that has been referring around the world today when quoting Buddhist literature.<sup>7</sup>

#### **1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To study various Buddhist councils which were held at various points of time.
2. To know how Theravada Buddhist doctrines have evolved over the period in Myanmar.
3. To understand whether there was any deviation in the doctrines over the period.

#### **1.5 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY**

The Buddhist Councils especially Theravada Buddhism have been convened for six times as the situations that had reflected on the current periods and how the teachings of the Buddha have been preserved and protected. Buddhist Organization called '**The Order of the Sangha**' has been standing as the longest organization in the world. Within 2,600 years of history of Buddhism, the teachings of the Buddha have been spreading every corner of the world due to the timeless message of the Buddha people have been enjoyed peace, harmony and happiness by applying those teachings in their daily life. Among the disciples of the Buddha those who follow and

---

7. Kelasa, Ashin, Chattsamgayana thamaingdwgyi, Vol.I.9. Yangon, 1997.

practice strictly the disciplines and teachings of the Master are called Theravadins in Buddhist world. Theravadins have been carrying out and distributing the techniques of their Master known as Theravada tradition now a day including convening Great Council.

## **1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

The proposed study is an attempt to trace the historical background when and why the Buddhist Councils were held which is based on Pali Canonical texts known as Tiptaka, the teachings of the Buddha, their commentaries and chronicles works recorded and handed down by successive authors and generations. History is a study of the past events concerned in the development of a particular place and linked with another places. Every event has its historical background so Sangayana, one of the significant things in the history of Buddhism in the past for centuries. The original sources written mainly are applied and historical data have been gleaned as possible as reach to our knowledge. Apart from the original sources' other methods such as comparative, historical, textual and scientific have been utilized for the present work and rational thinking has been applied to clarify the facts. All the collected data have been justified.

## **1.7 CHAPTERISATION OF THE STUDY**

The present work is divided into seven chapters. Chapter 1 is introduction. This chapter consists of systematic introduction of the topic, objectives, hypothesis, methodology, context of study, review of literature and mention of sources and

conceptual framework of thesis. Chapter 2 talks about the The First Council (B.C about 540). The third chapter discusses The Second Council (B.C about 383). The fourth chapter is about The Third Council (B.C about 307). The fifth chapter brings about the developments in the Fourth Council (B.C about 93). The sixth chapter is about the Fifth Council (A.D 1872). The seventh chapter discusses the Sixth Council (A.D 1954) and lastly the conclusion.

**CHAPTER II**  
**THE FIRST GREAT BUDDHIST COUNCIL**

## CHAPTER II

### THE FIRST GREAT BUDDHIST COUNCIL

According to Pali tradition, the recorded in canonical and non-canonical literature, the *Sangiti* now a day called the Great Council was held in the field of Buddhism which is rendering of the Pali and Sanskrit ‘*samgiti*’ or ‘*samgayana*’. The present chapter is an attempt to show the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* in order to prevent the true doctrine from being submerged in false doctrines soon after the demise of the Buddha. The Dhamma has been well proclaimed by the Buddha so we should all recite it together without disagreement, so that the Noble Dhamma may endure and be established for a long time

#### 2.1 THE GREAT COUNCILS

What we often call a ‘Council’ in the field of Buddhism is rendering of the Pali and Sanskrit ‘*samgiti*’ or ‘*samgayana*’. The term means ‘collective chanting or recitation or rehearsal. This had the main function of reconciliation and collective sanction or authorization. When certain concerns arose, the *Sangha* members were assembled to arrive at common decision, ironing out whatever differences there were. The history of the councils can be traced through reliable sources in Buddhist literatures.

After the final passing away of the Buddha, the community of he monks chose five hundred worthy ones (arahants) to work together to collect and compiled the doctrine and discipline; *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* in order to prevent the true doctrine from being submerged in false doctrines. According to Pali tradition recorded in canonical and non-canonical literature, three Great Council; the First, the Second and the Third were held to draw up the canonical texts and the creed in their pure form.

All traditional sources, transmitted by the different Buddhist schools, agree that the First Council took place at Rajagaha in the first rains retreat after the passing away of the Buddha, and the Second Council in Vaisali, about a hundred years after the demise of the Buddha.

## **2.2 SOURCES ON THE COUNCILS**

The accounts of the two Councils are found in the various extant Vinaya and in some sutra-s and sastra-s. They are preserved in the Pali and Sanskrit originals, and in Chinese and Tibetan translation. These sources are:

- Pali Vinaya, in Cullavagga XI, XII
- Dharmagupta Vinaya, T22, 966a-971c
- Mahisasaka Vinaya, T22, 190b-194b
- Sarvasativada Vinaya, T23,445c-453b
- Mulasarvastivada Vinaya, T24, 402a-408b
- Mahasamghika Vinaya, T22, 489c-493c
- Vinaya-matrka-sutra, T24, 817b-820a
- Tibetan: Dulva XI.
- Dipavamsa IV
- Mahavamsa III
- Samantapasadika, Intro.,3f
- Mahaprajaparamita-upadesa, T25,67b-69c
- Asokavadana, T50,112.<sup>8</sup>

---

8.112 asokavdana.

## 2.3 MOTIVES AND PROCESS OF THE PRESERVATION OF THE *DHAMMA* AND *VINAYA*

Concerning with the compilation of the Buddhist Canon, it was compiled in a gradual process, eventually assuming its present form. It must have been continuously concerned with the preservation of the authentic teachings of the specific domains of the Buddhist tradition. This became all the more urgent after the Buddha's demise, when the authority of the transmitted teachings had to be harmoniously universally accepted, without dispute. There had to be not only collective rehearsal of the teachings periodically, but also each time a collective sanction as regards authenticity. The importance of this function of *samgiti*, underlying the motive for the First Council, is stressed in *Sangiti sutta* of *Sutta Pitaka*<sup>9</sup> which relates the serious disputes among the followers of Mahavira after his demise. In the sutta Venerable Sariputta taught to the monks as suggested by the Buddha.

“Then Ven. Sariputta spoke to the monks, ‘Nigantha Nathaputta has just died at Pava, and at this death the Nigantha were split into two parties, quarrelling and disputing, fighting and attacking each other with wordy warfare. Their doctrine and discipline was so ill-proclaimed, so unedifyingly displayed, and so ineffectual in calming the passions having been proclaimed by one not fully enlightened’. This Dhamma has been well proclaimed by the Buddha, the fully enlightened one and so we should all recite it together without disagreement, so that the Noble Dhamma may endure and be established for a long time.”<sup>10</sup>

Naganthanaputta, also known as Mahavira, the founder of Jainism, just before he died, endured a great loss as his main patrons and devoted followers, the commander-in chief, General Siha, and the businessman Upali, left his teaching and

---

9. Pathika Pali (D.iii.) p.200, Department of Religious Affairs, Rangoon, 1958.

10. Maurice Walshe, The Long Discourse of the Buddha, p.480, Wisdom Publications, Boston, 1987.

became devoted to the Buddha's Dhamma. Nigantha died when he was about 80. His death was said to have occurred about ten years before the Buddha's and was followed by a serious split among his followers. Even before his body had been cremated, there were already quarrels, disputes, abuses, fights and attacks among the Nigantha's disciples.

In regard to this, Ven. Sariputta made remark that the teaching of Nigantha was not the outcome of perfect enlightenment, could not extinguish defilements, did not lead to liberation from the round of samsara, and were not well-proclaimed. According to Ven. Sariputta the conflict was due to defects in the teaching of their Nigantha.

In comparison with the teaching of Nigantha, Ven. Sariputta mentioned the Dhamma saying, "Brethren, the Dhamma-Vinaya that we are now following is well-proclaimed (*svakhata*) by the Buddha. It is the teaching that can make one free from *samsara* (*niyyanikasasana*). It is the teaching that can extinguish the fire of defilements (*upasamasasana*). It is the teaching taught with omniscient wisdom. Thus, we must learn it, keep it in our memory, practice, and preserve the Dhamma-Vinaya that is *svakhata*, *niyyanika* and *upasama*."

Ven. Buddhaghosa Thera, the great Pali commentator, commented on the word "*sangayhitabbam*" taught by Ven. Sariputta to the monks is meant that the Dhamma-vinaya should be recited unanimously (*samaggehithayitabbam*), without conflict in words and ideas (*aviruddhavacanehe bhanitabbam*), and with sole conviction (*ekavacanehe banitabbam*). So, the meaning of the word "*Sangiti*" or "*Sangayana*" is more than just recitation. According to the Pali commentary and sub-commentary on

the *Pasadika Sutta* of *Dighanikaya*,<sup>11</sup> the word “*sangayitabban*” has several meanings: this well-taught Dhamma-vinaya ought to be taught (*vacetabbam*), recited (*sajjhayitabbam*), learnt sincerely (*sammadeva gahitabbam*), and preached (*kathetabbam*). That’s the way by which the teaching will last long.

When the relics of the Buddha had been distributed, Ven. Mahakassapa encouraged seven hundred thousand monks, who gathered for the event of Buddha’s cremation at Kusinara to organize a Sangha council before the time when those who spoke the *Dhamma-Vinaya* became too few.

“Come, let us, your reverences, chant *Dhamma* and discipline before what is not *Dhamma* shines out and Dhamma is withheld, before what is not discipline shines out and discipline is withheld, before those who speak what is not Dhamma become strong and those who speak Dhamma become feeble, before those who speak what is not discipline become strong and those who speak discipline become feeble.”<sup>12</sup>

The intention of Ven. Mahakassapa Thera was to establish unity and harmony. His wish was that all the words of the Buddha taught during those forty-five years should be:

- Compiled systematically (*sama gahitabbam*)
- Recited unanimously (*samaggehi gayatabbam*)
- Taught systematically (*samma vacitabbam*)
- Learnt sincerely (*samma uggahetabbam*) and
- Preached soundly (*samma bhanitabbam*)

---

11. Ven.Buddhaghosa, Pathika Atthakatha (DA.iii.) p.95, Department of Religious Affairs, Rangoon, 1958.

12. Ven.Buddhaghosa, Vinaya Atthakatha (V.A. i).6. Department of Religious Affairs, Rangoon, 1958.

Here, the words of Ven. Sariputta and Ven. Mahakassapa should not be taken just to mean “to recite” and it should be taken with a more profound meaning: to learn, to preach, to teach, to compile, to practice, to safeguard and to propagate.

## **2.4 ASSEMBLY AT TIME OF THE BUDDHA**

As discussed earlier, ten years before his maha parinibbana, while the Buddha was staying in Pava city, Malla state and just after Naganthanaputta had just passed away, there was a serious split among the followers of Nagantha.

Noticing their increasingly worsening situation, the Buddha instructed Sariputta Thera the task of maintaining unity among the Sangha organization (Bhikkhu-sangiti) and compiling the Dhamma-vinaya systematically (Dhammavinaya-Sangiti). Following the Buddha’s instruction, Sariputta Thera called for the assembly of bhikkhus (bhikkhu-sangiti) and five hundred bhikkhus gathered at a garden which belonged to Cunda, the gold-smith. Out of five hundreds bhikkhus, half were the disciples of Sariputta Thera and the other half of Ananda Thera.

Presiding over the assembly of five hundreds bhikkhus, Sariputta Thera summarized for the assembled bhikkhus the Dhamma-vinaya as taught in detail by the Buddha for 35 years. The five hundred bhikkhus were pleased to learn the extracts teaching from the Thera and approved it as the teaching of the Buddha. The Buddha himself also approved it saying “Well done, Sariputta! Well indeed have you, Sariputta, proclaimed the way of extracting the teaching to the bhikkhus”<sup>13</sup>

This Sangiti (gathering) was considered to be Maha sangiti, “the great gathering”, for the Buddha himself attended the meeting and approved the outcome. It

---

13. Mahavagga Pali (D.ii.) p.255, Department of Religious Affairs, Rangoon, 1958.

was the first Maha-sangiti led by Sariputta Thera while the Teacher was still alive. This sangiti has been overlooked by many scholars.

#### **2.4.1 Different versions recorded in the text about the first council**

As mentioned earlier, there are many versions dealing with the First Council recorded in different schools of Buddhism. Those accounts will be discussed later.

#### **2.4.2 Final passing into Nibbana**

As recorded in the Mahavamsa and the Samanta pasadika, three months after the Buddha's Maha-parinibbana, the first Sangiti was held in Rajagaha, Magadha State. This gathering was patronized by Ajatasattu, the king of Magada Mahakassapa Thera presided over the Sangiti. Earlier, the bhikkusangha, over seven hundred thousand in number, who gathered at Kushinagara, unanimously elected Mahakassapa Thera as the president of the sangiti. The meeting of those bhikkhus undisputedly gave the Thera full authority to organize a Sangiti. Mahakassapa Thera exerted his authority by choosing 500 capable bhikkhus; regarding the procedure of this historic council, a scholar once remarks: "a basic form of parliamentary democracy of the modern age could be found in the history of Buddhism".

Bhikkhus from different backgrounds, either originally from the Brahmana caste before they joined the order, or from the Khattiya caste, or even from the Vassa and Suddha castes and joined the Sangiti without paying the least heed to their differences. The most important issue from the Sangiti was the compilation work (Sangiti) of the words and the disciplinary rules by the Buddha.

A simile may be given of the situation when the Master was still alive and thereafter. From a tree full of colorful blossoms, the flowers scattered everywhere

about the place where the Buddha was laying. A man picked up all the flowers of different colors and put them into three suitable baskets. The Buddha passed away like a colorful tree full of its blooms; his words, taught at the 13 different places at which he dwelled, entered into the hearts of many thousands of disciples like the fragrant flowers scattered on the ground.

Mahakassapa Thera knew that there was a need to collect the many flowers of the Dhamma-vinaya that had scattered into the hearts of the many disciples and so he appointed five hundred capable bhikkhus and gave them the task of compilation. They all gathered at Rajagaha. Upali Thera gathered the disciplinary rules that were taught to different disciples on different occasions at different places, grouped them together accordingly and submitted the systematic compilation to the Sangha assembly. Ananda Thera took the responsibility of compiling the Suttanta and Abhidhamma submitted the compilation to the same assembly. Then Mahakassapa Thera, the president of the assembly, asked three questions to the participants:

- Is there anything that should be deducted from the submission of Upali Thera and Ananda Thera?
- Is there anything that should be added to them?
- Are there any defects in the submissions that should be corrected?

The replies from the 500 bhikkhus to the questions were without difference in views (*avivada*), in concord (*samaggama*), and merged into a single thread of philosophy (*ekavacana*). They said, “The submissions of the two Theras, O Venerable Mahakassapa, concerning with the Sutta, Vinaya, and Abhidhamma were perfect. There is nothing that should be deducted from them, or added to them, or that required any correction. They were perfectly authentic teaching of the Buddha.”

- *Apannatam na pannapenti.* (Bhikkhus will not declare what the Buddha did not declare).
- *Pannattam na samucchindissanti.* (Bhikkhus will not amend what the Buddha declared).
- *Yatha pannattesu sikkhapadesu samadaya sikkhissanti.* (Having accepted the disciplinary rules as the Buddha declared, Bhikkhus will put them into practice).

Having heard the reply from the 500 bhikkhus, Mahakassapa Thera made a presidential request to them to recite the Dhamma-vinaya in a chorus to show their undisputed approval. Then 500 bhikkhus led by Mahakassapa Thera, Ananda Thera, Upali Thera recited the Dhamma-vinaya with one accord and officially approved it as an authentic record of the Buddha's teachings. (*Buddhapavacananam sangiti*). Thus, the systems laid down by Sariputta Thera after the Buddha's demise and led by Mahakassapa Thera after the Buddha's demise were taken as the systems of the elders. (*Theranam vado theravado*). The strategy at the First Sangiti led by Mahakassapa Thera could be attributed to the Bhikkhu-aparihaniya Sutta as taught by the Buddha himself.

That was, after the Buddha, Sariputta Thera and Moggalana Thera had passed away, the first united conference of Sangha, where Mahakassapa Thera as the president of the Sangha, using his authority, chose five hundred monks and formed a parliament of the Sangha. Upali Thera and Ananda Thera took the positions of secretariat and assisted the president. All decisions concerned with the authentic teaching of the Buddha were made with the unanimous accord of the council's participants.

There were no disputations made to the decision that nothing should be deducted from or be added to, or be corrected in the teachings of the Buddha. It was a Buddhist Singiti or Buddhavacana Sangiti. Lord Zetland made a remark on the First Sangiti saying: “And it may come as a surprise to many to learn that in the assemblies of the Buddhists in India two thousand and more ago are to be the rudiments of our parliamentary practice of the present day!”

### **2.4.3 Theravada Version**

One hundred years after the final passing away of the Buddha, there was a split among the Sangha: the orthodox groups those who wanted to preserve the disciplinary rule strictly and the other group, heterodox who wanted to change the rules in accordance with the situation. Theravada is the orthodox group and, in their treatise, the even was recorded as follow:

Ven.Mahakassapa addressed the assemble bhikkhus, “At one time, brothers, I was on a long road from Pava to Kusinara with a large community of bhikkhus, about five hundred. Then I stepped off the road and sat down under a tree. At that time, brothers, a certain naked ascetic, having taken a flower of a coral tree, had entered the long road from Kusinara to Pava. I saw, brothers, that naked ascetic coming from a distance and said this to him, “Do you know, friend, our teacher? He said, “Yes, friend, I know him. The recluse Gotama entered into Parinibbana one week ago today; from there I took this flower of a coral tree.”

‘On that occasion, brothers, some of those bhikkhus whose pasion had not yet ceased held both their hands fast and cried, jumped down from cliffs, or reeled back and forth, saying, “The Blessed One has entered into parinibbana so soon; the Well Gone One has entered into parinibbana so soon; the Eye of the World has disappeared

so soon.” Those bhikkhus whose passion had ceased endured with mindfulness and awareness, thinking, “Conditioned things are impermanent. How could it be otherwise in this situation?”

‘Then, brothers, I said this to those bhikkhus, “Enough, brothers, don’t grieve, don’t lament. Has it not already been explained by the Master that there is change, separation and becoming other of all that are dear and beloved? Brothers, how could it be possible in this situation that whatever is born, whatever has come to be, whatever is conditioned and subject to change would indeed not break down? This is impossible.”’

At that time, brothers, a person called Subhadda, who had renounced family life at an old age, was sitting in that assembly. Then, brothers, he said this to those bhikkhus, “Enough, friends, don’t grieve, don’t lament. We are well released from that great recluse; we were troubled by him saying, ‘This is allowable to you and this is not allowable to you.’ Now we will do what we wish and will not do what we don’t.

‘Brother, let us recite the Dhamma and the Vinaya before Adhamma shines forth and the Dhamma is rejected, before Avinaya shines forth and the Vinaya is rejected, before those who advocate Adhamma become strong and those who advocate the Dhamma become weak, before those who advocate Avinaya become strong and those who advocate the Vinaya become weak.’

The bhikkhus said, ‘well then, Venerable Sir, let the elder select bhikkhus.’ Then, the Ven.Mahakassapa selected five hundred arahants, less one. The bhikkhus said this to Ven.Mahakassapa, ‘Ven.Sir, this Ananda, although still a trainee, is incapable of following a wrong course through desire, anger, delusion and fear. He has learnt by heart much Dhamma and Vinaya under the Blessed One. Therefore,

Ven.Sir, let the elder select Ven.Ananda too.’ Then Ven.Mahakassapa selected Ven.Ananda as well.

Then this idea occurred to the elder bhikkhus, ‘Where should we recite the Dhamma and Vinaya? Then this idea occurred to the elder bhikkhus, ‘Rajagaha has a large resort for alms and plenty of lodgings. Let us recite the Dhamma and Vinaya while observing rain retreat in Rajagaha. Let not the other bhikkhus observe rain retreat in Rajagaha.’

Then *Ven.Mahakassapa* informed the Samgha, ‘brothers, let the Samgha agree that these five hundred should recite the Dhamma and Vinaya while observing the rain retreat in Rajagaha and the other bhikkhus should not observe the rains retreat in Rajagaha. This is the resolution.

Brothers, let the Samgha listen to me. The Samgha agrees that these five hundred bhikkhus should recite the Dhamma and Vinaya while observation the rains retreat in Rajagaha and the other bhikkhus should not observe rains retreat in Rajagaha. Any venerable one to whom the agreement, that these five hundred bhikkhus should recite the Dhamma and Vinaya while observation rains retreat in Rajagaha and other bhikkhus should not observe the rains retreat in Rajagaha, is acceptable should observe silence. Any venerable one to whom it is not acceptable should speak. It is agreed upon by the Samgha that these five hundred bhikkhus should recite the Dhamma and Vinaya while observation rains retreat in Rajagaha and other bhikkhus should not observe the rains retreat in Rajagaha. It is acceptable to the Samgha, so the silence. Thus do I understand this.’

Then the elder bhikkhus went to Rajagaha to recite the Dhamma and Vinaya. Then this idea occurred to the elder bhikkhus,’ Repair work to the broken and dilapidated parts was praised by the Master. Let us do the repair work in the first

month. Having assembled in the middle month, we will recite the Dhamma and Vinaya.’ Then the elder bhikkhus repaired the broken and dilapidated parts during the first month.

Then the Ven.Ananda thought, ‘Tomorrow is the assembly. Being a trainee, it is not suitable for me to go to the assembly.’ Having spent most of the night practicing mindfulness of body, he reclined, thinking, I shall sleep.’ His head had not reached the pillow and his feet were off the ground, when his mind became free from defilements and without grasping. Then Ven.Ananda, having become an arahant, went to the assembly.

Then, *Ven.Mahakassapa* informed the Samgha, ‘brothers, let the Samgha listen to me. If the time is suitable for the Samgha, I would question Upali on the Vinaya.’ *Ven.Upali* informed to the Samgha, ‘Venerable Sirs, let the Samgha listen to me. If the time is suitable for the Samgha, I, being questioned on the Vinaya by Ven.Mahakassapa, would answer.’

Then, Ven.Mahakassapa said this to Ven.Upali, ‘brother Upali, where was the first Defeat (Parjika) proclaimed?’ ‘In Vesali, Ven.Sir.’ ‘Concerning whom?’ ‘Concerning Sudinna, the son of Kalnda.’ ‘on what subject?’ ‘On sexual intercourse.’ Then, Ven.Mahakassapa questioned Ven.Upali on the subject, the origin, the individual, the rule, the amendment, the offence and non-offence of the first Defeat.

‘Brother Upali, where was the second defeat proclaimed?’ ‘In Rajagaha, Ven.Sir.’ ‘Concerning whom?’ ‘Concerning Dhaniya, the son of a potter.’ ‘On what subject?’ ‘On taking what was not given.’ Then Ven.Mahakassapa questioned Ven.Upali on the subject, the origin the individual, the rule, the amendment, the offence and non-offence of the second Defeat. ‘Brother Upali, where was the third defeat proclaimed?’ ‘In Vesali, Ven.Sir.’ ‘Concerning whom?’ ‘Concerning several

bhikkhus.’ ‘On what subject?’ ‘On taking human life.’ Then Ven.Mahakassapa question Ven.Upali on the subject, the origin the individual, the rule, the amendment, the offence and non-offence of the third Defeat. ‘Brother Upali, where was the fourth defeat proclaimed?’ ‘In Vesali, Ven.Sir.’ ‘Concerning whom?’ ‘Concerning the bhikkhus on the bank of the river Vaggumuda.’ ‘On what subject?’ ‘On the superhuman qualities.’ Then Ven.Mahakassapa question Ven.Upali on the subject, the origin the individual, the rule, the amendment, the offence and non-offence of the fourth Defeat. In this way, he posed questions on both Vinaya: bhikkhu and bhikkhuni. Ven.Upali upon being questioned, answered.

Then, Ven.Mahakassapa informed the Samgha ‘Brothers, let the Samgha listen to me. If the time is suitable for the Samgha, I would question Ananda on the Dhamma.’ Ven.Ananda informed the Samgha, ‘Venerable Sirs, let the Samgha listen to me. If the time is suitable for the Samgha, I, being questioned on the Dhamma by Ven.Mahakassapa, would answer.’ Then, Ven.Mahakassapa said this to Ven.Ananda, ‘Brother Ananda, where was the Brahmajala spoken?’ ‘Between rajagaha and Nalanda at the royal rest-house in Ambalattika, Ven.Sir.’ ‘Concerning whom?’ ‘Concerning Suppiya, the wanderer, and Brahmadata, the young man.’ Then Ven.Mahakassapa Ven.Ananda on the origin and the person involved in the Brahmajala. ‘Brother Ananda, where was the Samannaphala spoken?’ ‘At the mango grove of Jivaka in Rajagaha, Ven.Sir.’ ‘With whom?’ ‘With Ajatasattu, the son of Vedehi.’ Then Ven.Mahakassapa questioned Ven.Ananda on the origin and the person involved in the Samannaphala. In this way, he posed questioned on the five nikayas. Ven.Ananda, upon being questioned, answer.<sup>14</sup>

---

14. Vinay Pali. (iii).pp.480-484.

#### **2.4.4 Mahasamghika Version**

At the time the Buddha was abiding in Rajagaha. Then the king Ajatasattu, the son of Vaidehi, was not on good terms with Vaisali, as given in detail in Mahaparinirvana sutra, which continues to narrate that the Buddha, having given up his will to live at the Stupa of the Bow and Stick, set out for Ksinagara, in the native land of warriors, on the bank of the Xi-lian-chan River. He entered into parinirvana between the twin trees in the Hard Grove. The cremation was to take place beside the Stupa of Heavenly Crown (Makuta bandhana cetiya). By the power of the deities the fire on the funeral pyre could not be ignited because they were waiting for the coming of Ven.Mahakasyapa.

At that time Ven.Mahakasyapa was practicing meditation in the cave Bin-bo-luo (pippali) in the mountain Grdhakuta. Ven.Mahakasyapa thought, ‘The World-honored One had given up his will to live. Where did he choose to enter into parinirvana? Where is he now? Is he free from pain and trouble, and is he happy or not? Having reflected thus, he entered into samadhi and surveyed the whole world with his divine eye. He saw the World-honored One lying between the twin trees in the Hard Grove on the bank of Xi-lian-chan River. He entered into parinirvana between the twin trees in the Hard Grove. The cremation was to take place beside the Stupa of Heavenly Crown (Makuta bandhana cetiya). However, the fire on the funeral pyre could not be ignited. Having seen this, he was grieved and unhappy. He thought again, ‘I should go there to pay my respect before the World-honored One’s body is decomposed.’ Then he thought again, ‘as I am going to pay my respect to the World-honored One’s last body, I should not use my psychic power, but should go there on foot.’

Then, *Ven.Mahakasyapa* said to the other *bhikkhus*, ‘elders, the World-honored One has entered into parinirvana. Let each of you take your robe and bowl, and let us go together to Kusinagara to see and pay respect to the World-honored One.’ All the *bhikkhus* said, ‘Very well.’

Then *Ven.Mahakasyapa*, with all the *bhikkhus*, set out for Kusinagara. They passed one village, where a Mo-he-luo (mahallako) *bhiksu* had been residing. *Ven.Mahakasyapa* said to Mo-he-luo, ‘take your robe and bowl. We are going with you to Kusinagara to see and pay respects to the World-honored One.’ Mo-he-luo said, ‘elder Kasyapa, wait until I have taken my first and last meals and then I will go with you.’ Kasyapa answered, ‘It is not appropriate to wait for your meals.’ Mo-he-luo requested three times, but Kasyapa insisted that it was not appropriate to wait. Then Mo-he-luo became angry and said, ‘Sramana, what urgent business is there that you are in such a hurry?’ the dead crow is not worth even a penny. Wait a moment. I will join you after I have finished my meals. *Ven.Mahakasyapa* said again, ‘you should put aside the meals. The World-honored One has entered into nirvana, and has not yet cremated. We should go immediately.’ When Mo-he-luo heard that the Buddha had entered into parinirvana, he said to *Ven.Mahakasyapa*, ‘now we are released forever. What is the reason? Arahant was alive he When that arahant was alive he always said, ‘You should do this and you should not do that.’ Now he has entered into niravana. We are free to do what we like, and refrain from doing what we don’t. When *Ven.Mahakasyapa* heard this, he was grieved and unhappy. Thereupon he snapped his right fingers and fire came out. He struck the ground with his right foot. At the sight of this, Mo-he-luo was so scared that he fled.

*Ven.Mahakasyapa* went to the place where the Buddha was. Thereupon the Wrold-honored One’s two feet appeared, coming out of the cremation coffin. Having

seen the feet of the Buddha, *Ven.Mahakasyapa*, baring his right shoulder, made obeisance with his head and face and uttered these verses:

‘The soles of the Tathagat are complete in themselves,  
Where wheel symbols with one thousand spokes appers.  
His toes are long and soft and joined together like a web.  
Therefore, today I pay my respects to the most perfect feet.  
These most perfect and soft feet have wandered in the world,  
With compassion, for the benefit of all beings,  
From now on they will wander no more.  
Therefore, today I bow my head at the Tathagata’s feet.  
The Tathagata helped me in gaining liberation and becoming an arahant.  
Now I am seeing these feet for the last time;  
I shall see them no more.

Cutting off beings’ doubts, the highest among those who are detached from sense-desire,

He benefited all beings, making all of them happy.

Therefore, today I pay my respects to the most perfect feet.

The Buddha had the virtues of answering skillfully and setting all doubts.

Today the time has past. The light of wisdom and compassion is extinguished forever.

Therefore, today I bow my head at the most perfect feet.

I realized the Four Noble Truths and praise the gem of the Buddha’s merits.

At the end of my verse of praise, the Buddha’s two feet will disappear into the cremation coffin.

All the bhikkhus deliberated on the point of who should lead the cremation. Then *Ven.Mahakasyapa* said, ‘I am the eldest son of the World-honored One; therefore, I should lead the cremation.’ Every said, ‘Very well.’ Thereupon, the cremation began.

After the cremation *Ven.Kasyapa* remembered what *Mo-he-luo* bhikkhu had said in the village, ‘we are free to do what we like, and refrain from doing what we

don't.' he told the bhikkhus, 'elders, the relics of the World-honored One are not our business. The kings, elders, brahmins and householders shall do what should be done for gaining merit. Our first and foremost business is to recite the Dhamma Pitaka. We should not allow the Dhamma to disappear quickly.'

Then they deliberated, 'Where should we recite the Dharma Pitaka? Some of them said, 'Sravasti.' Others said, 'Saketa.' Others said, 'Campa.' Others said, 'Vaisali.' Others said, 'Kapilavastu.' Then, Ven.Mahakasyapa said, 'We should go to Rajagaha to recite the Dharma Pitaka. The reason is that in Rajagrha the king Ajatasatru, the son of Vaidehi, was declared by the Buddha himself to be the foremost among lay disciples who have no rooted faith. Moreover, this king is capable of providing beds and other material requisites for the five hundred. We should go there. All of them agreed.

The World-honored One had said to Ven.Aniruddha earlier, 'When the Tathagata has entered into parinirvana, you should guard the relics. Don't let the deities take them away. The reason is that when the previous Tathagatas entered into parinirvana, the deities took the relics away, so that human beings could not go there and they lost the opportunity to gain merit. The deities can come to the human world to pay their respects, but human beings, except for those who have psychic power, cannot go there. Therefore, you should guard the relics well.'

Ven.Ananda, the personal attendant, could not go with *Ven.Mahakasyapa* because he had to discharge his duty to the Buddha. Then, *Ven.Mahakasyapa* went to Cha-di mountain cave in Rajagarha with one thousand bhikkhus. They prepared beds and mattresses and decorated the World-honored One's seat. On the left-hand side of the World-honored One's seat Ven.Sariputta's seat was prepared, and on the right-hand side Ven.Mahamaudgalyanana's seat, and then Ven.Mahakasyapas seat.

Accordingly, the beds and mattresses were arranged in order and requisites for four months were prepared because while reciting the Dharma Pitaka they would be cut off from the outside world.

When the bhiksus had assembled, among them were: those who had threefold wisdom and sixfold knowledge, virtue and liberation; those who had heard one section of the Vinaya from the mouth of the World-honored One; those who had heard one section of the Vinaya from the mouth of the disciples; those who had heard two sections of the Vinaya from the mouth of the World-honored One; and those who had heard two sections of the Vinaya from the mouth of the disciples. They deliberated, saying, 'We should choose those who have threefold wisdom and sixfold special knowledge, virtue and liberation; those who have heard two sections of the Vinaya from the mouth of the World-honored One and those who have heard two sections of the Vinaya from the mouth of the disciples.' They selected five hundred less two. They again deliberated, saying, 'We should make a full five hundred.' When the elder Aniruddha came, they were still less by one.

Then Ven.Mahakasyapa was the first sthavira, Natou-lu, the second sthavir, and You-bo-tou-lu, the third sthavira. Then, Ven.Makasyapa ascended his seat. The seats of Ven.Sariuptra, Mahamaudgalyana and Ananda were left vacant. The other bhiksus took their seats one after another.

Then Ven.Mahakasyapa told the elder Li-po-di, the disciple of Ven.Maudgalyana, 'Go to the Heaven of Thirty-three and ask the bhiksu Shuo-di-na come here, as the World-honored One has entered into parinirvna and the bhiksus have assembled to recite the Dharma Pitaka.' The elder Li-po-di responded to the other, went to the Heaven of Thirty-Three and said, 'elder, the World-honored One has entered into parinirvana and the bhiksus hav assembled to recite the Dharma

Pitaka. So I came here to call you.’ Upon hearing this, the bhikṣu was grieved and unhappy and asked, ‘Has the World-honored One entered into parinirvāna? The elder Li-po-di answered, ‘Yes.’ The bhikṣu said, ‘Were the Buddha in the world, I would come. Now the World-honored One has entered into parinirvāna; the Eye of the World has disappeared.’ Thereupon, he used his psychic power to ascend into the sky, entered into fire-light samādhi and cremated himself. Having seen that, the elder Li-po-di came back to the assembly and reported as above.

Then again he was sent to the Heaven of Thirty-Three to the Shi-li-sha-chi palace to call Jiao-fan-bo-di, then the elder Shan-jian of Fragrant Mountain, the elder Po-tou-xi-na of Entertainment Mountain, the elder Ba-qu-li of Zhan-po Mountain, then the elder Yu-duo-luo of Pure Mountain, a disciple of Ven. Maudgalyāna named Da-guang of Light Mountain, a disciple of Ven. Śāriputra named Mo-sou-lu of Mantuo Mountain, Ven. Luo-du of Mo-luo Mountain and so on... when they were called, they all entered into parinirvāna.

In addition, an attendant was sent to the heavenly palace of Vaiśravaṇa to call Xiu-mi-duo, saying, ‘elder, the World-honored One has entered into parinirvāna. The bhikṣus have assembled to recite the Dharma Pitaka. So, I have come here to call you.’ Upon hearing this, the bhikṣu was grieved and unhappy and asked, ‘Has the World-honored One entered into parinirvāna?’ The attendant answered, ‘Yes.’ Xiu-mi-duo then said, ‘Were the Buddha in the world, I would come. Now the World-honored One has entered into parinirvāna; the Eye of the World has disappeared.’ Thereupon, he used his psychic power to ascend into the sky, entered into fire-light samādhi and cremated himself and entered into parinirvāna. The attendant came back to the assembly and reported as above.

Ven.Mahakasyapa said, ‘elder, stop now. Do not call the others. Of those who were called, all have entered into parinirvana. If others are called, they will also enter into parinirvana and the world will be devoid of the field of merit.’

A bhiksu in the assembly said, ‘elder, Ven.Ananda has been the attendant to the Buddha. He has learnt from the Buddha’s mouth. The World-honored One remarked that Ananda has three qualities. We should first of all call him to come.’ Mahakasyapa said, ‘No, we should not. If this trainee were allowed to enter into this assembly of the perfected, virtuous and liberated ones, it would be like a jackal with a skin disease entering into a group of lions.’

Then Ven.Ananda, having discharged his duties to the Buddha, came to a village and said this, ‘I will stay here for the night and will go to Rajagrha tomorrow.’ Then, there was a deity who came and said to Ananda, ‘Ven.Mahakasyapa said that you are like a jackal with a skin disease.’ Ananda reflected thus, ‘the World-honored One has entered into parinirvana. Now I want to join the assembly. Why did the elder Mahakasyapa take me to be like a jackal with a skin disease? He was not happy and reflected again thus, ‘Ven.Mahakasyapa knows all about me. It may be because of the fact that I have not yet cut off my fetters that he said so.’

Then, Ven.Ananda made an effort to practice walking meditation in order to free himself of defilements. As he was tired of walking and he was mourning the World-honored One’s nirvana, he could not think clearly of what he learnt before. He thought, ‘The World-honored One remarked with reference to me, “if you are mindful, you can become free of your defilements in this very life.” Therefore, there is no need to overexert myself.’ Without losing his concentration, he inclined his body to lie down. Before his head touched the pillow, his defilements were exhausted and he attained threefold wisdom and sixfold special knowledge, virtue and liberation.

Then, using his psychic power, he ascended into the sky and went to Cha-di cave.

Standing outside, he uttered the following verse:

‘Learned, good at argumentation, personal attendant to the World-honored One,

Ananda, the son of Gotama, now stands outside the door.

Why don’t you open the door?

He then uttered another verse:

“Learned, sharp at argumentation, personal attendant to the World-honored One,

Who has given up the burden of fetters,

The son of Gautama is outside.’

Then Ven.Mahakasyapa uttered the following verse:

‘You have given up the burden of the defilements, and

Yourself spoken of your attainments.

You have stayed outside, the son of Gautama;

Enter now, the son of Gautama.’

Ven.Ananda, after entering, paid his respect to the World-honored One’s seat, and then paid his respects to the sthaviras one by one until he came to his own seat and sat down. Then Ven.Mahakasyapa said to Ven.Ananda, ‘It was neither because of my pride, nor because of wanting to disparage you that I made such a remark. It was because you were not making enough effort in cultivating the path and I wanted you to make more effort and to become free of your defilements that I made the remark.’ Ananda said, ‘I also know that it was because my fetters had not yet been cut off that you wanted me to make an effort to become free of my defilements.’

Then, Ven.Mahakasyapa asked the assembly, 'What Pitaka should we recite first? They all said, 'We should recite the Dharma Pitaka first.' Mahakasyapa then asked, 'Who should be the one to recite? The bhiksus said, 'The elder Ananda.' Ananda said, 'No, there are other elder bhiksus.' The bhiksus said gain, 'Although there are other elder bhiksus, the World-honored One remarked that you were the foremost among the learned. Therefore, you should be the one to recite.' Ananda said, 'elder, if I am asked to recite, you should agree if what I say is in accordance with the Dharma. Don't hesitate out of respect for me. Please tell me whether my recitation is correct or not. They all said, 'elder Ananda, recite the Dharma Pitaka. If what you say is in accordance with the Dharma, we will recognize it immediately.'

Then, Ven.Ananda thought, 'now how should I recite the Dharma Pitaka? After reflecting thus, he uttered the sutra, 'Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha had been staying in the Bodhi mandala at Uruvila on the bank of the river Nairanjara. When Ananda uttered these words, the five hundred arahants who were virtuous and liberated ascended into the, poesky. They all exclaimed, 'We have seen the World-honored One face to face and now we have heard the words.' They said together 'Namo buddhaya' and returned to their seats.

Ven.Ananda recited all of the Dharma Pitaka. Long discourses were collected into the long Agama, Medium discourses were collected into the Medium Agama. Miscellaneous discourses were collected into the Miscellaneous Agama, which consisted of the root miscellany, power miscellany, enlightenment miscellany and path miscellany. One-up Agama was collected according to the numbers, from one to one hundred. What was the Miscellaneous Pitaka? The utterances and life stories of the pratyekabuddha and arahants, all in verse form, were called the Miscellaneous Pitaka. This was called the compilation and recitation of the entire Dharma Pitaka.

Ven.Mahakasyapa asked next, ‘Who should recite the Vinaya Pitaka? Some of them said, ‘the elder Upali.’ Upali said No, there are other elder bhiksus.’ The bhiksus said gain, ‘Although there are other elder bhiksus, the World-honored One remarked that you attained fourteen Dharmas. Except for the Tathagata Aranaht Samyakasambuddha, you are the foremost to hold the Vinaya.’ Upali said, ‘elder, if I am asked to recite, you should agree if what I say is in accordance with the Dharma. Don’t hesitate out of respect for me. Please tell me whether my recitation is correct or not. They all said, ‘elder Ananda, recite the Dharma Pitaka. If what you say is in accordance with the Dharma, we will recognize it immediately.’

Ven.Upali reflected thus, ‘Now, how should I recite the Vinaya Pitaka? There are five basic groups of rules. If they are in accordance with the Dharma and Vinaya, you may agree; if not, you should stop me. What are the five? The first is the rules or Restrictions, the second is the rules on Methods, the third is the rule on Precepts, the fourth is the rules of elders, and the fifth is the rules on Customs.

What are the rules on Restrictions? Restrictions on lodgings of bhiksus. If the restrictions are in accordance with the Four Great Teachings, we should accept them, if not, we should reject them. What are the rules on the Methods? They are the laws of the country. If the restrictions are in accordance with the Four Great Teachings, we should accept them, if not, we should reject them. What are the rules of precepts? They come out of the behavior of bhiksus who follow the precepts. If the restrictions are in accordance with the Four Great Teachings, we should accept them, if not, we should reject them. What are the rules on Elders? They come out of the practice of the elders such as Ven.Sariputra, Maudgalyana. If the restrictions are in accordance with the Four Great Teachings, we should accept them, if not, we should reject them. What are the rules on Customs? Eating at an improper time, drinking alcohol, and indulging

in sexual behavior. These are legal for the worldly but not for renunciates. Elders, these are the five basic groups of rules. If they agree with the Dharma, you may accept them; if not, you should reject them.’ The bhiksus answered, ‘if they are in accordance with the Four Great Teachings, we should accept them; if not, we should reject them immediately.’ Thus, the recitation of Vinaya was completed.<sup>15</sup>

#### **2.4.5 The Saravastivada Version**

Buddha, the World-honored One, entered into parinirvana between twin sala trees in Kusinagara, the dwelling place of warriors. The warriors of Kusinagara paid their respects to the body of the Buddha. At that time the Elder Mahakasyapa was on his way to Kusinagara from Pava with five hundred bhiksus. Midway he met an ascetic, who was going from Kusinagara to Pava, holding a divine mandarava flower. The elder Mahakasyapa asked, ‘Do you know my teacher? He replied. ‘Yes, I do. Your teacher entered into parinirvana between the two sala trees in the dwelling place of warriors. Now it has been seven days since. Every being, divine and human, paid respects to the body of the Buddha. It was there that I got this divine flower.’ Mahakasyapa was unhappy. Among his disciples some had great sorrow, some raised their hands and cried and some threw their bodies on the ground. All of them said, ‘Why did the Buddha attain parinirvana so soon? The Eye of the World has been extinguished.’ Some of the bhiksus were rolling on the ground, some were very sad, and some were equanimous, seeing the truth in the phenomena of impermanence, dukkha and emptiness and insubstantiality. The Buddha’s entering into parinirvana too is a phenomenon of impermanence; how could it be permanent? When the Buddha was alive, he often said, ‘Everything we take delight in cannot last long; it

---

15. Da-cang-jing, the Photo printed Grand Buddhist Tripitaka, Taisho ed, Vol.22, Mo-he-seng-qi-lu, pp.489-493.

will separate, fall apart and vanish.’ At that time, there was one foolish, bad and undisciplined old bhiksu who made this harsh remark, ‘That elder always said you should do this and you should not do that. We can do what we want to do and refrain from doing what we don’t. this harsh remark was heard by Kasyapa alone. No one else could hear it, as it had been smothered by the power of heavenly beings.

At that time in Jambudvipa, the elder Ajnata Kaundinya was the first sthavira. The elder Cunda was the second sthavira. The elder Dasabala Ksyapa, the preceptor of Anananda, was the third sthavira. The elder Mahasasyapa was the fourth sthavira. Mahakasyapa had a profound knowledge, and his advice was respectfully accepted by the four assemblies. When they heard that Mahakasyapa was coming from Pava to Kusinagara, they went halfway to welcome him. Upon seeing the four assemblies coming Mahakasyapa spread his sitting mat under a tree on the roadside and sat down. The four assemblies came to him and paid obeisance with their heads and faces, and stayed beside him to listen to the Dharma. Then Mahakasyapa preached the Dharma in various ways and made them happy. After that he instructed them to go to the twin trees and hang a canopy from the treetops. Mahakasyapa said, ‘I am coming right away. Don’t ignite the funeral pyre. I want to pay my respects to the body of the Buddha. Then, Ven.Mahakasyapa went there with the whole community and hang a canopy from the treetops. After that the divine beings opened the metal cremation coffin and unwarpped the body. Ven.Mahakasyapa paid his respects to the Buddha’s body. The assemblies also paid their respects and Ven.Mahakasyapa instructed the people to use heavenly new cotton cloth to wrap the Buddha’s body and to use new fragrant oil to fill the metal coffin. He also instructed them to put the Buddha’s body in the coffin, cover it and gather different kinds of sandalwood to make up the funeral

pyre. Then Ven.Mahakasyapa said to the warriors that it was time. At that time the elder Ananda, at the sight of the fire, was filled with sorrow and uttered this verse:

“This body of the World-honored One,  
Having gone to the Brahma-world,  
Is now inside the metal cremation coffin,  
Wrapped in one thousand pieces of cotton cloth,  
Covered with fragrant oil and burnt with the sandalwood.

After that, Ven.Mahakasyapa thought now we should recite all of the Surtra, all of the Vinaya and all of the Abhidhamma. Again he thought ‘if I were to recite all of the Sutra, all of the Vinaya and all of the Abhidharma in this assembly, there might be some unlearned bhiksus who would say that this is not the way to recite all of the Sutra, all of the Vinaya and all of the Abhidharma. Therefore, we should select some bhiksus who are clever and capable of reciting the Dharma.’ Selection was made by performing a formal procedure in the Samgha.

Elder Mahkasyapa selected five hundred bhiksus less one in the assembly and called their names one by one. These bhiksus were masters of the Tripitaka who had gained the threefold wisdom, extinguished the three poisons and been liberated. Ven.Mahakasyapa said aloud in the Samgha, ‘Venerable Samgha, listen. If it is the proper time, if the Samgha agrees, these five hundred bhiksus less one called by name, who are the master of the Tripitaka who had gained the threefold wisdom, extinguished the three poisons and been liberated, will be reciters of the Dharma. This is the proposal.

At that time, Ven.Ananda was in the Samgha. The elder Mahakasyapa thought, ‘This Ananda is a good and skilful trainee. The Buddha said Ananda was the foremost among the learned. We should select Ananda too as a reciter of the Dharma.’

After thinking thus, the elder Mahakasyapa said aloud in the Samgha, ‘Venerable Samgha, listen. ‘This Ananda is a good and skilful trainee. The Buddha said Ananda was the foremost among the learned. We should select Ananda too as a reciter of the Dharma. This is the proposal. If the Samgha agrees to the proposal, let the Samgha was silent, Ananda was selected as a reciter of the Dharma. The matter was so decided.

The elder Mahakasyapa reflected again. ‘The recitation of all of the Surtra, all of the Vinaya and all of the Abhidhamma will not be completed within one day, two days or even seven days. Now we should perform a formal procedure in the Samgha. Those who recite the Dharma should observe the rains retreat in one place; those who do not should not observe the rain retreat in the same place.’ After reflecting thus, the elder Mahkasyapa said aloud in the Samgha, ‘Venerable Samgha, listen. ‘The recitation of all of the Surtra, all of the Vinaya and all of the Abhidhamma will not be completed within one day, two days or even seven days. Now we should perform a formal procedure in the Samgha. Those who recite the Dharma should observe the rains retreat in one place; those who do not should not observe the rain retreat in the same place.’ This is the proposal.’

Again, *Mahakasyapa* thought, ‘which country is secure, has good temples, where the four requisites are available, and is free from robbers and bandits? Then he thought, ‘Rajagrha is not lacking in the four requisites and is secure and free from robbers and bandits. We should go now to Rajagrha for the rain retreat.’ After reflecting thus, Mahakasypa went alone to prepare the temples. He had the walls plastered, the ground prepared, the beds set up, the floor swept and the bedding cleaned. He instructed the people to prepare medicine, food, drink, clothes and blankets.

Ven.Mahakasyapa, knowing that the rainy season was drawing near, observed the retreat in Rajagrha with the five hundred bhiksus. Wearing a robe and holding a bowl, he entered Rajagarha in the early morning. He instructed the people to support the reciters of the Dharma with food and drink. After doing the alms collection and taking a meal, he went out of the city and returned to the temple. He assembled the Samgha. When the Samgha had assembled, he thought, 'whichever bhiksu is capable of reciting the Vinaya clearly and answering our questions without difficulty, we will collect the Vinaya from him.' Then, he thought that the bhiksu Upali had been praised by the Buddha himself as the foremost among the bhiksus in reciting the Vinaya clearly. After thinking thus, he said to the Samgha, 'the Buddha always praised the bhiksu Upali as the foremost among the bhiksus in reciting the Vinaya clearly. The bhiksu Upali could answer our questions with no difficulty.'

Then, Ven.Mahakasyapa arranged the Dharma seat and the bhiksu Upali ascended and occupied it. Mahkasyapa asked Upali, 'When was the first defeat promulgated? Upali answered, 'the first defeat was promulgated at Vaisali, on account of the bhiksu Xu-di-na (Sudinna), the son of Jia-lan-tuo (Kalandaka). Then Mahakasyapa asked, 'what is regarded as an offence and what is not regarded as an offence? Then, Upali explained in detail what was an offence and what was not an offence.

Then Mahakasyapa asked Anjata Kaundinya, 'Is it so?' he answered, 'It is so, as Upali has said.' After asking Anjata Kaundinya, Ven.Maha-ksyapa asked the elder Cunda, then Dasabala Kasyapa, and then the five hundred arahants, one by one, and lastly Ananda. Ananda answered, 'Thus have I heard. This is what happened, this is the Dharma and this is the Kusala, as explained by the elder Upali.' Ananda asked Mahakasyapa, 'Is it so?' Ven.Mahakasyapa answered, 'It is so.' Then the elder

Mahakasyapa said aloud in the Samgha, Venerable Samgha, listen. This first defeat has been recited. It is the Dharma, it is the Vinaya, it is the Buddha's teaching. No bhiksu can say that Dharma is Adhamarma and Adharma is Dharma, that Vinaya is Avinaya and Aviyana is Vinaya. It is the Dharma, it is the Vinaya, it is the Buddha's teaching.' As the Samgha agreed and remained silent, the matter was so decided.

The elder Ven.Mahakasyapa thought, 'which bhiksu is capable of of reciting the Sutra and the Abhidharma clearly and answering our questions without difficulty, we will collect all of the Sutra and the of Abhidharma from him.' Then, he thought that the bhiksu Ananda had been praised by the Buddha himself as the foremost among the bhiksus in reciting the Dharma and the Abhidharma clearly. After thinking thus, he sad to the Samgha, 'the Buddha always praised the bhiksu Ananda as the foremost among the bhiksus in reciting the Sutra and the Abhidharma clearly. After reflecting thus, he sad to the Samgha, 'Venerable Samgha, listen. This bhiksu Ananda is a good and skilful trainee. He had been praised by the Buddha himself as the foremost among the bhiksus in reciting the Dharma and the Abhidharma clearly. We will question him in detail and collect the Sutra and the Abhidharma from him. This is the proposal.

Then, Ven.Mahakasyapa prepared the highest seat after Ven.Ananda ascended and occupied it. Mahakasyapa asked Ananda, 'When did the Buddha preach the first Sutra? Ananda answered, 'thus have I heard. At one time, the Buddha was in Varanasi at Deer Park, the abode of sages.' At the words of Ananda, the five hundred bhiksus knelt down with tears flowing from their eyes and said, 'we realized the Dharma in the presence of the Buddha. Now it has become 'Thus have I heard.' Mahakasyapa said to Ananda, 'from today onward all Sutra, all Vinaya and all Abhidharma should start with "Thus have I heard. At one time..." Ananda said , 'It should be so.' Then he

continued, ‘at that time the Buddha said to the five bhiksus, ‘This is the Noble Truth of Dukha, which I have never heard from others before. When I rightly contemplated the dharma, the eye arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose and light arose. This is the Noble Truth of the Origin... This is the Noble Truth of the Cessation... This is the Noble Truth of the Path. I have never heard this dharma from others before. When I rightly contemplated the dharmas, the eye arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose and light arose.

Then Ven.Mahakasyapa asked Ajnata Kaundinya, ‘Is it so, as Ananda has said?’ Kaundina answered, ‘Yes, elder Mahakasyapa, I also know it as Ananda has said. After asking Ajnata Kaundinya, Ven.Maha-ksyapa asked the elder Cunda, then Dasabala Kasyapa, and then the five hundred arahants, one by one, lastly Upali. Upali answered, ‘Thus have I heard. This is what happened, this is the Dharma and this is the Kusala, as explained by the elder Ananda.’ Upali asked Mahakasyapa, ‘Is it so?’ Ven.Mahakasyapa answered, ‘It is so.’ Then the elder Mahkasyapa said aloud in the Samgha, Venerable Samgha, listen. All of the Sutras and Abhidharma have been recited. It is the Dharma, it is the Vinaya, it is the Buddha’s teaching. No bhiksu can say that Dharma is Adhamarma and Adharma is Dharma, that Vinaya is Avinaya and Aviyana is Vinaya. It is the Dharma, it is the Vinaya, it is the Buddha’s teaching.’ As the Samgha agreed and remained silent, the matter was so decided. So, all of the Sutras and Abhidharma and all of the Vinaya were recited.<sup>16</sup>

#### **2.4.6 The Dharmagupta Version**

At that time the World-honored One had entered into parinirvana in the sala grove of the Malla garden in Kusinagara. The Mallaputras, having washed the

---

16. The Chinese text was taken from the Shi-Song-lu, in the Da-cang-jing, vol.23, pp.445-450.

Buddha's body, wrapped it in clean cotton and then swathed it in five hundred pieces of fine cloth. They had an iron cremation coffin made, filled it with fragrant oil, placed the body inside, and covered it with a lid. Then they made a wooden outer-coffin, placed the iron coffin inside and piled different kinds of scented wood underneath. Then the chief of the Mallaputras took up a torch to light the fire. Thereupon, the devas extinguished the fire. The rest of the great Mallaputras, one after, took up a torch to light the fire, which was likewise immediately extinguished by the devas.

Ven.Aniruddha said to the Mallaputras, 'No need to weary yourselves thus. It is the devas who have extinguished your fire.' Thereupon they asked Ven.Aniruddha, 'Venerable Sir, why did the devas extinguish our fire?' He answered, 'Ven.Mahakasyapa is traveling on the road between Pava and Kusinagara together with a great multitude of five hundred bhiksus. He has thought to himself, "Will I be able to see the Buddha's body before it is cremated?" the devas have understood this thought of Ven.Kasyapa and so they have extinguished your fire.' The Mallaputras said, 'Ven.sir, we will wait a while in accordance with the will of the devas.'

At that time Ven.Mahakasyapa was traveling between the two cities together with a great multitude of five hundred bhiksus. There was a Nirgaranthaputra walking on the road holding a mandarava flower which he had picked up at the time of the World-honored One's parinirvana. Seeing him coming from a distance Ven.Kasyapa asked, "Where are you coming from?" He answered, 'I am coming from Kusinagara.' Ven.Kasyapa asked again, 'Do you know the World-honored One?' He answered, 'Yes, I do.' Ven.Kasyapa asked again, 'Is he still alive?' He answered, 'No, he is no longer alive. It has been seven days since he entered into parinirvana. I got this flower from where he was.'

Upon hearing this, Ven.Kasyapa was not pleased. Among those there were bhiksus not yet free from passion who, upon hearing that the World-honored One had attained nirvana, threw themselves on the ground. Like a tree falls, having been cut off from the roots, these bhiksus who had not yet been free from passion fell down on the ground. They wailed, saying, ‘too early has the Well Gone One entered into nirvana; too soon has the Clear Eye of the World been extinguished; too quickly has the Dharma that we follow come to an end.’ There were some who rolled on the ground like logs of wood. Thus those bhiksus who had not been free from passion wailed in grief, saying, ‘too early has the World-honored One entered into nirvana.’

At that time there was a member of the Sakya clan called Ba-nan-tuo (Upananda) in the multitude. He said to the bhiksus, ‘elder, stop. Don’t’ grieve and wail thus. We are liberated from that old man. When he was alive he often instructed us saying, “This is right and this is not right; this should be done and this should not be done.” Now we are free. We can do what we want and refrain from doing what we don’t.

Upon hearing this, Ven.Kasyapa was displeased. Then he said to the bhiksus, ‘Arise, and quickly take up your robes and bowls and go. We might be in time to see the World-honored One’s body before its cremation.’ On hearing Ven.Kasyapa’s words, the bhiksus quickly took up their robes and bowls. Thus Ven.Kasyapa, together with the five hundred, went to Kusinagara. After passing through the city they crossed the Xi-lan-re (Hiranyavati) River and arrived at the Tian-guan (Devavana) where Ven.Ananda was. Ven.Mahakasyapa said, ‘Ananda, I want to see the World-honored One’s body before its cremation.’ Ven.Ananda answered, ‘it is rather difficult to see the World-honored One’s body before its cremation. What is the reason? The World-honored One’s body has been bathed, wrapped in new cotton and

swathed in five hundred pieces of fine cloth, placed in an iron cremation coffin filled with fragrant oil and then put into a wooden outer-coffin with all kinds of scented wood piled up underneath. Now it is about to be cremated. Therefore, it is rather difficult to see the World-honored One's body.

Ven.Kasyapa walked to where the Buddha's body was placed. The coffin opened by themselves and the World-honored One's feet appeared. Then Ven.Kasyapa that the wheel symbols on the soles of the World-honored One's feet were soiled, and he asked Ven.Ananda, 'The World-honored Ones face was serene and his body was of golden colour. Who has soiled the wheel symbols on the soles of his feet? Ven.Ananda answered, 'Ven.Sir, the women were tender-hearted. When they came to worship the Buddha, their tears fell on his feet, and also their hands held the World-honored One's feet and soiled them.'

Upon hearing this, Ven.Kasyapa was displeased and he worshipped the World-honored One's feet. The bhiksus, bhiksunis, upasakas, upasikas and devas all worshipped the Buddha's feet. Then the World-honored One's feet returned to the inner coffin and disappeared. Ven.Kasyapa sighed and, uttering a verse, circumambulated the coffin seven times. The fire burned without being ignited.

Then Ven.Kasyapa, having cremated the Buddha's body, for this reason gathered the bhiksus, saying, 'When I was traveling on the road earlier, I heard Banam-tuo addressing the bhiksus saying, 'elder, stop. Don't' grieve and wail thus. We are liberated from that old man. When he was alive, he often instructed us saying, "This is right and this is not right; this should be done and this should not be done." Now we are free. We can do what we want and refrain from doing what we don't.

We now should recite together the Dharma and Vinaya. Don't let other religious sects mock us thus, 'The Dharma Vinaya of the recluse Gautama is like

smoke. When the World-honored One was alive, they all practiced the precepts. Now, after his passing away, nobody practises his precepts.” Elders, now we should select from the bhiksus those arahants who are learned and wise.’ Therefore, they selected four hundred and ninety-nine who were all arahants, learned and wise, to form an assembly. Then the bhiksus said, ‘We should include Ananda in the assembly.’ Ven.Makakasyapa said, ‘Don’t include Ananda in the assembly, what is the reason? Ananda had desire, hatred, fear and delusion. Since he has desire, hatred, fear and delusion, he should not be included in the assembly.’ Then the bhiksus said again, ‘This Ananda is Buddha’s personal attendant. He always accompanied the Buddha and was personally instructed by the Buddha. Whenever there was any doubt, he always asked the Buddha. Therefore, now he should be included among our number.’ Thereupon, he was included among the number.

The bhiksus all reflected thus, ‘Where is a place well supplied with food and drink and not lacking in sleeping material that we may assemble to recite the Dharma Vinaya? They all said, ‘Only Rajagarha has plenty of lodging, food, drink and sleeping material. It is suitable for us now to go there to assemble for the recitation of the Dharma Vinaya.’ Then Ven.Kasyapa announced, ‘Venerable Samgha, listen. These bhiksus have been selected by the Samgha. If the time is suitable for the Samgha, let the Samgha give silent consent. These bhiksus are now going to Rajagarha to recite the Dharma Vinaya.’ Thus, he announced. After the announcement they all proceeded to Vaisali.

After that time Ven.Ananda was traveling on the road. He went to a quiet place and reflected thus, ‘I am a trainee requiring something more to be done and traveling together with five hundred arahants, like a new-born calf still drinking milk and traveling together with five hundred fully grown oxen.’ Then the elders all went

to Vaisali, and Ven.Ananda also resided there. The bhiksus, bhiksunis, upasakas, upasikas, kings, ministers, all kinds of sramanas and other religious people came to pay their respects. Many people gathered together. At that time there was a Vrijiputraka bhiksu who had great divine powers, having attained the divine eye and the knowledge of others' mind. He reflected thus, 'now, Ananda is residing in Vaisali. The bhiksus, bhiksunis, upaskas, upasikas, kings, ministers, all kinds of sramanas and other religious people came to pay their respects. Many people gathered together. Now I would like to observe Ananda has desire or not desire.' Thereupon, he observed that Ananda had desire and was not free from desire. He reflected again, 'now I will make him free from attachment.' In order to make Ananda free from attachment, he uttered this verse:

‘Stay in a solitary and quiet place under a tree.

Focus the mind on nirvana.

Sit in meditation and be mindful.

Speaking too much serves no purpose.’

Having heard the Vrijiputraks's verse on non-attachment, Ven.Ananda stayed in a solitary place, mking an effort, heedful, and with a calm and concentrated min. this was Ven.Ananda's extraordinary dhrama. Then Ven.Ananda spread his sleeping mat on the open ground and practised walking meditation all night. When the night had passed and dawn was about to appear, he felt extremely tired ad reflected, 'I am extremely tired and would like to sit for a while.' Having reflected thus, he sat down, and, having sat down, he wanted to go to sleep. Before his head had reached the pillow, his mind became free of defilements. This was Ven.Ananda's extraordinary dharma. Then, having attained arahanthood, Ven.Ananda uttered this verse:

‘Being a personal attendant to the World-honored One,

I have heard various teachings.

Cut off from birth and lie death,

Gautama now wants to lie down.’

Then the bhiksus went from Vaisali to Rajagarha. They spoke among themselves, ‘What should we do first: prepare the lodgings and sleeping materials or recite the Dharma Vinaya? They all agreed, ‘We should prepare the lodgings and sleeping materials first.’ Thereupon, they prepared the lodgings and sleeping materials. Then, Ven.Kasyapa assembled the bhiksus. Among them, Dasabala Kasyapa was the first sthavira, elder Po-po-na the second sthavira, Mahakasyapa the third sthavira, and elder Da-zhou-na the fourth sthavira.

Then Ven.Kasyapa, who was in charge of the affairs of the Samgha, announced. “Venerable Samgha, listen. If the time is suitable for the Samgha, let the Samgha give silent consent. The Samgha will now assemble to recite the Dharma Vinaya.’ He announced thus. Then Ven.Ananda arose from his seat, and baring his right shoulder around and touching the ground with his right knee, with palms folded, addressed Ven.Kasyapa, ‘I heard personally from the Buddha and remember the words of the Buddha, ‘from this time onward, the Samgha may revoke the miscellaneous and minor rules for the bhiksus.’”

Ven.Kasyapa asked, ‘Ananda, did you ask the Buddha what the miscellaneous and minor rules were?’ Ven.Ananda answered, ‘At that time I was grieved and at a loss and did not ask what the miscellaneous and minor rules were.’ Then the bhiksus all said, ‘Come, I will tell you what the miscellaneous and minor rules are.’ Among them some said, ‘With the exception of the four defeats, all the rest are miscellaneous and minor rules.’ Some said, ‘With the exception of the four defeats and the thirteen rules on a formal meeting of the Samgha, all the rest are miscellaneous and minor

rules.’ Some said, ‘With the exception of the four defeats, the thirteen rules on a formal meeting of the Samgha, and thirty rules on forfeiture, all the rest are miscellaneous and minor rules.’ Some said, ‘With the exception of the four defeats up to the ninety rules on expiation, all the rest are miscellaneous and minor rules.’

Then Ven.Mahakasyapa addressed the bhiksus, ‘elders, according to what has just been said, we are uncertain as to what the miscellaneous and minor rules are. From this time onward we should make a ruling: now we should not make any rules and that the Buddha has not made and should not revoke any rules that the Buddha has made. We should observe the rules that have been made by the Buddha and train ourselves accordingly.’ Thereupon, together they made such a ruling.

Then, Ven.Masyapa made an announcement, ‘Venerable Samgha, listen. If the time is suitable for the Samgha, let the Samgha give silent consent. The Samgha will now question Upali on the Dharma Vinaya.’ He announced thus. Then Ven.Upali made an announcement. ‘Venerable Samgha, listen. If the time is suitable for the Samgha, let the Samgha give silent consent. The Samgha now will ask the Sthavira Mahakasyapa to question me and I will answer.’ He announced thus.

Then, Ven.Kasyapa asked, ‘Where did the first defeat originate? Who was the first offender? Ven.Upali answered, ‘In Vaisali. Sudinna Kalandakaputra was the first offender.’ ‘Where did the second originate? Ven.Upali answered, ‘In Rajagarha. Dhanika bhiksu, a potter’s son, was the first offender. He asked again, ‘Where did the third originate? Ven.Upali answered, ‘In Vaisali. The bhiksus on the bank of the Vaggumuda river were the first offenders.’ He asked again, ‘Where did the fourth originate? Ven.Upali answered, ‘In Vaisali. The bhiksus on the bank of the Vaggumuda river were the first offenders.’

He asked again, ‘Where was the first ordination granted?’ Ven.Upali answered, ‘In Varanasi, to the five bhiksus.’ He asked again, ‘Where was the first recital of rules approved?’ Ven.Upali answered, ‘In Rajagrha, for the young bhiksus.’ He asked again, ‘Where was the first rain retreat approved?’ Ven.Upali answered, ‘In Sravasti, on account of the group of six bhiksus.’ He asked again, ‘Where did the first invitation originate?’ Ven.Upali answered, ‘In Sravasti, on account of the group of six bhiksus.’ So, they went through the rules one by one, until the One-up Vinaya.

Then, they collected all the rules relating to the bhiksus into the Restraint Vinaya of the bhiksus, all the rules relating to the bhiksunis into the Restraint Vinaya of the bhiksunis, all the rules relating to the ordination into the chapter on Ordination, all the rules relating to the recital of rules into the chapter on Recital of the Rules, all the rules relating to the Rains Retreat into the chapter on Rains Retreat, all the rules relating to Invitation into the chapter on Invitation, all the rules relating to articles made of leather into the chapter on Leather, all the rules relating to garments into the chapter on Garments, all the rules relating to medicine into the chapter on Medicine, all the rules relating to the kathina robe into the chapter on the Kathina Robe. The two Restraint Vinaya together with all the chapters and the Harmonizing section and the One-up were collected into the Vinaya Pitaka.

Then, Ven.Masyapa made an announcement, ‘Venerable Samgha, listen. If the time is suitable for the Samgha, let the Samgha give silent consent. The Samgha will now question Ananda on the Dharma Vinaya.’ He announced thus.

Then Ven.Ananda made an announcement. ‘Venerable Samgha, listen. If the time is suitable for the Samgha, let the Samgha give silent consent. The Samgha now will ask the Sthavira Mahakasyapa to question me and I will answer.’ He announced thus.

Ven.Kasyapa thereupon questioned Ven.Ananda, saying, ‘Where was the Brhama-moment (Brahmajala) Sutra delivered? Where was the One-up delivered? Where was the Ten-up delivered? Where was the Formation and Destruction of the World Sutra delivered? Where was the Samghiti Sutra delivered? Where was the Mahanidana Sutra delivered? Where was the Deva Sakra’s Questions Sutra delivered?’

To these Ven.Ananda answered as given in the Dirghagama. They thereupon collected all the long sutra inot the Dirghagama, all the middle-length sutta into the Madhyamagama, from one to ten points and from ten to eleven points inot the Ekottaragama, and miscellaneous sutras dealing with the bhiksus, bhiksunis, upasakas, upasikas, devas, Sakra, Mara and Brahma into the Samyuktagama. Likewise they collected the Sheng-jing, Ben-jing, Kusalanidana Sutra, Vaipulya Sutra, Adbhuta Sutra, Upama Sutra, Upatisya Sutra, Arthapada Sutra, Dharmapad Sutra, Parayana he Sutra, Pratisamvid Sutra and Sthavira-sthavirai-gatha Sutra into the Miscellaneous Pitaka. The You-nan, Wu-nan, Xi, Xiang-ying and Zuo-chu were collected into the Abhidharma Pitaka. Thus the collection of the Tripitaka was completed.

At that time the elder Urana heard that the five hundred arhants had assembled to collect the Dharma Vinaya in Rajagrha. Thereupon he went with five hundred bhiksus to Rajagrha. When he arrived a the place where Ven.Mahakasyapa was, he said, ‘I heard that the venerable was reciting the Dharma Vinaya with five hundred arhants. I would also like to participate in the recitation and listen to the Dharma.’ Then Ven.Kasyapa, for this reason, assembled the bhiksus. For the sake of this bhiksu, he questioned Ven.Upali again until the Tripitaka was collected as narrated above. Ven.Purana said, ‘Venerable Kasyapa, I agree to all of the above except for the eight rules. Venerable, I personally heard the Buddha and remember them well. The

Buddha allowed storing food in the lodging, cooking in the lodging, cong of food by bhiksus, receiving food after getting up in the morning, receiving food brought in, eating various kinds of fruit and eating what comes out of a pond. All these wre allowed and there was no taking of food by other ways.’ Ven.Mahakasyapa answered, ‘It was as you said. The World-honored One in times of famine, when corn was expensive and it was difficult to get food by begging, took pity on the bhiksus and made these eight rules. When the time of plenty returned and there was an abundance of good and drink, the Buddha revoked these rules.’

Ven.Purana said again, ‘Ven. Kasyapa, the Buddha knows and see everything. He would not make a rule and revoke it, and then, after revoking it, make it again.’ Ven.Kasyapa answered, ‘because the Buddha knows and sees everything, it is appropriate for him to make a rule and revoke it, and then, after revoking it, to make it again. Ven.Purana, we should make this our ruling: we should not make any rule tht has not been made by the Buddha, we should not revoke any rule that has been made by the Buddha, and we should follow andpractice the rules made by the Buddha.’

As five hundred arhants assembled in Rajagrha for the recitation of the Dharma Vinaya, this is called the Assembly of the Five Hundred for the Recitation of the Dharma Vinaya.<sup>17</sup>

#### **2.4.7 The Mahisasaka Version**

At that time, not long after the World-honored One’s nirvana, Ven.Mahakasyapa was at the two-storeyed hall by the side of the Markata Lake in Vaisali, together with a large community of five hundred bhiksus, all arhants, except

---

17. The Chinese text was taken from the Si-fen-lu in the Da-cang-jing, vol.22,pp.966-968.

Ven.Ananda. He said to the bhiksus, ‘One day I was making a journey from Pava to Kusinagara. On the way I heard that the Buddha had entered into parinrvana. At that time I was confused in my mind and could not control myself. Bhiksus, bhiksunis, upasakas and upasikas in the village threw themselves on the ground, jumped and rolled about. They all wailed, lamenting that it was so fast, so quick that the world became empty and the Eye of the World disappeared. Then Ba-nam-tuo (Upananda) who had been touring there, stopped the multitude, saying, “That elder always said, ‘This should be practiced and that shouldn’t be practiced; this should be learnt and that shouldn’t be learnt.’ Now we are liberated from this suffering. We can do whatever we like without hindrance. Why do you gather together cry?” After hearing his words, I was very much worried. Although the Buddha has entered into nirvana, the Vinaya still exists. We should make an effort to recite it and not let the people like Ba-nan-tuo set up a separate community to destroy the true Dharma.

All the bhiksus agreed to his proposal and said to Kasyapa, ‘Ananda attended the World-honored One all the time. He is intelligent, learned and holds theDharma Pitaka. Now we should allow him to join the assembly of bhiksus for the recitation.’ Ven.Kasyapa said, ‘Ananda is still a trainee. He may be swayed by desire, hatred, confusion and fear and should not be admitted to the assembly.’

At that time Ven.Ananda was in Vaisali, preaching day and night to the four divisions of disciples. The multitude came and went as if the Buddha were alive. There was a bhiksu from Vrji practicing meditation in the pavilion. He was unable to enter into liberation samadhi because of this hustle and bustle. He reflected thus, ‘Ananda is a trainee. I wonder whethr he should engage in cultivating himself or not, yet he preaches so often in this nosy crowd.’ Having entered into samadhi, he saw that Ven.Ananda should engage in cultivating himself. He again thought to himself, ‘I

should preach to him the Dharma of detachment so that he would realize the truth.’

Therefore he went to Ven.Ananda’s dwelling place and uttered the following verse:

Sit under a tree in a quiet place.

Orientate the mind to nirvana.

Practice meditation and be mindful.

What is the use of speaking too much?

The bhiksus also said to Ven.Ananda, ‘you should immediately engage in cultivating yourself. Now Ven.Mahakasyapa wants to recite the Vinaya Dharma but would not admit you to the assembly for the recitation.’ Ven.Ananda, having heard the verse uttered by the bhiksu from Vrji, and then learning that Kasyapa would not admit him to the assembly for the recitation of the Vinaya, diligently practiced walking meditation and contemplation in the first, middle and last watches of the night. He hoped that he might attain liberation but was unsuccessful. Towards the end of the last watch of the night, he was extremely tired and wanted to lie down and rest for a while. Before his head touched the pillow, suddenly his defilements were exhausted. When the bhiksus learnt about this, they spoke at once to Ven.Kasyapa, ‘Ven.Ananda attained liberation last night. Now he should be admitted to the assembly for the recitation of the Vinaya.’ Thereupon Ven.Kasyapa consented to his admission. Then Ven.Kasyapa reflected thus, ‘Where can we find plenty of food and drink, bed and bedding, and sitting material to supply the assembly for the recitation of the Vinaya?’ he saw that Rajagrha was the only place that could supply these. So he announced in the Samgha. ‘Five hundred arhants among you should go to Rajagrha to observe the Rains Retreat; none of the rest should go.’

After the ruling was made, five hundred arhants went to Rajagrha. In the first month of the summer, they had the lodging repaired and beddings prepared. In the

second month they disported in different kinds of meditation and in liberation. Then in the third month they assembled in one place. Then Ven.Kasyapa addressed the Samgha, ‘Venerable Samgha, listen. Now I am going to question Upali in the Samgha on the contents of the Vinaya. If the time is suitable for the Samgha, let the Samgha give silent consent.’ It was announced thus. Then Ven.Upali also addressed the Samgha, ‘Venerable Samgha, listen. Now I am going to answer Ven.Kasyapa on the contents of the Vinaya. If the time is suitable for the Samgha, let the Samgha give silent consent.’ It was announced thus.

Thereupon, Ven.Kasyapa asked Ven.Upali, where did the Buddha make the first rule? Ven.Upali said, ‘In Vaisali.’ Ven.Kasyapa then asked, ‘On account of whom was the rule made? Ven.Upali answered, ‘on account of Sudinna Kalandakaputra.’ Ven.Kasyapa then asked, ‘On account of what was the rule made?’ Ven.Upali answered, ‘On account of the original act and the subsequent act of sexual intercourse.’ Ven.Kasyapa then asked, ‘Was the subsequent rule made? Ven.Upali answered, ‘Yes, it was. There was a bhikisu who had sexual intercourse with a monkey.’

Ven.Kasyapa then asked, ‘Where was the second rule made? Ven.Upali answered, ‘In Rajagrha.’ Ven.Kasyapa then asked, ‘On account of whom was the rule made?’ Ven.Upali answered, ‘On account of Dhanika.’ Ven.Kasyapa then asked, ‘On account of what was the rule made?’ Ven.Upali answered, ‘On account of stealing wood belonging to King Bimbisara.’

Ven.Kasyapa then asked, ‘Where was the third rule made? Ven.Upali answered, ‘In Vaisali.’ Ven.Kasyapa then asked, ‘On account of whom was the rule made?’ Ven.Upali answered, ‘On account of a multitude of bhiksus.’ Ven.Kasyapa

then asked, ‘On account of what was the rule made?’ Ven.Upali answered, ‘On killing one another.’

Ven.Kasyapa then asked, ‘Where was the fourth rule made? Ven.Upali answered, ‘In Vaisali.’ Ven.Kasyapa then asked, ‘On account of whom was the rule made?’ Ven.Upali answered, ‘On account of the bhiksus on the banks of the river Po-qi-mo (Vaggumuda).’ Ven.Kasyapa then asked, ‘On account of what was the rule made?’ Ven.Upali answered, ‘On account of falsely claiming superhuman qualities.’ When Ven.Kasyapa had finished asking about all of the Vinaya in this way, he announced in the Samgha. ‘This is the Vinaya for the bhiksus; this is the Vinaya for the bhiksunis. Together they continued the Vinaya Pitaka.

Ven.Kasyapa again addressed the Samgha, ‘Venerable Samgha, listen. Now I want to question Ananda in the Samgha on the contents of the Sutra. If the time is suitable for the Samgha, let the Samgha give silent consent.’ It was announced thus. . Then Ven.Ananda also addressed the Samgha, ‘Venerable Samgha, listen. Now I am going to answer Ven.Kasyapa on the contents of the Sutra. If the time is suitable for the Samgha, let the Samgha give silent consent.’ It was announced thus.

Thereupon Ven.Kasyapa asked Ven.Ananda, ‘Where did the Buddha teach the One-up-Sutra? Where did the buddha teach the Ten-up Sutra (Dasuttara Sutta), the Great Cause and Effect Sutra (Mahanidana sutta), the Seng-zhi-tuo Sutra (Samgiti Sutta), the Sramana Fruit Sutra (Samannaphala Sutta) and the Brahma-movement Sutra (Brahmajala Sutta) which sutras were spoken to the bhiksus, and which sutras to the bhiksunis, upasakas, upasikas, devas and devatas?’

Ven.Ananda answered all the questions in accordance with the Buddha’s teaching. Kasyapa, having asked questions on all the sutras in this way, announced in the Samgha, ‘These are the long sutras now collected into one agama named the

Dirghagama. These are the middle-length sutras, now collected into one agama named the Madhyamagama. These are the miscellaneous discourses delivered to bhiksus, bhiksunis, upasakas, upasikas, devas and devatas, now collected into one agama named the Samyuktagama. These are the dharmas from one up to eleven, now collected into one agama named the Ekottaragama. The rest of the miscellaneous discourses are now collected into one pitaka named the Miscellaneous Pitaka. Together they constitute the Sutra Pitaka.

‘We have completed the recitation of the Dharma. From now on, what was not made by the Buddha, we should not make on our own. What was made by the Buddha, we should observe? We should carefully learn what the Buddha taught.’

At that time the elder Fu-lan-na (Purana?) was in the south. He heard that the Buddha had entered into parinirvana in Kusinagar and the elder bhiksus had assembled in Ragajrha to discuss the Vinaya Dharma. He went with his followers to the assembly as swiftly as the contracting and extending of an arm. He said to Ven.Kasyapa, ‘I have heard that the Buddha has entered into nirvana and the elder bhiksus are all assembled here to discuss the Vinaya Dharma. Is that true or not?’

Ven.Kasyapa answered, ‘Venerable Sir, it is true.’ Ven.Purana said, ‘Please elaborate on it.’ Ven.Kasyapa then elaborated as above, after which Ven.Purana said to Ven.Kasyapa, ‘I have heard from the Buddha’s mouth that the following are allowed: eating in the lodging, fruit ripened in the lodging, fruit ripened by itself, managing their own cooking, receiving from people, taking fruit on their own and eating, picking up fruit from a pond when there is no one to make it befitting and eating it after taking the stone out.’ Ven.Kasyapa answered, ‘Venerable Sir, these seven rules were made while the Buddha was living in Vaisali at the time of a famine, when it was difficult to obtain alms. He made this allowance in accordance with the

circumstances. Later on, four more rules were added. In Sravasti, three more rules were added.’

Ven.Purana said, ‘The World-honored One should not have made allowances after making the rules and should not have made more rules after making allowances.’ Ven.Kasyapa answered, ‘The Buddha was a master of the Dharma. He was free to do what he wanted with the Dharma. What is wrong with making allowance after making the rules and making more rules after making allowances? Ven.Purana said, ‘I agree to the rest, but I cannot practice these seven rules.’ Ven.Kasyapa again announced in the Samgha, ‘What has not been made by the Buddha, we should not make our own. What has been made by the Buddha, we should observe. We should carefully learned what the Buddha taught.’<sup>18</sup>

## **2.5 Venerable *Mahakassapa*, The Father of The *Sangha***

Shortly before his *Parinibbana* the Buddha had refused to appoint a personal successor. Instead he urged the monks to look upon the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya*- the Doctrine and the discipline- as their Master, for within the teachings proclaimed during his forty-five year ministry they could find all the instructions they needed to treat the path to deliverance. Though the monks did not select a successor, in the period immediately following the Buddha’s demise the community came to regard with increasing reverence one solitary elder whose person emanated a natural aura of strength and authority. This figure, whom the Pali commentaries describe as ‘the disciple who was the Buddha’s counterpart (*buddhapatibhaga savaka*), was the Venerable *Mahakassapa*.

---

18. The Chinese text was taken from the Wu-fen-lu, in the Da-cang-jing, vol. 22, pp.190-192.

There are many factors that contributed to Ven.*Mahakassapa*'s rise to preeminence in the newly orphaned *Sangha*, the disciples of the Buddha. He had been praised by the Master for his meditative attainments and realizations. He was the only one monk with whom the Buddha had exchanged robes, a special honor. Ven.*Mahakassapa* possessed to the highest degree the 'ten qualities that inspire confidence.

Like the two chief disciples, Ven.*Sariputta* and *Moggallana*, Ven.*Mahakassapa* was of Brahmin descent. He was born in the *Magadha* country, in the village *Mahatittha*, as the son of the Brahmin Kapila and his wife Sumanadevi. He was named Pippali and grew up in the midst of wealthy and luxury but in his youth he felt a longing to leave the worldly life.

Dedicating his life to the Buddha, he renounced and on the way between Rajagaha and Nalanada, the Buddha sat down under a banyan tree waiting for Pippali who will become his future disciple to arrive. He did not sit there like an ordinary ascetic but displayed all the sublime glory of a Buddha. When Pippali reached the spot and saw the Buddha sitting there in the full splendor of an Enlightened One, he thought, "This must be my master for whose sake I have gone forth!" He approached the Buddha, fell at his feet, and exclaimed: "The Blessed One, Lord, is my teacher and I am his disciple! The Blessed One, Lord, is my teacher, and I am his disciple." The Buddha gave him three exhortations as his first formal introduction to the *Dhamma*.

The triple exhortations constituted Ven.*Kassapa*'s going forth and higher ordination. The both Master and disciple walked toward Rajagaha. On the way the Buddha wanted to rest and went off the road to the root of a tree. *Mahakassapa* then folded his double-robe in four and requested the Master to sit on it "as this will

be for my benefit for a long tie.” The Buddha sat down on *Kassapa*’s robe and said: “Soft is your robe of patched cloth, *Kassapa*.” Hearing this, *Kassapa* replied: “May the Blessed One, O Lord, accept this robe of patched cloth out of compassion for me!” the Buddha said to him, “But, *Kassapa*, can you wear these hempen, worn-out rag robes of mine?”

This exchange of robes bestowed a great distinction on the Venerable *Mahakassapa*, an honor not shared by any other disciple. The commentary explains that the Buddha’s intention in exchanging robes with *Kassapa* was to motivate him to observe the *dhutanga*, the austere practices, from the time of his very admission into the *Bhikkhu Sangha*. Several austere practices: using only the triples set of robes; wearing only rag robes; subsisting only on food collected on alms round; living only in the forest were commended in the discourses. On a later occasion the Buddha declared Ven.*Mahakassapa* foremost among the *bhikkhus* who observed the austere practices. It was only seven days after his ordination and the exchange of robes that *Kassapa* attained the goal he was striving for, Arahantship, the mind’s final liberation from defilements.

We have already seen that there was a deep inner relationship between the Ven.*Mahapassapa* and the Buddha. According to traditional sources, this relationship had its root in their past lives. From *Kassapa*’s final life, many conversations are reported between the Buddha and his great disciples. It happened three occasions that the Buddha spoke to him: “Exhort the monks, *Kassapa*. Give them a discourse on the *Dhamma*, *Kassapa*. Either I, *Kassapa*, should exhort the monks, or you. Either I or you should give them a discourse on the *Dhamma*. These words imply a high recognition of *Kassapa*’s ability, because not every arahant has the capacity to expound the teaching well and effectively.

On three occasions when the Buddha requested Ven.*Kassapa* to exhort the monks, he refused to comply. On the first of these occasions *Kassapa* said that it had now become difficult to speak to some of the monks: they were not amenable to advice, were untractable, and did not accept admonitions with respect. He had also heard that two monks had been boasting of their skill in preaching, saying: “Come, let us see who will preach more profusely, more beautifully, and at greater length!” When the Buddha was informed about this by *Kassapa*, he had these monks summoned and gave them a stern lecture, making them give up their childish conceit. Hence, we can see that *Kassapa*’s negative report turned out to be of positive benefit to those monks. It was not done just for the sake of criticizing others.

On the second occasion, Ven.*Kassapa* did not wish to instruct the monks because they were not amenable to admonishment, lacked faith in the good, lacked a sense of shame and fear of wrongdoing, and were slack and devoid of wisdom. Ven. *Kassapa* compared such monks, in their state of decline, to the waning moon, which daily loses in beauty (confidence), in roundness (shame), in splendor (fear of wrongdoing), in height (energy), and in width (wisdom).

On the third occasion the Buddha asked Ven.*Kassapa* to instruct the monks, and *Kassapa* again expressed his reluctance for the same reason as before. It seems that this time, too, the Buddha did not urge Ven.*Kassapa* to change his mind, but he himself spoke of the reasons for their conduct.

On another occasion, Ven.*Kassapa* asked the Buddha: “What is the reason that formerly there were fewer rules, but more monks were established in the knowledge of arahantship, while now there are more rules, but fewer monks are established in the knowledge of arahantship? The Buddha replied to him:

*Kassapa*, when beings deteriorate and the true *Dhamma* vanishes: then there are more rules and fewer arhants. There will be no vanishing of the true *Dhamma* until a sham *Dhamma* arises in the world. But when a sham *Dhamma* arises in the world, then the true *Dhamma* vanishes. But, *Kassapa*, it is not a cataclysm of the four elements-earth, water, fire, and air-that makes the true *Dhamma* disappear. It is rather the presence of five detrimental attitudes that causes the obscuration and disappearance of the true *Dhamma*.

These are the five: it is the lack of respect and regard for the *Buddha*, the *Dhamma*, the *Sangha*, the training, and meditative concentration, on the part of monks and nuns, and male and female lay devotees. But so long as there is respect and regard for those five things, the true *Dhamma* will remain free of obscuration and will not disappear. Other discourses relating to *Mahakassapa* deal chiefly with his austere way of life which was highly praised and commended by the Buddha. On one occasion late in his ministry the Buddha reminded *Kassapa* that as he had now grown old he must find his coarse, worn-out robes irksome to use. Therefore, the Buddha suggested, he should now wear robes offered by householders, accept invitations for alms offerings, and live near him. But *Ven.Massapa* replied: “for a long time I have been a forest dweller, going on alms round and wearing rag robes; and such a life I have commended to others; and that too I have commended to others.”

When the Buddha asked: “But for what reason do you live in this way?” *Ven.Kassapa* replied: “for two reasons: for my own pleasant abiding here and now, and out of compassion for later generations of monks who, when they hear about such a life, might think to emulate it.” Then the Buddha said: “Well spoken, *Kassapa*, well spoken! You are living for the happiness of many, out of compassion for the world,

for the benefit and welfare of gods and humans. You may then keep on your coarse rag robes, go out for alms, and live in the forest.

The strongest recognition of Ven.*Mahakassapa*'s achievement, the highest praise given him by the Buddha came when the Master said that *Kassapa* could attain at will just as he himself could, the four fine-material and the four immaterial meditative absorptions, the cessation of perception and feeling, and could also attain the six supernormal knowledge (*abhinna*) which include the supernormal powers and culminate the attainment of *Nibbana*.

In his verses preserved in the *Theragatha*, Ven.*Mahakassapa* praises again and again the peace of the *Jhanas*. He was one who went from abundance to abundance. In his lay life he had lived in the abundance of wealth and harmony. As a monk he dwelt in the abundance of Jhanic experience, furthered by his former life in the Brahma-world. While in some of the texts he appears to be very severe, this should not lead us to believe that he was harsh by nature. When he occasionally rebuked others in stern words, he did so for pedagogical reasons, in order to help them.

According to tradition, Ven.*Mahakassapa*'s relation to Ven.*Ananda* is closely connected with his leading role in the *Sangha* after the passing away of the Buddha. At the demise of the Buddha only the two of the five most prominent disciples were present, *Ananda* and *Anurudha*. Ven.*Sariputta* and Ven.*Mahamoggallana* had expired earlier that year, and Ven.*Mahakassapa*, with a large company of monks, was just then en route from Pava to Kusinara. During that walk he happened to step aside from the road and sat down under a tree to rest. Just then a naked ascetic passed that way holding a coral-tree flower (*mandarava*) which is said to grow only in the world of gods. When Ven.*Mahakassapa* saw this, he knew that something unusual must have

happened for the flower to be found on earth. He asked the ascetic whether he had heard any news about his teacher, the Buddha, and the ascetic told him: “The recluse *Gotama* passed into *Nibbana* a week ago. This coral-tree flower I picked up from the site of his demise.”

Among the monks in Ven.*Mahakassapa*’s company only the arahants remained calm and composed; those who were still unliberated from the passions fell to the ground, weeping and lamenting: “Too soon has the Blessed One passed into *Nibbana*! Too soon has the Eye of the World vanished from our sight! There was one monk in the group named *Subhadda*, ordained in his old age, who addressed his comrades: “Enough, friends! Do not lament. We are well rid of the Great Ascetic. We were constantly troubled by his telling us: ‘This is proper for you, that is improper.’ Now, we can do what we like, and we won’t have to do what we don’t like.”

Ven.*Mahakassapa* did not reply to those callous words at that time. Just then he may have wanted to avoid striking a discordant note by censuring the monk or having him disrobed as he deserved. But, as we shall see later, Ven.*Mahakassapa* referred to this very incident shortly after the Buddha’s cremation when he spoke of the need to convene a council of elders to preserve the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* for posterity. Now, he merely admonished his group of monks not to lament but to remember that all conditioned things are impermanent. He then continued his journey to Kusinara together with his company.

Ven.*Mahakassapa* came and paid his final homage to the Master’s remains and when he arrived, he walked around the pyre three times, reverently, with clasped hands, and then with bowed head paid his homage at the feet of the *Tathagata*. When his group of monks had done likewise, the pyre burst into flames by itself. After cremation, he turned his thoughts to the preservation of the Master’s spiritual heritage,

the *Dhamma* and the *Vinaya*. The necessity for this was plainly demonstrated to him by *Subhadda*'s challenge of the monastic discipline and his advocacy of moral laxity.

Ven.*Mahakassapa* took this as a warning of what the future held in store unless clear strictures were established now. If *Subhadda*'s attitude were to spread and there were groups of monks who shared this attitude even while the Buddha was alive-it would rapidly lead to the decline and ruin of both the *Sangha* and the Teaching. To prevent this at the very start, Ven.*Mahakassapa* proposed holding a council of elders to rehearse the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* and preserve them for posterity.

With that suggestion, he turned to the monks gathered at Rajagaha. The monks agreed, and at their request Ven.*Mahakassapa* selected five hundred elders all but one of whom were Arahants. The one exception was Ven.*Ananda*, whose position was ambivalent. As he had not yet succeeded in reaching the final goal, he could not be admitted to the council; but as he excelled in remembering all the Buddha's discourses, his presence was essential. The only solution was to give him an ultimatum that he must reach arahatship before the council began, which he did on the very night before it opened. Thus Ven.*Ananda* was admitted to complete the five hundred members of the First Council. All other monks were to leave *Rajagaha* for the duration of the meeting.

As the first time of council's proceedings, the *Vinaya*, the code of monastic discipline, was recited by Ven.*Upali*, the leading *Vinaya* expert. The second item was the codification of the teachings laid down in the *Suttas*. Here it was Ven.*Ananda* who, on being questioned by Ven.*Mahakassapa*, recited all those texts which were later collected into the five collections (*nikaya*) of the *Sutta Pitaka*.

After holding the First Council, the high regard in which Ven.*Mahkassapa* was held grew still greater, and he was seen as the de facto head of the *Sangha*. His

seniority would have contributed to this, as he was then one of the oldest living disciples. Later on, Ven.*Mahakassapa* handed over the Buddha's alms bowl to Ven.*Ananda* as a symbol of the faithful preservation of the *Dhamma*. Thus, Ven.*Mahakassapa*, who had been generally recognized in the Order as the worthiest in succession, on his part chose Ven.*Ananda* as being the worthies after him.

## 2.6 Perspective on The Council

We have stated the five versions on the assembly of the Five hundred bhikkhus, *pancasatika sangiti*, from their respective available Buddhist sources. In our work, we would like to focus on mainly the work of Theravada Buddhist School as recorded in the history.

The Dhamma was systemically compiled just after the demise of the Buddha with the intention of safeguarding it in its authentic form and making it available to the next generations. This was the main motivation of the First Sangiti. The Dhamma should remain in place of the teacher. Buddha himself had pointed his disciples out the Dhamma to be their teacher when he passed away.<sup>19</sup>

A Sangiti was essential for the purity of the Dhamma. The First Sangiti was organized in accordance with the Bhikkhu-aparihaniya Sutta which exhortance disciples to meet regularly, to be united, to preserve the Dhamma-Vinaya unchanged, to respect the elders and to value those whose moral practices are pure and who are well versed in Tipitaka. It was remarkable that no one amongst seven hundred thousand monks who gathered at Kusinagara stood in opposition to Mahakassapa Thera. All of them elected Mahakassapa Thera to be the president of the Sangiti. Moreover, they all showed their respect for the Buddha's word, "*Sukha Samghassa*

---

19. Mahavagga Pali, Department of Religious Affairs, Rangoon, 1958.ii.p.50.

*Samaggi*”, by supporting Mahakassapa Thera for selecting 500 bhikkhus who represented all of them at the First Sangiti.

Some monks did complain about selecting Ananda Thera who was still a Sotapanna for this important event; they considered that it should necessarily be led by arahants whose undefiled minds would not make even a trivial mistake concerned with the teaching. But this complaint happened to be the best encouragement for Ananda Thera. Being driven by this encouragement, he could manage to attain arahatta-magga just before the Sangiti. Dhamma and Vinaya were systematically compiled at the Sangiti owing to the extraordinary memory of Ananda Thera and Upali Thera. After the Sangiti, Mahakassapa Thera laid down three Theravada strategies in accordance with the *Aparihaniya Sutta* and they were approved by the participants of the Sangiti.

The system applied in the election, compilation and convention of the First Sangiti became the forerunner of the Parliament Democracy. That system is still alive in Sasana. The Sasana taught by the Buddha is perfect in every sense. It will never get outdated. By the preservation of the teaching one can show his attentiveness to the teacher. The Buddha can be said to be alive as long as the Dhamma exists. We still have the Dhamma in our hands, which means that our teacher is still with us. The compilation of the Dhamma and Vinaya could be done in its pristine form because the First Sangiti was held while Mahakassapa Thera, Upali Thera and Ananda Thera were alive. Samgha was organized in unity due to the leadership quality of Mahakassapa Thera.

The Dhamma would have been lost if the elders delayed the First Sangiti. Since we have the authentic form of the Dhamma, we can still practice the Dhamma

as if the teacher was giving the instruction personally. There is no doubt about that we owe our achievement to the First Sangiti.

The Commentaries evaluate the claim of a monk, called Subhadda, as the main reason for organizing the First Sangiti. Contrary to this exaggerate statement; it must be just one of many reasons. Because what Subhadda said was a mere claim to live without discipline; it was not a dispute on the tenets of the teaching. Besides, Subhadda was just an ordinary monk who joined the Bhikkhu Samgha in his old age. He was not even a scholar of the Pitaka. Again, his background was weak. Undoubtedly, his claim must not be a serious threat to disharmony among Samgha.

He had no power to influence the Samgha, kings, and any other important personalities of that time. Therefore, the claim of an ordinary old monk who did not have any influential power, who had no background, and who had no support could not be the main reason for organizing the First Sangiti. The evil acts of Devadatta were taken into serious consideration since he was one of the influential personalities at the time of the Buddha.

As mentioned above to preserve and compile the Dhamma and Vinaya systematically was the main reason for organizing the First Sangiti. Buddha passed away like a fully blossomed tree falling. Like the flowers of the tree that scatter on the ground, the discourses taught by the Buddha were spread since they were taught to different people in different places in different occasions. As the Buddha said his teaching must remain in his place guiding the disciples to the goal. So it was important that whatever was taught by the Buddha should be compiled and the compilation should be approved by the entire Samgha.

To gain the approval from the Samgha, Mahakassapa Thera made a systemic plan. He chose only 500 monks with the approval of the Samgha. These selected

monks were most eligible for this great task. Then he gave the specific task of compiling Sutta and Abhidhamma to Ananda Thera, and Vinaya to Upali Thera who were the most eligible persons for the task. The selection was obviously non-partial. Anuruddha Thera was among the 500 monks. He was a cousin of the Buddha and he was the one who led all the works in the cremation of Buddha's body. Besides, he possessed the divine eye. But he was not chosen for the task. Ananda Thera who just attained arahatta-magga and Upali Thera who used to be a barber were chosen instead. It was because Ananda Thera was the treasurer of the Dhamma (*Dhamma-bhandagarika*) and Upali was the best maintainer of the Vinaya (*Agga Vinaya-dhara*). As a consequence of this impartial selection and owing to the extremely precise memory of the two Theras, the compilation was approved without dispute. Thus Mahakassapa Thera could declare, "The Pitaka compiled at the First Sangiti is the authentic teaching of the Buddha and therefore it should be recognized as the teacher himself."

If Mahakassapa Thera did not make the right selection, the Sangiti would have been futile. And if the First Sangiti was not organized, the Dhamma would have been lost already or would have been distorted completely by now. The authenticity of the Dhamma that is still available to us should be contributed to the farsighted Theras at the time of the First Sangiti and the generations of teachers who made the greatest effort to preserve the teaching. The generation of Ananda Thera and Upali Thera led the Samgha for about 250 years until the Third Sangiti. This proved that Mahakassapa Thera made the right decision.<sup>20</sup>

### **2.6.1 Modern Scholars' Perspective**

---

20. Dr.Ashin Nyanissara, Sangiti, A perspective, Prospect and their impacts.p.38., S.B.C.M.S. Malaysia,2008.

Dealing with the Buddhist Councils many modern scholars have different perspective. We would like to focus on their opinions on it. Hermann Oldenberg was the first modern scholar to express doubt concerning the historicity of the First Council, what he said was that it was a pure fiction. His main ground was that there was no mention at all of the Council in the Mahaparinibbana-sutta which clearly gives its motive. He was supported by R.O. Franke.<sup>21</sup>

Oldenberg believed that the Second Council at Vaisali was historical, but that the First Council was invented for the sake of introducing the Second.<sup>22</sup> Wilhelm Geiger, on the other hand, argued that the Pali account represents a genuine historical reminiscence, and its general framework contains a kernel of historical truth.<sup>23</sup> Since Oldenberg, the authenticity of the Councils has been a topic of much controversy. Some Western scholars of his time had already reacted to Oldenberg. Thus, Louis La Vallee Poussin argued that such an important question as the historicity of the First Council could not be determined by such simple methods as those used by Oldenberg.<sup>24</sup> Hermann Jacobi also responded by remarking that there was no need for the Mahaparinibbana sutta to go out of its way to give the Council account. T.W. Rhys Davids, while initially agreeing with Oldenberg, seemed later on to concede some degree of historicity to the First Council.<sup>25</sup>

Moriz Winternitz remarked that Cullavagga XI-XII (in which the Councils are narrated) are later additions, forming a kind of appendix to the text.<sup>26</sup> Oldenberg was the first to point out that these sections are closely connected with the mahaparinibbana sutta. He and T.W. Rhys Davids showed that the first two parts of

---

21. The Buddhist Councils at Rajagaha and Vesali, in *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, VI, 1908.

22. Herman Oldenberg, *Vinaya Pitka*, I, Introduction, XXV.

23. W. Geiger, *The Mahavamsa, or The Great Chronicle of Ceylon*, 1912, Introduction.

24. *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, IV, p.182, James Hastings, ed.

25. T.W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist Suttas, Sacred Books of the East*, IX, 1881, General Introduction.

26. M. Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, II, 26.

Cullavagga XI were derived from the Suttanta.<sup>27</sup> Franke went further to assert that both accounts of the two Councils as given in the Cullavagga are no more than concoctions based on the Suttanta. It was Watanabe Baiyu who pointed out that in three Chinese versions of the Mahaparinirvana-sutra (T1,175a-c;T1, 190c;T1,207c), the First Council is clearly mentioned.<sup>28</sup>

Yin Shun remarked that much of the controversy resulted from these scholar's over reliance on the literary records, to the neglect of tradition itself. In his view, the Council accounts and the mahaparinirvana-sutra were separately transmitted by the Vinayadharas and the sutradhars respectively. In the process of transmission, the Vinayadharas had no need to go out of their way to depict the events of the Mahaparinirvana-sutra, nor did the sutradharas have any need to record the accounts of the Councils. From this perspective, we cannot doubt the authenticity of the First Council simply because it was not mentioned in the Mahaparinirvana-sutra. According to Yin Shun the sutra masters gradually compiled the Mahaparinirvana-sutra out of the tradition of scattered events connected with the Mahaparinirvana. On the other hand, somewhat earlier on, the Vinaya masters had put together traditions connected with the First Council and succinctly recorded them in the 'Vinaya-matrkā'. Later on, the north-eastern Vinaya masters came to include the event of the Mahaparinirvana. On the other hand, somewhat earlier on, the Vinaya masters had put together traditions connected with the First Council and succinctly recorded them in the 'vinaya-matrkā'. Later on, the north-eastern Vinaya masters came to include the event of the Mahaparinirvana in the Vinaya, and it is in this way that the event came to be connected with the Council, as attested in the ksudraka-vastu of the Mula-sarvastivada-vinaya. Likewise, the Rajarha Council was originally not transmitted by the Sutra masters.

---

27. Sacred Books of the East, XX,370.

28. Watanabe Baiyu,101.

However, its prevalence in the north and the western regions resulted in its being incorporated into the above-mentioned three sutras on the Mahaparivana translated in China.<sup>29</sup>

---

29. Yin Shun,29.

**CHAPTER III**  
**THE SECOND GREAT BUDDHIST COUNCIL**

## **CHAPTER III**

### **SAMGHA**

Disciplines play the most important role in the life of the Sangha because it is the life blood of the Dispensation of Buddha Sasana so to defend the genuine teaching and doctrines, the leading Ven. Revata and other senior bhikkhus led the Samgha gathered together to purify the Samgha.

#### **3.1 A Perspective On The Second Sangayana Or Sangiti**

The removal of minor rules from Vinaya was permitted by the Buddha if the Samgha so desired. This permission encouraged some members of Samgha to practice Vinaya by the way they thought was reasonable. Consequently, a community of Samgha that held heterodox interpretation of the teaching was formed. Nevertheless, Theravada Orthodoxy held the higher position at that time since it had gained the patronage of kings and also had bigger and stronger community of Samgha. Besides, Theravada Orthodoxy was supported by a majority of people in society. On the other hand, the heterodox school was accused of holding wrong views and forced to go into exile.

The Pitaka compiled at the First Sangiti was reconfirmed again at the Second one. The Theravada tradition continued to be privileged until then. However, Theravada could not hold their position long. The controversy occurred at the time of the Second Sangiti and caused many splinter groups in both Theravada and Mahasamghika Schools. The consequence of this split continued to influence until the Fourth Sangiti held in Kashmir 500 years later. Conservatism was not favored everywhere. It may not be able to adapt to different environments or people may not be able to adapt to it. It is natural that people in different societies, different traditions,

and different situations have different tendencies. A flexible, liberal system is much easier to spread among people of different tendencies. The Mahayana idea has covered a larger area than Theravada for the former favored the liberal system while the latter did not want to change and therefore more people have embraced Mahayana Buddhism.

In fact, both traditions have their strong and weak aspects. Theravada Conservatism claimed that no rule should be removed or changed: not even minor rules. But they cannot deny the fact that this rigid tendency creates many difficulties in their mission. Liberal schools were accused by the conservative of holding evil teaching for they have some rules. This accusation is too heavy for the actual offence. On the other hand, liberal groups were so careless when they made changes. They did not notice that legalization of soft alcoholic drinks would enormously damage the Patipatti and Pativedha Sasana. Some Japanese Mahayana Schools allow soft alcoholic drinks in their practice and they end up with legalization of sexual intercourse.

This legalized sexual intercourse in the Samgha Organization is no way appropriate and disgraceful to the Sasana. It is an admirable fact that Theravada, though it faced many difficulties in its mission, still conquered the hearts of many people in Europe, America, Africa, and Northern Hemisphere countries, while they are strongly opposed to drinking alcohol and sexual practice of the members of Samgha Community.

### **3.2 The Second Sangayana Or Sangiti (Be. 100, Bce 443)**

One hundred year the Buddha, in Vesali, monks from Vajji proposed an idea to deduct some minor and sub-minor rules from the Vinaya.<sup>1</sup> Their proposal came out with ten points of controversy. Their ideas were unconventional. According to them, for example, following their teacher's practices, even if they were not in accordance the Vinaya, was acceptable. They neglected that the Buddha taught in the Kesamutti Suttanta, "Do not be led by the idea: 'this is our respected teacher'. Whatever the teacher had said might not have been in accordance with that sutta. It is not surprising that they had distorted ideas for they also appreciated the attitude of Devadatta who had tried to murder the Buddha Devadatta was the forerunner of all who distort the authentic teaching of the Buddha. He even created a split among the Sangha."<sup>2</sup>

When we read the Vinaya carefully, we can see that Buddha himself treated the Vinaya rules flexibly in order to harmonize with the situation. A particular rule is taken, under certain circumstance, sometimes only as a point of general reference but sometimes in more specific detail. For instance, the rule concerned with sexual intercourse became more comprehensive and stricter when the Buddha added a supplementary statement. First, the rule was that a monk who committed a sexual act should lose his identity as a monk. Supplementing that statement, the Buddha then said that a monk should not have sexual intercourse even with an animal (*antamaso tiracchanagatayapi*). But sometimes, with a supplementary statement, the intensity or detail of particular rules was lessened. First, the Buddha insisted that a monk, with his own hand, should not pick up anything to eat if it was not offered by a lay person. Then he made the rule less strict saying "except water and tooth cleaning-sticks".

Just before his death, the Buddha granted permission for the removal of minor rules from the Vinaya if the Sanghaso desired. (akankhamano kho ananda sangho

---

1. Ven. Buddhaghosa, Vinaya commentary. (vol.3), Department of Religious Affairs, Rangoon, 1957. p.134. Sarathadipinitika, (vol,1). p. 111.  
2. Vinaya Pali, (vol.3). p. 491.

khuddanu khuddakani sikkhapadani samuhanatu). But no one among the leading figures of the Sangha was willing to remove any rules however trivial they may have seemed. Mahakassapa Thera and the 500 Sangiti Theras made a firm decision to preserve the Dhamma and Vinaya in its entirety and as they were handed down by the Buddha. However, contrary to this decision, the Vajji monks announced their ten points of controversy and used the Buddha's final remark on the minor rules as the basis for their argument.

It is common in every religion that conflicts occur following the death of the founder. Orthodoxy and heterodoxy or conservatism and liberalism are common features of religions. Followers of the Jainas split into splinter groups; some of the Buddha's disciples wanted a change. The Mahasanghika sect was a splinter from the Theravada convention a hundred years after the Buddha's demise. Hinduism had different interpretations on the Vedas and as a result there have been many religious beliefs within Hinduism. Christianity split into many churches such as Roman Catholics, Protestants, Methodists, Baptists, etc. Followers of Mohammad, Sunni and Shiite, at the present time, are killing each other. Sons and daughters of Brahma turn their backs on each other. Children of Jesus Christ disagree with each other on their Father's words. In the same way the Buddha's inheritors founded many religious schools. Fortunately, there have been no wars among the Buddhists, no matter how strongly they disagree on their Teacher's words.

The second Sangiti with its 700 participants was an attempt to deal with ten questionable monastic practices. Yasa Thera was the president of this Sangiti, Revata Thera the questioner and Sabbakami Thera gave answers to the questions. The council declared that the practices proposed by the Vajjian monks were unlawful. The Vajjian confederacy, with its ten thousand members, was charged with holding to unlawful

Dhamma and subsequently exiled from Vesali. On their part, the Vajjians organized a separate council in Kosambi in protest the decisions of the second Sangiti. They declared that their council was the Mahasangiti since they had more participants at the convention. Their movement resulted in the forming of the Mahasanghika School. Some scholars trace the origin of Mahayana School to this school.

The leading figures of the Vesali Sangiti were the disciples of Ananda Thera whose death occurred 40 years after the Buddha. Among them were some who were expert and memorized the entire teaching of the Buddha, tipitakadhammabhandagarikas. They had made the very admirable act of preserving the authentic teachings of their teacher. Unlike the Vesali Sangiti, the Kosambi Sangiti did not gain great reputation in the history of Buddhism. Nevertheless, the origins of the first major schism between the Mahasanghikas and the Theravada Schools can be traced back to this event.

The generations of Ananda Thera and Upali Thera continued until the Third Sangha Council.

### **3.2.1 Theravada *Vinaya*<sup>3</sup>**

Dealing with the second great council, several Buddhist schools recorded the event in their literature so we will take their genuine records.

#### **The Assembly of the Severn Hundred for the Recitation of the *Vinaya***

At that time, one hundred years after the Blessed One's entering into *parinibbana*, the *bhikkhus* of *Vesali*, the sons of *Vajji*, promulgated ten points in *Vesali*:

---

3. Cullavagga, section XII, Vinayapitaka, Vol.II, Pali Text Society, London, 1977.

Salt inside a horn was permissible.  
Two finger-breadths' was permissible.  
Inter-village was permissible.  
Residence was permissible.  
Ratification was permissible.  
Customary practice was permissible.  
Unchurned buttermilk was permissible.  
Drinking unfermented toddy was permissible.  
A sitting mat of unlimited size was permissible.  
Gold and silver were permissible.

At that time the Venerable *Yasa*, the son of *Kakandaka*, while touring the kingdom of *Vajji*, entered *Vesali*. There the Venerable *Yasa*, the son of *Kakandaka*, abided at the Gabled Hall of the Great Grove in *Vesali*. At that time the Bhikkhus of *Vesali*, the sons of *Vajji*, on the day of Observance,<sup>4</sup> having filled a bronze pot with water and kept it in the midst of the *Samgha*, spoke thus to the lay followers who had come, 'Sirs, please give us a copper coin, a half, a quarter, even a *masaka*.<sup>5</sup> There is something to be done for the *Samgha* in respect of material requisites.'

When they had spoken thus, the Venerable *Yasa*, the son of *Kakandaka*, said this to those lay followers of *Vesali*, 'Sirs, do not give to the *Samgha* a copper coin ... even a *masaka*. Gold and silver are not permissible to the recluses, the sons of the *Sakyan*; the recluses, the sons of the *Sakyan*, do not appropriate gold and silver; the recluses, the sons of the *Sakyan*, do not receive gold and silver; the recluses, the sons of the *Sakyan*, have abandoned gems and gold and are aloof from gold and silver.'

The lay followers of *Vesali*, in spite of being spoken to thus by the Venerable *Yasa*,

---

4. This refers to Uposatha which falls on the fourteenth or the fifteenth of the month. The monks in the resident monastery meet fortnightly on this day and recite Patimokkha.

5. Masaka, a small coin of very low value.

the son of *Kakandaka*, gave the *Samgha* a copper coin ... even a *masaka*. Then the bhikkhus of *Vesali*, the sons of *Vajji*, at the end of the night, apportioned that gold according to the number of bhikkhus. Then the bhikkhus of *Vesali*, the sons of *Vajji*, said this to the Venerable *Yasa*, the son of *Kakandaka*, ‘This is, brother *Yasa*, your share of gold.’ ‘Brother, there is no portion of gold for me. I do not appropriate gold.’ Then the bhikkhus of *Vesali*, the sons of *Vajji*, proposed, ‘Brothers, this *Yasa*, the son of *Kakandaka*, reviles, insults, and makes the faithful lay followers unfaithful. Let us perform the act of Reconciliation for him.’<sup>6</sup> They performed the act of Reconciliation for him.

Then the Venerable *Yasa*, the son of *Kakandaka*, said this to the *bhikkhus* of *Vesali*, the sons of *Vajji*, ‘Brothers, it was proclaimed by the Blessed One that an accompanying messenger should be given to the Bhikkhus for whom the act of Reconciliation has been performed. Brother, give me an accompanying messenger *bhikkhu*.’ Then the *bhikkhus* of *Vesali*, the sons of *Vajji*, having agreed upon one *bhikkhu*, gave him to the Venerable *Yasa*, the son of *Kakandaka*, as an accompanying messenger. Then the Venerable *Yasa*, the son of *Kakandaka*, went into *Vesali* with the accompanying messenger *bhikkhu* and said this to the lay followers, ‘It is said, sirs, that I, who maintain *adhamma* as *adhamma*, the Dhamma as the *Dhamma*, *avinaya* as *avinaya*, the *Vinaya* as the *Vinaya*, revile and insult you, the devoted and the faithful, and make you unfaithful.’

‘At one time, Sirs, the Blessed One abided at *Jeta* Grove, the monastery of *Anathapindika*, in *Savatthi*. There, Sirs, the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus, “Bhikkhus, there are four pollutions of the moon and the sun, because of which the moon and the sun do not shine, do not glow and do not glitter. What are the four?

---

6. Patiraniyakamma, by means of which a monk is forced to tender an apology to a layman.

Clouds are, *bhikkhus*, a pollution of the moon and the sun, because of which the moon and the sun do not shine, do not glow, and do not glitter. Fog.... Smoke and dust .... *Rahu*, the king of *asuras* ... These are, *bhikkhus*, the four pollutions of the moon and the sun, because of which the moon and the sun do not shine, do not glow and do not glitter. In the same way, *bhikkhus*, there are four pollutions of the recluses and Brahmins, because of which some recluses and Brahmins do not shine, do not glow and do not glitter. What are the four? There are, *bhikkhus*, some recluses and Brahmins who drink fermented toddy, who drink spirits and who do not abstain from drinking fermented toddy and spirits. This is, *bhikkhus*, the first pollution of the recluses and brahmins, because of which some recluses and Brahmins do not shine, do not glow and do not glitter. And again, *bhikkhus*, some recluses and Brahmins indulge in sexual intercourse and do not abstain from indulging in sexual intercourse. This is, *bhikkhus*, the second .... And again, *bhikkhus*, some recluses and Brahmins appropriate gold and silver and do not abstain from accepting gold and silver. This is, *bhikkhus*, the third .... And again, *bhikkhus*, some recluses and Brahmins practice wrong means of livelihood and do not abstain from wrong means of livelihood. This is, *bhikkhus*, the fourth .... These are, *bhikkhus*, the four pollutions of the recluses and the Brahmins, because of which some recluses and Brahmins do not shine, do not glow and do not glitter.” Sirs, the Blessed One said this. Having said this, the Well Gone One, the Teacher, further said thus:

“Some recluses and Brahmins, being polluted by lust and hatred, covered with ignorance and delighting in beautiful forms, drink fermented toddy and spirits, indulge in sexual Intercourse, and

Appropriate gold and silver, the fools.

Some recluses and Brahmins live by wrong means.

These are said to be pollutions by the Buddha, the kinsman of the Sun,

Because of which some recluses and Brahmins do not shine and do not glow. Impure, dusty beasts, covered with darkness, enslaved by craving, led by desire, they cause dreadful cemeteries to grow and take up becoming again.” It is said, Sirs, that I, who maintain *adhmma* as *adhamma*, the *Dhamma* as the *Dhamma*, *avinaya* as *avinaya*, the *Vinaya* as the *Vinaya*, revile and insult you, the devoted and the faithful, and make you unfaithful.’

‘At one time, Sirs, the Blessed One abided at the Bamboo Grove, the feeding ground of squirrels, in *Rajagaha*. At that time, Sirs, there was this conversation among the members of the royal assembly who had assembled and been sitting in the inner-city of the king: “Gold and silver are permissible to the recluses, the sons of the *Sakyan*; the recluses, the sons of the *Sakyan*, appropriate gold and silver; the recluses, the sons of the *Sakyan*, accept gold and silver.” At that assembly. Then, Sirs, the village headman *Maniculaka* said this to that assembly, “Sirs, don’t say thus. Gold and silver are not permissible to the recluses, the sons of the *Sakyan*; the recluses, the sons of the *Sakyan*, do not appropriate gold and silver; the recluses, the sons of the *Sakyan*, do not accept gold and silver. The recluses, the sons of the *Sakyan*, have abandoned gems and gold and are aloof from gold and silver.” Sirs, the village headman *Maniculaka* was able to convince that assembly. Then, Sirs, the village headman *Maniculaka* was able to convince that assembly. Then, Sirs, the village headman *Maniculaka*, having convinced that assembly, approached the Blessed One, worshipped the Blessed One and sat to his side. The village headman *Maniculaka*, who sat to his side, Sirs, said this to the Blessed One, “Here, Venerable Sir, among the members of the royal assembly who have been sitting in the inner-city of the king .... The recluses, the sons of the *Sakyan*, accept gold and silver. When this was said,

Venerable Sir, I said this to that assembly, ‘Sirs, don’t say thus... [they] are aloof from gold and silver.’ I was able, Venerable Sir, to convince that assembly. May I know, Venerable Sir, whether I, maintaining thus, represent correctly the Blessed One, whether I do not falsely accuse the Blessed One, whether I explain what is in conformity with the teaching, and whether any reasonable argument [of mine] brings about censure.”

“Definitely, village headman, maintaining thus, you represent me correctly, do not falsely accuse me, explain what is in conformity with the teaching, and any reasonable argument [of yours] does not bring about censure, gold and silver are, indeed, not permissible to the recluses, the sons of the *Sakyan*; the recluses, the sons of the *Sakyan*, do not appropriate gold and silver; the recluses, the sons of the *Sakyan*, do not accept gold and silver. The recluses, the sons of the *Sakyan*, have abandoned gems and gold, and are aloof from gold and silver. To whomsoever, village headman, gold and silver are permissible, the five objects of sense pleasure are also permissible. Being one for whom the five objects of sense pleasure are permissible, definitely, you should understand, village headman, that it is not the teaching of the recluses and it is not the teaching of the sons of the *Sakyan*. And yet, village headman, I say to you thus, ‘Grass is to be sought for by one who is in need of grass; wood is to be sought for by one who is in need of wood; a cart is to be sought for by one who is in need of a cart; a person is to be sought for by one who is in need of a person. Surely, village headman, I do not say that gold and silver are to be sought for and appropriated in any way.’

‘It is said, Sirs, that I, who maintain *adhamma* as *adhamma*, the *Dhamma* as the *Dhamma*, *avinaya* as *avinaya*, the *Vinaya* as the *Vinaya*, revile and insult you, the devoted and the faithful, and make you unfaithful.

‘On one occasion, Sirs, the Blessed One, on account of the Venerable *Upananda*, a son of the *Sakyan*, rejected gold and silver and promulgated a rule of training right there in *Rajagaha*. It is said, Sirs, that I, who maintain *adhamma* as *adhamma*, the *Dhamma* as the *Dhamma* ... the *Vinaya* as the *Vinaya*, revile and insult you, the devoted and the faithful, and make you unfaithful.’ When it was said thus, the lay followers of *Vesali* said this to the Venerable *Yasa*, the son of *Kakandaka*, ‘Venerable Sir, it is only *Yasa*, the son of *Kakandaka*, who is a recluse, a son of the *Sakyan*; all these are not recluses, sons of the *Sakyan*. Venerable Sir, let the master *Yasa*, the son of *Kakandaka*, stay in *Vesali*. We will do our best to provide the master *Yasa*, the son of *Kakandaka*, with robes, alms-food, lodging and medicine and other requisites for the sick.’ Then the Venerable *Yasa*, the son of *Kakandaka*, having convinced the lay followers of *Vesali*, went to the Grove with the accompanying messenger *bhikkhu*.

Then the *bhikkhus* of *vesali*, the sons of the *Vajji*, questioned the accompanying messenger *bhikkhu*, ‘Brother, has *Yasa*, the son of *Kakandaka*, apologized to the lay followers of *Vesali*?’ [He replied,] ‘Brothers, a big mistake has been made by us. It was only *Yasa* who was considered a recluse, a son of the *Sakyan*; we all were considered not recluses, not sons of the *Sakyan*.’

Then the *bhikkhus* of *Vesali*, the sons of the *Vajji*, said, ‘Brothers, this *Yasa*, the son of *Kakandaka*, gave information to the lay followers without our consent. Let us perform the act of Suspension against him.’<sup>7</sup> With the intention of performing the act of Suspension against him, they assembled. Then the Venerable *Yasa*, the son of *Kakandaka*, ascended into the sky and reappeared in *Kosambi*. Then the Venerable *Yasa*, the son of *Kakandaka*, sent a messenger to the *bhikkhus* of *Patheyya* and of

---

7. Ukkhepaniyakamma, which is done on three grounds: not seeing the offence, not taking the remedial measure and not giving up the heretical view.

*Avanti*, which was on the route to the south, saying, ‘Let the venerable ones come. We will take up this legal question before *adhamma* shines forth and the *Dhamma* is rejected, before *avinaya* shines forth and the *Vinaya* is rejected, before the advocates of *adhamma* become powerful and the advocates of the *Dhamma* become weak, before the advocates of *avinaya* become powerful and the advocates of the *Vinaya* become weak.’

At that time the Venerable *Sambhuta*, the wearer of a hempen robe, lived on the *Ahogamga* mountain. Then the Venerable *Yasa*, the son of *Kakandaka*, went to the *Ahogamga* mountain and approached the Venerable *Sambhuta*, the wearer of a hempen robe. Having worshipped the Venerable *Sambhuta*, the wearer of a hempen robe, the Venerable *Yasa* sat to one side. The Venerable *Yasa*, the son of *Kakandaka*, said this to the Venerable *Sambhuta*, the wearer of a hempen robe, ‘Venerable Sir, these bhikkhus of *Vesali*, the sons of the *Vajji*, promulgate ten points: the salt inside a horn is permissible .... Gold and silver are permissible. Venerable Sir, let us take up this legal question before *adhamma* shines forth ... and the advocates of the *Vinaya* become weak.’

‘Very well, brother,’ the Venerable *Sambhuta*, the wearer of a hempen robe, replied to the Venerable *Yasa*, the son of *Kakandaka*. Then the bhikkhus of *Patheyya*, as many as sixty, all forest dwellers, all alms collectors, all rag-robe wearers, all equipped with three robes, all arahants, assembled at *Ahogamga* mountain; and the bhikkhus of *Avanti*, which was on the route to the south, as many as eighty-eight, some forest dwellers, some alms collectors, some rag-robe wearers, some equipped with three robes, all arahants, assembled at *Ahogamga* mountain.

Then while the elder bhikkhus were deliberating, this idea came to their mind, ‘This legal question is very hard and difficult. How should we have a faction by

which we could be more powerful in this legal question?’ At that time the Venerable *Revata* lived in *Soreyya*. He was learned well-versed in the texts, a master of the *Dhamma*, of the *Vinaya* and of the *matikas*, wise, experienced, intelligent, conscientious, scrupulous and in favour of *Vinaya*. Then this idea came to the elder *bhikkhus*: ‘This Venerable *Revata* lives in *Soreyya*. He is learned ... and in favour of *Vinaya*. If we could get the Venerable *Revata* to join our faction, we would thus be more powerful in this legal question.’

The Venerable *Revata*, while the elder *bhikkhus* were deliberating, heard with a divine ear, which was pure and beyond that of humans. This idea occurred to him: ‘This legal question is very hard and difficult. If I were to evade a legal question like this, it is not proper for me. By now, those *bhikkhus* are coming. If I were to mingle with them, I would not be at ease. I should go beforehand.’

Then the Venerable *Revata* went from *Soreyya* to *Samkassa*. Then the elder *bhikkhus* went to *Soreyya* and asked, ‘Where is the Venerable *Revata*?’ They said thus, ‘The Venerable *Revata* has gone to *Samkassa*.’ Then the Venerable *Revata* went from *Samkassa* to *Kannakujja*. Then the elder *bhikkhus* went to *Samkassa* and asked, ‘Where is the Venerable *Revata*?’ They said thus, ‘The Venerable *Revata* has gone to *Kannakujja*.’ Then the Venerable *Revata* went from *Kannakujja* to *Udumbara*. Then the elder *bhikkhus* went to *Kannakujja* and asked ‘Where is the Venerable *Revata*?’ They said thus, ‘The Venerable *Revata* has gone to *Udumbara*.’ Then the Venerable *Revata* went from *Udumbara* to *Aggalapura*. Then the elder *bhikkhus* went to *Udumbara* and asked, ‘Where is the Venerable *Revata*?’ They said thus, ‘The Venerable *Revata* has gone to *Aggalapura*.’ Then the Venerable *Revata* went from *Aggalapura* to *Sahajati*. Then the elder *bhikkhus* went to *Aggalapura* and asked, ‘Where is the Venerable *Revata*?’ They said thus, ‘They said thus, ‘The Venerable

*Revata* has gone to *Sahajati*.’ Then the elder *bhikkhus* met with the Venerable *Revata* at *Sahajati*.

Then the Venerable *Sambhuta*, the wearer of a hempen robe, said this to the Venerable *Yasa*, the son of *Kakandaka*, ‘Brother, this Venerable *Revata* is learned, well-versed in the texts, a master of the Dhamma, of the *Vinaya* and of the *matikas*, wise, experienced, intelligent, conscientious, scrupulous and in favour of *Vinaya*. If we were to question the Venerable *Revata*, the Venerable *Revata* is competent enough to spend the whole night with only one question. Even now, the Venerable *Revata* is going to examine a student *bhikkhus* who is a recite with intonation. So you should approach the Venerable *Revata* at the end of that *bhikkhu*’s recital with intonation and ask these ten points.’ ‘Yes, Venerable Sir,’ the Venerable *Yasa*, the son of *Kakandaka*, replied to the Venerable *Sambhuta*, the wearer of a hempen robe.

Then the Venerable *Revata* finished the examination of a student *bhikkhu* who was a recite with intonation. Then the venerable *Yasa*, the son of *Kakandaka*, at the end of that *bhikkhu*’s recital with intonation, approached the Venerable *Revata*, worshipped him and sat to one side. The Venerable *Yasa*, the son of *Kakandaka*, who sat to one side, said this to the Venerable *Revata*, ‘Venerable Sir, is salt inside a horn permissible?’ ‘Brother, what do you mean by salt inside a horn?’ ‘Is it permissible, Venerable Sir, to carry salt in a horn, thinking, “I will use it wherever salt is not available?”’ ‘Brother, it is not permissible.’ ‘Venerable Sir, is “two finger-breadths” permissible?’ ‘Brother, what do you mean by “two finger-breadths?”’ ‘Is it permissible, Venerable Sir, to have a meal at an improper time, when the shadow has passed two finger-breadths?’ ‘Brother, it is not permissible.’ ‘Venerable Sir, is inter-village permissible?’ ‘Brother, what do you mean by inter-village?’ ‘Is it permissible, Venerable Sir, for a *bhikkhu* who has satisfied himself after finishing a meal, to think

that he will go to another village now and eat a second meal which is not leftover?’

‘Brother, it is not permissible.’ ‘Venerable Sir, is residence permissible?’ ‘Brother, what do you mean by residence?’ ‘Is it permissible, Venerable Sir, for the bhikkhus of several residences within the same boundary to hold an uposatha ceremony separately?’ ‘Brother, it is not permissible.’ ‘Venerable Sir, is ratification permissible?’ ‘Brother, what do you mean by ratification?’ ‘Is it permissible, venerable Sir, to carry out a formal act with a group of the Samgha, thinking, “We will get it ratified when all the bhikkhus have come”?’ ‘Brother, it is not permissible.’

‘Venerable Sir, is customary practice permissible?’ ‘Brother, what do you mean by customary practice?’ ‘Is it permissible, Venerable Sir, to follow the customary practice, thinking, “This has been followed by my preceptor, this has been followed by my teacher”?’ ‘Brother, some of the customary practices are permissible, others are not.’ ‘Venerable Sir, is unchurned buttermilk permissible?’ ‘Brother, what do you mean by unchurned buttermilk?’ ‘Is it permissible, Venerable Sir, for a *bhikkhu*, who has satisfied himself after finishing a meal, to drink that milk which is not leftover and which has gone beyond the state of milk which is not leftover and which has gone beyond the state of milk and not reached the state of curd?’ ‘Brother, it is not permissible.’ ‘Venerable Sir, is drinking unfermented toddy permissible?’ ‘Brother, what do you mean by unfermented toddy?’ ‘Is it permissible, Venerable Sir, to drink that toddy which is not fermented and which has not reached the state of an intoxicant?’ ‘Brother, it is not permissible,’ ‘Venerable Sir, is a sitting mat of unlimited size permissible?’ ‘Brother, it is not permissible.’ ‘Venerable Sir, are gold and silver permissible?’ ‘Brother, they are not permissible.’ ‘Venerable Sir, these *bhikkhus* of *Vesali*, the son of the *Vajji*, promulgate these ten points in *Vesali*. Venerable Sir, let us take up this legal question, before *adhamma* shines forth... and

advocates of the *Vinaya* become weak.’ The Venerable *Revata* replied to the Venerable *Yasa*, the son of Kakandaka, saying, ‘Yes, Brother.’

### 3.2.2 The First Recitation

The *Bhikkhus* of *Vesali*, the sons of the *Vajji*, heard, ‘*Yasa*, the son of Kakandaka, desiring to take up this legal question, is on a search for a faction and is gathering a faction.’ Then this idea occurred to the *bhikkhus* of *Vesali*, the sons of the *Vajji*, ‘This legal question is very hard and difficult. What faction should we have, by which we could be more powerful in this legal question?’ Then this idea occurred to the *bhikkhus* of *Vesali*, the sons of the *vajji*: ‘This Venerable *Revata* is learned, well-versed in the texts ... and is in favour of *Vinaya*. If we were to get the Venerable *Revata* to join our faction, we could be more powerful in this legal question.’ Then the *bhikkhus* of *Vesali*, the sons of the *Vajji*, prepared abundant material requisites of recluses – bowls, robes, sitting mats needle cases, waistbands strainers and water-pots with filters. Then the *bhikkhus* of *Vesali*, the sons of the *Vajji*, having gathered those material requisites of recluses, went upstream to Sahajati by boat. Having disembarked from the boat, they sat at the foot of a tree and had their meal.

Then this idea occurred to the Venerable *Sajha* when he was in solitude, ‘Who are the advocates of the Dhamma, the *bhikkhus* of the East or those of *Patheyya*?’ then this idea came to the Venerable *Salha* when he was reviewing the *Dhamma* and the *Vinaya*: ‘The *bhikkhus* of the East are not the advocates of the *Dhamma*: the *bhikkhus* of *Patheyya* are the advocates of the *Dhamma*.’ Then a divine being of the pure Abodes, having understood the mind of the Venerable *Salha*, disappeared from the Pure Abodes and appeared just in front of the Venerable *Salha* as swiftly as a strong man extends and folds his arm. Then that divine being said to the Venerable

*Salha*, ‘You are right, Venerable *Salha*. The *Bhikkhus* of the East are not the advocates of the *Dhamma*; the *bhikkhus* of *Patheyya* are the advocates of the *Dhamma*. Therefore, Venerable *Salha*, stand firm according to the *Dhamma*.’ ‘Formerly as well as at present, divine being, I have been standing firm according to the at present, divine being, I have been standing firm according to the *Dhamma*. Nevertheless, I will not reveal my view, with the hope, “May the *Samgha* agree upon selecting me in this legal question.”

Then the *bhikkhus* of *Vesali*, the sons of the *Vajji*, having taken those material requisites of recluses, approached the Venerable *Revata* and said this to the Venerable *Revata*, ‘Venerable Sir, let the elder accept material requisites of recluses – bowls, robes, sitting mats, needle cases, waistbands, strainers and water-pots with filters.’ He did not wish to accept, saying, ‘No need, Brothers, My three robes are complete.’ At that time there was one *bhikkhu* of twenty years’ standing named *Uttara*, who was the attendant of the Venerable *Revata*. Then the *bhikkhus* of *Vesali*, the sons of *Vajji*, approached the Venerable *Uttara* and said this to the Venerable *Uttara*, ‘Let the Venerable *Uttara* accept the material requisites of recluses – bowls ... and water-pots with filters.’ He did not wish to accept, saying, ‘No need, Brother. My three robes are complete.’ ‘Brother *Uttara*, people offered material requisites of recluses to the Blessed One. If the Blessed One accepted, they were made happy just by that. If the Blessed One did not accept, they offered them to the Venerable *Ananda*, saying, “Venerable sir, let the elder accept the material requisites of recluses. Thus, it will be like something accepted by the Blessed One.” Let the Venerable *Uttara* accept the material requisites of recluses. Thus, it will be like something accepted by the elder.’

Then the venerable *Uttara*, being pressed by the *bhikkhus* of *Vesali*, the sons of the *Vajji*, took one robe and said, ‘You should tell me, Brothers, what you want.’

‘Venerable *uttara*, say this much to the elder, “Venerable Sir, let the elder say this much in the midst of the *Samgha*, that the Enlightened Blessed Ones are born in one of the eastern countries, that the eastern *bhikkhus* are the advocates of the *Dhamma* and the *bhikkhus* of *Patheyya* are the advocates of *adhamma*.” ’ Having replied, saying ‘Yes, Brothers’ to the *bhikkhus* of *Vesali*, the sons of the *Vajji*, the Venerable *Uttara* approached the Venerable *Revata* and said this to the Venerable *Revata*, ‘Venerable Sir, let the elder say this much ... the *bhikkhus* of *Patheyya* are the advocates of *adhamma*.’ The elder said, ‘*Bhikkhu*, you would cause me to fall into the *adhamma*.’ He asked the Venerable *Uttara* to leave. Then the *bhikkhus* of *Vesali*, the sons of the *Vajji*, said this to the Venerable *Uttara*, ‘Brother *Uttara*, what did the elder say?’ ‘Brothers, we have made a big mistake. The elder asked me to leave, saying, “*Bhikkhu*, you would cause me to fall into the *adhamma*.” ‘Aren’t you, Brother, a senior of twenty year’s standing?’ ‘Yes, Brothers. But I depend on the teacher. Don’t I?’

Desiring to decide that legal question, the *Samgha* assembled. Then the Venerable *Revata* informed the *Samgha*, ‘Brothers, listen to me. If we were to settle this legal question here, there is a possibility that the *bhikkhus* who contributed to this legal question originally would raise an objection to open it up again. If the time is suitable for the *Samgha*, let the *Samgha* settle this legal question then and there, where this legal question originated.’ Then the elder *bhikkhus*, desiring to decide that legal question, went to *Vesali*. At that time the seniormost elder of the *Samgha* on earth, named *Sabbakami*, who had been ordained one hundred and twenty years before and had been a disciple of the Venerable *Ananda*, lived in *Vesali*. Then the Venerable *Revata* said this to the Venerable *Sambhuta*, the wearer of a hempen robe, ‘I will go to that dwelling place where the Elder *Sabbakami* abides. You, having gone

to the Elder *Sabbakami* in the early morning, ask about these ten points, ‘Yes, Venerable Sir,’ in reply to the Venerable *Revata*. Then the Venerable *Revata* went to that dwelling place where the Elder *Sabbakami* abided. The inner room of the lodging was prepared for the Elder *Sabbakami*, and the Venerable of the inner room for the venerable *Revata* thought, ‘This elder is old but does not lie down.’ Thinking thus, he did not lie down sleep. The Venerable *Sabbakami* thought, ‘This newly arrived *bhikkhu* is tired but does not lie down.’ Thinking thus, he did not lie down to sleep.

Then the Venerable *Sabbakami*, at the time of dawn, said this to the Venerable *Revata*, ‘In what mode of abiding, my dear, do you abide mostly at present?’ ‘In the abiding of [immeasurable] friendliness, Venerable Sir, I abide mostly at present.’ ‘In a trivial abiding, my dear, you abide mostly at present. What is called friendliness, my dear, is a trivial abiding.’ ‘Friendliness, Venerable Sir, was quite familiar to me even when I was a householder. Because of that reason I abide mostly with friendly abiding, even at present. But I attained arahanthood a long time ago. Venerable Sir, in what mode of abiding does the elder abide mostly at present?’ ‘In the abiding of emptiness, my dear, I abide mostly at present,’ ‘In the abiding of Great Beings, Venerable Sir, the elder abides mostly at present. What is called emptiness, Venerable Sir, the elder abides mostly at present. What is called emptiness, Venerable Sir, is an abiding of Great Beings.’ ‘Emptiness, my dear, was quite familiar to me even when I was a householder. Because of that reason, I abide mostly in emptiness abiding, even at present. But I attained arahanthood a long time ago.’

This conversation of the elder *bhikkhus* was disrupted when the Venerable *Sambhuta*, the wearer of a hempen robe, arrived there. Then the venerable *Sambhuta*, the wearer of a hempen robe, approached and worshipped the Venerable *Sabbakami* and sat down to one side. The Venerable *sambhuta*, the wearer of a hempen robe, who

had been sitting to one side, said this to the Venerable *Sabbakami*, ‘These *Bhikkhus* of Vesali, the sons of the *Vajji*, Venerable Sir, promulgate ten points: salt inside a horn is permissible ... gold and silver are permissible. Venerable Sir, much *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* have been learnt by the elder under the preceptor. Venerable Sir, reviewing the *Dhamma* and the *Vinaya*, what is your feeling as to who are the advocates of the *Dhamma*: the *bhikkhus* of the East or those of *Patheyya*?’ ‘Brother, you have also learnt much *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* under the preceptor. Reviewing the *Dhamma* and the *Vinaya*, what is your feeling as to who are the advocates of the *Dhamma*: the *bhikkhus* of the East or those of *Patheyya*?’ ‘Venerable Sir, when I am reviewing the *Dhamma* and the *Vinaya*, this is how I feel: the *bhikkhus* of the East advocate *adhamma*; the *bhikkhus* of *Patheyya* advocate the *Dhamma*. Nevertheless, I do not reveal my view, with the hope, “May the *Samgha* agree upon selecting me to address this legal question.” ‘Brother, when I am reviewing the *Dhamma* and the *Vinaya*, this is how I feel too: the *bhikkhus* of the East advocate *adhamma*; the *bhikkhus* of *Patheyya* advocate the *Dhamma*. Nevertheless, I do not reveal my view, with the hope, “May the *Samgha* agree upon selecting me to address this legal question.”

Then the *Samgha*, desiring it decide that legal question, assembled. When that legal question was being decided, there were endless speeches. The meaning of not one single speech was clear. Then the Venerable *Revata* informed the *Samgha*, ‘Venerable Sirs, may the *Samgha* listen to me. When this legal question was being decided by us there were endless speeches. The meaning of not one single speech was clear. If the time is suitable for the *Samgha*, let the *Samgha* settle this legal question by means of a select committee.’ He selected four *bhikkhus* from the East and four *bhikkhus* from *Patheyya*. From among the *bhikkhus* of the East, the Venerable *Sabbkami*, the Venerable *Salha*, the Venerable *Khujjasobhita*, and the Venerable

*Vasabhagamika* were selected. From the *bhikkhus* of *Patheyya*, the Venerable *Revata*, the Venerable *Sambhuta*, the wearer of a hempen robe, the Venerable *Yasa*, the son of *Kakandaka*, and the Venerable *Sumana* were selected.

Then the Venerable *Revata* informed the *Samgha*, ‘Venerable Sirs, may the *Samgha* listen to me. When this legal question was being decided by us, there were endless speeches. The meaning of not one single speech was clear. If the time is suitable for the *Samgha*, may the *Samgha* agree upon selecting four *bhikkhus* from the East and four *bhikkhus* from *Patheyya* to settle this legal question by means of a select committee. This is the resolution. May the *Samgha* listen to me. This legal question ... by us .... is clear. The *Samgha* agrees ... to settle this legal question by means of a select committee. Whomever finds the agreement of selecting four *bhikkhus* from the East and four *bhikkhus* from *Patheyya* to settle this legal question by means of a select committee to be acceptable should observe silence. Whomever finds it not acceptable should speak. Four *bhikkhus* from the East and four *bhikkhus* from *Patheyya* have been agreed upon by the *Samgha* to settle this legal question by means of a select committee. It is agreeable ... I hold.’

At that time a *bhikkhu* of ten year’s standing named *Ajita* was the recite of *Patimokkha* for the *Samgha*. The *Samgha* selected *Ajita* to be the arranger of the seats for the elders. Then this idea occurred to the elder *bhikkhus*, ‘Where should we settle this legal question?’ Then this idea occurred to the elder *bhikkhus*, ‘*Valika* monastery is nice, with little noise and little disturbance. May we settle this legal question in *Valikamonastery*.’ Then the elders, desiring to settle this legal question, went to *Valika* monastery.

Then the Venerable *Revata* informed the *Samgha*, ‘Venerable Sir, may the *Samgha* listen to me. If the time is suitable for the *Samgha*, I will question the

*VenerableSabbakami on the Vinaya.*’ The Venerable *Sabbakami* informed the *Samgha*, ‘Brothers, may the *Samgha* listen to me. If the time is suitable for the *Samgha*, I will answer the questions asked by *Revata* on the *Vinaya*.

Then the Venerable *Revata* said this to the Venerable *Sabbakami*, ‘Venerable Sir, is salt inside a horn permissible?’ ‘Brother, what do you mean by salt inside a horn?’ ‘Is it permissible, Venerable Sir, to carry salt inside a horn thinking, “I will use it wherever salt is not available”?’ ‘Brother, it is not permissible.’ ‘Where was it rejected?’ ‘At *Savatthi*, in the *Suttavibhamga*.’ ‘Which offence is committed?’ ‘An offence of Expiation on using after storing.’ ‘Venerable Sirs, may the *Samgha* listen to me. This first point has been decided by the *Samgha*: “thus this point is against the *Dhamma*, against the *Vinaya*, deviating from the teacher’s instruction. I put down this first voting stick.”

‘Venerable Sir, is “two finger-breadths” permissible?’ ‘Brother, what do you mean by “two finger-breadths”?’ ‘Is it permissible, Venerable Sir, to have a meal at an improper time when the shadow has passed “two finger-breadths”?’ ‘Brother, it is not permissible.’ ‘Where was it rejected?’ ‘At *Rajagaha*, in the *Suttavidhamga*.’ ‘Which offence is committed?’ ‘An offence of Expiation on eating at an improper time.’ ‘Venerable Sirs, may the *Samgha* listen to me. This second point ... I put down this second voting stick.’

‘Venerable Sir, is inter-village permissible?’ ‘Brother, what do you mean by .... Brothere, it is not permissible.’ ‘Where was it rejected?’ ‘At *Savatthi*, in the *Suttavibhamga*.’ ‘Which offence is committed?’ ‘An offence of Expiation of eating what is not leftover.’ ‘Venerable Sirs, may the *Samgha* listen to me .... I put down this third voting stick.’

‘Venerable Sir, is residence permissible?’ ‘Brother, what do you mean by .... Brother, it is not permissible.’ ‘Where was it rejected?’ ‘At *Rajagaha*, in what is connected with Observance.’ ‘Which offence is committed?’ ‘An offence of Wrongdoing on going beyond the limit of the *Vinaya*.’ ‘Venerable Sirs, may the *Samgha* listen to me ... I put down this fourth voting stick.’

‘Venerable Sir, is ratification permissible?’ ‘Brother, what do you mean by .... Brother, it is not permissible.’ ‘Where was it rejected?’ ‘On the point of *Vinaya* on things concerning the bhikkhus of *Campa*.’ ‘Which offence is committed?’ ‘An offence of Wrongdoing on going beyond the limit of the *Vinaya*.’ ‘Venerable Sirs, may the *Samgha* listen to me .... I put down this fifth voting stick.’

‘Venerable Sir, is customary practice permissible?’ ‘Brother, what do you mean by .... Brother, some of the customary practices are permissible, others are not.’ ‘Venerable Sirs, may the *Samgha* listen to me.... I put down this sixth voting stick.’

‘Venerable Sir, is unchurned buttermilk permissible?’ ‘Brother, what do you mean by. Brother, it is not permissible.’ ‘Where was it rejected?’ ‘At *Savatthi*, in the *Suttavibhamga*.’ ‘Which offence is committed?’ ‘An offence of Expiation on eating what is not leftover.’ ‘Venerable Sirs, may the *Samgha* listen to me .... I put down this seventh voting stick.’

‘Venerable Sir, is drinking unfermented toddy permissible?’ ‘Brother, what do you mean by.... Brother, it is not permissible.’ ‘Where was it rejected?’ ‘At *Kosambi*, in the *Suttavibhamga*.’ ‘Which offence is committed?’ ‘An offence of Expiation of drinking fermented toddy and spirits.’ ‘Venerable Sirs, may the *Samgha* listen to me.... I put down the eighth voting stick.’

‘Venerable Sir, is a sitting mat of unlimited size permissible?’ ‘Brother, it is not permissible.’ ‘Where was it rejected?’ ‘At *Savatthi*, in the *Suttavibhamga*.’ ‘Which

offence is committed?’ ‘An offence of Expiation on cutting down.’ ‘Venerable Sirs, may the Samgha listen to me.... I put down this ninth voting stick.’

‘Venerable Sir, are gold and silver permissible?’ ‘Brother, they are not permissible.’ ‘Where were they rejected?’ ‘At Rajagaha, in the Suttavibhamga.’ ‘Which offence is committed?’ ‘An offence of Expiation of accepting gold and silver.’ ‘Venerable Sirs, may the Samgha listen to me .... I put down this tenth voting stick.’

‘Venerable Sirs, may the *Samgha* listen to me. These ten points have been decided by the *Samgha*. These are thus against the *Dhamma*, against the *Vinaya* and deviate from the Teacher’s instruction. Brother, this legal question is concluded, settled and well settled. Nevertheless, you should question me, brother, in the midst of the *Samgha* in order to convince those *bhikkhus*.’ Then the Venerable *Revata* questioned the Venerable *Sabbakami* in the midst of the *Samgha*. The Venerable *Sabbakami*, being questioned, answered.

There were seven hundred *bhikkhus*, no more and no less, in this recitation of the *Vinaya*. Therefore, this recitation of the *Vinaya* is called ‘The Assembly of the Seven Hundred.’ The twelfth section on ‘The Assembly of the Seven Hundred’ has come to an end.

In this section there are twenty-five items. This is its summary; ten points, having filled, formal act, entered with a messenger, the four, on gold again, *Kosambi*, *bhikkhus* of Pava, the way to *Soreyya*, *Samkassa*, *Kannakuja*, *Udumbara*, and *Sahajati*, called upon, heard, whom should we, bowls, went in a boat upstream, two arahants and *udamassa* Darukam, the *Samgha* and *Vesali*, friendliness, the Samgha, the select committee.

### 3.3 The Mahasamghika Vinaya<sup>8</sup>

After the, the elder bhiksus were living in the *ValukaSamgharama* in *Vaisali*. At that time the bhiksus begged from the donors, lamenting like this, ‘Sirs, when the World-honoured One was alive, we were given early and late meals, clothing and other requisites. After the World-honoured One’s *parinivana*, we have become orphans. Who will provide for us? You could donate money and other requisites to the Samgha.’ They begged, lamenting like this. People then gave them one *kahapana*,<sup>9</sup> two *karsapanas*, up to ten *karsapanas*. On *Uposatha* day the money so collected was put into a basin and, measured out by means of a small bowl, distributed to the *bhiksus* each in his turn.

At that time *Yasa*, the *Vinaya* master, came to *Vaisali* for the first time and was in turn offered a share. He asked, ‘What is this?’ They answered, ‘The *karsapanas* given to you are medical expenses.’ *Yasa* said, ‘Pass.’ They asked, ‘Why do you say “Pass” to the offering?’ *Yasa* answered, ‘No legal.’ The *bhiksus* said, ‘By saying this is not legal, you insult the *Samgha*. We should perform a legal act here to suspend you.’ So they performed the legal act of Suspension against him.

At that time the Venerable *Dasabala* was living in *Mathura*. *Yasa* went to see him and said, ‘Elder, the act of suspension was performed against me and I was forced to comply.’ The elder asked, ‘Why were you accused?’ He answered, explaining the reason. The elder said, ‘You were accused for no reason. Elder, I am sharing with you *Dharma* and the material requisites.’ Upon hearing these words, *Yasa* said, with you the *Dharma* and the material requisites.’ Upon hearing these words, *Yasa* said, ‘Elder, we should recite the *Vinaya Pitaka* again. We should not

---

8. The Chinese text was taken from *Da-cang-jing*, Vol.22, scroll 33p.493

9. A coin has a value approximately.

allow the Buddha's *Dharma* to be destroyed.' The elder asked, 'Where do you want to recite it?' *Yasa* answered, 'At the place where the matter arose.'

At that time, *Mathura*, *Samkasya*, Jie-nao-qi (Kanyakubja?), Sravasti and Shazhi (Sahajati?) were in the central region, where the assembly of the seven hundred *bhiksus* was held. Some of these *bhiksus* had memorized one section of the *Vinaya* or two sections of the *Vinaya*. They had either been instructed personally by the World-honoured One or by his disciples. At that time there were ordinary *bhiksus*, trainees, non-trainees, those with three-fold knowledge, those with the six special knowledges, and those with power and liberation in the assembly of the seven hundred *bhiksus* held in the *Valukasamgharama* in *Vaisali* where beddings were prepared.

At that time, *Mahakasyapa Sthavira*,<sup>10</sup> *Upali Sthavira* and the Venerable *Ananda* had entered into *parinirvana*. At that time the Venerable *Yasa* was the *samghasthavira*. He asked, 'Who should recite the *Vinaya Pitaka*?' The Venerable *Dasabala* should recite it.' *Dasabala* said, 'Elder, there are other elder *bhiksus* who should recite it.' The *bhikus* said, 'Although there are other *sthaviras*, yet the World-honoured One remarked that the elder's master achieved fourteen *dharma*s and was the foremost in holding the *Vinaya*. You, having been taught personally by him, should recite.' Then *Dasabala* said, 'If I am asked to recite, you should agree if what I say is in accordance with the *Dharma*, and you must stop me if what I say is contrary to the *Dharma*. Don't hesitate out of respect for me. Whether my recitation is correct or not, please let me know.' They all agreed.

Then the Venerable *Dasabala* thought, 'Now, how should I recite the *Vinaya Pitaka*? There are five basic rules. If they are in accordance with the *Dharma* and the *Vinaya* you should agree; if they are not in accordance with the *Dharma*, you must

---

10. The Chinese text gives Da-tou-lu.

stop me. What are the five? The first, the rules on Restrictions ... the rules on Customs.’ He said thus, ‘Elders, there are nine categories of *Dharma*. What are the nine? The four Defeats ... the *Dharma* of Legal Procedures. The World-honoured One made the rules for so and so and in such and such a place. I heard from my master that the rules were made in this was. Was it so?’ they all said, ‘It was so. It was so.’

Five things have been recorded in the *Vinaya* and explained in detail therein .... ‘Elders, it was stated that those who need bowls should ask for bowls; those should ask for robes; those who need medicine should ask for medicine. They should not find ways and means to ask for gold, silver and money.’ So the elders should train themselves accordingly. This is called the Assembly of the Seven Hundred for the Recitation of the *Vinaya Pitaka*.

### **3.4 The Sarvastivada Vinaya<sup>11</sup>**

One hundred and ten years after the Buddha’s *parinirvana*, ten points came up in *Vaisali*. These ten points were *adharmā*, *akusala*, and deviated widely from the Buddha’s teaching. They neither agreed with the Sutra nor the *Vinaya* and damaged the image of the *Dharma*. The bhiksus of *Vaisali* used these ten points, practiced them and said that they were legal. They upheld them thus. What are these ten points?

1. Salt was legal.
2. Fingers were legal.
3. Nearby villages were legal.
4. Mixing raw things was legal.
5. Asking for ratification was legal.

---

11. The Chinese text was taken from the *Shi-song-lu*, scroll 60-61, in *Da-cang-jing*, vol.23. p.450.

6. Seeking approval for illegal performance was legal.
7. Making unfermented drinks in the residence was legal.
8. Habitual practices were legal.
9. Not having a boundary to the sitting mat was legal.
10. Gold, silver and jewels were legal.

The bhiksus of *Vaisali*, taking a big golden bowl from *Kosala*, came out of *Kosala*, entered *Vaisali* and begged for money from house to house. Whatever money the people gave was deposited in the bowl, be it ten thousand or one thousand or five hundred or fifty or even one coin.

At that time the Elder *Yasa*, the son of *Kakandaka*, lived in *Vaisali*. He had attained threefold knowledge and memorized the *Tripitaka: Sutra, Vinaya* and *Abhidharma*. He was a disciple of the Elder *Ananda*. *Yasa* heard about the ten points that had arisen in *Vaisali*. These ten points were *adharmā, akusala*, and deviated widely from the Buddha's teaching. They neither agreed with the *Sutra* nor the *Vinaya* and damaged the image of the *Dharma*. The *bhiksus* of *Vaisali* used these ten points, practiced them and said that they were legal. They upheld them thus. What are these ten points? Salt was legal.... Gold, silver and jewels were legal. The *bhiksus* of *Vaisali*, taking a big golden bowl from *Kosala*, came out of *Kosala*, entered *Vaisali* and begged for money from house to house. Whatever money the people gave was deposited in the bowl, be it ten thousand or one thousand or five hundred or fifty or even one coin.

After the Elder *Yasa* heard about this, he knew that these points were not in accordance with the *Dharma*. He sent a messenger to *Vaisali*, to the place where the lay people were and said to them, 'Sramanas, the sons of the Sakyan, should neither beg for gold, silver or jewels nor keep them. The Buddha, for various reason, gave a

teaching to the village headman *Manicuda*. The Buddha said, “Bhiksus, from today onward, if you need firewood, beg for firewood; if you need grass, beg for grass; if you need a carriage, borrow a carriage; if you need workmen, borrow workmen.” In the teaching, the Buddha neither allowed sramanas, the sons of the Sakyan, to beg for gold, silver or jewels nor keep them.’

The *bhiksus* of Vaisali heard that Yasa had sent a messenger to the place where the lay people were who said to them, ‘Sramanas, the sons of the Sakyan, should neither beg for gold, silver or jewels nor keep them. The Buddha, for various reasons, gave a teaching to the village headman *Manicuda*. The Buddha said , “*Bhiksas*, from today onward, if you need firewood, beg for firewood; if you need grass, beg for grass; if you need a carriage borrow a carriage; if you need workmen, borrow workmen.” In the teaching, the Buddha neither allowed sramanas, the sons of the Sakyan, to beg for gold, silver or jewels nor keep them.’

Hearing this, the bhiksus of Vaisali assembled and decided that all the gold, silver and jewels should be divided among themselves. There were some bhiksus who took away their own shares. Some of them asked novices and lay people to take away their shares. Some of them put their shares on the bed to be taken away. Some of them put their shares in their shoes and took them away. Some of them wrapped their shares in their robes and took them away. They sent one share of the distribution to Yasa by a messenger. Yasa thereupon returned the share to the messenger, saying, ‘This is an illegal thing. Why do you ask me to take it? Sramanas, the sons of the Sakyan, should not take this illegal thing. For various reasons the Buddha gave a teaching saying, “Bhiksus, from today onward if you need firewood and grass, you should beg for them; if you need carriages and workmen, you should borrow them. You are not allowed to keep gold silver or jewels.”’

The bhiksus of *Vaisali* thought to themselves, ‘Yasa exposed our offence to the lay people. We should perform a legal act of Humility on Yasa, ordering him to apologize to the lay people of *Vaisali*.’ Having reflected thus, the *bhiksus* gathered together and decided to perform the legal act of *Jumility*, ordering Yasa to apologize to the lay people of *Vaisali*. *Yasa* heard that *bhiksus* of *Vaisali* had decided to perform the legal act of Humility, ordering him to apologize to the lay people of *Vaisali*. Hearing this, he reflected thus, k ‘When I apologize to the lay people, I should speak the Dharma so as to give the lay people the word of faith. “Buddha, for various reasons, gave a teaching to the vantage headman *Manicuda* .... Neither allowed sramanas, the sons of the Sakyan, to beg for gold, silver or jewels nor keep them.” ’

The next day at mealtime, *Yasa*, having put on his robe and taking his alms bowl, entered *Vaisali* to beg for food. After the meal, he went to the place where the *Vaisali* people were and made an apology. He spoke the *Dharma* in everything he said, so as to give the lay people the word of faith. He said, ‘The Buddha, for various reasons, said to *Manicuda*, “Bhiksus, if you need firewood and grass, you should beg for them; if you need carriages and workmen, you should borrow them. You should neither beg for gold, silver or jewels not keep them.”’ In this way the Elder *Yasa* spoke the *Dharma* in everything he said and the lay people gained faith and understood. They knew that the *sramanas*, the sons of the *Sakyan*, should neither beg for gold, silver or jewels nor keep them.

The *bhiksus* of *Vaisali* heard that Elder *Yasa* had apologized to the lay people of *Vaisali* and spoken the *Dharma* in everything he said so that the lay people had gained faith and understood. They knew that for various reasons the Bhddha said, ‘*Bhiksus*, if you need firewood and grass, you should beg for them; if you need carriages and workmen, you should borrow them. You should neither beg for gol,

silver or jewels nor keep them.’ Hearing this, they thought to themselves, ‘We should not allow Yasa to live among us. Now we should perform the legal act of Suspension.’ After reflecting thus, they assembled and performed the legal act of Suspension, prohibiting Yasa to live in *Vaisali*.

The Elder Yasa heard that the bhiksus of Vaisali had performed the legal act of Suspension, prohibiting him to live in Vaisali. So he went back to his room and returned his bedding. Taking his robe and his alms bowl, he left *Vaisali*. Having walked a short distance, he thought to himself, ‘I was able to escape from the *bhiksus* of *Vaisali*. These *bhiksus* keep gold, silver and jewels. They have many sensual desires, seek many wrong *dharmas* and have succeeded in doing so.’ *Yasa* lived in *Kosala* during the rains.

At that time the Elder *Sambhuta* lived under an *udumbara* tree, in the grove of A-po-da-luo in the samgharama of Seng-qie-zhe (Samkassa?) in Mathura. This *Sambhuta* had memorized the *tripitaka* and attained threefold knowledge. He was famous and a great arhant, and a disciple of the Elder Ananada. The Elder Yasa heard about the Elder *Sambhuta* how lived under an *udumbara* tree, in the grove of A-po-da-luo in the *samgharama* os Seng-qie-zhe in *Mathura*. This *Sambhuta* had memorized the *Tripitaka* and attained threefold knowledge. He was famous and a great arhant. Hearing this, he sent a messenger to see *Sambhuta* saying, ‘Elder, do you know tdhat ten points came up in Vaisali? They are *adharmas*, *akusala* and deviate widely from the Buddha’s teaching. They neither agree with the *Sutra* nor the *Vinaya* and damage the image of the Dharma. The bhiksus of Vaisali use these ten points, practice them and say that they are legal and uphold them. What are these ten points? First, salt is legal. Second, fingers are legal. Third, nearby villages are legal. Forth, mixing raw things is legal. Fifth, asking for ratification is legal. Sixth, seeking

approval for illegal performance is legal. Seventh, making unfermented drinks in the residence is legal. Eighth, habitual practices are legal. Ninth, not adding an edge to the sitting mat is legal, and tenth, gold, silver and jewels are legal. The *bhiksus* of *Vaisali*, taking a big golden bowl of *Kosala*, came out of *Kosala*, went into *Vaisali* and begged for money from house. Whatever money the people gave was deposited in the bowl, be it ten thousand or one thousand or five hundred or fifty or even one coin. The elder *bhiksus* should assemble to destroy these wrong dharmas. If they are not extinguished now, they will surely spread.’ The Elder Sambhuta having heard this, immediately sent a messenger to *Avanti*, *Daksina*, and many other countries saying, ‘Do you know that ten points came up in *Vaisali*? What are these ten points? First, salt is legal ... and tenth, gold, silver and jewels are legal. All these are wrong *dharmas*. If they are not extinguished now, they will surely spread.’ At that time the *bhiksus* of *Avanti* and *Daksina* gathered in *Vaisali*.

At that time Elder *Ravata* lived in *Sa-han-ruo* (*Soreyya*?). He had memorized the Tripitaka and attained threefold knowledge. He was famous, a great arhant practicing the four immeasurable and a disciple of the Elder Ananda. The Elder *Ananda*. The Elder *Sambhuta* heard that Elder *Ravata*, who lived in *Sa-han-ruo*, had memorized the Tripitaka and attained threefold knowledge. He was famous and a great arhant practicing the four immeasurable. Hearing this, the Elder *Sambhuta* thought to himself, ‘Whichever elder we selected as the *sthavira* would be requested to lead the *bhikusus*.’ After reflecting thus, he said, ‘We should request the Elder *Revata* to speak about the true *Dharma* to the *bhiksus*.’ At that time the Elder *Sambhuta* assembled the *bhiksus* and asked the lay people to offer four requisites. After that he took a boat to *Sa-han-ruo* and made his way to the dwelling place of *Revata*. When the Elder *Revata* saw *Sambhuta* coming from a distance, he went to

greet him kindly and asked him whether he was tired from his journey. He carried *Sambhuta's* robe and alms bowl and showed him the lodging. He said to *Sambhuta* and the bhiksus, 'These are your beds and beddings. As to the *sthavira*, we are preparing the things for this bath such as soap, clay, sesame oil and firewood.' After bathing, it was night. *Revata* shared the same room with *Sambhuta*. All through the night they sat in meditation until dawn. Then the Elder *Revata* said to *Sambhuta*, 'I have completed my dharma offering to the guest. You should follow the dharma of renunciation.' The Elder *Sambhuta*, hearing these words, put on his robe and took his alms bowl at mealtime. Then he went into Sa-han-ruo to beg for food. Having begged and eaten, he returned to the place of *Revata* and made obeisance with his head and face at his feet.

At that time the Elder *Sambhuta* thought, 'This great *dharma* master *Revata* will perhaps query me on *Abhidharma*. I may not be able to offer an explanation at once. Now I should first of all ask *Revata* about the ten points of the Vaisali bhiksus.' He therefore asked with folded palms, "Salt is legal." Is this acceptable or not?' *Revata* asked *Sambhuta* in return, 'What do you mean by "salt is legal"?' *Sambhuta* said, 'Venerable *Revata*, the bhiksus of Vaisali put the leftover salt at their dwelling place into the legal food and eat it. They say that this is legal. I ask you Elder, is this actually legal or not?' *Revata* answered, 'Not legal. It should not be eaten.' *Sambhuta* asked, 'If they eat it, what offence would they commit?' *Revata* answered, 'They would commit an offence of Wrongdoing.' *Sambhuta* then asked, 'Where did the Buddha make the rule prohibiting this?' *Revata* answered, 'At Sravasti. The Rule is recorded in the Chapter on medicine of the *Vinaya*.'

*Sambhuta* asked, 'Venerable *Revata*, "Two fingers are legal." Is this acceptable or not?' *Revata* asked in return, 'What do you mean by "two fingers are

legal”?’ *Sambhuta* answered, ‘The bhiksus of Vaisali, getting up from their seats after having eaten, without following the rule of leftover food, use two fingers to scoop up food and eat it. They say that this is legal. I ask you, Elder, is this actually legal or not?’ *Revata* answered, ‘Not legal.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘What offence would they commit?’ *Revata* answered, ‘They would commit an offence of Expiation.’ *Sambhuta* then asked, ‘Where did the Buddha make the rule prohibiting this?’ *Revata* answered ‘In Vaisali. The Bhddha made the rule prohibiting the eating of leftover food.’

*Sambhuta* said, ‘Venerable *Revata*, “Mixing raw thigns is legal.” Is this actually legal or not?’ *Revata* asked in return, ‘What do you nean by “mixing raw things is legal”?’ *Sambhuta* answered, ‘The bhiksus of *Vaisali*, getting up from their seats after having eaten, mix together yoghurt and ghee and eat it without following the rule of eating leftover food. They say that this is legal. I ask you, Elder, is this actually legal or not?’ *Revata* answered, ‘Not legal.’ *Sambhuta* then asked, ‘What offence would they commit?’ *Revata* said, ‘They would commit and offence of Expiation.’ *Sambhuta* asked again, ‘Where did the Buddha make the rule prohibiting this?’ *Revata* answered, ‘In *Vaisali*. The Buddha made the rule prohibiting the eating of leftover food.’

*Sambhuta* asked, ‘Venerable *Revata*, “Asking for ratification is legal.” Is this actually legal or not?’ *Revata* asked in return, ‘What do you mean by “asking for ratification is legal”?’ *Sambhuta* answered, ‘the bhiksus of *Vaisali*, khaving performed a legal act separately at their dwelling place within the boundary, go to tkhe *Samgha* and announce that they have made a legal act at their dwelling place. They say that this is legal. Now I ask you, Elder, is this actually legal or not?’ *Revata* answered, ‘Not legall.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘What offence would they commit?’ *Revata* ansewered, ‘They would commit an offence of Wrongdoing.’ *Sambhuta* then asked,

‘Where did the Buddha make the rule?’ Revata answered, ‘In *Campa*, among the rules dealing with the practice of the *Vinaya*.’

*Sambhuta* said, ‘Venerable *Revata*, “seeking approval for illegal performance is legal.” Is this actually legal or not?’ *Revata* asked in return, ‘What do you mean by “seeking approval for illegal performance is legal”?’ *Sambhuta* answered, ‘The bhiksus of Vaisali, having performed an act illegally at their separate dwelling place, go to the Samgha and announce, “We have made a legal act at our separate dwelling place. We ask you bhiksus to approve it.” They say that seeking approval is legal. Now I ask you, Elder, is it actually legal or not?’ *Revata* answered, ‘Not legal.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘What offence would they commit?’ *Revata* answered, ‘They would commit an offence of Wrongdoing.’ *Sambhuta* then asked, ‘Where did the Buddha make the rule?’ *Revata* answered, ‘In *Campa*, among the rules dealing with the practice of the *Vinaya*.’

*Sambhuta* said, ‘Venerable *Revata*, “Making unfermented drinks in the residence is legal.” Is this actually legal or not?’ *Revata* asked in return, ‘What do you mean by “making unfermented drinks in the residence is legal”?’ *Sambhuta* answered, ‘The bhiksus of Vaisali say, “We make unfermented drinks in our residence and drink it.” They say that making unfermented drinks in their residence is legal. Is this actually legal or not?’ *Revata* answered, ‘Not legal.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘What offence would they commit?’ *Revata* answered, ‘They would commit an offence of Expiation.’ *Sambhuta* then asked, ‘Where did the Buddha make the rule?’ *Revata* answered, ‘In Ba-tuo-luo-po-di (Bhaddavatika?) of Zhi-po-di) (Ceti?) on account of the Elder Po-qie-tuo (Sagata?), the arhant, prohibiting the drinking of intoxicants.’

*Sambhuta* asked, ‘Venerable *Revata*, “Habitual practices are legal.” Is this actually legal or not?’ *Revata* answered, ‘Some practices are legal irrespective of the

fact that they comply or not with habitual practices. Some practices are not legal irrespective of the fact that they comply or not with habitual practices.’ Sambhuta asked, ‘What are the practices that are not legal irrespective of the fact that they comply or not with habitual practices?’ Revata answered, ‘The offence of killing. It is not legal irrespective of the fact that it complies or not with habitual practices. Stealing, adultery, telling lies, slandering, harsh words, frivolous talk, covetousness, anger and perverted views – these are illegal practices irrespective of the fact that they comply or not with habitual practices. This is what I mean by “Some practices are not legal irrespective of the fact that they comply or not with habitual practices.”’

*Sambhuta* asked, ‘What are the practices that are legal irrespective of the fact that they comply or not with habitual practices?’ Revata answered, ‘No killing, no stealing, no adultery, no telling lies, no slandering, no harsh words, no frivolous talk, no covetousness, no anger and no perverted views – these are legal practices irrespective of the fact that they comply or not with habitual practices.’

*Sambhuta* asked, ‘Venerable *Revata*, “Not having a boundary to the sitting mat is legal.” Is this actually legal or not?’ *Revata* asked in return, ‘What do you mean by “not having a boundary to the sitting mat is legal”?’ *Sambhuta* answered, ‘The *bhiksus* of *Vaisali* make sitting mats without a boundary and say that this is legal. Is this legal or not?’ *Revata* answered, ‘Not legal.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘What offence would they commit?’ *Revata* answered, ‘They would commit an offence of Expiation.’ *Sambhuta* asked again, ‘Where did the Buddha make the rule?’ *Revata* answered, ‘In *Sravasti*. The Buddha made it on account of the Elder *Kalodayin*, allowing him to add one span to the sitting mat.’

*Sambhuta* asked, ‘Venerable *Revata*, “Gold, silver and jewels are legal.” Is this actually legal or not?’ *Revata* asked in return, ‘What do you mean by “Gold,

silver and jewels are legal”?’ *Sambhuta* answered, ‘The bhiksus of *Vaisali* take gold, silver and jewels and say that this is legal. Is this actually legal or not?’ *Revata* answered, ‘Not legal.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘What offence would they commit?’ *Revata* answered, ‘They would commit an offence of Expiation.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘Where did the Buddha make the rule?’ *Revata* answered, ‘In *Vaisali*. The Buddha made the rule on account of *Ba-nan-tuo* (*upananda*?), prohibiting the taking of gold, silver and jewels.’ *Sambhuta* said, ‘Very well, Venerable *Revata*, you have explained very well the ten points. What should the bhiksus here do?’ *Revata* answered, ‘They should put their efforts together, using suitable mean, to extinguish these wrong *dharmas*.’

At that time the Elder *Salha* was living in *Vaisali*. He had memorized the *Tripitaka* and attained threefold knowledge. He was famous, a great arhant, and a disciple of the Elder *Ananda*. He thought thus, ‘What I have learnt all came from my master’s mouth. I should examine the guest bhiksus and the *Vaisalibhiksus* separately.’ Having reflected thus, he put on his robe, and taking his alms bowl, entered the city to beg for food. Having eaten, he walked towards the *Sala* grove. After entering the grove, he spread out his sitting mat under a tree, sat there and examined the *Dharma* to find sitting mat under a tree, sat there and examined the *Dhama* to find out who were right, the *Vaisali bhiksus* or the guest *bhiksus*. After reviewing thus, he found that the *Vaisali bhiksus* were not right, and the guest bhiksus of *Avantidaksinapatha* were right. There was a deity in the *Sala* grove, who with folded palms said to *Salha*, ‘That’s right, that’s right, Elder. The *Vaisalibhiksus* are not the speakers of the *Dharma*. The guest bhiksus are. Venerable *Salha*, what do you intend to do?’ *Salha* answered, ‘I should make an effort, using suitable means, to extinguish these wrong *dharmas*.’

The *bhiksus* of Vaisali heard that the guest *bhiksus* of *Avantidaksinapatha* put their efforts together to extinguish these dharmas by using suitable means. Hearing this, they thought thus, ‘Who would be the best *sthavira* to be invited, who could attract many *bhiksus* to come? We should invite the Venerable *revata* to be the *sthavira*, and on account of him many *bhiksus* would gather here.’ Having reflected thus, the *bhiksus* of *Vaisali* put on their robes and, taking their alms bowls, went to Sa-han-ruo.

After arriving there, they went to see the Elder *Revata* and found that he was on the side of the *bhiksus* of *Avantidaksinapatha*. They thought thus, ‘The Elder *Revata* has taken their side.’ They thought again, ‘We must use gentle words to ask the disciples of the *sthavira* to plead for us. The *sthavira* would listen to the words of his disciples.’ The *bhiksus* of Vaisali went to the disciples of the *sthavira* and gave them robes, bowls, keys, leather shoes and three kinds of medicine. Presented with these gifts, the disciples took notice and asked, ‘These are offerings for the *sthavira*. Why are you giving them to us?’ The *Vaisalibhiksus* answered, ‘Tell your teacher, “The *bhiksus* of *Vaisali* are speakers of the Dharma and the *bhiksus* of *Avantidaksinapatha* are not. All the Buddhas appear in the east. Venerable Elder, don’t dispute with the *bhiksus* of Vaisali, which is in the central region.”’ The *sthavira*’s disciples answered, ‘This is a minor matter, which we could handle. You should receive a favour from us.’ The disciples immediately went to the *Sthavira Revata* and said to him, ‘The *bhiksus* of *Avantidaksinapatha* are neither the speakers of the *Dharma* nor the speakers of *Kusala*. All the Buddhas appear in the east. Venerable Elder, do not dispute with the *bhiksus* of *Vaisali*, which is in the central region.’ *Revata* said to his disciples, ‘You fools, I know and see that the *bhiksus* of *Vaisali* are *adharmas* and *akusala*, and the *bhiksus* of *Avantidaksinapatha* act according to the

*Dharma* and are *Kusala* speakers. You fools, why do you ask me to speak for what is *adharma*, what is *akusala* and what is not in accordance with the Buddha's word? Go away and don't come back. I won't see you until I die.'

Then the Elder *Revata* said to *Sambhuta*, 'This *dharma* could be extinguished here, but there may be some unwise people who would say that this *dharma* could not be extinguished here. We should go to the place where it originated and extinguish it there.'

At that time the Elder *Revata*, *Sambhuta* and the *bhiksus* of *Avantidaksinapatha*, whoever were willing to go, went to Sa-han-ruo. Taking their robes and alms bowls, they made their way towards Vaisali and gradually reached Vaisali.

The *bhiksus* of Vaisali, too, taking their robes and alms bowls, made their way toward *Vaisali* and gradually reached there. At that time the eldest *Sthavira* Sa-po-qie-luo-po-li-po-luo (Sabbakami?) was living in *Vaisali*. He had memorized the Tripitaka and attained threefold knowledge. He was famous, a great arhant practicing emptiness *Samadhi* and a disciple of the Elder *Ananda*. The Elder *Revata* arrived at the dwelling place of the *Sthavira* Sa-po-qie-luo-po-li-luo.

The *sthavira*, seeing *Revata* coming from a distance, was very happy and greeted him, 'Elder, my dear. It is good that you have come, my dear. I have not seen you for a long time, my dear.' When he came in, they sat together. There was a *dharma* among the *sthaviras* that if a guest *bhiksu* came, they would spend the night in the same place. So Sa-po-qie-luo-po-li-po-luo told the *bhiksu* in charge of lodging, 'Prepare the bedding for the guest *bhiksu*.' The *bhiksu* thought thus, 'Since the *sthavira* gave me an order to prepare the bedding for the guest *bhiksu*, he must be sleeping with the guest *bhiksu* in the same room.' Having received the order, he went

to the *sthavira*'s room and prepared the bedding for the guest *bhikṣu*. After executing his duty, he reported to the *sthavira*, saying, 'I have finished preparing the bedding for the guest *bhikṣu*. Let the elder see whether it is the suitable time.

Then the *sthavira* rose up from his seat and went to his room, spread the sitting mat at the place where he used to sit and sat with legs crossed. The Elder *Revata* too went to the *sthavira*'s room. Upon entering, he saluted the *sthavira*, making obeisance with his head and face at the *sthavira*'s feet, spread his sitting mat upon his bedding and sat down with legs crossed. The *Sthavira* Sa-po-qie-luo-po-li-luo- thought thus, 'The Elder *Revata* is a guest. He is extremely tired after travelling. If the guest *bhikṣu* is not lying down, I should not lie down first. Only after he lies down should I do so.' The Elder *Revata* also thought, 'Now that the most senior *sthavira* in the *Samgha* is not lying down. I should not lie down. Only after he lies down should I do so.' They both sat in meditation all through the night. In the latter part of the night the most senior *sthavira* asked the Elder *Revata*, 'Why didn't you lie down?' *Revata* answered, 'I thought to myself that the most senior *sthavira* in the *Samgha* was not lying down, therefore I should not lie down. Only after you lay down should I do so.' The *sthavira* asked *Revata*, 'What kind of the time I practiced [immeasurable] loving-kindness *samadhi*.' The *sthavira* said, 'You, Elder, my dear. This is a minor *Samadhi*. During the night you practiced a minor *Samadhi*.' *Revata* answered, 'This is indeed a minor *Samadhi*. I, as an arhant, am rid of all defilements. For a long time, my mind has been full of joy. That's why I often practice this *Samadhi*.' *Revata* asked, 'Elder, why didn't you lie down?' The *sthavira* answered, 'I also thought that you were extremely tired after travelling and yet you did not lie down, so therefore I should not lie down. Only after you lay down should I do so.' *Revata* asked, 'What kind of *Samadhi* did you enter into this night?' The *sthavira*

answered, ‘Most of the time I practiced emptiness *Samadhi*.’ *Samadhi* during the night.’ The *sthavira* replied, ‘This is indeed a higher *Samadhi*. I, as an arhant, am rid of all defilements. For a long time my mind has been full of joy. That’s why I often practice this *Samadhi*.’ These two had both attained arhanthood, and they explained what they were practicing.

The Elder *Sambhuta*, when the night had passed, came to the most senior *sthavira*, saluted him, making obeisance with his head and face at the *sthavira*’s feet and sat down to one side. The *sthavira* asked *Sambhuta*. ‘*Sambhuta*, how do you intend to proceed to extinguish this *dharma*?’ *Sambhuta* answered, ‘Elder, as the most senior in the *Samgha*, you ought to know how to proceed to extinguish this *dharma*.’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘*Sambhuta*, after taking your meal today, assemble the *Samgha*.’ Having received the order of the *sthavira*, *Sambhuta* put on his robe and, taking his alms bowl, entered *Vaisali* to beg for food at mealtime. After taking his meal, he gathered the *Samgha* at one place.

At that time in *Vaisali*, there was an assembly of seven hundred, less one *bhiksu*, for the extinction of the wrong *dharma* which was *adharmā*, *akusala* and not the Buddha’s word. At that time there was an elder named Ji-she-su-mi-luo (*Kubja Sobhita*?), who was living in Po-luo-li-fu (*Patalip*). He had memorized the *Tripitaka* and attained threefold knowledge. He was famous, a great arhant, liked to use his divine eye and was a disciple of the Eldere *Ananda*. Using his divine eye, he saw from a distance that there was an assembly of seven hundred, less one *bhiksu*, in *Vaisali* for the extinction of this wrong *dharma* which was *adharmā*, *akusala* and not the Buddha’s word. He entered into *Samadhi* and disappeared from Po-luo-li-fu as swiftly as a strong man folding and stretching out his arm. Then he appeared at the door of the

dwelling place of the *VaisaliSamgha* and stood there. Ji-she-su-mi-luo came out of *Samadhi* and uttered these verses to get the door open:

‘In Po-luo-li-fu,  
a bhiksu among the old bhiksus,  
who is practicing *Vinaya*, learned  
and having cut off all doubts,  
has come from that country  
and is standing at this door.  
In Po-luo-li-fu,  
a bhiksu among the old bhiksus,  
who is practicing *Vinaya*, learned  
and having tamed the six sense faculties,  
has come from that country  
and is standing at this door.  
In Po-luo-li-fu,  
a bhiksu among the old *bhiksus*,  
who is practicing *Vinaya*, learned  
Ji-she-su-mi-luo,  
has come from that country  
and is standing at this door.

When the Elder Ji-she-su-mi-luo joined the *Samgha*, the number seven hundred was complete. Then the Elder *Sambhuta* thought thus, ‘If we were to extinguish this wrong *dharma* in the *Samgha*, there may be some unwise *bhiksus* who would say that this *dharma* should not be extinguished this way and this *dharma* should be extinguished that way. I will perform a legal act in the *Samgha*, so that all the *bhiksus* will consent to the extinction of this *dharma*.’ The Elder *Sambhuta* announced in the *Samgha*, ‘Venereable *Samgha*, listen. We are going to extinguish this wrong *dharma* in the *Samgha*. There may be some unwise *bhiksus* who would say that this *dharma* should not be extinguished this way and this *dharma* should be extinguished that way. I will now perform a legal act in the *Samgha* and may all the *bhiksus* give consent to extinguishing this *dharma*.’ He announced thus. At that time *Sambhuta* announced the names of four *bhiksus* from each side in the *Samgha*: four guest *bhiksus* from *Avantidaksinapatha* and four old *bhiksus* from the east. Who were the four guest *bhiksus* from *Avantidaksinapatha*? First, the *Sthavira* Sa-po-qie-luo-po-

li-po-luo; second, *Salha*; third, *Yasa*; and fourth, Ji-she-su-mi-luo. These were the four guest *bhiksus*. Who were the four old *bhiksus* from the east? First, the *Sthavira Revata*; second, the Elder *Sambhuta*; third, Wiu-mo-na (Sumana?); and fourth, Sa-po-mo-qie-luo-mo (Vasabhagamika?). these were the four old *bhiksus* from the east.

The Elder *Sambhuta* announced in the *Samgha*, ‘Venerable *Sambhuta*, listen. I announce the names of these eight: the four guest *bhiksus* from *Avantidaksinapatha* and the four old *bhiksus* from the east. If the time is suitable, give your consent to selecting these eight to act as arbitrators on the extinction of the wrong dharma in the *Samgha*.’ He announced thus.

At that time in the *Samgha* there was the Elder A-shi-tuo who had been ordained for five years and who excelled in reciting and memorizing the *Vinaya Pitaka*. The Elder *Sambhuta* reflected thus, ‘In this *Samgha* there is A-shi-tuo *bhiksu* who has been ordained for five years and who excels in reciting and memorizing the *Vinaya Pitaka*. If we order the *bhiku* A-shi-tuo to follow the *sthaviras* when they act as arbitrators on extinguishing the wrong dharma in the *Samgha*, the *sthaviras* would not be unhappy. We will send A-shi-tuo to follow the *sthaviras* when they act as arbitrators and prepare the seats for them in the *Sala* grove.’ Having reflected thus. *Sambhuta* announced in the *Samgha*. ‘Venerable *Samgha*, listen. This *bhiksu* A-shi-tuo has been ordained for five years. He excels in reciting and memorizing the *Vinaya Pitaka* and has learnt to memorize the *Agamas*. If the time is suitable, give your consent to having this *bhiksu* A-shi-tuo follow the *sthaviras* and prepare the seats for them in the *Sala* grove.’ He announced thus. They performed the legal act with one motion and one legal pronouncement accordingly. The *bhiksus* consented to having the *bhiksu* A-shi-tuo follow the *sthaviras* when they would act as arbitrators

and prepare the seats for them in the *Sala* grove. The *Samgha*, by keeping silent, consented. The motion was carried.

Then the *bhikṣu* A-shi-tuo rose from his seat and went into the grove. Having prepared the seats for the *sthavira bhikṣus*, he returned to the assembly and reported to the *sthaviras*, ‘Venerable *Sthavras*, I have prepared the seats in the grove. *Sthaviras*, this is the time.’ The *sthaviras* rose from their seats and walked towards the grove where the seats had been prepared. They spread their sitting mats and sat with legs crossed. The Elder *Sambhuta* rose from his seat, baring his right arm, folded his palms and said to the *Sthavira* Sa-po-qie-luo-po-li-po-luo, ‘Venerable *Sthavira*, “Salt is legal.” Is this actually legal or not?’ The *sthavira* asked in return, ‘What do you mean by “salt is kept in their dwelling place into the legal food and eat it, and say that this is legal. Is this actually legal or not?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘Not legal, not legal.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘What offence would they commit?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘They would commit an offence of Wrongdoing asked, ‘Where did the Buddha make the rule?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘In Sravasti. The rule is recorded in the Chapter on Medicine of the *Vinaya*.’ After asking the *sthavira* Sa-po-qie-luo-po-li-po-luo, *Revata*, *Xiu-mo-na* and *Po-qi-qie-mi*. Thus, he asked all the *sthaviras*. Lastly, he asked A-shi-tuo, ‘Do you also understand likewise? Do you answer the same as the *sthaviras*?’ A-shi-tuo answered, ‘I also understand likewise. I answer the same as the *sthaviras*.’ A-shi-tuo also asked *Sambhuta*, ‘Elder, do you also understand likewise? Do you answer the same as the *sthaviras*?’ *Sambhuta* answered, ‘I also understand likewise. I answer the same as the *sthaviras*.’ Then the Elder *Sambhuta* announced in the *Samgha*, ‘Venerable *Samgha*, listen. We have now finished extinguishing the first of the ten points in the *Samgha* in accordance with the *dharma*, the *Kusala* and the Buddha’s teaching. Now in front of the *Samgha* we have extinguished this wrong

*dharma*. There is no bhikṣu who can speak of *adharmā* as *Dharma*, *Dharma* as *adharmā*, *akusala* as *Kusala* and *Kusala* as *akusala*. This is *adharmā*, *akusala* and not the Buddha's teaching. This *dharma* is not legal.' Having said these words, he put down the first stick for the extinction of the first wrong *dharma*.

*Sambhuta* asked the *Sthavira* Sa-po-qie-luo-po-li-po-luo, 'Venerable *Sthavira*, "Two fingers are legal." Is this actually legal or not?' The *sthavira* asked in return, 'What do you mean by "two fingers are legal"?' *Sambhuta* answered, 'The *bhikṣus* of *Vaisali*, getting up from their seats after having eaten, without following the rule of leftover food, use two fingers to scoop up food and eat it. They say that this is legal. Is this actually legal or not?' The *sthavira* answered, 'Not legal, not legal.' *Sambhuta* asked, 'What offence would they commit?' The *sthavira* answered, 'They would commit an offence of Expiation.' *Sambhuta* asked, 'Where did the Buddha make the rule?' The *sthavira* answered, 'In *Waisali*. The Buddha made the rule prohibiting the eating of leftover food.' After asking the *Sthavira* Sa-po-qie-luo-po-li-po-luo, *Sambhuta* then asked the *Sthavira* *Salha*, *Yasa*, *Ji-she-su-mi-luo*, *Revata*, *Xiu-mo-na* and *Po-qi-qie-mi*. thus he asked all the *sthaviras*. Lastly he asked A-shi-tuo, 'Do you also understand likewise? Do you answer the same as *thesthaviras*?' A-shi-tuo answered, 'I also understand likewise. I answer the same as the *sthaviras*.' A-shi-tuo also asked *Sambhuta*, 'Elder, do you also understand likewise? Do you answer the same as the *sthaviras*?' *Sambhuta* answered, 'I also understand likewise. I answer the same as the *sthaviras*.' Then the Elder *Sambhuta* announce in the *Samgha*, 'Venerable *Samgha*, listen. We have now finished extinguishing the third of the ten wrong *dharmas* in the *Samgha* in accordance with the *Dharma*, the *Kusala* and the Buddha's teaching. Now in front of the *Samgha* we have extinguished this wrong *dharma*. There is no *bhikṣu* who can speak of *adharmā* as *Dharma*, *Dharma* as *adharmā*,

*akusala* as *Kusala* and *Kusala* as *akusala*. This is *adharma*, *akusala* and not the Buddha's teaching. This *dharma* is not legal.' Having said these words, he put down the second stick for the extinction of the second wrong *dharma*.

*Sambhuta* asked the *Sthavira* Sa-po-qie-luo-po-li-po-luo, 'Venerable *Sthavira*, "Nearby villages are legal." Is this actually legal or not?' The elder asked in return, 'What do you mean by "nearby villages are legal"?' *Sambhuta* answered, 'The *bhiksus* of *Vaisali*, having obtained food from nearby villages, eat it without following the rule of eating leftover food. They say that this is legal. Is this actually legal or not?' The *sthavira* answered, 'Not legal, not legal.' *Sambhuta* asked, 'What offence would they commit?' The *sthavira* answered, 'They would commit an offence of Expiation.' *Sambhuta* asked, 'Where did the Buddha make the rule?' The *sthavira* answered, 'In *Waisali*. The Buddha made the rule prohibiting the eating of leftover food.' After asking the *Sthavira* Sa-po-qie-luo-po-li-po-luo, *Sambhuta* then asked the *Sthavira* *Salha*, *Yasa*, *Ji-she-su-mi-luo*, *Revata*, *Xiu-mo-na* and *Po-qi-qie-mi*. thus he asked all the *sthaviras*. Lastly he asked A-shi-tuo, 'Do you also understand likewise? Do you answer the same as the *sthaviras*?' A-shi-tuo- answered, 'I also understand likewise. I answer the same as the *sthaviras*.' A-shi-tuo- also asked *Sambhuta*, 'Elder, do you also understand likewise? Do you answer the same as the *sthaviras*?' *Sambhuta* answered, 'I also understand likewise. I answer the same as the *sthaviras*.' Then the Elder *Sambhuta* announce in the *Samgha*, 'Venerable *Samgha*, listen. We have now finished extinguishing the third of the ten wrong *dharmas* in the *Samgha* in accordance with the *Dharma*, the *Kusala* and the Buddha's teaching. Now in front of the *Samgha* we have extinguished this wrong *dharma*. There is no *bhiksu* who can speak of *adharma* as *Dharma*, *Dharma* as *adharma*, *akusala* as *Kusala* and *Kusala* as *akusala*. This is *adharma*, *akusala* and not the Buddha's teaching. This *dharma* is not

legal.' Having said these words, he put down the third stick for the extinction of the third wrong *dharma*.

*Sambhuta* asked the *Sthavira Sa-po-qie-luo-po-li-po-luo*, “‘Mixing raw things is legal.’ Venerable *Sthavira*, is this actually legal or not?’ The *sthavira* asked in return, ‘What do you mean by “mixing raw things is legal”?’ *Sambhuta* answered, ‘The *bhiksus* of *Vaisali*, getting up from their seats after having eaten, mix together yoghurt and ghee and eat it. They say that this is legal. Is this actually legal or not?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘Not legal.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘What offence would they commit?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘They would commit an offence of Expiation.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘Where did the Buddha make the rule?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘In *Waisali*. The Buddha made the rule prohibiting the eating of leftover food.’ After asking the *Sthavira Sa-po-qie-luo-po-li-po-luo*, *Sambhuta* then asked the *Sthavira Salha, Yasa, Ji-she-su-mi-luo, Revata, Xiu-mo-na* and *Po-qi-qie-mi*. thus he asked all the *sthaviras*. Lastly he asked *A-shi-tuo*, 'Do you also understand likewise? Do you answer the same as the *sthaviras*?' *A-shi-tuo*- answered, 'I also understand likewise. I answer the same as the *sthaviras*.' *A-shi-tuo*- also asked *Sambhuta*, 'Elder, do you also understand likewise? Do you answer the same as the *sthaviras*?' *Sambhuta* answered, 'I also understand likewise. I answer the same as the *sthaviras*.' Then the Elder *Sambhuta* announce in the *Samgha*, 'Venerable *Samgha*, listen. We have now finished extinguishing the third of the ten wrong *dharmas* in the *Samgha* in accordance with the *Dharma*, the *Kusala* and the Buddha's teaching. Now in front of the *Samgha* we have extinguished this wrong *dharma*. There is no *bhiksu* who can speak of *adharmas* as *Dharma*, *Dharma* as *adharmas*, *akusala* as *Kusala* and *Kusala* as *akusala*. This is *adharmas*, *akusala* and not the Buddha's teaching. This *dharma* is not legal.' Having

said these words, he put down the fourth stick for the extinction of the fourth wrong *dharma*.

*Sambhuta* asked the *Sthavira Sa-po-qie-luo-po-li-po-luo*, ‘Venerable *Sthavira*, “Asking for ratification is legal.” is this actually legal or not?’ The *sthavira* asked in return, ‘What do you mean by “asking for ratification is legal”?’ *Sambhuta* answered, ‘The *bhiksus* of *Vaisali*, having performed a legal act separately at their dwelling place within the boundary, asked for ratification. They say that this is legal. Is this actually legal or not?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘Not legal.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘What offence would they commit?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘They would commit an offence of Wrongdoing.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘Where did the Buddha make the rule?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘In *Campa*, among the rules dealing with the practice of *Vinaya*.’ After asking all the *Sthavira*, *Sambhuta* asked A-shi-tuo- last, Do you also understand likewise? Do you answer the same as the *sthaviras*?’ A-shi-tuo- answered, ‘I also understand likewise. I answer the same as the *sthaviras*.’ A-shi-tuo- also asked *Sambhuta*, ‘Elder, do you also understand likewise? Do you answer the same as the *sthaviras*?’ A-shi-tuo answered, ‘I also understand likewise. I answer the same as the *sthaviras*.’ A-shi-tuo asked *Sambhuta* in turn, ‘Elder, do you also understand likewise? Do you answer the same as the *sthavira*?’ *Sambhuta* answered, ‘I also understand likewise. I answer the same as the *sthaviras*.’ *Sambhuta* announce in the *Samgha*, ‘Venerable *Samgha*, listen. We have now finished extinguishing the fifth of the ten points in the *Samgha* in accordance with the *Dharma*, the *Kusala* and the Buddha’s teaching. Now in front of the *Samgha* we have extinguished this wrong *dharma*. There is no *bhiksu* who can speak of *adharmas* as *Dharma*, *Dharma* as *adharmas*, *akusala* as *Kusala* and *Kusala* as *akusala*. This is *adharmas*, *akusala* and not the

Buddha's teaching. This *dharma* is not legal.' Having said these words, he put down the fifth stick for the extinction of the fifth wrong *dharma*.

*Sambhuta* asked Sa-po-qie-luo-po-li-po-luo, 'Venerable *Sthavira*, "seeking approval for illegal performance is legal." is this actually legal or not?' The *sthavira* asked in return, 'What do you mean by "seeking approval for illegal performance is legal"?' *Sambhuta* answered, 'The *bhiksus* of *Vaisali*, having performed an act illegally at their separate dwelling place, go to the *Samgha* and announce, "We have made a legal act at our separate dwelling place. We ask you *bhiksus* to approve it." They say that seeking approval is legal. Is this actually legal or not?' The *sthavira* answered, 'Not legal.' *Sambhuta* asked, 'What offence would they commit?' The *sthavira* answered, 'They would commit an offence of Wrongdoing.' *Sambhuta* asked, 'Where did the Buddha make the rule?' The *sthavira* answered, 'In *Campa*, among the rules dealing with the practice of *Vinaya*.' After asking all the *Sthavira* Sa-po-qie-luo-po-li-po-luo, *Sambhuta* then asked all the *sthaviras*. Lastly he asked A-shi-tuo, 'Do you also understand likewise? Do you answer the same as the *sthaviras*?' A-shi-tuo- answered, 'I also understand likewise. I answer the same as the *sthaviras*.' A-shi-tuo- also asked *Sambhuta* in turn, 'Elder, do you also understand likewise? Do you answer the same as the *sthaviras*?' A-shi-tuo answered, 'I also understand likewise. I answer the same as the *sthaviras*.' A-shi-tuo asked *Sambhuta* in turn, 'Elder, do you also understand likewise? Do you answer the same as the *sthavira*?' *Sambhuta* answered, 'I also understand likewise. I answer the same as the *sthaviras*.' *Sambhuta* announce in the *Samgha*, 'Venerable *Samgha*, listen. We have now finished extinguishing the sixth of the ten points in the *Samgha* in accordance with the *Dharma*, the *Kusala* and the *Buddha's* teaching. Now in front of the *Samgha* we have extinguished this wrong *dharma*. There is no *bhiksu* who can speak of *adharmas* as

*Dharma, Dharma as adharma, akusala as Kusala and Kusala as akusala. This is adharma, akusala and not the Buddha's teaching. This **dharma** is not legal.'* Having said these words, he put down the sixth stick for the extinction of the sixth wrong *dharma*.

*Sambhuta* asked Sa-po-qie-luo-po-li-po-luo, 'Venerable *Sthavira*, "Making unfermented drinks in the residence is legal." is this actually legal or not?' The *sthavira* asked in return, 'What do you mean by "Making unfermented drinks in the residence is legal"?' *Sambhuta* answered, 'The *bhiksus* of *Vaisali* say, "We make unfermented drinks in our residence and drink." They say that this is legal. Is this actually legal or not?' The *sthavira* answered, 'Not legal.' *Sambhuta* asked, 'What offence would they commit?' The *sthavira* answered, 'They would commit an offence of Expiation.' *Sambhuta* asked, 'Where did the Buddha make the rule?' The *sthavira* answered, 'In Ba-tuo-po-di of Po-di on account of the Elder Po-qie-tuo, prohibiting the drinking of intoxicants.' After asking the *Sthavira* Sa-po-qie-luo-po-li-po-luo, *Sambhuta* asked all the *sthaviras*. Lastly he asked A-shi-tuo, Do you also understand likewise? Do you answer the same as the *sthaviras*?' A-shi-tuo- answered, 'I also understand likewise. I answer the same as the *sthaviras*.' A-shi-tuo- also asked *Sambhuta* in turn, 'Elder, do you also understand likewise? Do you answer the same as the *sthaviras*?' A-shi-tuo answered, 'I also understand likewise. I answer the same as the *sthaviras*.' A-shi-tuo asked *Sambhuta* in turn, 'Elder, do you also understand likewise? Do you answer the same as the *sthavira*?' *Sambhuta* answered, 'I also understand likewise. I answer the same as the *sthaviras*.' *Sambhuta* announce in the *Samgha*, 'Venerable *Samgha*, listen. We have now finished extinguishing the seventh of the ten points in the *Samgha* in accordance with the *Dharma*, the *Kusala* and the Buddha's teaching. Now in front of the *Samgha* we have extinguished this wrong

*dharma*. There is no *bhikṣu* who can speak of *adharmā* as *Dharma*, *Dharma* as *adharmā*, *akusala* as *Kusala* and *Kusala* as *akusala*. This is *adharmā*, *akusala* and not the Buddha's teaching. This *dharma* is not legal.' Having said these words, he put down the seventh stick for the extinction of the seventh wrong *dharma*.

*Sambhuta* asked Sa-po-qie-luo-po-li-po-luo, 'Venerable *Sthavira*, "Habitual practices are legal." is this actually legal or not?' The *sthavira* answered, 'Some practices are legal irrespective of the fact that they comply or not with habitual practices. Some practices are not legal irrespective of the fact that they comply or not with habitual practices.' *Sambhuta* asked, 'What are the practices that are not legal irrespective of the fact that they comply or not with habitual practices?' The *sthavira* answered, 'The offence of killing. It is not legal irrespective of the fact that it complies or not with habitual practices. Stealing, adultery, telling lies, slandering, harsh words, frivolous talk, covetousness, anger and perverted views – these are illegal practices irrespective of the fact that they comply or not with habitual practices.' *Sambhuta* asked, 'What are the practices that are legal irrespective of the fact that they comply or not with habitual practices?' The *sthavira* answered, 'No killing, no stealing, no adultery, no telling lies, no slandering, no harsh words, no frivolous talk, no covetousness, no anger and no perverted views – these are legal practices irrespective of the fact that they comply or not with habitual practices.' After asking the *Sthavira* Sa-po-qie-luo-po-li-po-luo, *Sambhuta* then asked all the *sthaviras*. Lastly he asked A-shi-tuo, Do you also understand likewise? Do you answer the same as the *sthaviras*?' A-shi-tuo- answered, 'I also understand likewise. I answer the same as the *sthaviras*.' A-shi-tuo- also asked *Sambhuta* in turn, 'Elder, do you also understand likewise? Do you answer the same as the *sthaviras*?' *Sambhuta* answered, 'I also understand likewise. I answer the same as the *sthaviras*.' *Sambhuta* announced

in the *Samgha*, 'Venerable *Samgha*, listen. We have now finished extinguishing the eighth of the ten points in the *Samgha* in accordance with the *Dharma*, the *Kusala* and the Buddha's teaching. Now in front of the *Samgha* we have extinguished this wrong *dharma*. There is no *bhiksu* who can speak of *adharmas* as *Dharma*, *Dharma* as *adharmas*, *akusala* as *Kusala* and *Kusala* as *akusala*. This is *adharmas*, *akusala* and not the Buddha's teaching. This *dharma* is not legal.' Having said these words, he put down the eighth stick for the extinction of the eighth wrong *dharma*.

*Sambhuta* asked Sa-po-qie-luo-po-li-po-luo, 'Venerable *Sthavira*, "Not having a boundary to the sitting mat is legal." is this actually legal or not?' The *sthavira* asked in return, 'What do you mean by "Not having a boundary to the sitting mat is legal"?' *Sambhuta* answered, 'The *bhiksus* of *Vaisali* make the sitting mat without a boundary and say that this is legal. Is this legal or not?' The *sthavira* answered, 'Not legal.' *Sambhuta* asked, 'what offence would they commit?' The *sthavira* answered, 'They would commit an offence of Expiation.' *Sambhuta* asked, 'where did the Buddha make the rule?' The *sthavira* answered, 'In *Sravasti*. The Buddha made it on account of the Elder *Kalodayin*, allowing him to add one span to the sitting mat.' After asking the *Sthavira* Sa-po-qie-luo-po-li-po-luo, *Sambhuta* then asked all the *sthaviras*. Lastly he asked A-shi-tuo, 'Do you also understand likewise? Do you answer the same as the *sthaviras*?' A-shi-tuo- answered, 'I also understand likewise. I answer the same as the *sthaviras*.' A-shi-tuo- also asked *Sambhuta* in turn, 'Elder, do you also understand likewise? Do you answer the same as the *sthaviras*?' *Sambhuta* answered, 'I also understand likewise. I answer the same as the *sthaviras*.' *Sambhuta* announced in the *Samgha*, 'Venerable *Samgha*, listen. We have now finished extinguishing the ninth of the ten points in the *Samgha* in accordance with the *Dharma*, the *Kusala* and the Buddha's teaching. Now in front of the *Samgha* we have extinguished this wrong

*dharmā*. There is no *bhikṣu* who can speak of *adharmā* as *Dharma*, *Dharma* as *adharmā*, *akusala* as *Kusala* and *Kusala* as *akusala*. This is *adharmā*, *akusala* and not the Buddha's teaching. This *dharmā* is not legal.' Having said these words, he put down the ninth stick for the extinction of the ninth wrong *dharmā*.

*Sambhuta* asked Sa-po-qie-luo-po-li-po-luo, 'Venerable *Sthavira*, are gold, silver and jewels legal or not?' The *sthavira* asked in return, 'What do you mean by "gold, silver and jewels are legal"?' *Sambhuta* answered, 'The *bhikṣus* of *Vaisali* say that gold, silver and jewels are legal. Are they legal or not?' The *sthavira* answered, 'Not legal. not legal' *Sambhuta* asked, 'What offence would they commit?' The *sthavira* answered, 'They would commit an offence of Expiation.' *Sambhuta* asked, 'Where did the Buddha make the rule?' The *sthavira* answered, 'In *Sravastī*. The Buddha made it on account of *Ba-nan-tuo*, son of the *Sakyan*, prohibiting the taking of gold, silver and jewels.' After asking the *Sthavira* Sa-po-qie-luo-po-li-po-luo, *Sambhuta* then asked all the *sthaviras*. Lastly he asked *A-shi-tuo*, 'Do you also understand likewise? Do you answer the same as the *sthaviras*?' *A-shi-tuo* answered, 'I also understand likewise. I answer the same as the *sthaviras*.' *A-shi-tuo* also asked *Sambhuta* in turn, 'Elder, do you also understand likewise? Do you answer the same as the *sthaviras*?' *Sambhuta* answered, 'I also understand likewise. I answer the same as the *sthaviras*.' *Sambhuta* announced in the *Samgha*, 'Venerable *Samgha*, listen. We have now finished extinguishing all of the ten wrong *dharmas* in the *Samgha* in accordance with the *Dharma*, the *Kusala* and the Buddha's teaching. Now in front of the *Samgha* we have extinguished this wrong *dharmā*. There is no *bhikṣu* who can speak of *adharmā* as *Dharma*, *Dharma* as *adharmā*, *akusala* as *Kusala* and *Kusala* as *akusala*. This is *adharmā*, *akusala* and not the Buddha's teaching. This *dharmā* is not

legal.' Having said these words, he put down the tenth stick for the extinction of the tenth wrong *dharma*.

Then the *Sthavira* Sa-po-qie-luo-po-li-po-luo spoke to the Elder *Sambhuta*, 'We have now extinguished these wrong dharmas in accordance with the *Dharma*, the *Kusala* and the Buddha's teaching. Now we have put down ten sticks. The *dharmas* have been questioned and answered very clearly. There might be unwise *bhiksus* who would say thus, "Now the ten wrong *dharmas* are extinguished. Whether they have been extinguished in accordance with the *Dharma* or not, we do not know." For this reason, *Sambhuta*, you should go to the assembly and there question me on these ten points. I would answer and make the members of the assembly understand in the same way.' Having instructed *Sambhuta* thus, the *Sthaviras* rose up from their seats and went to the assembly and sat down where they had sat before. The Elder *Sambhuta* rose, placed his palms together and said thus to the *Sthavira* Sa-po-qie-luo-po-li-po-luo, 'Venerable *Sthavira*, "Salt is legal." Is this actually legal or not?' The *sthavira* answered, 'Not legal, not legal.' *Sambhuta* asked, 'What offence would they commit?' The *sthavira* answered, 'They would commit an offence of Wrongdoing.' *Sambhuta* asked, 'Where did the Buddha make the rule?' The *sthavira* answered, 'In *Sravasti*. The rule is recorded in the Chapter on Medicine of the *Vinaya*.'

*Sambhuta* asked, 'Venerable *Sthavira*, "Two fingers are legal." Is this actually legal or not?' The *sthavira* answered, 'Not legal, not legal.' *Sambhuta* asked, 'What offence would they commit?' The *sthavira* answered, 'They would commit an offence of Expiation.' *Sambhuta* asked, 'Where did the Buddha make the rule?' The *sthavira* answered, 'In *Vaisali*. The Buddha made the rule prohibiting the eating of leftover food.'

*Sambhuta* asked, ‘Venerable *Sthavira*, “Nearby villages are legal.” Is this actually legal or not?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘Not legal, not legal.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘What offence would they commit?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘They would commit an offence of Expiation.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘Where did the Buddha make the rule?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘In Vaisali. The Buddha made the rule prohibiting the eating of leftover food.’

*Sambhuta* asked, ‘Venerable *Sthavira*, “Mixing raw things is legal.” Is this actually legal or not?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘Not legal, not legal.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘What offence would they commit?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘They would commit an offence of Expiation.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘Where did the Buddha make the rule?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘In Vaisali. The Buddha made the rule prohibiting the eating of leftover food.’

*Sambhuta* asked, ‘Venerable *Sthavira*, “Asking for ratification is legal.” Is this actually legal or not?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘Not legal, not legal.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘What offence would they commit?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘They would commit an offence of Expiation.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘Where did the Buddha make the rule?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘In *Campa*, among the rules dealing with the practice of the *Vinaya*.’

*Sambhuta* asked, ‘Venerable *Sthavira*, “Seeking approval is legal.” Is this actually legal or not?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘Not legal, not legal.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘What offence would they commit?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘They would commit an offence of Expiation.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘Where did the Buddha make the rule?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘In *Campa*, among the rules dealing with the practice of the *Vinaya*.’

*Sambhuta* asked, ‘Venerable *Sthavira*, “Making unfermented drinks in the residence is legal.” Is this actually legal or not?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘Not legal, not legal.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘What offence would they commit?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘They would commit an offence of Expiation.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘Where did the Buddha make the rule?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘In Ba-tuo-po-di of Po-di, on account of the Eler Suo-qie-tuo, prohibiting the drinking of intoxicants.’

*Sambhuta* asked, ‘Venerable *Sthavira*, “Habitual practices are legal.” Is this actually legal or not?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘Some practices are legal irrespective of the fact that they comply or not with habitual practices. Some practices are not legal irrespective of the fact that they comply or not with habitual practices.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘What are the practices that are not legal irrespective of the fact that they comply or not with habitual practices?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘The offence of killing ... and perverted views – these are illegal practices irrespective of the fact that they comply or not with habitual practices.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘What are the practices habitual practices?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘No killing ... and no perverted views – these are legal practices irrespective of the fact that they comply or not with habitual practices.’

*Sambhuta* asked, ‘Venerable *Sthavira*, “Not having a boundary to the sitting mat is legal.” Is this actually legal or not?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘Not legal, not legal.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘What offence would they commit?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘They would commit an offence of Expiation.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘Where did the Buddha make the rule?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘In *Sravasti*. The Buddha made it on account of the Elder *Kalodayin*, allowing him to add one span to the sitting mat.’

*Sambhuta* asked, ‘Venerable *Sthavira*, are gold, silver and jewels legal or not?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘Not legal, not legal.’ *Sambhuta* asked, ‘What offence would

they commit?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘They would commit an offence of Expiation.’  
*Sambhuta* asked, ‘Where did the Buddha make the rule?’ The *sthavira* answered, ‘In Vaisali. The Buddha made the rule on account of Ba-nan-dtuo, prohibiting the taking of gold, silver and jewels.’

The Elder *Sambhuta* extinguished these dharmas in the *Samgha* in accordance with the *Dharma*. These were the offences related to the dharmas committed by the *bhiksus* of *Vaisali*. Having extinguished them in accordance with the *Dharma*, he uttered these verses:

‘If a person does not know it is an offence, he cannot be rid of it.  
He becomes angry when somebody tries to rid him of it.  
This unwise and foolish person  
will lose the benefit of merit day by day,  
like the moon after the sixteenth of the month,  
whose light gradually fades until it is no more.  
If a person knows it is an offence, he can be rid of it.  
He is happy when somebody tries to rid him of it.  
This wise and intelligent person  
Will get the benefit of merit day by day,  
Like the moon after the first day of the month,  
Whose light gradually increases.’

This is the end of the chapter of the Assembly of the Seven Hundred *Bhiksus* for the Extinction of Wrong *Dharma*.

### 3.5 The Dharmagupta Vinaya<sup>12</sup>

At the time, one hundred years had elapsed since the World-honoured One’s *parinirvana*, when the *Vrjibhiksus* in *Vaisali* practiced the ten points and said, ‘These are legal and allowed by the Buddha, namely;

Using two fingers to scoop up food and eat it.  
Between villages.  
Inside the temple.  
Seeking approval afterwards.  
Customary practices.

---

12. The Chinese text was taken from the Si-fen-lu, scroll 54, in Da-cang-jing, vol.22. p.968.

Mixing together.  
Keeping salt in the lodging.  
Drinking jalogi.  
Keeping a sitting mat without a boundary.  
Receiving gold and silver.’

On *Uposatha* days the *bhiksus* shared among themselves the gold and silver given by donors. Then *Yasa*, the son of *Jia-na*, heard that the *bhiksus* of *Vaisali* were practicing these points. Thereupon he went to the place where the *Vrji bhiksus* were and advised the donors against giving gold and silver to the *Samgha* on *Uposatha* days. The *bhiksus*, after discussing among themselves, decided to offer a share to *Yasa*, the son of *Jia-na*. thereupon he said, ‘I will not accept. The reason is that the *sramanas*, the sons of the *Sakyan*, should not accept gold and silver. The *sramanas*, the sons of the *Sakyan*, have abandoned jewels and wearing ornaments.’

On another day, after dividing the collection, they sent one share to the *bhiksu*, the son of *Jia-na*. The *bhiksu*, the son of *Jia-na*, said, ‘I don’t need it. I said before that *sramanas*, the sons of the *Sakyan*, have abandoned jewels and wearing ornaments.’ To this they said, ‘The lay people in *Vaisali* are angry. You should go to teach them and make them happy.’ Then they appointed an attendant to accompany him.

The *bhiksu* *Yasa*, the son of *Jia-na*, went to the place where the lay people in *Vaisala* dwelt and said thus, ‘Are you angry at my words? I said, “The *sramanas*, the sons of the *Sakyan*, should not accept gold and silver. They have abandoned jewels and wearing ornaments.” Then he said to the lay people, ‘At one time the World-honoured One was in *Rajagrha*. The king and his ministers were assembled in the palace and it was said thus, “The *sramanas*, the sons of the *Sakyan*, should be allowed to receive gold and silver and should not abandon jewels and wearing ornaments.” Among them there was a very senior householder called *Manicuda*, who said to the ministers, “Don’t say these words: ‘The *sramanas*, the sons of the *Sakyan*, should

receive gold and silver and not abandon jewels and wearing ornaments.’ The reason is that the *sramanas*, the sons of the *Sakyan*, were not allowed to receive gold and silver and had abandoned jewels and wearing ornaments.” Then *Manicuda* explained this to the ministers and made them all understand and happy.

‘Later *Manicuda* went to the dwelling of the World-honoured One, made obeisance with his head and face at his feet, stepped back and sat down to one side. He recounted the above incident to the World-honoured One, saying, “I explained to them and made all of them happy. World-honoured One, I hope what I have said is not contradictory to the *Vinaya* and the teaching of the *Dharma*.” The Buddha said, “Householder, what you have said is in accordance with the *Dharma* and the truth. It does not contradict the World-honoured One’s teaching. The reason is that the *sramanas*, the sons of the *Sakyan*, are not allowed to receive gold and silver, and have abandoned jewels and wearing ornaments. Those who receive gold and silver will receive the five sense-desires. The receiving of the five sense-desires is not in accordance with the *Dharma* of a *sramana*, a son of the *Sakyan*. Householder, if you should see a *sramana*, a son of the *Sakyan*, holding gold and silver, you could come to the conclusion that he is not following the *Dharma* of a *sramana*. I say this to you: it is permissible to beg for gold and silver in order to obtain bamboo, reed, grass and wood, but not permissible in any case to receive gold and silver for one’s own use.” Therefore, *Licchavis*, Because of what is narrated above, *sramanas*, the sons of the *Sakyan*, should not receive gold and silver; they should abandon jewels and wearing ornaments.

‘*Licchavis*, again at another time, the World-honoured One said to the *bhiksus* at *Jetavana*, “There are four things which make the sun and the moon lose their brightness. What are the four? *Asura*, smoke cloud and dust. There are the four things

which make the sun and the moon lose their brightness. Likewise, there are four things which pollute *sramanas* and *brahmanas* and obscure their shining qualities. What are the four? If *sramanas* and *brahmanas* would not give up drinking, it is the first pollution. If *sramanas* and *brahmanas* indulge in sense-desire and would not give it up, it is the second pollution. If *sramanas* and *brahmanas* receive gold and silver and would not give up wearing ornaments, it is the third pollution. If *sramanas* and *brahmanas* adopt a wrong means of livelihood and would not give it up, it is the fourth pollution. These are the four. These four things make *sramanas* and *brahmanas* polluted and unwise, and their shining qualities obscured.” Then the world-honoured

One uttered the following verses:

“Polluted by sense-desire  
and covered by ignorance,  
*sramanas* and *brahmanas*  
are attached to attractive forms.  
Those whose minds are confused by drinking,  
who indulge in sense-desire  
and receive gold and jewels,  
are unwise.  
So are *sramanas* and *brahmanas*  
who adopt a wrong means of livelihood.  
The Buddha says all these are fetters,  
like the cloud that covers the sun,  
obscuring its brightness.  
They are impure and all polluting.  
Blinded by this darkness,  
enslaved by craving,  
and doing harmful and unwholesome actions,  
how can the ignorant cultivate the path?  
Hatred increases.  
He will receive a next life again.”

‘Therefore, *Licchavis*, because of what I have narrated, you should know that *sramanas*, the sons of the *Sakyan*, should not receive gold and silver, and should abandon wearing ornaments. These are the words I said. Do you disbelieve me because of this?’ The *Licchavis* said, ‘It is not the case that we don't believe you. We have faith in you and we are happy. You can stay here in *Vaisali*. We will provide you

with clothing, food and drink, medicine and other requisites.’ Then the *bhiksu*, the son of Jia-na, having explained to the *Lucchavis* and made them happy, went back with the attendant to the place of the *Vrjibhiksus*. Upon seeing the *bhiksu*, the son of Jia-na, coming from a distance, they asked the attendant, ‘Has the *bhiksu*, the son of Jia-na, explained to the *Licchavis* and given them faith?’ The attendant answered, ‘Yes, they have faith and are happy with the *bhiksu*, the son of *Jia-na*. They hold the view that we are not sramanas, sons of the Sakyan.’ Then the *Vrji bhiksus* asked, ‘What is the reason?’ The attendant explained what had happened. Those *bhiksus* of *Vaisali* said to the *bhiksu*, the son of Jia-na, ‘You have abused the *Samgha*. Do you see the offence or not?’ *Yasa* answered, ‘I have not abused the *Samgha*.’ They assembled to perform a legal act against *Yasa*.

The *bhiksu*, the son of *Jia-na*, thought thus, ‘This dispute would be settled according to the *Dharma* if I could get the Elder *Revata* to accompany me.’ He therefore asked others, ‘Where is *Revata*?’ They answered, ‘We heard that he was living on the banks of the river *Po-he* (*Ahogamga*?).’ Thereupon he went to the banks of the river *Po-he*, but *Revata* was not there. He asked, ‘Where is *Revata*?’ They answered, ‘We heard that he was in *Qie-na-wei-che*- (*Kannakujja*?).’ Thereupon he went to that country. When he arrived, again *Revata* was not there. Then he asked again, ‘Where is *Revata*?’ They answered, ‘He is in *A-qie-lou-luo* (*Aggalapura*?).’ Thereupon he went to that country. Again he was not there. Then he asked, ‘Where is *Revata*?’ They answered, ‘He is in *Seng-qie-she* (*Samkassa*?).’ Thereupon he again went to that country to see *Revata*. There he found that the *bhiksus* had gathered, and he asked *Revata*’s attendant disciple, ‘Will your venerable elder *Revata* come to the gathering or not?’ He answered, ‘He will come to the gathering.’ Then *Revata* came to the gathering to listen to the teaching of the *Dharma*. After that he took his sitting

mat and went back to his lodging after midnight. *Yasa*, the son of *Jia-na*, was also in the gathering. After listening to the teaching, he took his sitting mat and went to *Revata's* dwelling place after midnight. He reflected thus, 'Now the time is suitable. I will tell him all that has happened.' He asked *Revata*, 'Venerable *Sthavira*, is it permissible to use two fingers to scoop up food and eat?' *Revata* asked in return, 'What do you mean by using two fingers to scoop up food and eat?' *Yasa* answered, 'Venerable Elder, having eaten one's fill, giving up one's posture, and not following the rule of eating leftover food, one scoops up food with two fingers and eats. Is it permissible or not?' *Revata* said, 'Not permissible.' *Yasa* asked, 'Where was the rule made?' *Revata* answered, 'In *Sravasti*, for not following the rule of eating leftover food.'

Then *Yasa* asked, 'Venerable Elder, is it permissible between villages?' *Revata* asked in return, 'What do you mean by between village?' *Yasa* answered, 'Venerable Elder, having eaten one's fill, abandoning one's posture and not following the rule of leftover food, one is permitted to eat between two village.' *Revata* said, 'It is not permissible.' *Yasa* asked, 'Where was the rule made?' *Revata* answered, 'In *Sravasti*, for not following the rule of leftover food.'

*Yasa* asked, 'Venerable Elder, is it permissible inside the temple?' *Revata* asked in return, 'What do you mean by inside the temple?' *Yasa* answered, 'Venerable Elder, a group of *bhiksus* performing a legal act inside the temple is permissible.' *Revata* said, 'It is not permissible.' *Yasa* asked, 'Where was the rule made?' *Revata* answered, 'In *Rajagrha*, in the Chapter on the Formal Act.'

*Yasa* asked, 'Venerable Elder, is it permissible to seek approval afterwards?' *Revata* asked in return, 'What do you mean by seeking approval afterwards?' *Yasa* answered, 'Venerable Elder, a group of *bhiksus*, after performing a legal act within

the boundary, seek approval from other *bhiksus*.' *Revata* said, 'It is not permissible.' *Yasa* asked, 'Where was the rule made?' *Revata* answered, 'In *Rajagrha*, in the Chapter on the Formal Act.'

*Yasa* then asked, 'Are customary practices permissible?' *Revata* asked in return, 'What do you mean by customary practices?' *Yasa* answered, 'Venerable Elder, the practices claimed to have been followed for a long.' *Revata* answered, 'If the practices do not comply with the *Sutra* and the *Vinaya*, even though they are in use, they should not be followed. If the practices comply with the *Sutra* and the *Vinaya*, they should be followed, even though they are not in use.'

*Yasa* then asked, 'Venerable Elder, is mixing together permissible?' *Revata* asked in return, 'What do you mean by mixing together?' *Yasa* answered, 'Venerable Elder, having eaten one's fill, and abandoning one's posture, is it permissible to eat yoghurt mixed with ghee, honey, butter and rock sugar?' *Revata* answered, 'It is not permissible.' *Yasa* asked, 'Where was the rule made?' *Revata* answered, 'In *Sravasti*, for not following the rule of leftover food.'

*Yasa* then asked, 'Venerable Elder, is it permissible to keep salt in the lodging?' *Revata* asked in return, 'What do you mean by keeping salt in the lodging?' *Yasa* answered, 'Venerable Elder, to put the salt kept in the lodging into the food and eat it?' *Revata* answered, 'It is not permissible.' *Yasa* was the rule made, 'Where was the rule made?' *Revata* answered, 'In *Sravasti*, in the Chapter on Medicine.'

*Yasa* then asked, 'Venerable Elder, is it permissible to drink jalogi?' *Revata* answered, 'It is not permissible.' *Yasa* asked, 'Where was the rule made?' *Revata* answered, 'In *Kausambi*, on account of the elder *bhiksu* *Suo-qie-tuo* (*Sagata*?).'

*Yasa* then asked, 'Venerable Elder, is it permissible to keep a sitting mat without a boundary?' *Revata* answered, 'It is not permissible.' *Yasa* asked, 'Where

was the rule made?’ *Revata* answered, ‘In Sravasti, on account of the group of six *bhiksus*.’

*Yasa* then asked, ‘Venerable Elder, is it permissible to receive gold and silver?’ *Revata* answered, ‘It is not permissible.’ *Yasa* asked, ‘Where was the rule made?’ *Revata* answered, ‘In Rajagrha, on account of Ba-nan-tuo (*Upananda*?), son of the *Sakyan*.’

*Yasa* said, ‘Venerable Elder, the *Vrji bhiksus* in *Vaisali* practice these ten points and say that these are legal, in accordance with the *Dharma* and permitted by the Buddha. They advised donors on Uposatha days to donate gold and silver to the *Samgha*, to be distributed by an appointed distributor. They say not to tell others. The reason is that they are afraid that other *bhiksus* will hold different views. They don't give to other *bhiksus* who are in concord. *Revata* said, ‘You can go to *Ahogamga* Mountain. There lives a *bhiksu* named *Sambhuta*, who follows the same master as I do. He is abiding with sixty *bhiksus* of Bo-luo-li. They are all brave, energetic, accomplished and fearless. Go and tell him all about this and make an appointment with him to go to the bank of Po-he River, where I would meet him.’ Then the *bhiksu* *Yasa*, the son of Jia-na, went to that mountain, the dwelling place of *Sambhuta*, and told him all about this and made an appointment with him to go to the bank of Po-he River, where the Venerable *Revata* would also come to meet him.

Then the *Vrji bhiksus* in *Vaisali* heard that the *bhiksu* *Yasa*, the son of Jia-na, was going round seeking supporters. They took a number of *Vaisali* robes of good quality and went to the dwelling place of a disciple of *Revata* and said, ‘We brought these robes of good quality for the Venerable *Revata*. We are unable to give them now to the Venerable *Revata*. You can take them if you like.’ The disciple of *Revata* said, ‘No, no, I won't accept them.’ Then they persuaded and forced him to accept. So he

accepted, after which they said, ‘Elder, there is dispute between two factions of bhiksus, Bo-yi-na (Eastern?) and Bo-li (Western?). The World-honoured One was born in Bo-yi-na. Very well, Elder, could you speak to the venerable sthavira for us thus, “There is a dispute between the *bhiksus* of Bo-yi-na and Bo-li. The World-honoured One was born in Bo-yio-na. Very well, Venerable Sir, you should help the Bo-yi-na bhiksus” ’ The disciple answered, ‘I respect the Venerable Elder *Revata*, and I dare not speak.’ They pressured him persistently. So he went to the dwelling place of the Venerable *Revata* and said thus, ‘Venerable Sir, there is a dispute between two factions of bhiksus, Bo-yi-na and Bo-li. The World-honoured One was born in Bo-yi-na. May the venerable sthavira help the Bo-yi-na *bhiksus*.’ Thereupon *Revata* answered, ‘You fool, you would get me involved with this illegal group. Get out. I don't need you any more.’ Having been driven out, the disciple went to the *Vrji bhiksus* of *Vaisali* and said thus, ‘Elders, I told you before that I respect the Venerable *Revata* and it would be difficult to speak to him on your behalf. I could not speak for you. I was severely rebuked by the master.’ They asked, ‘What happened?’ He said, ‘I was driven out.’ They then asked, ‘How long have you been in the Order?’ He answered, ‘Twelve years.’ They asked, ‘Why are you still afraid of being driven out if you have been twelve years in the Order?’ He answered, ‘He would not accept my support. How can I not be afraid?’

Then *Revata* and the *bhiksus* said thus, ‘Now we should go to the place where the dispute arose.’ Thereupon they went there by boat on the Ganges River. At the time the weather was hot and they were extremely tired. They moored the boat and rested under a tree on the riverbank.

There was an elder in the Po-sou village walking on the path. He thought thus, ‘In this dispute I should refer to the Sutra and the *Vinaya*. Then I will understand who

speaking the *Dharma* and who do not.’ Then he referred to the *Sutra* and the *Vinaya*, examined the *Dharma* and the Law and understood that the bhiksus in Bo-li were speaking in accordance with the *Dharma* and the bhiksus of Bo-yi-na were not. Then there was a heavenly being, who, without appearing, commended him saying, ‘Very well, good man. As you have observed, the Bo-li *bhiksus* speak in accordance with the *Dharma* and the Bo-yi-na *bhiksus* do not,’ Then the elders went to *Vaisali* together.

There was an elder in *Vaisali* called All Gone (*Sabbakami?*), who was the seniormost *sthavira* in *jambudvīpa*. Then Sambhuta said to *Revata*, ‘Now let us go and spend the night at All Gone’s lodging, tell him all about this and make him understand.’ Then both of them went to the lodging together. At that time in the night All Gone had been sitting in contemplation for a long time. *Revata* thought thus, ‘This *sthavira* is very old and weak, and yet he has been sitting for so long. Why shouldn’t I sit like this?’ Then *Revata* sat down and contemplated late into the night. The Elder All Gone Thought thus, ‘This guest bhiksu is extremely tired, having come from a long distance. He is still sitting in contemplation like this. Why shouldn’t I sit as long?’ Then that elder sat in contemplation for a long time. The night was almost gone. He said to *Revata*, ‘Elder, what dharma did you contemplate this night?’ *Revata* answered, ‘When I was a lay person I practiced loving-kindness. This night I practiced [immeasurable] loving-kindness Samadhi.’ Then he said, ‘This night you entered into a minor samadha. The reason is that loving-kindness Samadhi is a minor Samadhi.’ Thereupon *Revata* asked again, ‘Venerable All Gone, what dharma did you contemplate this night?’ He answered, ‘When I was a lay person I practiced the *dharma* of emptiness. Most of the time during this night I entered into emptiness

*Samadhi.*’ *Revata* said, ‘This night the Venerable one contemplated on the way of Great Beings. The reason is that emptiness *Samadhi* is the way of Great Beings.’

*Revata* thought thus, ‘This is the suitable time to tell him what happened and make him understand.’ He asked, ‘Venerable Elder, is it permissible to use two fingers to scoo up food and eat?’ All Gone asked, ‘What do you mean by using two fingers for taking food and eating it?’ *Revata* answered, ‘Venerable, having eaten one’s fill, giving up one’s posture, and not following the rule of leftover food, one scoops up food with two fingers and eats. Is this permissible or not?’ All Gone answered, ‘Not permissible.’ *Revata* asked, ‘Where was the rule made?’ All Gone answered, ‘In Sravasti, for not following the rule made?’ All Gone answered, ‘In Sravasti, for not following the rule of leftover food.’ In this way the ten points were questioned one by one up to the distribution of gold and silver on Uposatha days by a distributor and their having said not to tell others lost people holding different views would cause discord, as given before.

The *Sthavira* All Gone occupied the first seat, *Sambhuta* the second, *Revata* the third and the elder in Po-sou village the fourth, all of them disciples of *Ananda*. Then Elder All Gone started the proceedings and said, ‘Venerable *Samgha*, listen. If the time is suitable for the *Samgha*, let the *Samgha* give silent consent. Now the *Samgha* will discuss the *DharmaVinaya*.’ He announced thus.

Then the Bo-yi-na *bhiksus* said to the Bo-li *bhiksus*, ‘You should nominate committee members.’ Thereupon the Bo-li *bhiksus* said, ‘The *sthaviras* All Gone, *Revata*, *Yasa* and *Su-man-na* will be the committee members.’ Then the Bo-li *bhiksus* said to the Bo-yi-na *bhiksus*, ‘You should also nominate committee members.’ Thereupon the Bo-li *bhiksus* said, ‘the Elder *Samghuta*, the elder in the Po-suo village, Sha-liu (Salha?) and Bu-che-su-mo will be the committee members.’ Among

the *bhiksus* there was one named A-yi-tou, who was capable of giving advice. The *bhiksus* said, ‘Let us take this bhiksu as a member. The reason is that he will give us advice if he is there.’ So they selected him as a member.

Those *sthaviras* thought thus, ‘If we were to discuss this matter in the *Samgha*, more disputes might arise. We wouldn’t know who is right and who is wrong. We should choose another place for the committee meeting.’ Those elders thought thus. ‘Where is another place for holding the committee meeting?’ They said, ‘We should hold the meeting in the Po-li grove.’ Then the Elder All Gone said, ‘Venerable *Samgha*, listen. These are the *bhiksus* selected by the *Samgha*. If the time is suitable for the *Samgha*, let us *Samgha* give silent consent. The *Dharma Vinaya* will be discussed in the Po-li grove. No other *bhiksus* should be present.’ He announced thus. After the procedure, another legal act was performed to appoint two or three *bhiksus* to escort those *bhiksus* to the Po-li grove.

Then the *Sthavira* All Gone convened the committee meeting to discuss the aforesaid matter. When all the *sthaviras* were assembled, the *Sthavira* All Gone said, ‘Venerable *Samgha*, listen. If the time is suitable for the *Samgha*, let the *Samgha* give silent consent. Now the *Samgha* will discuss the *DharmaVinaya*.’ He announced thus. Then *Revata* said, ‘Venerable *Samgha*, listen. If the time is suitable for the *Samgha*, let the *Samgha* give silent consent. Now the *Samgha* will question the *Sthavira* All Gone on the *DharmaVinaya*.’ He announced thus. Then the *Sthavira* All Gone said again, ‘Venerable *Samgha*, listen. If the time is suitable for the *Samgha*, , let the *Samgha* give silent consent. Now the *Samgha* requests me to answer the questions put by *Revata* on the *Dharma Vinaya*.’ He announced thus. *Revata* asked, ‘Venerable *Sthavira*, are two fingers permissible?’ All Gone asked in return, ‘What do you mean by two fingers?’ *Revata* answered, ‘Venerable Elder, having eaten one’s fill and

giving up one's posture, one scoops up food with two fingers and eats.' All Cone answered, 'One should not do so.' Revata asked, 'Where was the rule made?' All Gone answered, 'In *Sravasti*, for not following *adharmā*, *avinaya* and not in accordance with the Buddha's teaching. The Committee made the decision and put down one stick. In the same way the ten points were examined one by one. They were *adharmā*, *avinaya* and not in accordance with the Buddha's teaching. The committee put down sticks one by one.

The elders said, 'Now we have finished our deliberations on this matter away from the assembly. We should go back to the *Samgha* for examination. The reason is to make it known to everyone.' All the elders went back to *Vaisali*. Then the *Sthavira* All Gone assembled the *bhiksus* and said, 'Venerable *Samgha*, listen. If the time is suitable for the *Samgha*, let the *Samgha* give silent consent. Now we will discuss the *Dharma Vinaya* in the *Samgha*.' He announced thus. The Elder Revata thereupon addressed the *Samgha*, 'Venerable *Samgha*, listen. If the time is suitable for the *Samgha*, let the *Samgha* give silent consent. Now I will question the *Sthavira* All Gone on the *Dharma Vinaya* in the *Samgha*.' He announced thus. Then the *Sthavira* All Gone addressed the *Samgha*, 'Venerable *Samgha*, listen. If the time is suitable for the *Samgha*, let he *Samgha* give silent consent. Now I will answer the questions on the *DharmaVinaya* put to me by *Revata* in the *Samgha*.' He announced thus. *Revata* asked, 'Venerable Elder, are two fingers permissible?' He asked, 'What do you mean by two fingers?' *Revata* answered, 'Venerable Elder, having eaten one's fill and giving up one's posture, without following the rule concerning leftover food, one uses two fingers to scoop up food and eat.' All Gone answered, 'One should not do so.' Revata asked, 'Where was the rule made?' All Gone answered, 'In *Sravasti*, for not following the rule concerning leftover in accordance with the Buddha's teaching.

After the first point was examined in the *Samgha*, one stick was put down. In the same way the ten points were examined one by one and it was decided that they were *adharmā*, *avinaya* and not in accordance with the Buddha's teaching. After all of them were examined in the *Samgha*, a stick was put down for each. There were seven hundred arhants assembled for the recitation of the *Dharma Vinaya in Vaisali*. Therefore it is called the Assembly of the Seven Hundred for the Recitation of the *Dharma Vinaya*.

### 3.6 The Mahisasaka Vinaya<sup>13</sup>

One hundred years after the nirvana of the Buddha, the *Vrji bhiksus* of *Vaisali* introduced ten illegal points;

- It is legal to keep salt and ginger in the lodging.
- It is legal to scoop up food with two fingers and eat.
- It is legal to sit again and eat.
- It is legal to go to another village and eat.
- It is legal to mix yoghurt with butter and rock sugar.
- It is legal to drink jalogi.
- It is legal to make the sitting mat of a size according to one's desire.
- It is legal to follow previous practices.
- It is legal to seek ratification.
- It is legal to receive and keep gold, silver and money.

Those *bhiksus* often sat among the public on the eighth, fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month. With their bowls filled with water, they would hold them in front and ask for donations for aspiring merit. When the lay people ... men, women, old and young – passed by, the *Bhiksus*, pointing at their bowls, said to them that it would be meritorious to give money for procuring robes, bowls, leather, shoes and medicine. Some of them gave money, and those who did not give mocked them, saying, 'It is not suitable for the recluses, some of the *Sakyan*, to receive and keep

---

13. The Chinese text was taken from Wu-fen-lu, scroll 30, in Da-cang-jing, vol.22. p.192.

gold, silver and money. Even if people wish to give of their own accord, they should not look at the things given. Now, how could they ask for donations in this way?’

Then the Elder *Yasa*, the son of *Jia-lan-tuo* (*Yasa-Kakandakaputra?*), who was in the two-storeyed hall on the bank of Monkey Lake, spoke to the bhiksus, ‘Don’t ask for donations in this way. I heard from the Buddha’s mouth that if a *bhiksu* asks for donations unlawfully, the donor as well as the receiver are guilty.’ *Yasa*, after speaking to those bhiksus thus, said to the lay people – men, women, old and young, ‘Don’t give your donations in this way. I heard from the Buddha’s mouth that if a *bhiksu* asks for donations unlawfully, the donor as well as the receiver are guilty.’

Those *bhiksus*, after receiving gold, silver and money, said to *Yasa*, ‘Venerable Sir, you can take this portion.’ *Yasa* answered, ‘I won’t take this portion of donations acquired unlawfully.’ The bhiksus then said, ‘If you don’t take it for yourself, you can give it to the *Samgha*.’ *Yasa* answered, ‘Since I won’t take it, how can I give it to the *Samgha*?’ Thus the bhiksus took *Yasa*’s former advice to the lay people as an abuse. So they performed a legal act of Humility. After the act, *Yasa* said, ‘I heard from the mouth of the Buddha that if the *Samgha* performs a legal act requiring an apology, the *Samgha* should order one bhiksu to accompany the guilty bhiksu to go to the lay people and apologize.’ Then the bhiksus, by performing an act with a motion and one legal pronouncement, ordered a bhiksu to accompany *Yasa*. *Yasa* thereupon led the *Bhiksu* to the place where the lay people were.

It so happened that five hundred laymen were gathered there at that time. To them *Yasa* said, ‘Sirs, you should know; if it is the *Dharma*, I say it is the *Dharma*; if it is *adharmā*, I say it is *adharmā*; if it is the *Vinaya*, I say it is the *Vinaya*; if it is *avinaya*, I say it is *avinaya*; if it is in accordance with the Buddha’s teaching; if it is not in accordance with the Buddha’s teaching, I say it is not in accordance with the

Buddha's teaching. If I made the laymen angry with what I said before, I have come here to apologize.' The laymen by saying "This is the *Dharma*, this is the *Vinaya* and this is in accordance with the Buddha's teaching" so that you have come here to apologize?'

*Yasa* said to the people further, 'At one time the World-honoured One was living in *Rajagrha*, in the mango grove of *Jivaka*. Then the king *Bimbisara* and the ministers, having gathered at that palace, after deliberation concluded that the *sramanas*, sons of the *Sakyan*, should receive and keep gold, silver and jewels and sell them. Among them was a minister named *Manicuda*, who said to the assembly, "Don't speak in this way. *Sramanas*, sons of the *Sakyan*, should not receive and keep gold, silver and jewels and sell them." Then he went and reported this incident to the World-honoured One, "Did I err in what I said?" The Buddha said, "You were perfectly correct. The reason is I always said that the *sramanas*, sons of the *Sakyan*, should not receive and keep gold, silver and jewels and sell them." *Manicuda* said to the Buddha again, "May the World-honoured One tell all the people and make them understand." The Buddha said, "Very good." He told *Manicuda*, "For example, there are four things – smoke, clouds, dust and *Asura* – that obscure the sun and the moon, making them dim and impure. Similarly there are four things that obscure the *sramanas* and brahmanas. What are they? To persist in sense-desire and indulge in sex, to indulge and persists in drinking alcohol and eating, to persist in practicing wrong means of livelihood, and to receive and keep gold, silver and jewels and sell them. If one were to regard the five sense-desires as permissible, one would regard receiving and keeping gold, silver and jewels and selling them permissible. If one were to regard receiving and keeping gold, silver and jewels and selling them permissible, one would regard the five sense-desires as permissible. If one leads a life

of renunciation under me as a fully ordained bhiksu and regards receiving and keeping gold, silver and jewels and selling them as permissible, he should be understood as one not believing in my Dharma and *Vinaya*. Although I always say that if you need a carriage you may ask for it, if you need people you may ask for them, and it is permissible to ask for whatever you need, yet you should never receive and keep gold, silver and jewels and sell them.” After narrating this, *Yasa* said again, ‘This was what I said before: “This is the *Dharma*, this is *adharmā*; this is the *Vinaya*, this is *avinaya*; this is in accordance with the *Buddha*’s teaching, this is not in accordance with the *Buddha*’s teaching; this came from the *Buddha*’s mouth, this did not come from the *Buddha*’s mouth.”

The laymen said ‘We believe all you have said, and we are happy with all you have said. Now, in *Vaisali*, you, Venerable Sir, asked the only *sramana*, son of the *Sakyan*. May you receive our material support here for your whole life.’

Having apologized to the laymen, *Yasa* went back to the temple with the attendant *bhiksu*. The *Vrji* bhiksus asked the attendant *bhiksu*, ‘Did *Yasa* apologize to the laymen?’ The attendant said, ‘Yes he did, but all the lay people believed in what he had said. They all said,’ “Now, in *Vaisali* you are the only venerable one.” They asked *Yasa* to accept the four material requisites for his whole life. There will be no more benefits for us.’

The *Vrji bhiksus* again charged *Yasa* with an offence of Expiation for his former advice to the bhiksus as abusing the *Samgha* and said, ‘You should recognize the offence and confess.’ *Yasa* replied, ‘I did not commit any offence. Why should I confess?’ Then the *Vrji bhiksus* assembled with the intention of performing an act of Not Recognizing an Offence on him. So, *Yasa*, using his psychic power, flew to *Boxun*.

At that time there were sixty *bhiksus* at Bo-li. They were all forest dwellers, wearing only three robes, living on alms collected, wearing rags from dust heaps, sitting all the time and sitting in the open air. They had threefold knowledge and sixfold supernormal power. All of them were the disciples of *Ananda*. They all flew to *Vaisali*. *Yasa*, upon seeing them, put his robe and bowl into the sky, as if putting them on the ground. *Yasa* and these *bhiksus* greeted each other. *Yasa* told them in detail about the ten illegal points of the *Vrji bhiksus* and said, ‘Venerable Sirs, we must get together and discuss the *Vinaya Dharma* to extinguish those ten points. We must not allow the *Vrui bhiksus* to destroy the true *Dharma*.’ They arrived at a mutual understanding and wanted to extinguish those ten points together.

Furthermore there were thirty Bo-li *bhiksus* living in *Mathura*. Their attainments were the same as above. They were also the disciples of *Ananda*. *Yasa* had conversed with the sixty *bhiksus* mentioned above, saying, ‘If those thirty *bhiksus* would join us, we shall extinguish those evil points in accordance with the *Dharma*.’ After this discussion they flew together to the dwelling place of the thirty *bhiksus* and spoke to them as above. They also arrived at a mutual understanding and wanted to extinguish those ten points together.

Furthermore there were thirty Bo-li *bhiksus* living in *Alavi*. Their attainments were the same as above. They were also the disciples of *Ananda*. *Yasa* had made the same proposal to the ninety *bhiksus* as above. Then they flew together to the dwelling place of the thirty *bhiksus* at *Alavi* and told them as above. They also arrived at a mutual understanding and wanted to extinguish those ten points together.

At that time the Elder *Samghuta* was living in *Ahogamga Mountain*. *Yasa* had discussed with the one hundred and twenty *bhiksus* again as above and flew to

Sambhuta's place and told him as above. They also arrived at a mutual understanding and wanted to extinguish those ten points together.

At that time the Elder *Reabta* was living in *Kausambi* and absorbed in meditation on [immeasurable] loving-kindness. He had a large number of followers. *Yasa* conversed again with the one hundred and twenty-one bhiksus as above and flew to *Revata's* location and told him as above. They also arrived at a mutual understanding and wanted to extinguish those ten points together.

Then the *Vrji bhiksus* heard that *Yasa* had gone to the dwelling place of *Revata* in *Kausambi*. So they went there in a boat oaded with robes, bowls and material requisites for sramanas, to offer them as gifts in exchange for support. In the boat there was a bhiksu named *Salha*, who was practicing *Vinaya*. He wondered to himself whether the *Vrji bhiksus* were following the *Dharma* or not. After observing their behavior, according to the *Sutra* and the *Vinaya* he found that their behavior was not in accordance with the *Dharma*. Then a deity in the sky said aloud three times, 'Yes, yes, the behavior of the *Vrji bhiksus* in not in accordance with the *Dharma* as you have seen.'

The *Vrji bhiksus* arrived in *Kausambi*. They all disembarked and went to *Revata's* dwelling place and said to him, 'We have brought a lot of material requisites for the sramanas to offer to the venerable one. Please accept them.'

*Revata* answered, 'I have enough robes and bowls. Therefore I don't need them.' They then said, 'If you don't need that much, will you accept a little?' *Revata* said, 'I have sufficient robes and bowls. I cannot go against the *Dharma* and cannot accept your offerings.'

*Revata* had one disciple name *Da-mo*, who was his personal attendant. The *Vrji bhiksus* went to his dwelling place and said, 'We have requisites for te sramana.'

You can take them if you lack anything.' He replied, 'I don't lack anything.' The *Vrji bhiksus* said again, 'When the Buddha was alive, people came and made offerings. Whatever the Buddha was alive, people came and made offerings. Wherever the Buddha did not accept was offered to *Ananda*, who accepted all of them. It was the same as being accepted by the Buddha.' Hearing this, Da-mo accepted one item. Then he asked, 'Why do you insist that I should accept your offerings?' The *Vrji bhiksus* replied, 'We want you to ask on our *Dharma* and *Vinaya*.'

Da-mo therefore went to his master and said, 'Master, please help the *Vrji bhiksus*.' *Revata* answered, 'I won't help the unlawful.' Da-mo then said, 'Please reconsider it.' *Revata* answered, 'Now as you are persuading me to help the unlawful, you are not my disciple. From today onward you are no longer my attendant and I won't speak to you.' Da-mo was ashamed and scared. He went to the place of the *Vrji bhiksus*. They all asked, 'Is your master willing to help us?' Da-mo answered, 'No, I was blamed for your sake. The master refused to speak to me and drove me out.' The *Vrji bhiksus* asked, 'How old are you?' Da-mo answered, 'I am twenty.' So the *Vrji bhiksus* said, 'You are old enough. How could your master refuse to speak to you drive you out?'

Then the Elder *Revata* reflected thus, 'If I were to extinguish the ten points here, those who initiated this matter will initiate them again. Now we should all go where the ten points arose and extinguish them there.'

Having reflected thus, he went to *Vaisali* with the multitude of *bhiksus*. In that city, there lived a *bhiksu* named All Gone (*Sabbakami*?). He was the most senior *sthavira* in *Jambudvīpa*. He was a *sramana*, a son of the *Sakyan*, an arhant who had gained threefold knowledge and sixfold supernormal power. He was also the most senior disciple of *Ananda*.

*Yasa* said to *Revata* outside the temple, 'Go to the *Sthavira's* room, prepare the bedding, sleep there and talk to him about the matter discussed above. I will come to pay my respects to the *sthavira* tomorrow morning.' The bhiksus who accompanied *Revata* entered the abodes of the *Samgha*. The *Sthavira All Gone* had bathing facilities and the afternoon drinks prepared for them. *Revata* went to the *sthavira's* room alone, prepared the bedding and slept there. In the night *Revata* thought thus, 'This *Sthavira All Gone* is very old and weak, but still makes an effort to spend the night in sitting meditation. How can I sleep here peacefully?' *All Gone* also thought thus, 'This guest *bhiksu* is extremely tired after travelling, has bathed himself and spends the whole night in sitting and walking meditation. How can I sleep here peacefully?' So they both engaged in sitting meditation for the whole night until the last watch, when *All Gone* asked *Revata*, 'What kind of *Samadhi* did you experience most of the time tonight?' *Revata* answered, 'I am disposed to loving-kindness. So I experienced this *Samadhi* most of the time tonight.' *All Gone* said, 'It is a trivial *Samadhi*.' He then asked, 'Are you an arhant?' *Revata* answered, 'Yes, I am.' Then *Revata* asked *All Gone*, 'What kind of *Samadhi* did the *sthavira* experience most of the time tonight?' *All Gone* answered, 'I am disposed to practicing insighton emptiness. So I experienced this *Samadhi* most of the time tonight.' *Revata* said, 'It is the practice of Great Beings. The reason is that the emptiness *Samadhi* is the *Dharma* of Great Beings.' He asked the *sthavira*, 'Are you an arhant?' *All Gone* answered, 'Yes, I am.'

After the last watch of the night, the bhiksu *Yasa* came to the door of their room and snapped his fingers. The *sthavira* opened the door. *Yasa* entered the room and greeted the *sthavira*. After the greeting, *Revata* asked *All Gone*, 'Is it legal to keep salt and ginger in the lodging?' *All Gone* answered, 'This question should be raised in

the Samgha. If you ask me here, I am afraid those who do not abide by the law would take it as my personal opinion and would not allow me to take part in the discussion of *Vinaya*.'

*Revata* therefore assembled the *Samgha* to discuss the *Vinaya*. Then different opinions came up so that they could not arrive at any decision. So he addressed the *Samgha*, 'Today we want to discuss the *Vinaya Dharma*, but different opinions came up so that no decision could be arrived at. Therefore I propose that four bhiksus from each side be appointed by the act of one motion and one pronouncement to deliberate the matter.' First the *Vrji bhiksus* named four persons: the first was All Gone, the second *Revata*, the third *Bu-che-zong* (*KubjaSobhita?*) and the fourth *Sumana*. The *Bo-li bhiksus* also named four persons: the first was *Sambhuta*, the second *Salha*, the third Long Hair and the fourth *Po-sha-lan* (*Vasabhagamika?*). These *sthaviras*, having been appointed by the *Samgha*, deliberated, 'Where can we find a place that is quiet, peaceful, level and spacious where we could discuss the *Vinaya Dharma*?' After surveying all around, they decided that only the garden donated by the lady named *Pi-luo-ye* was suitable. *Revata* ordered his disciple *Da-mo* to go there and prepare suitable. *Revata* ordered his disciple *Da-mo* to go there and prepare seats, saying, 'You should leave when the *sthaviras* come.' *Da-mo* received the order and prepared the seats. The *sthaviras* came and took their seats one by one. Then *Revata* asked the *Sthavira* All Gone answered, 'Not legal.' Then he asked, 'Where was the rule made?' All Gone answered, 'In *Rajagrha*.' He then asked, 'On account of whom was the rule made?' All Gone answered, 'On account of one forest-dwelling bhiksu.' He then asked, 'What offence would he commit?' All Gone answered, 'He would commit the offence of Expiation in keeping food items in the lodging.' *Revata* said, 'This is the *Dharma*, this is the *Vinaya* and this is in accordance with the Buddha's teaching. The

practice of the *Vrji bhiksus* is *adharmā, avinaya* and not in accordance with the Buddha's teaching. Now I put down the first stick.'

*Revata* then asked, 'Is it legal to scoop up food with two fingers and eat?' All *Gone* asked, 'What do you mean by "to scoop up food with two fingers and eat"?' *Revata* said, 'The *bhikṣu*, having eaten his fill, receives food again and eats it, scooping up the food with two fingers.' All *Gone* answered, 'Not legal.' He then asked, 'Where was the rule made?' All *Gone* answered, 'In *Rājagṛha*.' He asked again, 'On account of whom was the rule made?' All *Gone* answered, 'On account of *Bānāndya* (*Upananda*?).' He then asked, 'What offence would he commit?' All *Gone* answered, 'He would commit an offence of Expiation on eating leftover food.' *Revata* said, 'This is the *Dharma*, this is the *Vinaya* and this is in accordance with the Buddha's teaching. The practice of the *Vrjibhiksus* is *adharmā, avinaya* and not in accordance with the Buddha's teaching. Now I put down the second stick.' 'To sit again and eat' and 'To go to another village and eat' went through the same procedure as above. *Revata* put down the third and the fourth sticks.

*Revata* then asked, 'Is it legal to mix yoghurt with butter and rock sugar?' The *sthavira* asked, 'What do you mean by "to mix yoghurt with butter and rock sugar"?' *Revata* said, 'Drinking at an improper time.' All *Gone* answered, 'Not legal.' He asked, again, 'Where was the rule made?' All *Gone* answered, 'In *Srāvastī*.' He asked again, 'On account of whom was the rule made?' All *Gone* answered, 'On account of *Jiāliūtūoyī* (*Kalodayin*?).' He then asked, 'What offence would he commit?' All *Gone* answered, 'He would commit an offence of Expiation on eating at an improper time.' *Revata* said, 'This is the *Dharma*, this is the *Vinaya* and this is in accordance with the Buddha's teaching. The practice of the *Vrjibhiksus* is *adharmā, avinaya* and not in accordance with the Buddha's teaching. Now I put down the fifth stick.'

*Revata* then asked, 'Is it legal to drink jalogi?' The *sthavira* asked, 'What do you mean by jalogi?' *Revata* said, 'A drink that is not fully brewed.' All *Gone* answered, 'Not legal.' He then asked, 'Where was the rule made?' All *Gone* answered, 'In *Kausambi*.' He then asked, 'On account of whom was the rule made?' All *Gone* answered, 'On account of whom was the rule made?' All *Gone* answered, 'On account of *Sha-jie-tuo* (*Sagata*?).' He then asked, 'What offence would he commit?' All *Gone* answered, 'He would commit an offence of Expiation on drinking alcohol.' *Revata* said, 'This is the *Dharma*, this is the *Vinaya* and this is in accordance with the Buddha's teaching. The practice of the *Vrji bhiksus* is *adharmā, avinaya* and not in accordance with the Buddha's teaching. Now I put down the sixth stick.'

*Revata* then asked, 'Is it legal to make the sitting mat of a size according to one's desire?' All *Gone* answered, 'Not legal.' *Revata* then asked, 'Where was the rule made?' All *Gone* answered, 'In *Sravasti*.' *Revata* then asked, 'On account of whom was the rule made?' All *Gone* answered, 'On account of *Jia-liu-tuo-yi*.' *Revata* then asked, 'What offence would he commit?' All *Gone* answered, 'An offence of Expiation.' *Revata* said, 'This is the *Dharma*, this is the *Vinaya* and this is in accordance with the Buddha's teaching. The practice of the *Vrjibhiksus* is *adharmā, avinaya* and not in accordance with the Buddha's teaching. Now I put down the seventh stick.'

*Revata* then asked, 'Is it legal to follow previous practices?' The *sthavira* asked, 'What do you mean by following previous practices?' *Revata* said, 'To follow the practices one previously followed as a lay person.' The *sthavira* said, 'Some of them can be practiced and some cannot.' *Revata* said, 'This is the *Dharma*, this is the *Vinaya* and this is in accordance with the Buddha's teaching. The practice of the *Vrji bhiksus* is *adharmā, avinaya* and not in accordance with the Buddha's teaching. Now I put down the eighth stick.'

*Revata* then asked, 'Is it legal to seek ratification?' The *sthavira* asked, 'What do you mean by seeking ratification?' *Revata* said, 'Having performed a legal act separately, they seek ratification from the other bhiksus afterward.' All Gone answered, 'Not legal.' *Revata* then asked 'Where was the rule made?' All Gone answered, 'In Camga.' *Rnvata* then asked, 'On account of whom was the rule made?' All Gone answered, 'On account of the group of six *bhiksus*.' *Revata* asked again, 'What offence would they commit?' All Gone answered, 'The offence of not following the legal procedure.' *Revata* said, 'This is the *Dharma*, this is the *Vinaya* and this is in accordance with the Buddha's teaching. The practice of the *Vrji bhiksus* is *adharmā*, *avinaya* and not in accordance with the Buddha's teaching. Now I put down the ninth stick.'

*Revata* then asked, 'Is it legal to receive and keep gold, silver and money?' All Gone answered, 'Not legal.' *Revata* then asked 'Where was the rule made?' All Gone answered, 'In *Rajagrha*.' *Ravata* then asked, 'On account of whom was the rule made?' All Gone answered, 'On account of Nan-tuo-ba-nan-tuo (*Nandopananda*?).' *Revata* then asked, 'What offence would he commit?' All Gone answered, 'He would commit an offence of Forfeiture for receiving and keeping gold, silver and money.' *Revata* said, 'This is the *Dharma*, this is the *Vinaya* and this is in accordance with the Buddha's teaching. The practice of the *Vrji bhiksus* is *adharmā*, *avinaya* and not in accordance with the Buddha's teaching. Now I put down the tenth stick.'

After this questioning they went back and assembled the *Samgha* again. *Revata* put all the questions one by one as before to All Gone in the assembly. He put down the first stick, until the tenth. The *Revata* said aloud, 'We have completed the recitation of the *Vinaya Dharma*. We should not make rules that the Buddha did not

make and we should abide by the rules that have already been made. We should practice seriously what is taught by the Buddha.'

At that time the bhiksus who recited the *Vinaya Dharma* were as follows: the first *sthavira* called All Gone had been 136 years in the Order, the second *sthavira* called *Revata* had been 120 years in the Order, and the third *sthavira* called *Sambhuta* and the fourth *sthavira* called *Yasa* both had been 110 years in the Order. Altogether there were seven hundred arhants, no more and no less. Therefore it was called the Assembly of the Seven Hundred for the Recitation of the *Dharma*.

**CHAPTER IV**  
**THE THIRD GREAT BUDDHIST COUNCIL**

## CHAPTER IV

### THE THIRD GREAT BUDDHIST COUNCIL

The conflict between the orthodox traditionalists and the non-conformist sects in the Buddhist Sangha reached its climax at sometimes in the reign of Asoka Maurya in the third century B.C. with the growth of numerous sects issuing from the Mahasanghika group as well as the Theravada group, new theories and interpretations on the Dhamma Vinaya became a regular feature and to prevent those new interpretation on the Dhamma and Vinaya, Theravadain monks gathered together at Patliputta to settle down the dispute under the leadership of Ven.Moggaliputta Tissa.

We have discussed the Second Buddhist Council in previous chapter and we will keep on discuss the Third Buddhist Council. As Buddhism developed over the years, the different interpretations of the master's teachings among the different schools appeared. The occasion for the Third Buddhist Council was supplied by the need to establish the purity of the Canon which had been imperiled by the rise of different schools.

From the time of the Second Buddhist Council which was held a century after the passing away of the Buddha, numerous interpretations of the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* were made by monks, who by now had increased in numbers and were widespread in the country.

Subsequent to the Second Buddhist Council, in the first three centuries after the passing away of the Buddha, the community of Buddhist monks is said to have broken up into eighteen or more Schools. The list contained in the Sri Lanka Chronicles which mention eighteen early Schools and six later Schools, is doubtless the oldest, but as it is preserved by a School out of direct contact with India.

According to the list in the Chronicles the Schools were arranged as follow:

Theravada: *Mahisasaka, Vajjiputtaka, Sarvastivada, Dhammuttariya, Bhadra-yanika, Chandagarika, Samitiya, Dhammaguttika, Kassapika, Sankantika, and Suttan-tika* Schools.

Mahasanghika: *Gokullika, Ekavyavahara, Pannattivada, Bahulika, Cetiya.*<sup>1</sup>

As a result of the original Sangha breaking up into numerous Schools diverse views regarding the interpretation of the scripture developed. Basically, they all agreed on the principle tenets of Buddhism such as the four noble truths, the eightfold path, the theory of dependent origination, non-existence of soul, the theory of karma, and the *Bodhipakkhiyadhama.*<sup>2</sup> The differences of opinion were mainly on points like the superiority of the arahants, the existence of the dhamma (elements), the superhuman qualities of the Buddha, the virtue of making gifts, the realization of truths and its process and the powers of the arahants.<sup>3</sup> One common point mostly debated among monks of these sects was the question of the attributes of the arahants and their powers. As the views of the traditionalists were opposed by the seceders the latter were described in the traditional Theravada accounts as heretics and sinful men who despised the teachings of the Buddha and who by their theories distorted the teachings of the Buddha.<sup>4</sup>

According to the account of the Dipavamsa, the first seceders from the original Sangha were the Vajjiputtas who were ousted by the Theravadins.<sup>5</sup> This perhaps was the most conspicuous schism that occurred in the Sangha. The secessionists number ten thousand, hence I was recognized as the Vadas, doctrines.

---

1. W.Geiger, ed, Mahavamsa, the Great Chronicle of Ceylon, p.26. Buddhist CulturalCenter, Colombo,1912.

2. Mahavamsa,III,331-33, 448-9, 335-367.

3. Ibid.I,68, Shwe Zan Aung and Mrs.Rhys Davids, Kathavatthu, (Points of Controversy) XVII,4., Longon, 1960.

4. Dipavamsa, verse 23,27.

5. Dipavamsa.Verse.30-31.

Monks who followed the ancient tradition as held by the early disciples were known as the Theravadas and others generally designated the Acariyavadas.

Subsequent to the Second Great Council there grew up a number of such Schools holding different interpretations of the teachings and some of these Schools were referred to by the names of the leaders who propounded the system of thought. As such the Bahusrutiya School was started by the learned doctor Bahusruta, Kasspiya by Kassapa, Dhammuttariya by Thera Dhammuttara. Others came to be designated by the place of their origin such as the Apraseliyas, Cetiya, Hemavatas and so forth. Still others received their names from the particular tenet they held, like the Sabbatthivadins, Suttavadins and Vibhajjavadins.<sup>6</sup> Of these Schools the Thera Mahadeva who belonged to the Aparaseliys sect gained recognition in the accounts of the Northern Buddhists.

Vasumitra, Bhavya and Vinitadeva in their accounts of the Buddhist sects refer to the five propositions of Mahadeva as the cause of the first schism in the Buddhist Sangha.<sup>7</sup> These dogmas are: (a) The arahats are subject to temptation. (b) They may have a residue of ignorance. (c) They have doubts regarding certain matters. (d) They gain knowledge through others help. (e) The path is gained by an exclamation.

Watters refers to the evidence of Yuan Chwang, where the pilgrim states in the *Abhidharma Vibhāsa* Lun, that Mahadeva came from Mathura, had his ordination at the Kukkutrārama in Pataliputra and was the head of the monastery there. He was befriended by the ruling monarch with whose help he was able to oust the senior monks and establish his five dogmas. Yuan Chwang further states that on the instigation of the king an assembly of monks was summoned at which the senior

---

6. Rhys Davids, *Points of Controversy*, intr.XLIV.

7. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1910. p.416.

brethren voted against the five dogmas. Mahadeva was however supported by a large majority of the ordination monks.<sup>8</sup>

None of Theravada accounts speak of Mahadeva. His propositions alone are referred to in the Kathavatthu, but regarding his life we have only Yuan Chwang's account. Sanskrit and later Tibetan writers state that Mahadeva founded the school of the Caityakas and he put forward five points concerning which a Council was held. Professor De La Valee Poussin states that Mahadeva's points were purely speculative and that they approximated to, though they did not coincide with, the points controverted in Kathavatthu.<sup>9</sup>

According to Kathavatthu text, a section of the Mahasanghikas maintained that the arhats were not omniscient like the Buddhas and that they were subject to fall from the state of arahatship.<sup>10</sup> The Pubbaseliyas and Aparaseliyas held that the fall of an arahat is sometimes due to the deeds of his previous lives.<sup>11</sup> The Theravadins do not admit the failings which are attributed to the arahats by the Bahusrutiyas, Sailas and Hemavata Schools, and the Kathavatthu in a number of places defends the powers of the arahants when opposed by other Schools.

For instance, the Uttarapathakas believed that laymen could become arahants but the Theravadins denied it. The Uttarapathakas in maintaining their belief state that ordinary people such as Yasa, Uttiya and Sati did become arahants.<sup>12</sup> The Uttarapathakas believed that arahants were all free from passions whereas the Theravadins argued that not all 'dhammas' of arahants were free from passions.<sup>13</sup> The Andhakas maintained that by the destruction of all bonds one becomes an arahant,

---

8. Watters, Yuan Chwang 1,261,268. N. Dutt, Early Monastic Buddhism, Vol.II.42.

9. Kathavatthu, XXI.3.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.IV.1.

13. Ibid.IV.3.

whereas the Theravadins held that all bonds are gradually destroyed, and this not by Arahattamagga alone. The Rajagirikas and Siddhatthikas believed that one becomes an arahant only when one kammic effects are exhausted, and hence arahants cannot die an untimely death. The Theravadins on this point believed that arahants may die an untimely death, as arahantaghatakas (slayers of arahants) are mentioned in the Buddhavacana.<sup>14</sup>

This prejudice of the Theravadins is difficult to maintain the light of evidence found in some of the religious works of the opposing sects. For example, the Mahasanghika had much in common with the Theravadins in so far as the arrangement of their Vinaya works and interpretations of the Dhamma and Vinaya were concerned, but differed on matters such as the inclusion of certain texts in the Canon. They held that works like the Parivvara, Patisambhida, Niddesa and Jataka should be excluded from the Canon. Here the importance and accuracy of the decisions by which the Mahasanghikas discriminated between original portions and later interpolations are fully confirmed in the light of modern research. The Parivara, which was a manual for bhikkhus and a summary of the original Vinaya works, is a later composition and presumably the work of a Sri Lanka monk. The Patisambhida, Niddesa and Jatakas were added to the Canon long after it was closed.<sup>15</sup>

Yuan Chwang who studied at the Mahasanghika Vihara states that the Vinaya of the Mahsanghikas was the same as the one researched in the First Council but that they added discourses that were rejected at this Council.<sup>16</sup> The original Mahvastu, the Vinaya work of the Lokuttaravadins, a sub-sect of the Mahasanghikas, in form agreed closely with the Vinaya Mahavagga of the Theravadins. In certain doctrines the Mahasanghikas agreed with the Theravadins when they held that the realization of the

---

14. Kathavatthu.XVII.2.

15. Oldenberg, Vinaya Pitaka, Intr.XXI.,V; Dipavamsa, Verse.37.

16. Watters, Yuan Chwang, II,160; Kern, Manual of Indian Buddhism,4.

truths takes place all at once and not gradually as maintained by the Savatthivadins.<sup>17</sup>

Though they differed in minor points of Dhamma and Discipline came within the folds of Buddhism. Mrs. Rhys Davids in her introduction to Kathavatthu sums up the matter in these words:

“...and it must be borne in mind that all those who were implicated in the controversies here set forth were within the Sasana. All as we should say were Buddhists, they may not, on certain matters, have been of us ‘Sakavada’ but they were certainly not hence outside “*ito bahidda*”, a term bestowed on teachers of other creeds.”<sup>18</sup>

During the reign of Bindusara in the third century B.C., the Theravadins shifted their center to Avanti and Sarvastivadins to Mathura. The Mahisasakas went to Mysore and the Mahasanghikas to the Andhra country in the south. All these sects had their adherents living in the monasteries in Magadha.<sup>19</sup> In the reign of Asoka, Sarvastivadins had two centers; one at Mathura and the other at Kashmir. According to the Tibetan traditions, the Theravadins ascribed the foundation of their school to Mahakaccayana.<sup>20</sup> However, the Pali traditions give prominence to Upali.<sup>21</sup> From the Vinaya Cullavagga account it is clear that the monks of the West, Avanti and Kosambi formed the nucleus of this school. The West of India as the early Theravada center. On the basis of these traditions Dutt proposes two centers, where the Theravada School was popular in the third century B.C. one at Pataliputta and the other at Avanti.<sup>22</sup>

---

17. Kathavatthu, Points of Controversy VI.85.

18. Ibid, Intr.XLVII.

19. N. Dutt, Early Buddhist Monastism., Motil Banarsidh, Delhi, 1979, p.242.

20. Mahakarmavibhanga Sutra, Department of Religious Affairs, Rangoon, 1956, p. 61-62.

21. Ven.Buddhaghosa, Samantapasadika, commentary on Vinaya, Religious Affairs, Rangoon, 1957. p.140.

22. N. Dutt, Early History of the Spread of Buddhism and the Buddhist Schools, 257.

## 4.1 The Third Council

The conflict between the orthodox traditionalists and the non-conformist sects in the Buddhist Sangha reached its climax at sometime in the reign of Asoka Maurya in the third century B.C. with the growth of numerous sects issuing from the Mahasanghika group as well as the Theravada group, new theories and interpretations on the Dhamma Vinaya became a regular feature.<sup>23</sup> The Dipavamsa while recording the divisions in the Sangha which arose from the Mahasanghika faction refers to the sects which seceded from the Theravada and maintains that the original Theravada was the only pure undivided sect.<sup>24</sup>

The Theravadins maintained that they alone preserved the teachings of the Buddha in the undiluted form as handed down by the immediate disciples of the Buddha.<sup>25</sup> They argued that the teachings held by the seceders were heretical and contrary to the genuine teachings of the Buddha.<sup>26</sup> The dissenting sects on the other hand claimed authenticity to their teachings and they too traced their origin to a leading disciple of the Buddha. For we find the Mahasanghikas holding Mahakassapa as their patron noble person and founder and they believed that they held the doctrines and Disciplines settled by him at the First Council.<sup>27</sup>

In the time of Asoka (262 B.C) the Theravadins gained ascendancy in the area around Pataliputra and they were able to win the sympathy of the monarch. To suppress the dissenting views of the opposing sect and claim superiority for the teachings of the Theravadins an assembly of Elders of the Theravada was convened at Pataliputta. The Theravadins during this period found an able exponent of their views

---

23. Dipavamsa. Verse. 36, 43.

24. Ibid. 45, 51.

25. Samantapadasika. I. 40; Atthasalini. 32.

26. Dipavamsa. Verse. 19.

27. Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1838, 143;

in Moggaliputta Tissa, a monk of deep learning, well versed in the Vinaya and the orthodox tradition and an able dialectician.

In the assembly at Pataliputta he presented the Kathavatthu, a work on the Abhidhamma, in which he denounced the views of the opposing sects after comparing them with the teachings of Theravada. Around the nucleus of this fact a large amount of fiction has grown up. When stripped of the legendary material it appears that some form of assembly was actually held during this period. As this assembly was strictly confined to the Theravada group, it is completely ignored in the account of Northern schools. It is only in the Chronicles of Sri Lanka, the commentaries of Ven. Buddhaghosa and other literary works of a later date that there is reference to this Council. As it finds no mention in the Cullavagga, it implies that the Vinaya account was composed before the time of Asoka.

The accounts in the Chronicles are about six or seven centuries later, during which time of course numerous accretions had built up on the core of the incident. Kern states that the principal object of the whole story is to prove that the Vibhajjavādins of the Mahavihara, whose accounts are found in the Chronicles, were the real and original orthodox sect.<sup>28</sup>

The details of the Council in the Chronicles and the commentaries of Buddhaghosa have much in similar, except for the fact that Ven. Buddhaghosa and the author of the Mahavamsa seem to know more details of the incident than the Dipavamsa, the early Chronicle. The account of the Council appears in two chapters of the Dipavamsa. Presumably the author had access to two original sources but the contents do not vary much. According to the Dipavamsa, the reason for convening a Council was the fact that the genuine monks of Pataliputta were unable to perform the

---

<sup>28</sup> . Kern, Manual of Indian Buddhism, 110.

Uposatha as heretics and schismatic had lost honor and had crept into the Order and polluted the Sangha.<sup>29</sup> Secondly the Ajivaka and other s of different views had donned the yellow robes and corrupted the Sangha. To avert this situation Ven.Moggaliputta Tissa is said to have convened an assembly at which all heretical views of the other sects were denounced.<sup>30</sup>

According to the Dipavamsa, it was at this Council that Ven.Moggaliputta Tissa presented the Kathavatthu denouncing all the views of dissentient sects. Subsequent to this act the Dipavamsa reports that Aoka rid the order of ruinous monks.<sup>31</sup> The Samantapasadika and Mahavamsa give more details of the proceedings and state that the Council was held to cleanse the Order of undesirable elements. These accounts state that Asoka took a leading part in the matter and made inquires as regards the purity of the Order which for seven years had not held the Uposatha. Both sources report that Emperor Asoka requested Ven.Moggaliputta Tissa to hold the Council prior to which all monks were summoned to an ecclesiastical court and those who held views different to that of Vibhajjavada were expelled from the Order.

As the Sangha was now rid of corrupt monks, the king requested that the Uposatha be performed.<sup>32</sup> The Samantapasadika further adds that Asoka forcibly expelled the heretics and gave them white clothes.<sup>33</sup>

## **4.2 The Term ‘*Vibhajjavada***

*Vibhajjavada* is a term used by Theravada Buddhists today to describe the teaching of the Buddha. It is more than a descriptive term it is an honorific term signifying a mark of distinction that places Buddhism above all other philosophies.

---

29. Dipavamsa.VII.36,38

30. Ibid.VII.55.

31. Dipavamsa.VII, 53,57.

32. Mahavamsa, Verse.270-74.

33. Samantapasadika.29.

We will trace this term and its meaning in the light of the Pali Nikayas and modern historical research. We are going to attempt to discover the original teaching of the Buddha in its pristine purity.

We would like to point out that the teachings of these early texts are very different from that of the latter, and that one who fails to see this difference, fails to understand the original message of the Buddha. For convenience in expression, we use the term early Buddhism to refer to the earlier form and the term Theravada to refer to the latter.

The ideas set forth here may affect the sentiments of devout Theravadins, but they are presented for examination on an intellectual level. Emotional reactions are not only contrary to Buddhist principles, they are a hindrance to the understanding of the matter presented. In support we might recall the words of the Buddha in the *Brahmajala sutta*.<sup>34</sup>

“Monks, if others should speak against me, or against the Teaching, or against the Order, you should not on that account either bear malice, or suffer heart-burning, or feel illwill. If you, on that account, should be angry and hurt, that would stand in the way of your own self-conquest, if, when others speak against us, you feel angry at that and displeased, would you then be able to judge how far that speech of theirs is well said or ill?”

The references to the term ‘*Vibhajjavada*’ first occurs in the Pali Canon in the *Sangiti Sutta* of *Digha Nikaya*.<sup>35</sup> It here simply means one who deals with metaphysical problems straight away by direct answer. In the *Majjhima Nikaya* and the *Papanasudani*, the Buddha declared that he knew Theravada.<sup>36</sup> Though these two

---

34. D.i.3.

35. Pathika vagga(D.iii),210. Department of Religious Affairs, Rangoon, 1958.

36. Mulapannasa (M.i.). p.63, Department of Religious Affairs, Rangoon, 1955.

terms used were in the Nikayas they did not denote any particular sect. Bhavya and Vinitadeva treated the Vibhajjavadins as offshoots of the Sarvastivadins.

The first mentioned of this term *vibhajjavada* as an epithet describing the teaching of the Buddha, is found in the *Samantapasadka*, commentary to the Vinaya (4<sup>th</sup> century AC) and in the Mahavamsa (6<sup>th</sup> century AC). Both these texts mention this term with reference to the same incident during the time of Dharmasoka, the Emperor of India (3<sup>rd</sup> century BC)

We read in the Mahavamsa, the Ceylonese chronicle, that during the time of Asoka, the Righteous (Dhammasoka), many heretics holding false doctrines had entered the Sangha in order to destroy it. The Sangha had split into eighteen sects by this time. One of the sects identified as the Orthodox Theravada won his favor and he was converted to Buddhism. This sect happened to be the one that defined the teaching of the Buddha as vibhajjavada. Things seem to have been manipulated to the point where the Emperor had to use his authority to expel from the Sangha all those who were not Vibhajjavadins. The account in the Mahavamsa is interesting:

Then seated with the Thera on one side, behind a curtain, the ruler called to him in turn the bhikkus of the several confessions and asked them: “Sir, what did the Blessed one teach? And they each expounded their wrong doctrines, the ‘*Sassata* Doctrine’ and so forth. And all those adherents of false doctrines did the King cause to be expelled from the Order. Those who were expelled were in all sixty thousand and now he asked the rightly believing bhikkhus: ‘What does the Blessed One teach? And they answered: ‘He teaches Vibhajjavada Doctrine.’”<sup>37</sup>

---

37. Mahavamsa.49.

The term *vibhajja* (*va+bhajja*) in this context means: analysis, dissection or division. *Vibhajitva vadati silena vibhajjavadi, vibhajjavadi-* in the sense of speaking analytically.

Ven. Coliya Kassapa says in the *Vimativinodani Vinaya Tika*, sub-commentary to the *Vinaya*, *vibhajjavadi* is one who speaks analytically. He proceeds to explain further: Without speaking of all things in their totality, having analysed them according to the Dhamma, having disintegrated and fragmented them, removes whatever false views and confusing there be, and distinguishes between convention and truth.”

Poussin has traced in the Chinese commentary of the *Vijnapimatrasiddhi*, a passage in which the *Vibhajjavadins* are identified with *Prajnapativadins*, a branch of the *Mahasanghikas*.<sup>38</sup> He further states that the position of the *Vibhajjavadins* cannot be clearly made out as their doctrines have much in common with those of the *Sarvastivadins*, *Mahasanghikas*, *Sammitiyas* and others.<sup>39</sup> Sukumar Dutt believes, the *Vibhajjavadins* were of two groups: the *Sarvastivadi Vibhajjavadins* and the *Theravadi Vibhajjavadins*. The latter he presumes did not accept the theory that all things exist in their present nature, hence he prefers to call them the *Vibhajjavadi Theravadins*.

Apart from the *Chronicles* the colophon in the third chapter of the *Cullavagga* of the *Vinaya*, refers to the *Mahaviharavasins* as *Vibhajjavadins*. This appears to be a later interpolation, whereby the *Mahaviharavasins* were anxious to identify themselves as *Vibhajjavadins* and customs of the ancient teachings. It states that, this recitation is for the maintenance of the true Dhamma among teachers of *Vibhajja*

---

38. *Abhidharmakosa* Intro.

39. *Ibid.*

doctrine, who are dwellers in the Mahavihara and who illuminate the *Tambapannidipa*.<sup>40</sup>

From the accounts in the Chronicles and the *Samantapasadika* we are made to believe that Asoka interfered in matters of the Sangha. State interference concerning matters of the Sangha goes back to the days of the Buddha where we hear of king Bimbisara requesting the Buddha to enforce the 'vassa' practice and also postpone the vassa on a particular occasion. In these instances they were requests, and the Buddha abided by them.<sup>41</sup> However there is no reference to kings taking the initiative of expelling monks from the Order. By virtue of royal right the kings had the power to punish individuals of any religious Orders for violating a customary law of the country.

This is echoed in the Mahavagga account where Bimbisara states that kings not well disposed to religious men could mete out the several punishments if they admitted a warrior to the Order.<sup>42</sup> This is further characterised in the Cullavagga account of Ven. Devadatta. When Ven.Devatta was accused of conniving with prince Ajatasattu to murder king Bimbisara, the ministers held that Ven.Devadatta too should be given the same punishment for treason.<sup>43</sup>

In these legends, it is clear that monks come under the secular law of the country and the kings as upholders of both secular and religious law were entitled to interfere in matters concerning religious institutions. As such, if Asoka did intervene, his case was justifiable. We also find Asoka drawing the attention of the monks and nuns of the Buddhist Order, to certain Buddhist texts and also enforcing severe

---

40. Vinaya Pali (Vol.ii.)72.

41. Vinaya Pali (Vol.i.112)

42. Ibid.73.

43. Vinaya Pali (Vol.ii.191.)

punishment for those who violated the peace in the Sangha, and caused schisms in the monastery.

According to Vinaya rules, monks whose conduct was detrimental to the welfare of the Order, could be punished and expelled from the Sangha. This could only be carried out by the Sangha.<sup>44</sup> Whether Asoka actually had a hand in expelling the monks is a matter of conjecture. On the other hand it is likely that the composers of the Chronicles had in mind events which took place in the history of Sangha in Sri Lanka, where severe punishment such as branding and banishing were meted out to monks who held heretical views by such kings as Voharika Tissa and Gothabhaya in the latter part of the third century A.D.<sup>45</sup>

From the description of the Third Buddhist Council in the Chronicles and the various views expressed about it by modern scholars, the inference we can draw is that an assembly of Elders did take place in Pataliputra, which was now the stronghold of the Theravada sect. The growing power of the opposing sects, which were by now widely diffused throughout India, was a threat to the stability of the orthodox Sangha, who took stock of the situation. In order to further their views and denounce the claims of the other sects opposed to orthodoxy, they held a Council at which the Kathavatthu was formulated opposing all views of the opposing sects. Further, within the Theravada Sangha, works on Abhidhamma dealing with metaphysics and abstruse doctrinal interpretation had grown. These needed some legal recognition for which an assembly was convened, where these works were passed as teachings of the Buddha. This view is manifested in the Chronicles and the works of Ven. Buddhaghosa who maintain that the Abhidhamma was recognised even at the early Councils, a view which is absent in the Vinaya accounts.

---

44. Vinaya.i.88.

45. Mahavamsa.XXXVI.98.

Considering the next Council which was held in India during the reign of Kaniska in the first century B.C. where the Sarvastivadin monks gathered and arranged their doctrines, it is highly suggestive that a Council of the Elders of the Theravadins did take place in the reign of Asoka in Pataiputra, the stronghold of orthodox monastic life and organization.

Taking this event as a historical nucleus the traditional Chronicles of Sri Lanka amplified the whole theme for certain objective reasons. The missionaries who first came and established Buddhism and the monastic Order in Sri Lanka belonged to the Theravada sect. The Chronicles were anxious to maintain that the teachings which the missionaries brought were the pure form of orthodox Buddhism prevailing in the center of Magadha and that the missionaries who brought the teachings were of pure lineage. To give weight to their views they added the story of the Uposatha ceremony, the expulsion of unworthy monks and the complete rehearsal of the Dhamma and Vinaya at a Council held in Pataliputra.

### **4.3 The Doctrine Of Analysis**

This idea is well illustrated in the Visuddhimagga: “just as when the component parts such as axles, wheels, frame poles etc., are arranged in a certain way, there comes to be the mere term of common usage ‘chariot’, yet in the ultimate sense when each part is examined, there is no chariot, and just as when the component parts of a house such as wattles, etc., are placed so that they enclose a space in a certain way, there comes to be the mere term of common usage ‘house’, yet in the ultimate sense there is no house, and just as when the fingers, thumb, etc, are placed in a certain way, there comes to be the mere term of common usage, ‘fist’, -with body and strings, ‘lute’; with elephants, horses, etc., ‘army’; with surrounding walls, houses,

states, etc., ‘city’;- just as when trunk, braches, foliage, etc., are placed in a certain way, there comes to be the mere term of common usage ‘tree’, yet in the ultimate sense, when each component is examined there is no tree.<sup>46</sup>

This same analytical thinking that leads to the idea of ‘non-existence’ of the ‘thing’ or ‘entity’ is used to analyse the personality into five aggregates (panca-kkhandha), resulting in the concept of ‘no self’ (anatta).

So too, when there are the five aggregates (as objects) of clinging, there comes to be the mere term of common usage ‘a being’, ‘a person’, yet in the ultimate sense, when each component is examined, there is no being as a basis for the assumption ‘I am’ or ‘I’; in the ultimate sense there is only mentality-materiality. The vision of one who sees in this way is called correct vision.<sup>47</sup>

Ven.Nyanatilok comments on this stand-point in his book ‘Word of the Buddha’ thus:

This is, in brief, the Anatta Doctrine of the Buddha, i.e. the teaching that all existence is void (*Sunna*) of a permanent self or substance. It is the fundamental Buddhist Doctrine, not found in any other religious reaching.<sup>48</sup> How this analytical stand-point is related to meditation, is very clearly illustrated in the following passage from the Visuddhimagga: When a butcher rears a cow, brings it to the place of slaughter, binds it to a post, makes it stand up, slaughters it and looks at the slaughtered cow, during all that time he has still the notion ‘cow’. But when he has cut up the slaughtered cow, divided it into pieces, and sits down near it to sell the meat, the notion ‘cow’ ceases in his mind, and the notion ‘meat’ arises. He does not think that he is selling a cow or that people buy a cow, but that it is meat that is sold and bought. Similarly, in an ignorant worldling, whether monk or layman, the concept

---

46. Ven.Nyanamoli: The Path of Purification.XVIII.28,The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taiwan, 1958.

47. Ibid.28.

48. Ven.Nyanatiloka: Words of the Buddha.12, Wisdom Publication, Bostom, 2005.

‘being’, ‘man, ‘personality’, etc., will not cease until he has mentally dissected this body of his, just as it stands and moves, and has contemplated it according to its component elements. But when he has done so, the notion ‘personality’, etc, will disappear, and his mind will become firmly established in the contemplation of the elements.<sup>49</sup>

In discussing this same stand-point, Ven.Nyanaponika says in his book ‘Abhidhamma Studies’: “When expounding the characteristic of impermanence (*anicca lakkhana*), the Suttas and also the popular treatises on Buddhism stress mainly or exclusively that aspect of change which consists in separation, dissolution or dissimilation. This particular emphasis is fully justified in so far as the ultimate purpose of Buddhist instruction is a practical one: the final deliverance of the mind. But also the theoretical or philosophical understanding of reality has certainly to start with the dissimilating aspect of change, i.e., with its dissolving effect on apparently ultimate units. This corresponds to the methodical precedence which analysis takes in Buddhist philosophy in general as well as in the practice of meditation. The first task of clear Insight (Vipassana) is, as the commentators call it, ‘*ghana vñibboga*’ i.e., the dissecting of an apparently compact mass.<sup>50</sup>

#### **4.4 Theravada Abhidhamma**

With this short briefing in mind, let us examine the Theravada stand-point with reference to the Theravada *Abhidhamma*. Ven.Narada says in his book ‘A Manual of *Abhidhamma*’:

Abhidhamma means the Higher Doctrine because it enables one to achieve one’s deliverance, or because it exceeds the teachings of the Sutta and Vinaya Pitakas.

---

49. Visuddhimagg.XIII.2.

50. Ven.Nyanaponnaka: Abhidhamma Studies.12, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, 1949.

In the Sutta pitaka and Vinaya Pitaka the Buddha has used conventional terms such as man, animal, being, and so on. In the Abhidhamma Pitaka, on the contrary, everything is microscopically analyzed and abstract terms are used. As a distinction is made with regard to the method of treatment, it is called Abhidhamma Pitaka... owing to excellent analytical method of treatment, it is called Abhidhamma.

There are two realities-‘apparent’ and ‘ultimate’. Apparent reality is ordinary conventional truth (Sammuti sacca). Ultimate reality is abstract truth (paramattha sacca). For instance, the smooth surface of the table we see is apparent reality. In an ultimate sense the apparent surface consists of forces and qualities, in other words, vibrations.

For ordinary purposes a scientist would use the term water, but in the laboratory he would say H<sub>2</sub>O. In the same way the Buddha in the Sutta Pitaka resorts to conventional usage such as man, woman, being, self, etc., but in the Abhidhamma Pitaka He adopts a different mode of expression. Here He employs the analytical method and uses abstract terms such as aggregates (Khandha), elements (Dhatu), bases (Ayatana), etc.,... Parama is explained as immutable (aviparita), abstract (ibbattita); attha means things. Paramattha, therefore, means immutable or abstract things. Abstract reality may be suggested as the closest equivalent.

A brass vessel, for example, is a rūpamattā. It changes every moment and may be transmuted into a vase. Both these objects could be analysed and reduced into fundamental material forces and qualities which, in Abhidhamma, are termed Rupa Paramatthas. They are also subject to change, yet the distinctive characteristics of these Rupa are identically the same whether they are found in a vessel or a vase. They preserve their identity in whatever combination they are found...

There are four such Paramatthas or abstract realities. These four embrace everything that is mundane or supra-mundane, (i. consciousness, ii. mental states, iii. matter, and iv. *Nibbana*.) Consciousness, mental states and matter are mundane (*lokiya*), and Nibbana is supra-mundane (*Lokuttara*). The supra-mundane is the only absolute reality, which is the summum bonum of Buddhism. The other three are called realities in that they are things that exist (*Vijjamaṇa Dhamma*). Besides, they are irreducible, immutable, and abstract things.<sup>51</sup>

Ven. Nyanatiloka, in his book 'Guide through the Abhidhamma Pitaka' says: Regarding the difference between the Sutta and the Abhidhamma, the Higher Doctrine', ... its main difference... may be said to consist in the fact that in the Sutta the doctrines are more or less explained in the words of the philosophically incorrect 'conventional' every-day language (*voḥara-vacana*) understood by anyone, whilst the Abhidhamma, on the other hand, makes use of purely philosophical terms true in the absolute sense (*paramattha-vacana*). Thus, in the Sutta it often is spoken of 'individuals', 'persons', of 'I', 'you', 'self', even the rebirth of 'self' etc., as if such so called individualities really existed. The Abhidhamma, however, treats of realities (*Paramattha Dhamma*), i.e. of psychical and physical phenomena, which alone may be rightly called realities, though only of momentary duration, arising and passing away every moment. For in reality, or in the 'absolute sense', (*Paramattha*), as the expression runs, there does not exist any real, self-dependent permanent 'entity', no such thing as the so called 'Ego', but only this every changing process of conditionally arising and passing phenomena. Hence, the whole Abhidhamma has to do only with the description, analysis, and elucidation of such phenomena.<sup>52</sup>

---

51. Ven. Narada: Manual of Abhidhamma.2-9, Department of Religious Affairs, Rangoon, 1980.

52. Ven. Nyanatiloka: Guide Through the Abhidhamma Pitaka.2, Buddhist Cultural Center, Colombo, 1942.

## 4.5 Theravada Stand-Point

The foregoing seems to indicate that the Theravadins admit of two views of reality. One is the reality of the common folk (*puthujjana*), what might be called the ‘naïve reality’ of the uneducated common folk (*assutava puthujjano*). This is the reality that is commonly experienced and accepted in ordinary society. This is also a social convention and therefore called ‘conventional truth’ (*sammuti sacca*). The other reality is the reality of the enlightened ones’; which might be called the transcendent (*lokuttara*) reality’ of the educated ‘Ariyan disciple (*sutava ariyasavako*). This is what is accepted in the Arian Society (Ariya Sangha). This is more than a social convention; it is a result of experience in meditation. It is the common experience of the Enlightened Ones and of those who are in Vipassana meditation, the right way. It is regarded as super-normal or super-human (*uttari manussa*). To be in touch with this reality is the ultimate goal of the Buddhist. Therefore, it is called the ‘Ultimate Reality’ (*paramattha sacca*).

All this is in agreement with the Early Buddhist Pali Nikaya teaching. How these realities are understood and explained in the Theravada tradition is another matter. The commentaries, *Visuddhimagga* and the *Abhidhamma*, are the main Theravada texts, as distinct from the Early Buddhist Texts, the Pali Nikaya and Vinaya, according to most modern scholars.

## 4.6 Peace And Clarity

Clearly the ‘*Vibhajjavada*’ of the Buddha, as found in the Pali Nikaya is ‘non-sectarianism’. If all followers of the Buddha took up this position, there would never have been any schisms in the Sangha, and we would never have been confused with

so many schools of thought, all claiming to teach us the genuine teaching of the Buddha.

We might observe that this early Buddhist position of ‘non-sectarianism’ could be termed ‘*Vibhajjavada*’, but not without qualification; for them the term would mean something entirely different from what the Theravadins mean by it today.

This realization brings in a new dimension to study Buddhism. Firstly, Theravadins should realize that what has been handed down to them traditionally, through so many generations may not necessarily be the original teaching of the Buddha. Secondly, the term ‘*Vibhajjavada*’ may not have originally mean pluralism or nihilism, but ‘non-sectarianism’. Thirdly, Anatta does not have to mean insubstantiality but it could mean impersonality which means a lack of ownership.

It is not necessary for us to draw any definite, one side conclusions, this way or the other, on this matter.

#### **4.7 Emperor Asoka’s Place In Buddhist History**

No figure in Indian history has been evaluated for his place in history with as much intensity and by as many diverse interest-groups as Emperor Asoka, the third monarch of the Maurayan Dynasty (C.273-236 B.C.). Commencing with the discovery and deciphering of his most impressive litchi records on rocks and pillars and his identification with the Asoka the Righteous (Dhammasoka) of Sri Lankan Pali literature, Asoka has become the cynosure of not only scholarly attention but also popular admiration.

Asoka was crowned in the two hundred and eighteenth year after the Buddha's Parinibbana. At first he paid only token homage to the Dhamma and the Sangha and supported members of other religious sects as well as his father had done before him.

However, all this changed when he met the pious novice, Nigrodha who preached to him Appamada-vagga.<sup>53</sup> Thereafter, he ceased supporting other religious groups and his interest in and devotion to the Dhamma deepened. He used his enormous wealth to build, it is said, eighty-four thousand pagodas, temples and viharas and to support the Bhikkhus with the four requisites daily and lavishly. His son Mahinda and his daughter Sanghamitta were ordained and admitted to the community of Sangha.

Eventually, his generosity was to cause serious problems within the Sangha. In time the order was infiltrated by many unworthy men, holding heretical views and who were attracted to the order because of the Emperor's generous support and costly offerings of food, clothing, shelter and medicine. Large numbers of faithless, greedy men espousing wrong views tried to join the order but were deemed unfit for ordination. Despite this they seized the chance to exploit the Emperor's generosity for their own ends and donned robes and joined the order without having been ordained properly. Consequently, respect for the Sangha diminished. When this came to light, some of the genuine monks refused to hold the prescribed purification or Uposatha ceremony in the company of the corrupt, heretical monks.

When the Emperor heard about this he sought to rectify the situation and dispatched one of his ministers to the monks with the command that they perform the ceremony. However, the Emperor had given the minister no specific orders as to what means were to be used to carry out his command. The monks refused to obey and hold the ceremony in the company of their false and 'thieving', companions (*theyyasinivasaka*).

In desperation the angry minister advanced down the line of seated monks and drawing his sword, beheaded all of them one after the other until he came to the

---

53. Ven. Buddhaghosa; Parajika kandha Atthakatha. p.34, Department of Religious Affairs, Rangoon, 1959.

King's brother, Tissa who had ordained. The horrified minister stopped the slaughter and fled the hall and reported back to the Emperor Asoka who was deeply grieved and upset by what had happened and blamed himself for the killings. He was perplexed and enquired if there was any monks who could set his doubt at rest. All the monks said that only Ven.Moggaliputta Tissa could answer his question. Thus, the king sought Thera Moggaliputta Tissa's counsel. He asked him whether he was guilty of the murder of the monks through his minister. Ven.Moggaliputta Tissa responded him that there was no guilt without evil intent. This satisfied the scruples of the king.

Ven.Moogaliputta Tissa instructed and taught the doctrine and disciplines to the king. After learning the doctrines and disciplines of the Buddha, the king convoked an assembly of the whole community of the Sangha and asked the monks one by one to expound the teachings of the Buddha. Some monks set forth their misguided beliefs such as the doctrine of eternal soul, sasatavada and so on. Those monks who had heretical views numbering sixty thousand were expelled from the community of the Sangha. The king interrogated the real monks about the doctrine of the Buddha and they responded him that the doctrine of the Buddha was Vibhajjavada, analytical reasoning faith. When the monks corroborated the true of the answer, the king requested them to observe Uposatha ceremony so that the entire community of the Sangha might be purified of evil elements. So it was that in the seventeenth year of the Emperor's reign the Third Council was called.

#### **4.7.1 Asoka Of The Sri Lanka Pali Sources**

The most fertile source of historical information on Asoka has been the Pali literature of Sri Lanka which had recorded the Theravada tradition on the introduction of Buddhism to the Island and its development there. Apart from the life of the

Buddha, the three Buddhist Councils at which were rehearsed and formulated the Buddhist Canon and the schisms and schools occupied their main attention. In this tradition, Asoka commanded paramount importance as patron of the Third Buddhist Council, the promoter of the missionary movement to propagate Buddhism widely, and finally the father of the two great missionaries Mahinda and Sanghamitta, to whom Sri Lanka owes its Buddhist Order.

The main sources of the Theravada tradition on Asoka are an ancient commentary in Sinhala<sup>54</sup> no longer extant but widely quoted in later works; the two major Sri Lankan Chronicles the Dipavamsa (fourth century) and the Mahavamsa (fifth century); Samantapasadika, the Vinaya commentary by Ven. Buddhaghosa (fifth century); Vamsatthappadkasini or Mahavamsa Tika (circa 1000-1250) and a great number of chronicles dealing with the history of relics, stupas, the Bodhi tree etc. Loosely called Vamsa literature.<sup>55</sup>

The initial reaction of the Western scholars to the evidence presented by Sri Lankan Pali sources was quite negative. As early as 1879 Herman Oldenberg said:

“The stories of the Sinhalese concerning Mahinda may contain some germ of historical truth. This gem has been surrounded by a coating of inventions which renders it impossible to place any faith in the traditions of Mahinda... all this looks like a little truth and a great deal of fiction invented for the purpose of possessing a history of the origin of the Buddhist institution in the island and to connect it with the most distinguished person conceivable, the great Asoka.”<sup>56</sup>

---

54. W. Geiger: The Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa and Their Historical Development in Ceylon. 57, Govt. Press, Colombo, 1908.

55. At first these were written in Sinhala. Later translated into Pali or modified following the Sinhala models, Mahavodhivamsa, Dathavamsa and Thupavamsa became the forerunners of a branch of historical literature which was continued in Burma (now Myanmar) with works like Sasanavamsa and Gandhavamsa.

56. Edited by H. Oldenberg, Vinaya Pitakam Vol. I (Mahavagga) PTS., London, 1969.

It is important that the Sri Lankan testimony on Asoka is reviewed with much greater care. The Sangha of the Island has, right through its existence to this date, taken a continuing interest in both recording and studying its ecclesiastic history. In the process they have focussed considerable attention on political, social and economic aspects. In this respect Sri Lanka's twenty-five centuries of written history remains a unique example in the whole of the Indian Sub-continent.

The historical sense of the Sangha has been exceptionally well-developed and the information recorded only by them has dramatically proved to be invaluable specially for the following purposes:

1. The identification of "Piyadasi" of Rock Edicts and Pillar Inscriptions with Asoka, whose full name was preserved in Sri Lankan records only. Without this confirmation the historical interpretation of Asokan inscriptions would have been long delayed by nearly a century, if not rendered impossible.
2. The assessment of the role and achievements of Ven.Moggaliputta Tissa who had merited such special veneration in Asokan times as to have had his relics enshrined with the utmost honor in Stupa No.2 of Sanchi in a relic casket bearing the inscription "Sapurisasa Mogaliputasa". (Incidentally, similar finds have yet not established the historicity of any names like Upagupta or Yasa occupying in the Northern Buddhist records).
3. The establishment without doubt of the significance of the epithet "Hemavatacariya" occurring on the relic-caskets of Sanchi and Sonari Stupas containing some remains of Majjhima, Kassapagotta and Dundubhissara, who, in a comprehensive list of missionaries sent out after the Third Buddhist Council according to Sri Lankan Pali sources, were assigned the conversion of the Himalaya region. (This and the above information not only confirm the

historicity of the Third Buddhist Council and the missions but also provide the only literary support to the missionary role claimed by Asoka.)

4. The identification and interpretation of the sculptured scene depicting the transplanting of a Bo-sapling, found on the eastern gate-way of the Great Sanchi Stupa as further confirmed by the symbolism of peacocks and lions in the decorative motifs which reflected Maurya-Sinhala solidarity. (The very existence of the Bodhi-tree at Anuradhapura further confirms the tradition).

With such an array of confirmation from archaeological and epigraphical evidence, the Sri Lankan Pali sources deserve to be given a much higher degree of credibility specially when their information differs from that of Northern Buddhist records. For example, it is more likely that Asoka was the viceroy of Bindusara as Ujjain rather than Taxila and Mahinda his son rather than younger brother. It is also credible that Asoka was called Candasoka because of his wars of succession rather than for the gruesome acts of violence, including the establishment of torture house, which defy imagination unless we are dealing with a demented criminal. Similarly, the episode regarding his massacre of Ajivikas to avenge the desecration of a Buddha statue is beyond belief when considered along with his own commitment to non-violence and inter-religious tolerance.

The place which the Sri Lankan Pali sources-faithfully copied and preserved in many versions in all other Theravada Buddhist countries, namely Burma (now Myanmar), Thailand, Kampuchea (now Cambodia) and Laos- having given Asoka in history as a pious and generous patron of Buddhism. The main aspects highlighted are as follow:

1. Asoka was attracted to Buddhism because of the serene demeanor of a Buddhist monk as contrasted with the usual conduct of the Brahman

priests whom the court had traditionally supported. He began to seek the association of monks which proved intellectually and spiritually more satisfying.<sup>57</sup>

2. His munificence to the Buddhist Order was immense. He was a great builder and the number of shrines constructed all over his empire on his command is held out as 84,000, possibly a traditional symbolism for “innumerable”.<sup>58</sup>
3. He was convinced that his patronage of Buddhism was not complete until and unless a child of his entered the Sangha. Accordingly, his son Mahinda and daughter Sanghamitta were ordained. They became the missionaries to establish Buddhism in Sri Lanka and, as such, the heroes of the Sri Lankan tradition.<sup>59</sup>
4. Asoka’s generosity had a negative effect on the Sangha in that many joined it to enjoy its privileges. The need arose for purge and reform. Asoka, himself, gave his patronage to the cleansing process. At first, he even attempted to enforce his imperial authority. But it due course, he had to seek the assistance of the senior monk, Ven.Moggaliputta Tissa.<sup>60</sup>
5. The reformed Sangha undertook a programme of missions to propagate Buddhism in and around the empire of Asoka and, by implication, these missions were supported by the Emperor. At least as far as Sri Lanka was concerned, Asoka continued to backstop the mission by sending sacred

---

57. Mahavamsa.Verse 62-72.

58. Ibid.Verse.78. All Buddhist sources both Pali and Sanskrit speak of 84,000 Viharas. Sanskrit sources call them Dharmarajikas. The Vihara ascribed to Asoka in Taxila is known as Dharmarajika Vihara. Chinese tradition gives the figure as 80,000.

59. Mahavamsa.Verse.201-206.

60. Ibid. Verse.79-80.

objects of veneration, additional missionaries and skilled craftsmen to erect shrines.<sup>61</sup>

In short, Asoka was the instrument for the establishment of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. There was no special sanctity attached to him and he was not an object of veneration. He was for all purposes only a historical person-the greatest patron of Sri Lanka Buddhism and the entire Theravada Buddhist world saw him in that role.

Asoka in the eyes of recent writers and scholars

With all this information from diverse sources and specially his own lithic records coming almost all together to the attention of Indian and Ideological students a little over a century ago, Asoka burst into lime-light, as it were. He received from them a rousing welcome characterized by comparisons with a multitude of historical personages. In the words of Radhakumud Mookerji what he said:

“In the annals of kingship, there is scarcely any record, comparable to that of Asok, both as a man and as a ruler. To bring out the chief features of his greatness, historians have constituted comparison between him and other distinguished monarch in history, eastern and western, ancient and modern, the pagan, Moslem and Christian. In his effort to establish a kingdom or righteousness after the highest ideals of a theocracy, he has been likened to David and Solomon of Israel in the days of its greatest glory; in his patronage of Buddhism, which helped to transform a local into a world religion, he has been compared to Constantine in relation to Christianity; in his philosophy and piety he recalls Marcus Aurelius; he was Charlemagne in the extent of his empire and, to some extent, in the methods of his administration too, while his Edicts ‘rugged, uncouth, involved, full of repetitions’ read like the speeches of Oliver

---

61. Ibid. XII, XVIII, XIV.

Cromwell in their mannerisms. Lastly, he has been compared to Khalif Omar and Emperor Akbar, whom also he resembles in certain respects.”<sup>62</sup>

A Sri Lanka writer waxed eloquent as he outlined the role of Asoka in what was meant to be a prelude to a serious analysis of the state of Buddhism on the eve of the 2500<sup>th</sup> death anniversary of the Buddha. He wrote: “Asok, the mighty conqueror, sheathing his sword for ever after the conquest of Kalinga, because transformed into the world’s most compassionate monarch. The Lord of Hindustan became the Lord of Compassion. Declaring his admiration for the Buddhist ethic, he set up a humane government, whose officials were instructed to provide free medical attention, a compassionate jail administration, poor relief, old age pensions, amenities for travelers and animal hospitals; while he admonished the people to be dutiful to parents, kind to children and servants, charitable and tolerant. Asoka’s frontier policy was in the same vein; he renounced war as a method of settling disputes, and in a proclamation addressed to the border tribes he told them not be afraid of him, for his heartfelt desire was to be good to them.”

“On the numerous stone pillars that Asoka set up were long inscriptions in which he lectured to the people in a fatherly tone, and to some extent took them into his confidence, explaining how he ha been touched to believe in the Buddha’s conception of right conduct by the shock he had sustained in the early years of his reign by seeing with his own eyes the miseries he had inflicted on the Kalinga State to the south of him, by making war on it.”

“Asoka modeled himself after the Buddha, and worked for the welfare and happiness of his subjects, whom he considered ‘my children’. He carried out the principle of Love that the Buddha had stressed by extending his hand of friendship

---

62. Radha Kumud Mookerji: Asoka, 1-2, Banarsidas, Delhi,1972.

even to the peoples outside his domain. Asoka literally means “without sorrow”, the name of the ideal state of life that the Buddha aspired to achieve. Of the successors who added their own quota to the achievements of the Buddha, Asoka heads the list. He delighted in calling himself, not Asoka but Priyadarsi, He-who-has-realised-the-good (of the people); and on that score he was Devanampriya, “beloved of the gods.”

“Asoka’s reign was the Golden Age of India. His vast empire became a land of peace and happiness. Here was a ruler who ruled according to the law of the Buddha. Asoka was imbued with the spirit of the teaching of the Master, he was one who lived the Law. He looked after the people as a saint looks after humanity. He completely gave himself up to the Master, to the Dhamma and to the Sangha and to the people. Inscribed rocks and stone pillars, still found from Kashmir to Orissa, bear testimony to the extent of Asoka’s Empire, the righteousness and wisdom of his rule and the nobility of his character. His kingdom from plain to mountain-cave was freedom’s home.”

“The spread of Buddhism in India at first was due to the efforts of the Sangha which handed down the Dhamma, the teaching of the Buddha. The Emperor Asoka took a personal interest in spreading his new faith in India, and in foreign countries with which he had political and commercial relations.”

“Asoka was the Lenin of Buddhism, as he was the first to translate the Buddha’s Way of Life into a polity.”<sup>63</sup>

So were also the numerous adulation which poured from the pens of many an intellectual or political leader who admired Asoka for what he said and believed. Among them, Jawaharlal Nehru said, “Asoka’s pillars of stone with their inscriptions

---

63. D.C. Vijayavardhana: *The Revolt in the Temple*, 47-48, 557, Sinha, Colombo.1953.

would speak to me in their magnificent language and tell me of a man, who, though an emperor, was greater than any king or emperor.”<sup>64</sup>

“This astonishing ruler, beloved still in India and in many other parts of Asia devoted himself to the spread of Buddha’s teachings, to righteousness and good will, and to public works for the good of the people. He was no passive spectator of events, lost in contemplation and self-improvement. He labored hard at public business and declared he was ready for it.”<sup>65</sup>

At the very outset a significant division of opinion became evident. Western scholars, especially linguists who read the texts in their original languages like Max Muller, Senart, Rhys Davids, Oldenberg, Geiger and Norman were impressed with the value of the historical information gleanable from the Buddhist records, especially the Sri Lankan Pali sources. It was E.Senart who said:

“I believe that the Chronicles (i.e. Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa) have, in certain details, under the name of Asoka, preserved of our Piyasasi recollections sufficiently exact, not only to allow a substantial agreement to appear, but even to contribute usefully to the intelligence of obscure passages in our monuments.”<sup>66</sup>

Rhys David’s summarized his analysis of the Sri Lanka sources with the statement that “we may be unfeignedly grateful to these old students and writers for having preserved as much as we can gather from their imperfect records.”<sup>67</sup> As Asoka had specifically affirmed his personal faith in Buddhism in several edicts, these scholars had to concede it as a fact, with unconcealed reluctance. They seemed compelled to consider Asoka’s partiality to Buddhism an aberration, needing explanation. So they continued to question all that the Buddhist tradition claimed to

---

64. Jawaharlal Nehru: The Discovery of India, 39. Meridian, London, 1960.

65. Ibid. 123.

66. E.Senart: Inscriptions de Piyadasi. 2, 231.

67. T.W.Rhys Davids:, Buddhist India, 275, Motilal banarid SS, Delhi, 1971.

be his contribution to the promotion of Buddhism as a religion within and outside his emperor. His true significance in Buddhist history is perhaps more symbolic than intrinsic.

Sukumar Dutt, well-known for his “Early Buddhist Monachism”, states: “Asoka was a Buddhist himself, but on the question of his relationship to Buddhism, it is necessary to ‘clear our minds of cant’. In approaching it, even normally sure-footed historians are seen to stumble into three pitfalls, viz.

- (i) that Asoka in his old age became the ‘Head of the Buddhist Church’, that is, a sort of administration-in-chief to the Sangha;
  - (ii) (ii) that he took an active and energetic part in the propagation of Buddhism; and
  - (iii) (iii) that he sent missions to foreign countries for the spread of the religion.
- These are fallacies conveyed sedulously from book to book, though the first one is devoid of meaning and the other two rest practically on no historical basis.”<sup>68</sup>

As regards Asoka achievements and claim to greatness, if his conquest by righteousness through his edicts and inscriptions, diplomatic envoys and Dhamma-Mahamatras had been forgotten by the people, his patronage to Buddhism, his munificence, his involvement in the affairs of the Sangha, his pilgrimages and his support to the propagation of Buddhism has been preserved in living memory. As we have shown, his contribution to Buddhism has been gratefully recalled and appreciated throughout the centuries by the beneficiaries of his interventions, outside the Indian sub-continent.

---

68. Sukumar Dutt: Early Buddhist Monachism.157-158, Calcutta, 1945.

## 4.8 Ven.Moggaliputta Tissas

There is an account of the miraculous birth of Moggaliputta Tissa and his conversion to Buddhist faith in the commentary on Vinaya Pitaka.<sup>69</sup> The cardinal points in the life of Tissa are that he was born in a Brahmana family and learned the three Vedas before till he was sixteen. He was won over to the new faith, Buddhist doctrine by Ven.Siggava Thera and very soon he Tissa attained Arahantship with all its supernatural powers.

Thera Moggaliputta Tissa headed the proceedings and chose one thousand monks from the sixty thousand participants for the traditional recitation of the Dhamma and the Vinaya, which went on for nine months. The Emperor, himself questioned monks from a number of monasteries about the teachings of the Buddha. Those who held wrong views were exposed and expelled from the Sangha, immediately. In this way the Bhikkhu Sangha was purged of heretics and bogus bhikkhus.

According to Theravāda commentaries<sup>70</sup> and chronicles,<sup>71</sup> the Third Buddhist Council was held primarily in order to rid the monks of corruption and bogus monks who held heretical views. Ven.Moggaliputta Tissa elected a thousand monks who were well versed in the Three doctrines of the Buddha to make a compilation of the true doctrine. The Council was convened in 236 B.C. at Asokarama in Pataliputta (the present Patna). It was presided over by the Elder Moggaliputta Tissa and one thousand monks under the patronage of the Emperor Asoka. The Council last for nine months and it was held in the same manner and with the same zeal as those of Ven.Mahakassapa in the First Council and Ven.Yasa in the Second Council

---

69. Ven.Buddhaghosa, Parajika kandha commentary.39, Department of Religious Affairs, Rangoon, 1955.

70. Ibid.p.32,

71. ed Wilhelm Guiger, Mahavamsa, ch.V.26,

respectively. In the midst of the Council Ven.Moggaliputta Tissa set forth the Kathavatthu pakarana wherein the heretical doctrines were thoroughly examined and refuted. Thus the end of the Third Buddhist Council in which a thousand monks took part.

This council achieved a number of other important things as well. The Elder Moggaliputta Tissa in order to refute a number of heresies and ensure the Dhamma was kept pure, compiled a book during the council called, the Kathavatthu. This book consists of twenty-three chapters, and is a collection of discussions (katha) and refutations of the heretical views held by various sects on matters philosophical. It is the fifth of the seven books of the Abhidhamma Pitaka. The members of this Council also gave a royal seal of approval to the doctrine of the Buddha, naming it the Vibhajjavada, the Doctrine of Analysis. It is identical with the approved Theravada doctrine.

One of the most significant achievements of this Buddhist assembly and one which was to bear fruit for centuries to come, was the Emperor's sending forth of monks, well versed in the Buddha's Dhamma and Vinaya who could recite all of it by heart, to teach it in nine different countries. These Dhammaduta monks included the Venerable Majjhantika Thera who went to Kashmir and Gandhara. He was asked to preach the Dhamma and establish an order of monks there. The Venerable Mahadeva was sent to Mahinsakamandala (modern Mysore) and the Venerable Rakkhita Thera was dispatched to Vanavasi (northern Kanara in the south of India.) The Venerable Yonaka Dhammarakkhita Thera was sent to Upper Aparantaka (northern Gujarat, Kathiwar, Kutch and Sindh). The Venerable Maharakkhita Thera went to Yonakaloka (the land of the Ionians, Bactrians and the Greeks.) The Venerable Majjhima Thera went to Himavant (the place adjoining the Himalayas.) The Venerable Sona

and the Venerable Uttara were sent to Suvannabhumi (now Myanmar). The Venerable Mahinda Thera, The Venerable Ittiya Thera, the Venerable Uttiya Thera, the Venerable Sambala Thera and the Venerable Bhaddasala Thera were sent to Tambapanni (now Sri Lanka). The Dhamma missions of these monks succeeded and bore great fruits in the course of time and went a long way in ennobling the peoples of these lands with the gift of the Dhamma and influencing their civilizations and cultures.

**CHAPTER V**  
**THE FOURTH GREAT BUDDHIST COUNCIL**

## CHAPTER V

### THE FOURTH GREAT BUDDHIST COUNCIL

Ven. Mahinda, son of Emperor Asoka, had established the monastic Order in its traditional pattern in Lankadipa, hence those who joined the Order after his time did so as men who followed the footsteps of the great Elder. Establishment of the religion meant the establishment of the local Sangha with its traditions stated in the Chronicles, Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa. The present Pali texts have been rooted in the Third Council and a result of the mission done by Asoka to Lankadipa Buddhism has been flourishing to the Island. We will explain how the fourth Buddhist Council was assembled in the Island in this chapter.

In previous chapter we discussed the Third Buddhist Council. After the sessions of the Council, the Theravada School gained supremacy over the other Buddhist sects in India. To enhance their position and stabilize themselves, they decided to dispatch missionaries to the outlying districts of India and the adjoining countries. The names of the leading monks and the countries to which they were dispatched have been mentioned in brief in the previous chapter.

Emperor Asoka of India and King Devanampiyatissa of Sri Lanka (Lankadipa) were contemporaries. They recognized each other's reputations and became friends even though they never met one another. The Dhamma was sent to Sri Lanka as a noble gift of the Indian emperor to his friend, the Sri Lankan king.

The Chronicles relate in detail the mutual relationship between Asoka and Devanampiya Tissa and the exchange of gifts between the two monarchs, as a token of friendship. The efforts of the Theravada Sangha in the Magadhan area undoubtedly favored the policy of Asoka's territorial expansion and for this reason they no doubt received all necessary support from the Emperor. On the other hand the climax of

Indian culture was witnessed in the reign of Asoka Maurya and the outlying countries were readily willing to accept the efflorescence of this culture, which had a strong Buddhist culture. Hence the missions of the Theravada Sangha were readily welcomed in Sri Lanka.

The initiative for dispatching missions came from Thera Moggaliputta, the head of the Sangha. Propagating the Dhamma, including people to take refuge formally in the Triple Gems; Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha and encouraging the more earnest converts to adopt the religious life of a bhikkhu, was the concern of the Sangha and not of the State.<sup>1</sup>

Establishment of the religion meant the establishment of the local Sangha with its traditions and ecclesiastical rites, which naturally was outside the Emperor's scope. This idea is clearly manifested in the Mahavamsa, where Ven.Mahinda replies to a query of Tissa, the king of Sri Lanka. Tissa, after he had granted the Mahamegha garden to the Sangha, and treated him to the choicest food and other comforts, asked Ven.Mahinda whether the religion was established. Ven. Mahinda replied: "O Lord of nations, when the boundaries established her for the Uposatha ceremony and other acts of the religion according to the command of the Buddha then only does the doctrine stand."<sup>2</sup> We found an evidence as an inscription of about the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. at Mahintale includes the names of Mahinda and his three companions.<sup>3</sup>

The Theravada School had two important centers in India in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C., one was at Patalitputra in the Magadha region and the other at Avanti in the North West. The Chronicle accounts show that Ven.Mahinda hailed from Pataliputra and had his early training there under Thera Moggaliputta Tissa. Dr.E.J.Thomas,

---

1. Gunaratane Panabokke: History of the Buddhist Sangha in India and Sri Lanka.p.71, BPS, Kandy,1976.

2. Mahavamsa.XV,181.

3. Muller: Ancient Inscriptions of Ceylon.No.20.

while accepting that the first mission was headed by Mahinda, states that it is doubtful what School he represented or to which the scriptures he brought belonged.<sup>4</sup> From that time on until 450 years of the death of the Buddha, the teachings were handed down from teacher to pupil, from generation to generation, by word of mouth. It was oral tradition until that time.

The Chronicles speak of Mahinda's connections with Pataliputta and even before he arrived in Sri Lanka they made him a leader entrusted by Ven. Moggaliputta Tissa.<sup>5</sup> The Chronicles further traced the lineage of the Vinaya teachers from Ven.Upali to Ven.Moggaliputta Tissa and to give more prestige to Ven.Mahinda, place him within this lineage as having studied directly under Ven.Moggaliputta Tissa, and is linked with Pataliputra. In the fifth chapter of Dipavamsa, twenty five verses are devoted to the emphasis of this fact and the Mahavamsa maintains the same tradition but with less emphasis. Ven.Buddhaghosa goes a step further and adds to the list of the Vinaya teachers the successors of Ven.Mahinda up to his own time.<sup>6</sup>

It was Ven.Mahinda who had established the monastic Order in its traditional pattern, hence those who joined the Order after his time did so as men who followed the footsteps of the great Elder.<sup>7</sup> Ven.Mahinda not only established the Order of monks but also encouraged the teachings and traditional monastic practices. Thus he is extolled in the Mahavamsa;

“The great Thera Mahinda, who had taught the peerless doctrine of the Master, the sacred writings, the precepts of righteousness and the higher perfection (pariyatti, patipatti, pativedha) fully excellently in the Island of Lanka, the light of Lanka, the

---

4. E.J.Thomas: History of Buddhist Thought.p.41, London,1927.

5. Mahavamsa.232-233.

6. Samantapasadika.p.50.

7. Peter Masefield, Itivutaka Atthakatha,258 EHBC, 56.

teacher of many disciples, he who like the Master, had brought great blessings for the people while he being sixty years old passed away into Nibbana.”<sup>8</sup>

By the time of the Third Council the commentarial literature fully developed; and after the conclusion of the Council, Ven.Mahinda came to Ceylon and he brought over with him the expositions of the teaching which had been sanctioned by the Elders at the meeting. Very soon after Ven.Mahinda’s arrival he translated them into “the language of the land”, and there they continued to be studied and pondered upon and further developed by the monks of Ceylon.<sup>9</sup>

The eighteenth chapter of the Dipavamsa gives a description of the most important nuns who lived in ancient Sri Lanka. Sanghamitta’s spiritual lineage is traced back to Khema and Uppalavanna, the nuns who were noted preachers of the Vinaya during the Buddha’s time. The Dipavamsa states that the nuns who lived at Anuradhapura were clever in teaching the Vinaya, and reference is made to nuns who came from India and preached the Vinaya in the island. Their tradition was continued by others whose names are too numerous to mention here and they are all referred to as foremost in teaching Vinaya.

The growing power of the opposing schools, which were by now widely diffused throughout India, was a threat to the stability of the orthodox Sangha, who took stock of the situation. The Fourth Council was held under the auspices of Kaniska who was a powerful king of Saka race. He had sway over a wide tract of country including Kabul, Gandhara, Sindh, North-West India, Kashmir and part of Madhyadesa.<sup>10</sup> He was esteemed as highly by the Northern Buddhists as was Asoka.

Though we have no indisputable evidence of the date of his conversion, it is almost certain that the date of the Council held under his inspiration and patronage

---

8. Mahavamsa Trs.Geiger.p.139.

9. G.P, Malalasekera, The Pali Literature of Ceylon.p.91.

10. Bapat, P. V; 2500 Years of Buddhism.p.47.,Tara Art Press, NewDelhi, 1997.

was about 100 A.D. according to one authority, the place of the Assembly was Jalandhar, and according to another, Kashmir.<sup>11</sup>

The Southern Buddhists do not recognize this Council and there is no reference to it in the Chronicle of Ceylon. It would not be wrong to assume that the Buddhists of the Theravada schools did not participate in the Council.

Considering the next council which was held in India during the reign of Kaniska in the first century B.C where the Sarvastivadin monks gathered and arranged their doctrine, it is highly suggestive that a Council of the Elders of the Theravadins did take place in the reign of Asoka in Patliputra, the stronghold of the orthodox monastic life and organization.

Taking this event as a historical nucleus the traditional Chronicles of Sri Lanka amplified the whole theme for certain objective reasons. The missionaries who first came and established the monastic Order in Sri Lanka belonged to the Theravada sect. The Chronicles were anxious to maintain that the teachings which the missionaries brought were the pure form of orthodox Buddhism prevailing in the center of Magadha and that the missionaries who brought the teachings were of pure lineage. To give weight to their views they added the story of the Uposatha ceremony, the expulsion of unworthy monks and the complete rehearsal of the Dhamma and Vinaya at a Council held in Pataliputra.

The tradition as preserved in the Ceylonese Chronicles, the great emperor Asoka organized a network of missions to preach the teachings of the Buddha inside and outside India. He sent his son, Ven.Mahinda together with other four members to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). Ven.Mahinda preached the teachings of the Buddha to the Ceylonese king, Devanampiyatissa (247-207 B.C.) and his attendants. The king and

---

11. Bapat, P. V; 2500 Years of Buddhism.p.48.,Tara Art Press, NewDelhi, 1997.

the people were deeply impressed by the new teaching and accepted Buddhism. Its progress was phenomenal. According to the account of the Chronicles, Ven.Mahinda preached a number of sermons when he first arrived in Sri Lanka and these were all understood by the king and the masses. This again shows that the people in Sri Lanka were acquainted with the language spoken by Ven.Mahinda. Wickremasinghe suggests that the proceedings of the Third Council were carried out in Magadhi and that Mahinda brought to Sri Lanka the scriptures which were written in Magadhi, and later the Mahavihara lost contact with Magadha and turned to the South and North West of India.<sup>12</sup>

Both Oldenburg and Wickremasinghe have followed the Mahavamsa account which speak of Mahinda's activities in Pataliputra closely and on that basis have concluded that the teachings taken by Mahinda were from Pataliputra, hence Magadhi. N.Dutt after comparing various scholarly views on this subject has arrived at the following conclusion, which strongly supports the theory that Buddhism brought to Sri Lanka represented that existing in Avanti:

“In view of the combined arguments advanced by Sri G.Grierson, Professors, Sten Konow and Franke, the Pali is the literary form of Paisaci which obtained currency in the region about Ujjaini, and, in view of the statements made by Csoma Korosi and Wassiljew on the authority of Tibetan sources that there was a Paisaci version of the Pitaka, it is only natural to infer that the Pitaka using Pali as its medium was based upon the one in Paisaci. It has also been shown from Csoma Korosi and Wassiljew's statements that the Theravadins had their literature in Paisaci, a fact which is significant for my purpose, because of the vital connection of the Theravadins with Avanti, and their exodus to Sri Lanka from there. The early

---

12. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, (RAS). CB.XXXIII.18

education of Mahinda makes it apparent to us that he must have been more inclined to the literary dialect of his birthplace than to any other, and it was only natural that he should take the Pali version with him to Sri Lanka because it was the version of his own country that was growing into popularity and throwing the Paisaci version into the shade.”<sup>13</sup>

The importance of Mahinda’s mission lies in fact that it was with his arrival, after he formed the monastic Order, that Buddhism was fully established in the Island. The prime aim of Mahinda’s mission was to establish the Theravada teachings in the Island. This was made possible by the institution of monastic Order, through which the orthodox teachings would be propagated and fostered.

Hundreds of thousands of men and women embraced the new faith and thousands wanted to enter into the Sangha. Ven.Mahinda and the others who constituted the group of five carried out the act of admission and ordination, as followed in the Vinaya. Queen Alula and a number of women also expressed the desire to receive the ordination so emissaries were sent to Emperor Asoka to send some distinguished nuns to help them so Sanghamitta, the sister of Ven.Mahinda who had received ordination was sent to Ceylon.

Two great events in the early history of Buddhism in Ceylon left a deep impression. The transplanting of a branch of the Bodhi tree was a happy idea of Asoka. This served as an inspiration to the people who had recently embraced Buddhism. The second event was the bringing of the Buddha’s tooth relic from India more than 500 years later. Thus with a short time, the whole of the island became a stronghold of Buddhism.

---

13. Dutt.N: The Early History of the Spread of the Buddhist Schools.pp.264-265. London, 1925.

In the first few centuries after the establishment of Buddhism in the island, the monastic Order rapidly grew in numbers and attracted the attention of the rulers and the masses. The people in the Island for the first time found an organized religion and with the support it received from the monarchs and the courtiers it made headway in its first few years of existence. Not only was the Order of monks instituted at an early stage but also due to the efforts of Sanghamitta, an Order of nuns was formed at Anuradhapura. The popularity which Buddhism received from the masses all over the country is seen from the detail of the reception accorded to the Bodhi tree and the relics.<sup>14</sup>

The successors of Devanampiya Tissa were unable to retain their power in Anuradhapura and the second century B.C. witnessed an invasion from South India. The Tamils who capture power ruled for nearly half a century, and during this period Buddhism ceased to enjoy the privileged position accorded to it in the reign of Devanampiya Tissa. The monks abandoned Anuradhapura and migrated to Rohana and other areas. The shrines at Anuradhapura were neglected and Buddhism fell to a low position. There were monks living at Cetiyaigiri, since the Chronicles refer to Elara, the Tamil ruler who visited these monks.<sup>15</sup> Elara's rule was tolerant and the Chronicles speak of his high sense of justice. It was no doubt his diplomatic ways that enabled him to rule for forty four years.

The national character which Buddhism had assumed within its few centuries of existence in the island enabled a young prince of Rohana to rally support and wage a fierce battle against the Tamils. This was led by Dutthagamani and all national-minded countrymen joined him in ousting the foreigners. The accounts of the Chronicles state that in his attempt to throw out the Tamils he was assisted by the

---

14. Mahavamsa.XVII.64.

15. Ibid.XXI.22.

monks of the time. The prosperity of the religion was the prosperity of the Sangha, and even if the monks did not actively participate in the campaign they would have necessarily assisted the movement in some indirect way. The Mahavamsa records the motive of Dutthagamani in this verse.

*“Rajjasukkhaya vayamo,  
Naham mama kadacipi,  
Sambuddha sasanaseva,  
Thapanaya ayam mama.”*

“Not for joy of sovereignty is this toil of mine, my striving has been ever to establish the doctrine of the Sambuddha”. This was the incentive for both laymen and monks to assist Gamani in his enterprise.<sup>16</sup>

Having defeated the Tamils, and after having brought the country under his sole authority, Dutthagamani devoted his entire time to the improvement of Buddhism and the welfare of the Sangha. The first act of his was the building of the Maricavatti Vihara, according to the legend it was built by him as a penance for partaking of some long-pepper (marica) without having a share to the bhikkhus. This vihara was completed in three years and it was attended by a vast crowd of monks and nuns at the day of consecration.<sup>17</sup> The next work of the king was the building of Lohapasada, the ‘uposathaghara’ for the use of monks. The first floor was occupied by ordinary monks, the second by those learned in the Three Pitaka, the third, fourth and fifth by those who had attained to the stages of *sotapatti*, *sakadagami* and *anagami* respectively and the four topmost by arahants.<sup>18</sup>

The greater work of Dutthagamani was the building of the Cetiya known as the Mahathupa. Numerous literary references give details of this building and how the

---

16. Mahavamsa.XXV.3.

17. Ibid.XXVI.14.

18. Ibid.XXVI.44.

work was executed. Of importance to us in this account is the visit of numerous Theras from foreign countries that were present on the day the foundation stone was laid. The names of those monks were mentioned in the chronicle.<sup>19</sup> The present of these Theras has shown that the monastic establishments of ancient Sri Lanka maintained connections with other important Theravada centers in North and South India. The missions during the reign of Asoka were dispatched to these countries and Theravada Buddhism no doubt would have gained prominence in these regions. This is further confirmed in a statement in the *Sammohavinodani*, the commentary on the *Vibhanga*, which speaks of a *Thera Kutumbikaputta Tissa* going abroad to study under Thera Yonaka Dhammarakhita.<sup>20</sup>

The *Sammohavinodanitika* has a story of four bhikkhus from the country of Yonaka arriving at an unmanned monastery in the island.<sup>21</sup> From this evidence it is clear that monks of Theravada centers in India were constantly in contact with Sri Lanka. G.P.Malasasekera considers the statements in the Chronicles regarding this account to be genuine and concludes:

“Whatever we may feel about the Chroniclers’ statements as to the mode of travel adopted by these distinguished visitors and numbers of the disciples that formed their respective retinues (sixty thousands etc.) there is no gainsaying that this points to a historical event, that these eminent Theras did come to Sri Lanka at the time and that they were men of influence in their various dioceses”.<sup>22</sup>

The next king of importance was Vattagamani Abhaya (43 B.C.) and his reign is characterized by the two important incidents connected with Buddhism and the monastic Order. In early part of his rule a Brahmin in Roha named Tissa opened a

---

19. Mahavamsa.XXIX,29-34.

20. *Sammohavinodani*,389; *Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon (EHBC)*,65.

21. *Sammohavinodanitika*. 1336.

22. *Pali Literature of Ceylon*.p.36.

revolt. Simultaneous with this event was an invasion from South India. The revolt of Tissa proved disastrous to the entire country, which was threatened by a severe famine. In this period of confusion, the monks of Anuradhapura abandoned their monasteries and some migrated to India, others to areas in the island where living was more favorable. Some persevering monks remained behind, braving the disaster and eking out a bare existence, surviving on water lily stalks and barks of the banana tree as food.<sup>23</sup> After twelve years of endless suffering and misery the famine came to an end. Brahmin Tissa, the rebel, died and Vattagamani defeated the last of the Tamil invaders and established himself on the throne.

Once peace was restored the monks who had migrated to India and other parts of the country returned to Anuradhapura and resumed residence in the capital. The peaceful atmosphere prevailing in the country enabled monks to devote their time to religious pursuits and contemplation. The thirty-second chapter of the Mahavamsa contains references to the chief monks who lived in the time of Dutthagamani. Some of these names occur in the Parivara list of Theras belonging to the succession of Elders (*Theraparampara*) and have also been quoted in the Samantapasadika and other commentaries.<sup>24</sup>

With their presence, monastic life once again regained its original status. In the crisis that occurred in the early part of Vattagamani's rule, it was with the utmost difficulty that the monks who survived preserved the teachings of Buddhism. As soon as things became favorable they gathered together in a monastery in the Central Province and committed to writing the Tipitaka and the commentaries, which had hitherto been handed down in memory. It was an oral tradition until that time.<sup>25</sup>

---

23. Manorathapurani.I.92.

24. Oldenberg Vin.III,313; Smp.32.

25. Mahavamsa.XXIII.101; Dipavamsa.XXII.21.

According to Mahavamsa and other Ceylonese traditions, Three Councils were held in Ceylon and the Second One which was held during the time of King Vattagamani Abhaya is considered to be the Fourth by Theravada school. According to Ceylonese tradition, not only the Tipitaka was rehearsed, but its commentaries were revised, recast and arranged subject-wise. It is said that Buddhist religious practice and culture were threatened by growing materialism and moral decline of mankind through wars and famines, the learned Mahatheras decided to hold this Council so that the entire Canon and the commentaries might be committed to writing. At the end of the Council, the texts along with the commentaries were inscribed on palm leaves and the scriptures were checked over three hundred times.

The reign of Vattagamni is an important landmark in the history of Buddhism in Ceylon. Up to this time the sacred scriptures of Buddhism, as originally recited by Mahathera, were committed to memory and preserved as oral traditions. Arrangements were now made to commit them to writing, and five hundred reciters and scribes were employed for the purpose. The *Pali Tipitaka* which was the result of their labor, still survives as the sacred Canon of which the original disappeared long ago from India without leaving any trace. As mentioned above, the Pali Canon has been preserved in its entirety in this island and Ceylonese Buddhism had great influence upon Burma (now Myanmar), Cambodia, Thailand and Laos, the countries where Theravada Buddhism flourishes today.<sup>26</sup>

The reason can be traced why the Council was held. During that time there was a great rebellion. It was so great that people had to leave their places and go elsewhere for shelter. The monks found it difficult to survive during that rebellion. Some monks went to Southern India and many monks remained in Ceylon. Although

---

26. P.V. Bapat: 2500 Years of Buddhism.p.66. Government of India,1956.

it was difficult for them to stay alive, they nevertheless protected the teachings of the Buddha in their memory.

After the rebellion, the monks who went to India came back to Ceylon. The monks who remained in Ceylon said that since they had gone through difficult times their memories might have failed and they might have made some mistakes in the teachings. So, they compared the teachings of the Buddha-those teachings of the monks who had remained in the Island with those teachings of the monks who had gone to India and returned to the Island. When they compared the teachings, it is said that there was no difference or discrepancy. After that the monks decided that in the future it would be very difficult for monks to retain all the teachings of the Buddha in their memories. So they decided to write down the teachings on palm leaves. Thus, the Tipitaka was written down on palm leaves for the first time in the history of Theravada Buddhism and it was about 450 years after the passing away of the Buddha.<sup>27</sup>

As many as five hundred learned Mahatheras took part in the deliberations under the leadership of Mahathera Rakkhita, the Council was held at Aluvihara, Aloka cave in the village of Matale in Ceylon in 29 B.C. which was patronized by a minister of the king. King Vattagamani supported the monk's idea so that the genuine Dhamma might be lastingly preserved, the Venerable Maharakkhita and five hundred monks recited the words of the Buddha and then wrote them down on palm leaves. This remarkable project took place in a cave called, the Aluvihara (Alokalena), situated in the cleft of an ancient landslip near Matale. Thus the aim of the Council was achieved and the preservation in writing of the authentic Dhamma was ensured.

---

27. Ven.Silananda: Hand book of Abhidhamma Studies.p.5. SBVMS, Malaysia.2012.

The Second Council held in Matale which is known as the Fourth Buddhist Council in Theravada world, was the most notable and beneficial one in the history of 2500 years of Buddhism. If Sri Lankan monks did not write the vast literature of Tipitaka on palm leaves, which obviously needed the great endeavor, Buddhism could have been lost even before one thousand years after the demise of the Buddha. Oral tradition could not last long however much effort was made. Written form was definitely much safer than the oral tradition.

This is the fact that proves the importance of written records of Pitaka. Oral tradition of Pitaka faded out when there were no more super intelligent enlightened Bhikkhus (Patisambhidapatta-arahants) who could keep the entire Pitaka in their memory. No one could deny the fact that Tipitaka recorded on palm leaves, stones, paper was not only well preserved but also spread to many places until the present time, traveling through two thousand years journey of Buddhism. Theravada Pitaka Tradition in Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia, derived from Matale Council in Sri Lanka, therefore this Council was the most beneficial one.

Ven. Buddhaghosa Thera, whose origin was from India, wrote new commentaries at Mahavihara monastery in Anuradha, Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan monks did not easily approve those commentaries written by an Indian monk. Buddhaghosa had to present his commentaries before the learned Samgha. His writings were tested thoroughly and approved finally with full satisfaction. The Learned Samgha acknowledged that Buddhaghosa Thera's commentaries were more concise and suitable for that time than three old commentaries already available in Sri Lanka.

Those old commentaries were no longer used since then and gradually faded out. Ven. Buddhaghosa Thera, in his new commentaries, admitted explicitly that he wrote new commentaries with reference to old commentaries.

## 5.1 The Pali Texts Written On Palm Leaves

When the Buddha's teachings were recorded at the First Buddhist Council, the Elders of that Council divided the Buddha's teachings into different categories. There were several divisions. We could not find any solid record that which Pali texts were written on palm leaves in the Fourth Council thought the Council were held. We can trace from the Samantapasadika,<sup>28</sup> the commentary on Vinaya Pitaka composed by Ven. Buddhaghosa. He mentioned the texts recorded from the First Buddhist Council. Those texts were:

1. Five treatise of Vinaya Pitaka: Parajika, Pacittiya, Mahavagga, Culavagga and Parivara.
2. Thirty-Three discourses of Digha Nikaya beginning with Brahamajala sutta.
3. Fifty-Two discourses of Majjhima Nikaya starting with Mulapariyaya sutta,
4. Seven thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty-Tow discourses of Samyutta Nikaya beginning with Oghatarana sutta.
5. Nine Thousand Five Hundred and Fifty-Seven discourses of Anguttara Nikaya starting with Cittapariyadana sutta.
6. Fifteen treatises of Khuddaka Nikaya, namely- Khuddakpatha, Dhammapada, Udana, Itivuttaka, Suttanipata, Vimana vatthu, Peta vatthu, Theragatha, Therigatha, Jataka, Niddesa, Patisambhidamagga, Apadana, Buddhavamsa and Cariyapitaka
7. Seven Treatises of Abhidhamma Pitaka, namely-Dhammasangani, Vibhanga, Dhatukatha, Puggalapannati, Kathavatthu, Yamaka and Pathana.

---

28. Samantapasadika.p.13.

As stated in the commentary, the total amount of the teachings can be group in three, namely- Vinaya, Suttanta and Abhidhamma and five sections: Digha Nikaya, Majjhima Nikaya, Samyutta Nikaya, Anguttara Nikaya and Khuddaka Nikaya. The total amounts of the treatises are Forty-Eight.

## **5.2 The Commentaries Written On Palm Leaves**

We found sufficient evident at Dipavamsa<sup>29</sup> as well as Mahavamsa<sup>30</sup> that the council rehearsed at Aluvihara was not only the Pali texts but also the commentaries. Now a day, most of the commentarial literature using and learning in Theravada countries were composed by Ven.Buddhaghosa in the fifth century A.D. By the time Ven.Buddhaghosa wrote his commentaries, he quoted old commentaries and those ones are:

1. Mahapaccari atthakatha,
2. Kurundi atthakatha,
3. Andhaka atthakatha,
4. Sankhepa atthakatha,
5. Culapaccari atthakatha,
6. Ariya atthakatha and
7. Pannavara atthakatha.

---

29. Dipavamsa, XX. Verses.20-21.

30. Mahavamsa. XXX. Verses.202-203.

### 5.3 Mahavihara School

The prestige and reputation of the Sangha of Sri Lanka were so high during the medieval period though the political stability of the country was threatened by foreign invasions that other Buddhist countries regarded the Island as the center of Theravada Buddhism particularly as the living tradition preserved in the Mahavihara of Anuradhapura. Up to the time of Vattagamani Abaya Buddhist school in Sri Lanka was represented by the Mahavihara which was originally established by Ven.Mahinda and the Cetiyaigiri Vihara at Mihintale was a subsidiary monastery which was under the direct control of the Mahavihara. The Thuparama, Maricavattivihara and other monasteries lying within the region of Anuradhapura, as well as those of Rohana recognized the leadership of the Mahavihara as the chief center of authority.

In ancient time the Mahavihara had two important centers, one in Anuradhapura and the other in Rohana in the south. The commentaries state that monks in Anuradhapura and those residing in areas north of the river Mahaveli gather at the Pancanikayika Mandala at Lohapasada and recited the Dhamma and Vinaya from time to time. The monks in Rohana congregated separately for recitals in the same manner, in the chief monastery in the south.<sup>31</sup>

From very early times there was mutual contact between monks of these old institutions. In times of disaster the monks of the Mahavihara generally shelter in these monasteries and other monasteries in the Hill country. This shows that the Mahavihara from every early times had connections with monasteries throughout the island. These institutions all through the history of the island worked in close liaison with the Mahavihara and accepted its superiority.

---

31. Sumangala vilasini.i.13. PTS, London,1886.

The Thuparama, Maricavatti, Lohapasada and Dakkhinagiri were some of the monasteries founded by early kings, which came under the supervisory control of the Mahavihara. The Nikayaya sangraha refers to the Pancamaha Viharas, the group of five Viharas which came under the leadership of the Mahavihara. Apart from the monasteries in Mahavihara and Rohana there were other monasteries scattered throughout the country which owned their allegiance to the Mahavihara. By the fifth century, the Mahavihara came into possession of a vast number of scriptural works which certainly grew in these monastic cloisters.

The Chronicles refer to the constant support these monasteries received from the zealous rulers who were eager in promoting the cause of Buddhism and monastic scholarship. Some of the references in the Chronicles are confirmed by contemporary lithic records. The Culavamsa states that Sirimeghavana repaired all the damage done to the Mahavihara by his father Mahsena.<sup>32</sup> The Thuparama which was originally built by Devanampiya Tissa continued to be one of the important monasteries of the Mahavihara. There were monks who came from foreign countries residing here. The Culavamsa states that Kassapa I granted lands to this monastery and made the foreign monks residing there recite the scriptures.<sup>33</sup>

As regards grants, the Mahavamsa and Culavamsa record instances where individual monks belonging to Mahavihara received grants from kings as royal favor from time to time.<sup>34</sup> Further confirmation of grants made to the Mahavihara is seen in the numerous inscriptions ranging from the early Cristian ear to the end of the tenth century. The Pillar Inscription of Mahinda IV speaks of an outright grant made to a Parivena attached to the Mahavihara.<sup>35</sup>

---

32. Culavamsa.37-62.

33. Ibid.44-148.

34. Mahavams.30-31,32; Culavamsa.42-17.

35. Epigraphia Zeylanica.IV-66,67.

The pre-eminence of the Mahavihara in the history of Buddhism in the island was mainly due to the sustained efforts of its inmates to safeguard the traditional teachings as far as possible in their purity under various vicissitudes of life. There were numerous occasions where they were confronted with political upheavals and where they had to face disasters of nature like famines. Moreover they were also threatened by schisms and divisions. Yet the persisting monks braved these calamities and preserved the teachings in their original form. The first attempt of the monks to safeguard the teachings is seen in the reign of Vattagamani Abhaya when they resolved to commit to writing the sacred texts which so far had been handed down in memory. These teachings, which were originally brought to the island by Thera Mahinda, represented the Theravada teachings as formulated in the Third Buddhist Council held in the time of Asoka under the aegis of the Thera Moggaliputa Tissa. Ever since they were brought to Sri Lanka the monks of the Mahavihara considered it their obligation and duty to preserve them in their original form.

The commentaries furnish us with details of the manner in which these teachings were preserved in the ancient monastic establishments of Sri Lanka. From the time the scriptures were brought to the island there grew up in the Mahavihara fraternity a group of monks whose duty it was to memorize certain sections of the scriptures and instruct their pupils in the interpretation of these texts, whereby it was handed down in the traditional manner. This was similar to the practice in ancient India where, after the proceedings of the First Buddhist Council at Rajagaha, the sacred teachings were divided into sections and entrusted to some of the leading disciples to memorize them and carry them down from generation to generation.

As such there grew up the institution of Theras generally known as the 'Poranacariya', otherwise known as the 'Teachers of Old'. These monks were largely

responsible for codifying and systematising the teachings of the Buddha. They were also termed the Dhammasangahaka Theras in the Milindapanha.<sup>36</sup> It was their duty to convene Councils from time to time and arrange the teachings in a particular system giving detailed interpretations on points of the Pali Canon.

The Gandhavamsa, a work of the seventeenth century by a Burmese monk, which deals with the history of the Pali Canon based on ancient documents, states that the Poranacariyas were the same as the 'Atthakathacariyas', the composers of the exegetical works.<sup>37</sup> E.W.Adikaram is of the opinion that there existed an ancient commentary known as the Poranattakatha based on the Pali Canon incorporating the views of the ancient Theras.<sup>38</sup>

#### **5.4 Bhanaka, The Reciter**

There were also the Bhanaka, the monks who were reciters. Their duty was to memorize certain sections of the texts and pass it down to their pupils. They did not invent anything new or add anything to the Canon. These Bhanakas too had their origin in ancient India as reference to them is made in the Milindapanha.<sup>39</sup> Though they memorized a particular section of the Canon they also had to acquire learning in the other sections.

The monks in Mahavihara followed this traditional system of preserving the teachings. Amongst them there the Poranacariya; Atthakathacariyas and Bhanakas. The Atthakathacariyas, while studying the Canon, made certain additions and gave different interpretations, though not deviating from the original teachings. The Bhanakas, whose duty it was to memorize the text held different views on certain

---

36. T.W. Rhys Davids; Milindapanha; The Questions of Milinda, 369, Motilal Banarasidah, Delhi, 1965.

37. Journal of the Pali Text Society.1885,59.

38. E.W. Adhikaram: The Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon.22. Colombo,1946.

39. Milindapanha.342.

points on Dhamma and Vinaya. Reference is made in the commentaries to some of the Bhanakas. Their views were held in high esteem by the later commentators. Digha Bhanaka Abhaya and Mahasiva were reputed for who survived the famine in the reign of Vattagamani. Mahatissa of Punnavalika was a Vinaya Bhanaka. His views were held in high esteem by Ven. Buddhaghosa. This Thera is believed to have derived these views from Theras of old.<sup>40</sup>

The Atthakathacariya and Bhanaka system held good for the preservation of the teachings, but this system paved the way for diverse interpretation of the Dhamma and Vinaya. The commentary on Dighanikaya states that the Digha Bhanaka held that the Kuhddakapatha was included in the Abhidhamma section of the Canon, while the Majjhima Bhanaka maintained that it should be included in the Sutta Pitaka.<sup>41</sup> Apart from the difference of opinion on classification of the texts there were different opinion on classification of the texts there were different opinions expressed by the Bhanakas on the life of the Buddha, on the practice of meditation and on certain points of Abhidhamma.<sup>42</sup>

As a result of the political disturbances in the country from time to time and the threats of serious famines, the monks of the Mahavihara on a number of occasions left the city and migrated to the Hill Country or to India. The power of the Sinhalese monarchy was low at times, due to foreign invasions which caused the monks to be neglected. In these troubled times the monks found it difficult to maintain themselves. The religious scriptures which were preserved in memory were on the point of being lost good food.

The Samantapasadika states that a certain Thera who knew the Niddesa by heart led an impure life and other monks refused to learn this text from him. After

---

40. Samantapasadika.II.34.

41. Sumangalavilasini.I.15.

42. Samantapasadika.II.413, 428; Atthasalini,151; Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon.28-30.

much persuasion the monk Maharakkhita was made to study it from the monk who led an impure life.<sup>43</sup> Moreover the growing popularity and their use of a Sanskrit Canon aroused the suspicions of the Mahavihara monks. Taking these matters into consideration the Mahaviharavasins decided to commit the teachings of the Buddha to writing.

The Nikaya sangraha elaborates on this by stating that this solemn act of recording the teachings in books was a result of a Council in which five hundred Elders participated under the patronage of a certain chieftain. The venue of this Council was Aloka Vihara.<sup>44</sup> G.P.Malalasekera states that the commentaries said to have been compiled by Mahind, by their very nature, precludes the possibility of having been down orally. He further maintains that by the time of Vattagamani Abhaya the Tipitaka and its commentaries were still unarranged, rare, imperfect and full of inaccuracies, at Aluvihara these texts were rehearsed and the commentaries revised and finally committed to writing and distributed among the chief monasteries in the island.<sup>45</sup>

From the time the Canon and the commentaries were introduced to the island they were closely studied in the Mahavihara. The Council at Aluvihara in the first century B.C settled the Council texts and the commentaries to a certain point, yet there were further accumulations and interpretations growing on these works. The commentaries and the views of *Poranacariyas* received further elaboration and discussions even after the text were written down, as the Bhanakas system and the Acariya lineage were carried down even after this incident. The views of these Theras came to be recorded in the commentaries that were preserved in the Mahavihara.

---

43. Samantapasadika.III.695.

44. C.M.Fernando, tr: Nikaya Sangraha,10-11, Colombo,1908.

45. G.P.Malalasekera: The Pali Literature of Ceylon.43,45. Colombo, 1928.

*Mahatthakatha*, of the commentaries, is the most comprehensive and the oldest. It contains views of the ancient Theras of India and Ceylon. E.W. Adikaram pointed out an instance where an addition has been made to the Canon even after it was settled at the Council at Aluvihara.<sup>46</sup> Apart from Mahathakatha there were also the *Mahapaccari* and *Kurundi Atthakathas*. Of these the *Sihalatthakatha* was supposed to be the oldest existing in the Mahavihara and was delivered to have been the work of Ven.Mahinda. The *Mahatthakatha* was more complete than all other commentaries.<sup>47</sup> The close contact of the Mahavihara with South Indian Buddhist centers is seen from the existence in the Mahavihara of a commentarial work known as the *Andatthakatha*. This work contained views of the Sri Lanka Theras and was held in esteem both in India and Sri Lanka.<sup>48</sup>

## **5.5 Ven.Buddhghosa**

By the fifth century A.C. the Mahavihara was in possession of a vast amount of both Canonical and commentarial literature written in Pali, Sinhalese and Tamil. The reputation of the Mahavihara as a center where the teachings of the orthodox Theravada tradition was preserved spread far and wide in India. This brought a number of scholars from Indian Buddhist centers who were anxious to gain further knowledge in the original teachings. The foremost of these scholars was Ven.Buddhaghosa, whose name ranks as the greatest scholar and authority on the Pali commentaries and ancient Theravada thought.

The purpose of Ven.Buddhaghosa's mission is vouched in the words of the Chronicles which state thus:

---

46. E.W.Adikaram: Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon.12.

47. Samantapasadika.II.317.

48. Ibid.II.646.

“The Thera Revata then observing his desire of undertaking the compilation of a Parittathakatha said, ‘the texts alone of the Pitakattaya has been preserved in this island; the Atthakathas are non-existent here; nor is there any complete version of the different vasa (Schools). The Sinhalese Atthakathas are genuine; they were composed in the Sinhalese language by the inspired and profoundly wise Mahinda, who had previously consulted the discourses of the Buddha, confirmed at the three convocations, the dissertations and arguments of Sariputta and others; as they exist among the Sinhalese. Repairing thither, and studying the same, translates them according to the rules of the Magadhi grammar. It will be an act conducive to the welfare of the whole world.’”<sup>49</sup>

At the time when Ven. Buddhaghosa arrived in Ceylon in the early part of the fifth century A.C.- the commentaries so handed down in the schools at various times and places had already been put together into treatises, and books had been made to them, written in the native dialects. And we know, at least, the names of several of those which existed at this period. They are:

1. The Mula or Maha-atthakatha, or simply the Atthakatha of the dwellers of the Mahavihara at Anuradhapura.
2. The commentary of the dwellers of the Uttara-Vihara, also at Anuradhapura.
3. The Maha-paccari, or ‘Great Raft’, so called because it was composed on a raft somewhere in Ceylon.
4. The Andha-Atthakatha, handed down at Kancipura (Conjeraram), in South India.

---

49. Culavamsa.37-227-31.

5. The Kurundi-Atthakatha, so named because of its having been written at the Kurundaveha Vihara in Ceylon.
6. The Sankhepa-Atthakatha, or 'Short Commentary', which was also, possibly, of South Indian origin.<sup>50</sup>

Ven.Buddhaghosa found a large mass of material at his disposal. These commentaries doubtless embraced various shades of opinion, and represented different schools of thought. It is difficult to decide whether each one of them with dealt with the Canon as a whole or only with separate portions of it.

Accordingly, Ven.Buddhaghosa arrived in Sri Lanka and took up residence in the Mahavihara and studied the Tipitaka and the commentaries from the Thera Sanghpala. After he had acquired himself with the Sinhalese language he composed his first work, the Visuddhimagga. The Visuddhimagga is a concise but complete encyclopedia of the Buddhist teachings and Ven.Buddhaghosa drew his material for this work from the Canon and the commentarial literature existing in Mahavihara. When composing this he drew freely from non-Canonical works such as the Milindapanha, Petakopadesa and Anagatavamsa. Frequent reference is made to the Sinhalatthakatha and the Poranas in this work. This work is divided into three parts; virtue, concentration and wisdom, and was written at the request of the Thera Sanghapala. It is considered to be the only work in which the whole of the Buddhist system is well depicted. Though it does not contribute to the Pitakas, it aims at a systematic arrangement of their contents. In the Sammohavinodani on the Vinaya Ven.Buddhaghosa tells us that he composed it "by taking the substance of the old commentaries". Thus, it is pretty clear that at least the first three of those mentioned above were separate works on the entire Tipitaka and that all of them were more or

---

50. Vijayasinha: Mahavamsa (English translation), p.298, Colombo, 1909.

less directed to the elucidation of one or more of the Pitakas. Gray, in his appreciation of this work, remarks in this way, “if he had written nothing else, it alone would have secured him undying fame.”<sup>51</sup>

The works of Ven.Buddhaghosa undoubtedly speak of his learning and ability as a scholar. As a pioneer in this field he is unrivalled. His monumental thesis the Visuddhimagga was the greatest contribution to the cause of Buddhist studies. He accomplished a great task by systematically arranging all the existing works on the Buddhist scriptures, which had up to this time laid scattered and unarranged. From the time of Aluvihara Council numerous works were composed on the Canon and the commentaries.

The Council at Aluvihara laid down the Canon and system of Theravada Buddhist thought in the early stages of the Order. The accretions and different interpretations on these words were finally codified and coherently arranged by Ven.Buddhaghosa. Thus the Theravada teachings received a further definition and settlement at the hands of an authoritative scholar. By this, Ven.Buddhaghosa established the pre-eminence of Sri Lanka over all other countries in the genuineness of its traditional heritage of the Buddhist religion and justified her claim to be the home of Theravada in his day.

The close contact the Mahavihara maintained with the South Indian Theravada centers is visible from the regular visits of scholars from these areas. This contact had grown from early times. The commentaries refer to the views of the Theras known as the Parasamuddavasi (Theras living on the other side of the ocean).<sup>52</sup> These were monks of Theravada centers abroad, South India. Ven.Buddhaghosa was followed by other scholars from South India. Ven.Dhammapala from Kanchipura came and

---

51. Gray: Buddhagosuppatti-Intr.31. London, 1982.

52. Papanicasudani.718. PTS, London.1922.

studied at the Mahavihara. The Mahavihara was keen on stabilizing its position by aligning itself with the Theravada centers in India and propagating the orthodox teachings in these centers.

## **5.6 The Beginning Of Literacy Activity**

With the advent of Pali, brought by Ven.Mahinda from the Council at Pataliputta, as the language of the sacred scripture, Sinhalese borrowed and derived from it various terms and expressions with all their specific connotations. The steady and constant intercourse kept up with the mainland enabled all the advances made in various branches of knowledge in India to find their way into Ceylon. The frequent invasions of Tamil marauders provided another source of enrichment for the language. Thus, steadily and quickly grew up to be a language capable of expressing the most varied ideas and emotions, rich in its vocabulary and supply its structure.

From the time when Pali was introduced into Ceylon its study was assiduously cultivated, but, as Sinhalese grew in power, monks and laymen alike tended more and more to use this medium for the exposition of the Buddhist faith. Ven.Mahinda gave the lead to this tendency not only by preaching in “the language of the land”, but more so by translating into it the commentaries on the Pitakas.<sup>53</sup> The very nature of the Atthakathas demanded that they should be compiled in a manner to be easily understood, and the choice of Sinhalese, which was mainly the people’s tongue, is therefore no matter for surprise.

From the very commencement it seemed to have been agreed upon that the text of the canon itself, the Pitakattaya, was to remain intact in Pali; that no attempt should be made to have it in any other language. The reason for this was obviously

---

53. G.P. Malalasekera: The Pali literature of Ceylon. 73. M. D. Gunasena, Colombo. 1928.

the preservation of the purity of the doctrine, so that whenever doubt arose on some doctrinal matter, as variously expounded by the commentators, the resource of appealing to the scriptures themselves for the correct interpretation.

It is interesting to observe that, side by side with the ascendancy of Sinhalese over Pali, another language was gradually coming into vogue in Ceylon. This was classical Sanskrit, which had rapidly become the medium of expression for learned works on the mainland of India. Scientific and secular works in that language had found their way into Ceylon and were studied with care.<sup>54</sup>

### **5.7 Relation With Burma (Now Myanmar)**

Among South East countries Ceylon's relations with Burma were the closest. With the decline of Buddhism in India, Ceylon Buddhists turned more and more to Burma and vice versa. We learned from Culavamsa that King Vijayabahu I (1070-1111) sent envoys to Anurudha (1044-1077) King of Burma, requesting him to send competent bhikkhus to re-establish the higher ordination in Ceylon which had been disrupted during the Cola occupation (1017-1070) of the greater part of the Island.<sup>55</sup>

This request was duly accepted to and the higher ordination of the country was reestablished as a result. From this time the relationship between the two countries, which had momentous consequences for Buddhism in Burma, seems to have continued for several centuries. According to Junakalamili a Northern Thai Pali Chronicle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, King Anurudha received texts of the Tipitaka from Ceylon in the early years of his reign.<sup>56</sup>

---

54. Pali Literature of Ceylon.p.74.

55. Culavamsa (PTS),50.

56. Jinakalamali, p.100, ed.A. P. Buddhadatta Mahathera,PTS,London, 1962.

**CHAPTER VI**  
**THE FIFTH GREAT BUDDHIST COUNCIL**

## CHAPTER VI

### THE FIFTH GREAT BUDDHIST COUNCIL

In the history of Theravada Buddhism, the Samgha and kings of Burma actively carried out the Great Council in Manadalay, the ancient capital of Burma, patroned by King Mindon. The work of the king, the Sangha and the people will be discussed in this chapter.

The Great Buddhist Councils were held for six times recorded and recognized in the history of Theravada Buddhism. Among the six, the First, Second and Third councils were held in India and the Fourth was held in Sri Lanka. The last two: the Fifth and the Sixth were convened in Burma respectively.

#### **6.1. History Of Buddhism In Burma (Myanmar)**

First, however, it should be understood that Buddhism has been the prime influence and the majority of the people are Buddhists. There is ample archaeological evidence that Buddhism had already reached Burma in the Pyu Era. Gold tablets with inscriptions the *Pali* stanza in it dating back to the Pyu Era give credence to this view. But inscribed records of Burmese cultural and ethical value systems proliferated only during the Bagan Era when Buddhist culture began to flourish and permeated all levels of society. Code of conducts were clearly laid down for parents and offspring, teacher and students, ruler and ruled, elders and youths, monks and laymen, between friends as well as towards one's impoverished relatives. These codes of conduct can be traced in Buddhist literature known as *Singala sutta* of *Digha Nikaya*.<sup>1</sup>

Burma (now Myanmar) as the nation has been known throughout history and it is one of the major countries following Buddhist doctrines especially Theravada

---

1. D.iii.p.147, The Long Discourse of the Buddha.p.467.

Buddhism. Buddhism and the people of Burma cannot be separated from each other because Buddhism is the life blood of Burmese in literature, cult, arts, architecture, ways of life and culture.

There are four dominant ethnic groups in the recorded history of Burma: the Pyu, the Mon, the Bamar and the Shan. The sources of information for the events can be found in *Sasanavamsa*,<sup>2</sup> a chronicle of Buddhism written in Pali. The history of Buddhism in Burma is closely interlinked with the development of Burmese social, education, economy, culture and civilization. Buddhism plays a major role in the heart of Burmese so Burmese have been embracing Buddhism since immemorial time.

It was during the reign of Asoka in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C that Buddhism came to be known all over India and neighboring countries. Burmese chronicles say that Thaton in Lower Burmese received Buddhism from Ven. Sona and Uttara, the leaders of the two missionaries of Asoka sent forth from Pataliputta.<sup>3</sup> The history of Buddhism in Burma began with Sona and Uttara. Burmese and Mon traditions asserted that the monks leading the mission established a monastery at Kelasa Mountain on the outskirts of the city. Barring the story of Ven.Sona and Uttara there is no other evidence that Buddhism flourished in Burma before the fifth century A.C. Mahavamsa, the Sinhalese chronicle (originally of the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D) writes in great detail of Buddhist missions sent by Emperor Asoka in great details of spread of Buddhism including Burma (then known as Suvannabhumi).<sup>4</sup> King Ramadhipati (popularly known as Dhammaceti) of Hanthawady (now Bago) in his Kalyani Sima Inscription (A.D 1480) traced the beginning of Buddhism in Ramannadesa (lower Burma) to the Sona-Uttara mission of 309 B.C.

---

2. Wilhelm Geiger (Trsn): *Sasanavamsa*.p.230, London, PTS, 1929.

3. Mahadhamma Thingyin: *Sasanalankara*.p.12., Hanthawaddy press. Rangoon, 1956.

4. W.Geiger's translation: *Mahvamsa*, Chapter XII, Verse 6 and 8.p.82. Sri Lanka Government, 1950 reprint)

## 6.2 Buddhism In Early Phase In Burma

Considering the close proximity of Burma to India, and the existence of not too difficult land routes between the two even before the Christian era, the possibility is not altogether excluded that Buddhism found its way to Burma even before the fifth century A.C but from this period onwards there definite records to prove not only the existence but also the flourishing state of Theravada Buddhism in the old kingdom of the Pyus known as Sri ksetara with its capital, Prome, (now Pyay) the ruins of which lie in modern Hmawza. It was to lose its importance about 9<sup>th</sup> century and moved to Thaton, lower Burma.

The archaeological remains at Hmawza, about five miles from modern Prome, and the Chinese accounts leave no doubts that the Theravada form of Buddhism with Pali canonical texts was introduced in the region round Prome not later than the fifth century A.C. The site was excavated and the place was a town of Srikhsetra that flourished between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. quite a number of religious objects belonging to Hinduism and Buddhism were unearthed.<sup>5</sup> The earliest developed urban settlement of the Pyu was Beikthano, near Prome. When Srikhsetra became the center of Pyu civilization, a major monastery built in the fourth century has been unearthed at Beikthano. The building, constructed in brick, with a stupa and shrine located near by, is identical to the Buddhist monastery of Nagajunakonda, the great Buddhist center of Southern India.

From the 5<sup>th</sup> century until the conquest of lower Myanmar by Pagan, there is a continuous record of Buddhism flourishing in the Mon and in the Pyu kingdoms. Pyu culture of this period is well documented because of archeological finds at Maunggan,

---

5. Myanmar History in General.p.55, Moun yway press, Yangon,2007.

a small village closed to the ancient ruins of Hmawzar. The finds on the site of ancient Pyu capital confirm the report of the Chinese pilgrims and also the Tang imperial chronicles of China which state: "They (the Pyu) dislike taking life. They know how to make astronomical calculations. They are Buddhists and have a hundred monasteries with brick of glass embellished with gold and silver vermilion gay color and red at seven years of age the people cut their hair and enter a monastery; if at the age of twenty they have not grasped the doctrine they returned to a lay state." <sup>6</sup>

There are good grounds for supposing that the Theravada form of Buddhism also flourished among the Mons settled in Pegu, Thaton and other neighboring regions collectively known as Ramannadesa. Sometime before the eleventh century A.C. Thaton became a very important centre of this religion.

### **6.2.1 Buddhism In Bagan Period**

Both Buddhist culture in the South of Myanmar, the Mon and the Phy were swept away in the eleven century by the armies of Burmese who had found a unifying force in their leader, the founder of Bagan and champion of Buddhism, Anawratha. In 1044 A.C, Anawratha ascended the throne of Pagan and he was dissatisfied with the prevailing religion of his people, which was a mixture of Tantric Buddhism with native animistic beliefs. He resented the enormous authority and prestige of the Ari monks, whom he considered depraved. At this juncture a Mon monk, Shin Arahan by name, also known as Dhammadasi who came from Thaton, arrived at Pagan. His saintly personality stood in contrast to the heavy-eating and arrogant Ari monks, and within a short period of time he was able to convert Anawratha to Theravada Buddhism. Anawratha, who must have been already planning to conquer the Mons

---

6. Maung Htin Aunt: A History of Burma, p.10., Columbia University Press, New York and Landon,1967.

and extend his frontiers to the seacoast, was now seized with genuine religious zeal and assumed the role of a champion of his new faith.<sup>7</sup>

In making Buddhism the official and national religion of his people, Anawratha was acting under advice of Shin Araham, whom he appointed as the primate of his empire. A strict disciplinarian, he was intolerant of and punished ruthlessly any departure from orthodoxy. He handled the opposition from the Aris with skill, executing the leaders but conscripting the rank and file for his armies, and, according to traditional accounts, with their well-fed and vigorous bodies the unfrocked Aris fought well in the elephantary. Nonetheless, he had to come to some compromise with spirit worshipers. In spite of his stern measures, he was successful in making Buddhism the national religion of the people only because the majority accepted. The Burmese of Pagan adopted the religion, language, literature and script of the Mons.

Once Thaton had fallen, Anawratha showed regard for the Mons and encouraged his own tribes to sit at their feet and learn their culture. Although he allowed his troops to sack Thaton, he saw to it that the defenders were not wantonly slaughtered, and Manuha and his family were treated with consideration and courtesy; even his shackles had to be specially made of gold.

Anawratha and his successors became the great champions of the Theravada form of Buddhism, and along with their political authority it extended over the whole of Burma. With the zeal of a new convert Anawratha built numerous pagodas and monasteries and his example was followed by his successors.

Anawratha of Pagan was the patron par excellence of Buddhism in any part of Burma. His semi barbarous subjects received the softening culture of the religion and

---

7. Maung Htin Aung: A History of Burma.p. 36., Columbia University Press, New York and London, 1967.

the benefits of a worthy civilization which arose with it. Thus resulted the pre-eminence of Pagan in the cultural history of early Burma. The exertions of this king led to religious contacts with Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) from where was brought the version of Tipitaka, the teachings of the Buddha to be compared with that brought from Thaton.

Pagan's faith prospered no less under his son, Kyanzittha, the successor of Anawratha, who completed the on the Shwezigon Pagoda built by Anawratha followed the footsteps and built the famous and magnificent Ananda temple at Pagan. The unrivalled sculptures, paintings and legends of the latter shrine are testimony of the fact that Theravada Buddhism had taken firm root in less than two centuries.

They also are evidence that, towards the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the nidanakatha of Jataka was familiar in upper Burma. Kyansittha was a worthy patron of Buddhism, the religion which brought luster upon his people. His time was replete with erudite monks, who made important contributions to Buddhist studies. In his galaxy there were, besides the Ven. Arahan, Nanagambhira, Moggaliputtatissa, Sumedha, Brahmapla, Brahmadeva and Anandabodhi also carried out the development of Buddhism. In addition to building to shrines, Kyansittha is known to have repaired ruined temples in Arakan. More memorable was his repairing of the Buddha Gaya shrine in India.

By the time Kyansittha was dying, his son, Rajakumar dedicated to the gratitude of his father, set up a golden image of the Buddha, endowing it with the lands he had inherited from his mother. He said to the king, "My lord, remembering the many great favors which you have showered on me, I have done this deed of merit, and may my lord be pleased to take a share." The king, even in the extremity of his sickness and on the point of death, smiled upon his son and said, "Well done."

After the king died, so that there should be no doubt in the minds of the king's subjects as to his intentions, the prince Rajakumar set up a stone on which was inscribed a full description of his last meeting with his father in four languages, Pali, Pyu, Mon and Burmese. This inscription is named as 'Myaseti inscription' and it can be seen even today in Pagan.<sup>8</sup>

King Alaungsithu, the next, also devotedly followed his predecessors. He continued the work at the Mahabodhi, particularly at the Vajrasana which all Buddhists hold in the deepest veneration. In the reign of the king, Alaung Sithu, peace and prosperity were enjoyed so the king built temple after temple and became so religious that people felt convinced that he was a Future Buddha. One of the pagodas he built was Shwegugyi by name. The king deserved his reputation of being a pious Buddhist. In his inscription at the Shwegukyi Pagoda, the king shows himself as a Buddhist of rare brilliance. Unfortunately, he was killed by his younger son, Narathu.

Narapatisithu (1171-1210), a successor, proved to be equally devoted to the religion. During the reign of Narapatisithu religion especially Burmese culture and literature reached its highest level. In his reign, Pali, Sanskrit, and Mon languages were discarded and Burmese replaced them as the language of inscriptions. Pagan scholars were so proficient in the study of the scriptures that they were producing commentaries and grammatical works of their own. These commentaries were accepted in Theravada Buddhist countries as part of the scriptures.

In his reign, the Venerable Panthagu who left Ceylon in a voluntary exile from the previous unprincipled ruler, returned home to be respectfully received by the new king.<sup>9</sup> In order to draw the people's mind more strongly toward the religion, the king

---

8. Myaseti Inscription is erected near Myaseti Pagoda in Bagan.

9. Sasanalankara.p.50.

set up large Buddha images and built several temples including Gawdawpalin pagoda. Monastic scholarship reached great heights in his time.

A more important event was that the Sinhala ordination from Ceylon was introduced into the country about 1181 by Ven. Chappata who lived in Ceylon for decades. He accompanied with his master Ven.Uttarajiva to the Island and he studies pali texts and commentaries and he came back to Burma with four Sinhalese monks. The group lost no time in introducing this new ordination from a land reputed as the home of the spiritual successors to the apostle Ven.Mahinda.

By the close of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Buddhism was to suffer an eclipse in Bagan. It was brought about by political causes and although the Samgha would have continued to work on quietly, the days of spectacular royal patronage were drawing to a close. King Htilominlo (1210-34), a son of Narapatisithu, was devout and built the temples of Mahabodhi (in imitation of the famous shrine in India).

The kings and people of Pagan used to build countless temples. Some of them stand at the present day and many still in daily use as places of worship. Thousands more were destroyed in the great fire that ravaged the city in 1225, in the sacking of the city by Kublai Khan's troops in 1287, and in the burning of the city by Shan usurpers in 1299. Hundreds of monasteries were also built but did not survive the disasters because they were usually of wood.

The fondness of the Pagan people for music was well illustrated by a prayer contained in an inscription set up by a minister: "For this deed of merit, may I attain Buddha-hood, but before attaining Buddha-hood, may I always enjoy the bliss of being awakened in the mornings by the music of the drum and the horn."

Kyaswar (1234-50) was a king under whom scholarship was encouraged even more because the king himself spent most of his time in scholarly pursuits including

memories passages of *Tipitaka*. Both he and his daughter are reputed to have written a work each on Pali Grammar. Two grammatical works: the *Saddhabindu* and the *Paramatthabindu*, are ascribed to him. It would appear that his palace was a place of great culture and learning as his ministers and his daughter are credited with scholarly works as well. The principal works of Pagan period still extant are Pali grammars. The most famous of this is the *Saddaniti* composed by Ven. *Aggavamsa* in 1154. *Saddaniti* still used to teach grammar in monasteries in Myanmar. B.C Law regards it as one of the three principal Pali grammars by *Kaccayana* and *Moggalana*. K.R. Norman says “the greatest of extant Pali grammars is *Saddaniti*, written by *Aggavamsa* from Pagan, Burma.” G.E Harvey honors the kings of Pagan with the following words: To them the world owes a great measure the preservation of Theravada Buddhism, one of the purest faith mankind has ever known.”

The chronicles suggested that some of the Ari monks who had fled from Anawratha’s persecution to the remote parts of the Shan plateau had come back with the Shans. There were riotous scenes at Sagaing. Thadominbya re-introduced law and order and tried to purify the Buddhist clergy, which had become hopeless corrupt. He extended full patronage to orthodox monks and encouraged learning among both monks and laymen. But he died in 1368.

Bayinnaung (1551-81), of the Taungoo dynasty proved to be a bountiful monarch in every way and he considered it his duty to act as the champion of Theravada Buddhism in Southeast Asia. He not only work zealously to further Buddhism but emulating Emperor Asoka, went even as far as prohibiting the slaughter of animals. The prohibition extended even to Muslims and foreigners in the land.

In the reign of Bayinnaung, he introduced Theravada Buddhism in Shan region. The Shans had gradually absorbed Buddhism since the thirteenth century. He prohibited all human and animal sacrifices, built hundreds of monasteries all over the Shan region. He distributed thousands of copies of Buddhist scriptures and made it compulsory for villagers to congregate and study the scriptures on Sabbath days.

King Anaukpetlun had assumed the role of a patron of Buddhism, and he swore a mighty oath that he would drive away the archenemy of Buddhism, Philip De Brito y Nicote, one of Portuguese mercenaries, into the sea. He was the typical Portuguese adventure in Southeast Asia.

Tharlun Min was another great patron of Buddhism; he built the famous Kaunghmudaw pagoda on the opposite bank of the Irrawaddy River from Ava and enshrined the sacred Tooth and the Alms Bowl received from Ceylon by Bayinnaung. Tharlun Min felt that it was a duty he owed to his brother, Anaukphetlun, and to his grandfather, Bayinnaung, to build a permanent pagoda for the relics. So he sent a mission to Ceylon to get the architectural plans of the great temple of Anuradhapura, and using it as his model he built the Kaunghmudaw pagoda.

He extended his patronage to those monks who were famous for their learning and purity, and encouraged all ranks of monks to follow the rules of the Order strictly. He encouraged not only the study of the scriptures but also various works on Burmese customary law, which was considered the common cultural heritage for all the racial groups. As a result one of his ministers produced another compendium of Burmese law, which took its place with the earlier Code of Dhammavilasa.

## 6.2.2 Buddhism In Konbaung Period

Alaungpaya (1752-60) established a Myanmar emperor known as Konbaung dynasty. In early Konbaung dynasty, Buddhist monks broke into two sects, orthodox and reformed. The point of controversy was in the manner of wearing robes. The orthodox group insisted that the robes should be worn for dignity and decorum, and the reformed sect insisted that they should be worn for comfort. It was a bitter conflict, involving not only Burmese but Mon monks also, because they were all under the *Sangharaja*, leader of the Sangha, appointed by the king.

Alaungpaya appointed a new primate, Atula Yasathera who belonged to the reformed sect, and gave him full support to end the controversy and the schism but it could not be solved for a long time. He encouraged learning and scholarship by giving awards and titles to scholars and poets. He prohibited the killing of cattle, both on religious and economic grounds. People above sixty years old, kept the Five Precepts and spent their time in monasteries and pagodas.

However, with the death of Alaungpaya the primate had lost his office automatically and ended. It was virtually closed by king Bodawpaya (1782-1819) was reluctant to share authority even with a primate and he appointed a royal commission to consider the point of conflict. He felt it his responsibility to revive it and to find a permanent solution. The commission heard witnesses and arguments put forward by both sides and then reported in favor of the orthodox sect.<sup>10</sup>

Accepting the commission's report, Bodawpaya proclaimed that all monks must wear their robes in the orthodox manner and the controversy should cease forthwith. No king in the long history of Buddhism, both in Burma and outside, had ever dared to proclaim a Vinaya rule for the monks and there were outcries of protest

---

10. Sasanavamsa.p.106.

from all ranks of the monks. Systematically Bodawpaya disrobed all monks who questioned his authority to make the proclamation. The protests did not cease, and he unfrocked the leader of the reform sect who had been Alaungpaya's primate and ordered him to be taken to lower Burma.<sup>11</sup>

When Bodawpaya died in 1819, he left to his grandson, Bagyidaw, also known as Sagaing Min, a country full of rumors of war and disaster. The crisis occurred in Arakan. By moving westwards, he destroyed the buffer state of Arakan that lay between Burma and the powerful state of the East India Company in India. The disputes arose and in January 1824, Burmese troops led by Mahabandula marched into Cachar and in the following March the British formally declared war against the Burmese. These finally led to the First Burmese War (1824-26).

Prince Tharrawaddy rose against his brother Bagyidaw, dethroned him and reigned in his stead and became king (1837-46) and as former commander was interested in the procurement of modern arms. He refused to be imposed upon by a British; ultimately, instead of a peaceful incorporation of Burma into the British Empire, the country was conquered and annexed by military force. He himself had no plans to attack the British. He needed those arms to restore law and order in the kingdom. He had the royal support of his eldest son, the prince of Pagan, the command of the armies. The British accused the king of going against the spirit of Yandabo Treaty and Tharrawaddy replied that the treaty no longer bound him since the British had broken it already by not stopping their allies from attacking his kingdom.

Tharrawaddy died in 1846 and the prince Bagan (1846-1853) succeeded the throne. His two younger brothers, the prince of Mindon and Kanaung, gave their full

---

11. U Kala Mahayazawintawgyi. p. 3, 4, 102-3, 303, (Great Chronicle), Myanmar Research Society, Yangon, 1959; Mhanan Yazawintawgyi. p. 24, 25, 384, 391, Mibagonyi Press, Meiktila, 1956.

support to the new king. The first year of his reign Pagan proved to be an able monarch. He was neither an administrator nor a soldier. He wanted to turn his army into a strong, peace-keeping force in the kingdom. His great ambition was to remove the sting from the Treaty of Yandabo by exchanging envoys with the king of England. The king especially mentioned the grand friendship that existed between the two nations.

Mindon (1852-1878) was entirely different from his predecessors. He was peaceful in nature and was also a man of sound common sense. He led the rebellion against his elder brother Pagan not as a seeker after power but as a humanitarian yearning to end a purposeless war in which Burmese lives were being sacrificed in counterattacks against impregnable British positions. He hated bloodshed and had a strong sense of public duty. Mindon had one advantage over his predecessors. He knew more of the world than they did. When Mindon came to the throne, the capital was Amarapura. After five years at Amarapura he wanted to build a new capital because there was a prophecy that one lives long in the shadows of the Mandalay Hill so the king built his new capital at the foot of Mandalay hill and he called his new city Ratanapura (Yadanabon), the City of Gems.

According to the Pali word "*Rajapadhanam*", which means the flourishing of *Sasana* depends on the Kings or the heads of the State who rule the country. The king is presented as not only the ruler of the people but a being distinctly above them occupying the chief and central position in the country and wielding great power. If the ruler encourages the *Sasana*, the teachings of the Buddha, it will become prosperous in that country. If not, *Sasana* will not be flourished. Most of the kings in Burma promoted and propagated Buddhism in their reigns for Buddhism is the life of the people.

Kings built pagodas and established monasteries because they were the supporters of Buddhism. It was part of their kingly duties to support their religions. In the chronicle the account on their reign should always end with the list of pagodas and monasteries they built. In fact, these meritorious deeds would be remembered in the local histories.

### **6.3 The Role Of Supreme Sangha (Thathana Paing)**

In the time of the kings, the government was far more concerned to keep the Sangha under effective royal control than were the monks to interfere in political affairs. The principal agency by which the king exerted control over the Buddha Sangha was the office of the Thathanapaing, the supreme monk appointed by the king. The Supreme Order of a monk (known as Thathanapaing in Burma) was highly respected personally because of his religious eminence and as one of the great men of the kingdom.

In Konbaung dynasty, King *Alaungpaya* eagerly encouraged Pariyatti Sasana, the teachings of the Buddha. Thathanapaing was selected by the king and retained office at his pleasure and the king appointed Venerable Atulayassa as Supreme monk by offering the title "*Mahaatulaya-ssamahadhamma-rajaguru*". The Thathanapaing, the primate, exercised religious authority under royal mandate and served also as the channel for making royal authority effective throughout the monastic community.<sup>12</sup> The principal function performed by the organization was disciplinary. It exercised legal jurisdiction under the Vinaya rules governing monastic disputes, settled controversies involving among the community of the Sangha.

---

12. Furnivall, J. S. (1948). *Colonial policy and practice a comparative study of Burma and Netherlands India*. Cambridge England: Cambridge University Press.

The national civilization of Burma was held together in large measure by the Buddhist monks.<sup>13</sup> Not only Konbaung dynasty but also all successive kings in Burma propagated Buddhism because they knew that only Buddhist ways of life can develop the people as well as the nation. The powerful inertia behind religious tradition was also demonstrated in the persistence of veneration of monks long after growing laxity of discipline. Social life centered on pagoda festivals, colorful light celebrations at the end of lent and novitiation ceremony. Until the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, the monasteries continued to serve as the principal means of education centers.<sup>14</sup>

The monastic system in ancient Burma was also socially important as a democratic leveling agency. The sons of princes and of fishermen enjoyed the same status at the monastery, for entrance was open to all alike and all were subjected to the same discipline. The system undoubtedly helped translate ethical precepts into social mores. Buddhism provided a logical relationship between goodness and personal destiny and offered to the pious a pathway of refuge and escape through the Triple Gems: the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. It is against these background considerations that one must assess the effects of the subsequent serious decline of the monastic system under British rule.<sup>15</sup>

By tracing the history of Burma what we found is that Burmese kings and the people have been embracing Buddhist faith from the time of immemorial until the present day. It means the kings and their subjects are Buddhists. So, the Burmese ways of life are under the guidance of spiritual leaders. Everyone either a prince or a poor kid have equal educational privilege at the monasteries. The spiritual leaders,

---

13. Furnivall, Colonial Policy.p.17,

14. Scott, Sire James George: Burma as it Was, as It Is, and as It Will Be, p.211-223,.London,1886.

15. Shway Yoe, p.59.

Buddhist monks, imparted their arts and science knowledge to those students through Buddhist perspective.

## **6.4 Buddhism Under King Mindon**

Buddhism under King Mindon experienced a revival and “flourished like the sun and the moon” as the saying goes. Although Burmese kings supported Buddhism they did not neglect other elements of Burmese religious life.

King Mindon was described as the king who most supported Buddhism during his reign.<sup>16</sup> Unusual in the Myanmar conception, though not new in the Asokan tradition, King Mindon had the Tipitaka text inscribed on 729 stone tablets, and convened the Fifth Buddhist Council.

When Mindon came to power in 1853, the kingdom he inherited from his brother was in bad shape both economically and politically. The morale of the people was at a low ebb after the civil war and successive defeats at the hands of the British. territorial losses to the foreigners had created a disturbance in the politics, royal finances, and economic conditions of the country. At a time when political and economic instruments of policy could be only marginally effective in consolidating the kingdom, social instruments and especially religion, were the most convenient means to elicit the loyalty and support of the people. Because of their religious faith, the people increasingly turned their attention to the life hereafter, and with this solace they could bear the political and economic hardship of their time. For these reasons, it was no doubt that religion became a rallying point to unify the society and consolidate the kingdom under Mindon.

---

16. Myanmarmin Ok Chokpon Sadan. Part. III. p.90.

Moreover, King Mindon's religious reforms did not receive favorable responses from various groups of monks both in Lower and Upper Burma. His religious reforms were criticized by both monks and lay people who accused him of either going too far in his reforms or not going far enough.<sup>17</sup>

#### **6.4.1 Merit-Making And Donations**

The scope and extent of King Mindon's support for religion is well documented with detailed information on each work of merit-making. He spent a total of more than 226 million kyat (Myanmar currency) on donations and support for Buddhism.<sup>18</sup> Even one monastery known as Mahadmmikarama Taik constructed for the Shwegyin Sayadaw cost him 223,355 kyat.<sup>19</sup> The building of new pagodas and the repair of old ones was a constant activity throughout his reign. One religious work of great magnitude that entailed a heavy expenditure of money and labor was the crafting of Kyauktawgyi Buddha image, which was made from a single block of marble.

One surviving manuscript called the Tharasein Mibura Parabaik<sup>20</sup> describes various kinds of donations made by King Mindon between 1853 and 1857. By examining that manuscript one can estimate the extent and the intensity of his religious merit-making in the early years of his reign. One can also safely assume that the momentum of these donations continued and possibly increased throughout his reign.

The largest proportion of spending on religion went to the support of the Sangha and the number of monks in the capital, Mandalay, and in the whole kingdom

---

17. Htin Aung: *Burmese Monk's Tales*.p.17.

18. Myanmarmin Ok Chokpon Sadan.Part.III. p.132.

19. Shwe Hintha Sayadaw: *Shwgyin Nikaya Sasanawin*.p.108.

20. British Library Oriental MS.13681.

in Mindon's time was quite considerable. There were more than ten thousand monks at the capital, or ten percent of its population.<sup>21</sup> For the kingdom as a whole, monks constituted about three percent of the population. It must have been a considerable strain on the hard-pressed economy to support the Sangha, both in terms of money and in terms of goods and materials. Most of the monasteries were on the donation-list of the king. At first, donations to the monks were given in money, but when some monks protested that it was against disciplinary rules (Vinaya rule) for monks to handle money, the king switched to donations of rice. The Myowun, the Mayor, were instructed to take the money from the tax of the area to spend on rice donations to the monasteries.<sup>22</sup>

## **6.5 Purification Of The Sangha**

Protecting and supporting Buddhism was not enough for a righteous king but the purity of the Sangha and the Pali texts, the teachings of the Buddha, was essential for the continuous thriving of Buddhism for five thousand years ago. In the ideology of Burmese Kingship, it was the function of the righteous kings to ensure that the purity of the Sangha be maintained. If the king could show that the Order of Monks no longer lived by the disciplinary rules or that it was wealthy or schismatic, he could justifiably purify it.<sup>23</sup> With the tradition of schism in the interpretation of the Disciplinary rule and the laxity of discipline in previous reigns, the Burmese Sangha received the most urgent attention of King Mindon.

Available evidence suggests that Mindon's desire for the purification of religion dated back to his days as a prince at the court of King Bangan, his brother.

---

21. Than Tun: *Neihle Yazawin*, Vol.II,p.133.

22. Win Maung: *Mandalekhit Buddha Thathanawin (Buddhism in Mandalay Period)* p.127. 1976.

23. Michael Aung-Thwin: *Divinity, Spirit, and Human: Conceptions of Classical Burmese Kingship*. p.54, YaleUniversity, 1984.

While he served at the Hluttaw (Parliament), he was reported to have been upset over the behavior of monks who did not observe the disciplinary rules. The laxity of discipline as a result of the weakness of the Thathanapaing's control over the monks in the kingdom before King Mindon was confirmed by the contemporary observers like Bishop Bigandet, who noticed that Thathanapaing could not send his deputies to the provinces to discipline unruly monks. In his words, "Unfortunately for the welfare of the order, these salutary visits no more take place; the wholesome check is done away with. Left without a superior control, the order has fallen into a low degree of abjectness and degradation."<sup>24</sup>

Although the majority of monks obeyed the rules there were many who were lax in disciplines for several reasons other than religious ones. For instance, some monks donned the yellow robe to escape from the King's service, some tried to escape from slavery, some to evade paying debts, some to support parents and relatives; some wanted careers at the court through the monk-hood and some wanted easy lives without worries for their livelihood.

Not only the king but also the people were distressed to see such 'erratic' monks who engaged in various types of activities contrary to the disciplinary rules, namely, engaging in agriculture, raising cows, asking for donations, engaging in trade, practicing medicine, using umbrellas and footwear without sufficient reason, fortune-telling, chewing betel, loitering inside the town; watching theatrical performances, puppet shows and boxing; listening to music, handling weapons, smoking, engaging in tattooing, making charms and amulets, reciting mantras for secular ends, and engaging in alchemy and intimate relations with women.

---

24. Paul A. Bigandet: *The Life of Legend of Gutama, The Buddha of Burmese*.p.250, Pegu Press. Rangoon, 1858.

As a result of disobeying the disciplinary rules, there were many cases of disputes, quarrels, and crimes among the monks and also between the monks and laity. Such cases centered around rival claims over monasteries and land, inheritance, theft, misappropriation, assault, murder, gambling, alchemy, entering the monk-hood while underage, using abusive language.<sup>25</sup>

When Mindon ascended the throne, he ordered the Mahadanwun, officer of religious affairs, to take those monks who were not careful about their behavior to the Subhamma assembly, Sangha assembly, for admonition. This is regarded as the beginning of religious purification measures early in the reign of King Mindon.<sup>26</sup> The officers also assisted the Thathanapaing in discharging his functions. In his effort to purify the Sangha, King Mindon relied on certain elements of the monk-hood who were very strict in their observance of the disciplinary rule and who spearhead the reform movement.

### **6.5.1 The Dhamma Vinaya Code And Religious Controversy**

King Mindon started his Sangha purification effort by issuing a drastic and controversial act called Dhamma Vinaya Act on February 15, 1856. This Act aimed at setting a certain standard of behavior for monks and cracking down on Alajji, the monks who did not follow the rules. The Act was written by Ven.Nanda who was known as Shangalegyun Sayadaw at the request of King Mindon and passed through the royally appointed Sudhamma Council, the act emphasized how monks should act and behave in daily life whether they were at the monastery or in any other place.

The most controversial aspect of the Act was that people were ordered not to pay obeisance to or support these Alajji monks in the capital and in other parts of the

---

25. Shin Pannasami: Sangha Vinicchaya Phyathton (Palm leaf manuscript) p.107, MandalayUniversity.

26. Than Tun: History of Shwegyin Nikaya. P.30, Shiroku no.4, 1981.

kingdom. Every effort must be made to prevent the people from supporting these bad monks. In addition, if the Acts or Orders were not obeyed, myowun and government officials were required to punish disobedient people in order to remove the danger to religion. The Act was strictly enforced by royal authority. The monks who did not follow the Act were forced to leave the Order and many were driven out of their locality. Despite the good intention of the King to purify the Sangha, the Act touched off controversy and disputes among the monks and laity in the country. The Act was strongly criticized by the famous venerable monks and was resisted by some sections of the monk-hood. Since the Vinaya rules had already been promulgated by the Buddha, some argued whether it was necessary for lay authority to restate it. The crux of the problem in enforcing the Act was how one could decide whether a monk was a bad one, *alijji* or not.

The most vocal protect came from the famous and learned monk known as Bhamo Sayadaw who made a bitter attack on the edict, its author and Sudhamma Council. Bhamo Sayadaw made two serious accusations against King Mindon.<sup>27</sup> First, Bhamaw Sayadaw warned Mindon that using his bellwether group to purify the Sangha was dangerous because the opinions of the Shangalaygun Sayadaw were private, personal interpretations of the Disciplines (Vinaya). If the King wanted to purify the Order according to the proposed new rules, he could convene a full-fledged Council, Sangayana which could compare in scholarly fashion the new rules with the old. Second, Bhamaw Sayadaw warned the king not to encourage lay people to become judges of monastic behavior so that they would, in fact, bring about Asokan purification by refusing to honor with food and material support those they considered to be bad monks. For the laity to criticize the Sangha, he said, was to open the way to

---

27. John P. Ferguson: *The Quest for Legitimizing by Burmese Monks and Kings: The Case of Shwegyin Sect (19<sup>th</sup>- 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*. p.71. Anima Books, 1978.

hell. The Sayadaw expressed his concern that as a result of the enforcement of the Act, divisions among the Sangha would disturb religion and could bring bad effects not only to the human world but also the world of devas and brahmas.<sup>28</sup>

By putting the Dhamma Vinaya Act in the context of King Mindon's religious reforms, one suspects that it was Mindon's political intention to bring the Order under his control and to use it to his political advantage. It was tempting for a monarch whose political and economic position was relatively weak to use the Sangha which commanded popular support at the grass-roots level as an instrument for consolidating the King.

### **6.5.2 Thathanapaing, The Supreme Council And His Duties**

To further check and control the Sangha in the kingdom, a highly-structured Sangha organization was developed in Mindon's reign. The Sangha organization was headed by the Thathanapaing also known as Sangharaja whose power was supreme in affairs of religion and also spilled over into the realm of politics in the kingdom. Therefore, successive Burmese kings including Mindon chosen respected, qualified, well versed in the teachings of the Buddha as well as good at worldly and religious affairs venerable monk for the position of Thathanapaing. It means the Sayadaw was chosen as the king's teacher.

The Thathanapaing also had to be one who was well respected and loved by the entire Sangha, the court and the people. Once elected, the Thathanapaing made a vow in front of a Buddha image and in the midst of the Sangha that he would carry out his duties impartially.<sup>29</sup> He had the right to use such symbols of royalty as riding on a palanquin, sitting on a throne, and traveling under a white umbrella. Armed guards

---

28. Thein: Thinggaza Sagapon paungchok.p.361.

29. Encyclopedia Birmanica, vol.9. p.363.

accompanied the Thathanapaing both before and behind when he went out of his elegant monastery.<sup>30</sup>

The duties of Thathanapaing were varied, touching on every aspect on every aspect of religion in the kingdom. He settled disputes among the Sangha on points of the disciplinary rules, reviewed and settled cases submitted by district and provincial heads of the Sangha organization, appointed the leaders of the hierarchy in the districts, issued orders to monks and novices to follow the disciplinary rules and punished those monks who broke the code of discipline. In consultation with learned men, the Thathanapaing announced the time of the New Year, and the beginning and end of the Buddhist lent. He also had an important role to play in the politics and administration of the country.<sup>31</sup>

### **6.5.3 The Sudhamma Council**

In order to assist the Thathanapaing in discharging his various functions, the king appointed a committee called Sudhamma Council. There were eight to twelve members of the council mostly chosen from the outstanding ability and learned monks who had been awarded titles by the king. They were called Sudhamma venerable Sayadaw. The council met under the chairmanship of Thathanapaing every Sabbath day at the Sudhamma hall at the foot of Mandalay hill to decide all the cases and disputes pertaining to the affairs of the Sangha in the kingdom. Most of the cases dealt with the disputes over the points of disciplinary rules, rival claims over monasteries and property, and the points of doctrine.

---

30. Shwegaingtha: Ahnitayapye Mandalay.p.230.

31. Myaketu: Nandalei Hmatanmya.p.273; Maung Htaung (Thathanapaing): Amatoau Aphre (Answers to the Royal Questions.p.80.Mandalay Pitaka Press,1961.

Two royally-appointed officers were responsible for assisting the Thathanapaing and Sudhamma Council dealing with religious affairs. One was Mahadanwun, commissioner of ecclesiastical censorship. He arrested monks who were found breaking the disciplinary rules and sent them to the Sudhamma Council with the assistance of the Mahadansaye, the clerk. He also acted as liaison officer between the court and the venerable monks, especially supervising the correspondence between the two.

The Mahadawun and his assistant made sure that punishments given to monks and novices by the Sudhamma Council, especially carrying water and sand, standard punishment for monks, were duly carried out.<sup>32</sup>

With a view to enforce the disciplinary rules strictly, the Sudhamma Council issued directives to the deputy leaders of the Sangha hierarchy in the districts and provinces. The directives were quite detailed in their instructions to deputy leaders in provinces on such matters as what particular Buddhist texts on the disciplinary rules and other subjects must be committed to memory by monks and novices, how instructions on scriptural studies should be given, how monks should wear their robes and behave in towns and villages, what color monks should dye their robes, how they should keep the Sabbath, how they should meditate and how they should promote their learning and practice doctrine.<sup>33</sup>

Those directives contained some instructions which had a direct bearing on the politics of the kingdom. For instance, monks were instructed not to harbor in the monastery and put in the monk-hood criminals who were dangerous to the country and who were wanted by the king and the court. These instructions clearly demonstrate the king's intention to neutralize the potential ability of the Sangha to

---

32. Maung Maung Tin: Shwenanthon.p.115.

33. Myint Myint Than: Dhamma Vinaya Ameindaw.p.49, Burmese Historical Documents in Microfilm (Tokyo), Reel No.59.

support his enemies. The monks who were found guilty of violating the directives were to be punished.<sup>34</sup>

#### **6.5.4 Sangha Organization**

To carry out the functions of the Sudhamma Council, some qualified venerable Sayadaws comprised of eight members were appointed by Sudhamma Sayadaws. The appointed Sayadaws had to write down the statements of the accuser and the accused in cases submitted for decision to the Sudhamma Council. For handling the Sangha efficiently in the capital, one venerable monk was appointed to each of the four quarter of the capital. He reviewed whether cases should be submitted to Sudhamma Council or to the heads of the monasteries concerned. For internal administration of the monasteries, Sudhamma Council appointed the head of the monastery (taik nayaka), deputy head of the monastery (taik oke) and the assistant of the head (taik kyat) to supervise and guide the monks and novices in their daily lives in their respective monasteries.<sup>35</sup>

For the administration and control of the Sangha in the kingdom, Thathanapaing appointed a hierarchy of provincial and district heads called local leader (gaing choke) deputy leader (gaing oke) and assistant leader (gaing tauk) monks respectively. The duties of the provincial leaders were promoting studying Buddhist scripture and punishing the monks who did not follow the disciplinary rules. Just as Thathanapaing served as a bridge between the Sangha and the king so

---

34. Myint Myint Than: Dhamma Vinaya Ameindaw.p.49, Burmese Historical Documents in Microfilm (Tokyo), Reel No.62.

35. Shwegaintha: Anitayapye Mandalay.p.231.

provincial officers served as a bridge between the Thathanapaing and local monks and lay people.<sup>36</sup>

### **6.5.5 The Purification Of The Buddhist Texts**

The purification of Buddhist Texts is as important as the purity of the Sangha for the survival of Buddhism. There was a precedent for the Burmese King at his accession to make new copies of the Pali texts, the teachings of the Buddha called Tipitaka in order to pay respect to the teachings of the Buddha and to purify the texts. There were three ways of copying Tiptaka, namely, copying on palm-leaf with an iron stylus, copying on palm-leaf in ink, and copying on gilded palm-leaf.

Four years after ascending the throne, King Mindon initiated the copying of the Tipitaka in all three forms. Inspired Asoka's noble work, King Mindon thought of copying the Pali texts and commentaries again in an unprecedented manner on stone tablets. Although it made no difference for the advancement of religion, it was a visible and dramatic way of showing his piety to the people. It was made clear that only under the King's patronage Buddhism could prosper.<sup>37</sup>

The project of great magnitude, the purification of the Buddhist texts, needed a large amount of labor, money and expert hands. First, the king appointed a committee of experts to examine the correctness of the scriptures which were to be inscribed on the stone tablets. Those who were represented on the committee were the Thathanapaing and four members of the respect monks who were awarded titles by the king. Thirty learned monks were appointed to examine the texts, fifty learned monks to edit the texts and another fifty learned monks to recheck the texts. Once the

---

36. E. Michael Mendelson: *Sangha and State in Burma: A Study of Monastic Sectariansim and Leadership*.p.84, Cornell University Press, 1975.

37. Ludu Daw Ama: *Kaba Akyizon Saouk (The Tipitaka inscriptions in Mandalay)* p.8, Ludu Press, 1972.

committee had decided that the texts were correct, more than one hundred scribes wrote the scriptures on palm leaves.

During the process of copying, another three learned monks took the responsibility for correcting and supervising the texts. Once written, clerks from the Hluttaw (Parliament) and the court who specialized in language and letters edited the texts again. After this, the monks from the committee looked over it again and accepted the final copy. The edited texts of the Tipitaka filled more than twelve thousand palm leaf manuscripts and they were kept in the Pitakataik (Ptiaka library) in Mandalay. The elaborate process of copying, checked by expert hands was followed by the actual inscribing of the texts on the stone tablets.

To carry out the king's wish to inscribe the Tipitaka on stone tablets, the learned monks and court officials had to take responsibility for supervising this gigantic work of meritorious deed. This group includes respected well-known venerable monks. Stone tablets were taken from a marble mountain called Sagyin Mountain. Once the marble stone reached the palace, more than fifty masons worked on inscribing the letters on the stone tablets. Inscribed texts were checked before the ink was put on the inscribed letters. Out of a total of **729 stone tablets**, **111 tablets** were used for inscribing the five Pali treatises of **Vinaya Pitaka**, **208 tablets** for seven Pali treatises of **Abhidhamma Pitaka** and **410 tables** for five Pali texts of the Nikaya and three **Pali texts of Sutta**. Each stone tablet was housed under a small pagoda in the compound of Kuthodaw Pagoda near Mandalay Hill. It took nearly eight years to complete the project which was brought to a successful conclusion on May 4, 1868. Because of the size and the magnitude of the work, people termed these stone tablets "the world's biggest book." Since then they have stood magnificently there as the biggest library in the world. These marble inscriptions last longer than a

record on fragile palm leaf or on a computer CD. Myanmar people are proud of having this historical heritage.

### **6.5.6 The Fifth Buddhist Council**

With the purpose of further purification of the texts, King Mindon initiated a grand meeting of 2,400 monks in his palace from 15 April 1871 to September of the same year to revise the Buddhist scriptures. In an edict issued after the great convocation he said that he was following the great traditions of the Kings who had convened the previous four Buddhist Councils. The meeting, he said, was successfully completed under the leadership of the Eight Sudhamma Venerable. In order that his people could share the merit, the edict was ordered to be announced in the capital and throughout the kingdom.<sup>38</sup>

By looking at the timing of the Fifth Council, it was clear that there was something else behind the grand gathering. Since the Tipitaka text had been revised and recorded on palm leaf manuscripts and stone tablets, there was no pressing need to have learned monks revise and edit the texts. By holding the Fifth Council, the King wanted to earn the grand title of “Convener of the Fifth Buddhist Council”, the title he cherished most in his life. In term of unifying the divided Sangha, the Fifth Buddhist Council was only a qualified success. Mindon’s Great Council seems to have been predominantly a Sudhamma affair.

Considering the religious actions of King Mindon, one cannot help drawing the conclusion that the kingdom was under pressure and the king had to resort to all means at his disposal, including religion, to consolidate his rule internally and to influence public opinion externally. The purification of the Sangayana and religion,

---

38. Konbaungzet, Vol.iii.p.384.

the royal patronage of the Sangayana and pious laity, the use of the Sangha administration and politics, the convening of the Sangayana, religious endowments at home and abroad, were all geared to the political goals of legitimation and the consolidation of power. It is ironic that King Mindon, who was considered to be the most pious King in Konbaung dynasty, used religion for political purposes considerably more than his predecessors had done.

## **6.6 King Mindon (1814-1878)**

### **6.6.1 The King Who Patronized The Fifth Buddhist Council**

#### **6.6.2 As Man And King**

Konbaung dynasty, the last dynasty of Burma (Myanmar), has a special place in Burmese historical writings. With its famous warrior kings, weak kings and pious kings, the Konbaung dynasty still evokes a mixed feeling of national pride, disappointment, and nostalgia among the Burmese people. Among the Konbaung kings, Mindon was considered as one of the most dynamic and successful kings of the dynasty. He was well known for founding Mandalay and convening the Fifth Buddhist Council.

King Mindon was born in 5th July, 1814 to King Tharawaddy and his Queen of the Southern Apartment, Thirithusada Matamahay in Amarapura. As was often the case in Myanmar royal tradition, his birth was accompanied by an omen: a banyan tree in front of their residence in Amarapura opposite the Shwe Linbin Pagoda, burst into flower which is against the law of nature. The Konbaungset chronicle mentions that on the basis of the good omen, the mother predicted that her son would become king one day. The baby was named Maung Lwin and the name Mindon came from

the twon in central Burma which was his appanage as a prince his younger brother was prince Kaung who later became his Crown Prince.

Like any other boys, prince Mindon was sent to a famous monastery for his education and the monastery was called Ratanabonsan kyaung in mahazawtikarama Taik in Amarapura. The high priest of the monastery entrusted Mindon and his little brother under the supervision of monk Ven.Candima by name. Years of schooling at the monastery seem to have had great influence on Mindon's character, especially his piety, devotion and respect for the Sangha, Buddhist monks. His desire to see a purified Sangha probably dates back to these days.

Mindon must have had a lasting and deep impression of those years at the monastery. One oral tradition survives as to how he had a deep respect for his former monk-teacher. According to the tale, Ven.Candidma, Mindon's teacher, had a special linking for salted fish from lower Burma. One day Maung Lwin, the furture king Mindon, was asked by his master to keep the big salted fish which had been donated to him by a layman. Unfortunately, the salted fish was found missing when the monk wanted his meal. Maung Lwin was punished with a cane stick until he bled from the beating. The master scolded him, the future king, by telling how he could rule a country safely and successfully if one could not even keep a salted fish safely. Maung Lwin took the words of his master in his heart.<sup>39</sup>

When Maung Lwin became a king as Mindon, he told his personal story to his sons to whom he showed his scars on his back from the punishment and reminded them how they should receive punishment from their greatful venerable monks in good spirit. As soon as ascending the throne, King King Mindon built a large and beautiful monastery called 'Mahazawtikakarama Taik, Yatanabonsan Kyaung with

---

39. Mya Ketu: Nandalai Hmat tanmyar (notes on Palace Traditions).p.290, Hnalon Hla press, Rangoon, 1966.

twenty smaller buildings surrounding it and donated them to his former master, Ven.Candima and he also conferred the honorable title to his master 'Candimabhisiridhajapavaradhamma rajadirajaguru.' But to the surprise of the court and the people he appointed Venerable Nyeyya as Thathanapaing, Supreme Council of the Sangha rather than his master.

### **6.6.3 Early Personal Alliances And Friendships**

Three persons who were destined to play the most important role in the reign of King Mindon came into his early life and cemented with him personal friendships and alliances that were to endure for many decades. One was Ven.Visuddha from Bakara monastery who used to come to prince Mindon's house and gave sermons on the Sabbath day. King Mindon had a deep respect to him and honesty of him. The monk came from Pakhan township, Upper Burma and when the monk disrobed the king was given him the position of *akyidaw*, the functionary who guided the prince in moral behavior and supervised the household.<sup>40</sup> Another source mentioned that when King Mindon ascended the throne at Amarapura, he called Pakhan Sayadaw to his capital and requested him to assist him in administration. Because of King Mindon's insistence, the monk disrobed and he was appointed as *wungyi*, minister, in Mindon's government.<sup>41</sup>

Yule wrote in his record that immediately after the revolution, the king summoned him from his cell, and at once appointed him *atwinwun*, secretary and subsequently *wungyi*, a promotion which was unusual without having first gone through the lower orders of office. He was none other than the Pakhan Wungyi U Yan

---

40. Taik Soe: Mindon Min (King Mindon). p.16, Bagan publishing House, Rangoon, 1972.

41. Hmawbi Saya Thein Gyi: Myanmar Wungyi Hmugyimya Atthopatti (Biographies of Ministers and Officials). p.45, Aye Aye Press, Rangon, 1967.

Way who played the role of chief minister, largely responsible for foreign affairs, until his death in 1875. He wielded great influence on the king and dared to reverse the king's decisions on many occasions. The king respectfully addressed him as Pakhan shinbayingyi, lord of Pakhan.<sup>42</sup>

Another person who came to associate with the king was Venerable Asavha from Mintaingbin village in Monywa district. The monk had literary talent and well-versed in Tipitaka. During the reign of King Bagan, the brother of Mindon, Ven.Asabha came to Bagara monastery in Amarapura and studied under Ven.Vivsuddha, the future Pakhan *Wungyi*. In 1849, when prince Mindon asked his master Ven.Visudha for a talented, intellectual young man for him, the master recommended his pupil Ven.Asabha so Ven.Asabha left the monkhood and served as Treasure in Mindon's household. He was U Kaung, the future *Kinwun Mingyi* who became the first Burmese Envoy to the Court of St.James and served on important diplomatic missions. He also became *Thanat Wungyi*, the minister of Musketeers, in the latter part of Mindon's reign. Despite his submissiveness to King Mindon, he played a decisive role in choosing Mindon's successor without consideration of King Mindon's wishes when the old king was on his deathbed.

King Mindon was also lucky enough to make the acquaintance of another yong man, Maung Pho Hlaing,<sup>43</sup> son of a noble family. He was a bright and intelligent man. His father was executed by King Tharawaddy who accused his minister of complicity in an attempted coup by one of his sons in 1844. At the time of his father's execution, Pho Hlaing was a novice in a monastery. Concerned for the safety of her son, Pho Hlaing's mother took the boy from the monastery and sent him to prince Mindon for protection.

---

42. Yuli: Mission to the Court of Ava.p.102.

43. Shwe Thwe: Yaw Atwinwun U Pho Hlaing,p.51, Sarpayloka, Rangoon,1965.

Mindon in turn gave him to the Setkyadevi princess, who was the beloved daughter of King Tharawaddy and later became the Chief Queen of Mindon. Setkyadevi made Pho Hlaing novitiate again and sent him to study under Ven.Pyay Sayadaw and Bagara Sayadaw. When prince Mindon and Kaung left for Shwebo to begin their revolt in 1852, they took Pho Hlaing from the monastery at the advance of Satkyadevi who really knew the intelligence of the young man. As a close advisor to Mindon, Pho Hlaing's opinion was decisive to the successful outcome of the revolt. He advised Mindon to attack Shwebo first instead of withdrawing to the Indian border and building up strength there. After Shwebo revolution, Pho Hlaing was awarded the title of Minhla Sithu and was given *Yawmyo* (Yaw taung) as his appanage. Later, he was promoted to *atwinwun*, secretary, and was the leading brain behind King Mindon's reforms and the handling of many important foreign policy questions.

An author of twenty books on various subjects, Pho Hlaing or Yaw Atwinwun or Shwepyi wun was both a reformer and a leading intellectual who was dismissed from his position several times for voicing opinions against the king; but invariably he was reinstated because of his outstanding ability.

#### **6.6.4 Personality And Character Of A Disciplined Man**

Leaving aside his public life as a king, it would be good to know something about Mindon's private life as a man. How did his personality reflect his character? Was he a self-disciplined person or not? Those who had a chance to meet King Mindon favorably recorded their impressions. Most foreign envoy found him polished in his manners and usually courteous and affable, fully bearing out the image of the great self control which he is said to have possessed.<sup>44</sup>

---

44. Fytche: Burma, Past and Present, Vol.i.p.236.

Henry Yule recorded the appearance of the king in more detail in his journal of 1855. He wrote, 'from the distance at which we view the king, he seems a somewhat portly man, having features of a much more refined character than are common among his subjects, exhibiting indeed the national physiognomy, but much subdued. His expression was good and intelligent, his hands delicately and finely formed...

Our nearer view made no unfavorable change in our judgment of the King's appearance. He has a clear and smooth skin, with a bright black eye which twinkles up into a Chinese obliquity when he laughs, and that he does every two minutes; his mustache is good, the throat and jaws very massive, the chest and arms remarkably well developed, and the hands clean and small. The retreating forehead, which marks him as a descendant of Alaungphaya, was now very conspicuous, and I never saw this feature before in such singular excess.<sup>45</sup>

King Mindon as a regular and well-disciplined man with a tight daily schedule was described in 'Myanmar Min Okchokpon Sartan'.<sup>46</sup> The description suggests the King as a regular and well-disciplined man with a tight daily schedule for dealing with affairs of state and his personal life. It seems that King Mindon's daily pattern of life somewhat resembled Kautilya's suggestion for the tight schedule of a king during day and night.<sup>47</sup>

On the Sabbath day, the King observed the precepts and no audience was held. On that day, he would invite some distinguished venerable monks to the palace and listened to their sermons. After the venerable monks left, he would listen to the sermons written by venerable monks who had been awarded the titles. In addition to these merit-making activities, he never failed to pay obeisance to his ancestors.

---

45. Yule: Mission to the Court of Ava.p.85.

46. Myanmar Min Okchopon Sartan. Vol.iii. pp.79-84.

47. Kautilya's Arthasastra, tr.R.Shamassastry.pp.36-38, Sri Raghveer printing press, Mysore, 1951.

On the first day of each lunar month, King Mindon made merit by paying homage to the golden statues of his ancestors of the Konbaung dynasty.<sup>48</sup> There were seventeen statues including Chief Queens listed in the Myanmar Min Okchopon Sartan and the last being the statue of King Mindon made in 1878 immediately after his death.<sup>49</sup> .

By paying his obeisance to his ancestors King Mindon put himself in the line of history. He was not only aware of the Konbaung dynasty as a whole but also of his lifetime during which the very existence of Burma was increasingly under the threat from the British. it is hard to imagine that Burma could better be prepared without King Mindon who by virtue of his training, temperament, and ideas was an ideal person for the sake he faced. He was born in a critical age to face difficult problems for his kingdom. His personality and character might be complex because the times he lived were also complex.

### **6.6.5 Piety, Devotion And Patronage Of Religion**

Before ascending the throne, Mindon had gone through many valuable experiences in the reigns of his three predecessors. Born at the time of the height of Konbaung power, he must have had childhood memories of affluence and power during his grandfather Bodawpaya's reign. Mindon's respect for religion was quite exemplary among the Konbaung kings.

In the book of the history of Shwekyin sect, the compiler narrates one event to exemplify King Mindon's extreme piety. When the two brothers left to take up their rebellion in Shwebo in 1852, they passed the Mahamuni Buddha Shrine and prince Mindon could not resist paying to the Buddha Image.<sup>50</sup> The list of King Mindon's

---

48. Myanmar Min Okchopon Sartan. Vol.iii.pp.84-89

49. Ibid. Vol.iii.pp.79-84.

50. Shwe Hinthar Sayadaw: Shwekyin Nikaya.pp.138-139.

works of merit during his lifetime was entered under eighty categories in the Konbaungset, filling nearly eleven pages of the chronicle.

Mindon's works of merit included building pagodas, Buddha images, monasteries, hallways, and rest-houses for monks and lay people, offering finials (htee) and whit umbrellas to many famous pagodas, gilding many pagodas, copying Tipitaka texts onto 729 stone tablets, convening the Fifth Great Buddhist Council, digging canals and wells, repairing water tanks and ponds, donating land for the construction of ordination halls, putting his sons into the Order of Monk, donating money to monks who were well-versed in Tipitaka examinations, donating rice and other daily necessities to the monks, providing old aged people with money, clothing and medical service, freeing animals from death, building animal sanctuaries. King Mindon even constructed rest-houses in Macca and Bodhgaya. On every fifth day of the waxing moon, the King had officials remind the people to keep the precepts and avoid eating the flesh of large animals.

Although King Mindon was by nature religious and tolerant, he was quite sensitive on the correct interpretation of Buddhist principles. He dismissed his close adviser, Yaw Atwinwun who expounded the view that beer was similar to bitter medicine and if taken in small amounts one did not break the Buddhist precepts. Only when one consumed large amounts and became drunk did one break the precepts, he argued. By the time the King heard his adviser's interpretation on it, he was upset and worried that the common people would take alcohol, offering the excuse given his adviser. As a result, he dismissed him from his position and sent him to Amarapura.<sup>51</sup>

### **6.6.6 Sensitivity To People's Feeling**

---

51. Shwe Thawey: Yaw Atwinwun U Pho Hlaing.p.181.

Never before in Konbaung history had a king who shown his sensitivity to the feeling and psychology of his people like King Mindon. He understood that the morale of his people was at a low ebb as a result of foreign wars and civil strife. He boosted the morale of the people by giving them the benefit of a humane rule and sound administration. He made vows to rule the country justly and according to the ten kingly duties in return for the support and loyalty of the people.

How the king made himself accessible to the people was described by a British resident who stayed in Burma for a long time and served as an informal agent for the British Commissioner of Low Burma:

He (the King) made himself in inquiring into the smallest matters and reads himself every petition that is presented. Almost everyone has access to him either personally or through his friends. Besides, he makes a tour every now and then round the palace for the purpose of receiving petitions from those, who might not otherwise be able to make known their grievances.<sup>52</sup>

Once an old women sent a petition to the king asking that she bring the case of her murdered son to a speedy conclusion, since it had been at the Hluttaw (parliament) for three months. When the king found out that the woman's appeal was true, he ordered the criminal to pay 300 ticals to her for compensation according to the Burmese Dhammathat (law), and also ordered the Crown Prince, four Wungyi, and four Wundauk to pay 150 ticals to the old woman for holding up her case too long at the Hluttaw.<sup>53</sup>

---

52. Hall, Dalhousie-Phayre Correspondence, p.338.

53. Taik Soe: Mindon Min.p.31.

**CHAPTER VII**  
**THE SIXTH GREAT BUDDHIST COUNCIL**

## CHAPTER VII

### THE SIXTH GREAT BUDDHIST COUNCIL

Soon after the country had regained her independence, the Sangha and the leaders joined hands together to hold the Sixth Great Council by organization several sub-committees. The recitation of the entire Pali texts was the main task for the Sangha in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Burma wanted other Theravada countries participate this Great Council so Theravada Sangha as well as Mahayana organization attended the great event. We are going to discuss this great event in this chapter.

#### 7.1 Convening of 6<sup>th</sup> Great Council

In early 1947, one year before Burma regained her independence, members of Anti-Fascist People Liberation (AFPL) and members of government had a future plan for the country. The projects were national unity, independence, education, economy and perpetuation of Buddhism. Those projects are the infrastructure of the country. Among those projects, *Chatthasangayana* which is the Sixth Great Council project was one of them and the project was proposed by Pathamakyaw U Kyee Pe. In this project, translation of *Tipitaka*; compilation of Pali-Myanmar Dictionary included.

U Kyee Pe had a dream to convene *Sangayana* since his young-hood when he was a member of Buddhist monks but due to several reasons in the country the project did not come to effect. Soon after leaving a monk-hood, U Kyee Pe started his dream to come true by dispatching his idea to Sir, U Thwin, the pious and the wealthiest man in Burma. Due to the encouragement of U Kyee Pe, Sir U Thwin had an idea to perform this great task. When the two discussed the matter, they came to realize that

they need the monks who can study by heart the entire *TiPitaka*, the teaching of the Buddha if they wanted to convene the council successfully because *Tipitaka* is the main source of *Buddha Sasana*.

To hold the council the force of monks as well as the rumor that *Chatthasangayana* will be held happened coincident so *Tipitaka* Selection Examination and convening *Chatthasangayana* linked one another. A meeting led by U Nu, the Prime Minister was held to promote Buddhism in 1947 and at the meeting Sir. U Thwin said, “To promote Buddha Sasana we need to carry out two duties: *dhammcakka* (dhammaset) which means supporting the need of the Sangha and *anacakka* (arnarset) which means suppressing the monks who did not follow the disciplinary rules. And we need to set up an organization to spread Buddhism around the world.” The Prime Minister and other members who were attended the meeting agreed what Sir. U Thwin proposed. Thus, an organization called “**Union of Burma Buddhasasananuggaha Organization**” was formed in 13<sup>th</sup>, November, 1947.<sup>1</sup>

Soon after the organization was setting up, Burma regained her independent in 4<sup>th</sup>, January 1948. The country was ruled by AFPL led by U Nu, the Prime Minister. From the time Burma lost her independence in 1885, Buddha Sasana declined day after day for 68 years so the government tried to light the Dhamma. By looking at the historical back ground of the Great Councils in Theravada Buddhist world we learned that the kings and the Sangha joined hands together to preserve and promote Buddhism. With the intention of purifying *Buddhasasana* the government arranged to convene the Sixth Great Council.

In 1950, the parliament enacted Buddhist law and after enacting the law, **Buddha Sasana Council** was formed in 13<sup>th</sup>, November 1950 with the intention of

---

1. Mya Mya Tun: *Chatthasangayana Grand Ceremony*.p.105, DPPS, Yangon, 2007.

performing necessary work at home and abroad. The Sixth Great Council was organized by Buddha Sasana Council. The aims of the council were as follow:

1. To carry out the promotion, propagation and perpetuation of Buddha Sasana.
2. To support Pariyatti and Patipatti Sasana as possible as they could.
3. To build an international library for all religions.

The working processes of the council were as follow:

1. To carry out the construction of international library.
2. To hold Tipitakadhara Selection Examination with the intention of emergence of Buddha Sasana hero monks before the Sixth Great Council and to build one building for the hero monks.
3. To build buildings for meditation instructor Venerable monks for promoting Patipatti Sasana (meditation centers)

## **7.2 Tipitakadhara Selection**

When we traced the history of Sangayana, the Great Council, we found that the Mahatheras, who participated in the Sangayana, could memorize the entire words of the Buddha. It was called oral tradition, Bhanaka tradition.

In 1948, the first year of independence from British rule the government considered the need to purify, perpetuate and propagate Buddha Sasana, to promote the emergence of a heroic Sasana personality with the ability to memorize and recite by heart the entire Pali Canon called Tipitaka and to seek out personalities with special intellectual powers to receive the reverence and praise of the devotees. The government decided to hold the Tipitakadhara Selection Examination as proposed by Sir U Thwin and a committee was formed chaired by Sri U Thwin.

The examination is an oral and written one which is lasting for thirty-three days. The candidate is examined in the Three Pitakas: Vinaya, Suttanta and Abhidhamma. The oral examination in the Vinaya covers five volumes in five books comprising 2260 pages. The oral examination in Sutta covers three volumes in three books comprising 782 pages. The oral examination in the Abhidhamma covers seven volumes in twelve books comprising 4941 pages.

The oral examination on these 7983 pages or about 2.4 million words is not a viva voce, a question and answer examination. It is an examination on total recall and faultless reproduction. The candidate will be given a point in the Pali Canon, any point, and asked to continue reciting from there, line by line, para by para and page by page. Or he would be given a point and asked to go back from there a certain number of sections and to recite from there. There must be no error in the word form, the pronunciation must be correct, the flow must be smooth and the enunciation must demonstrate the proper understanding of the meaning of the passage being recited. A certain number of pages of text must be covered in a fixed time. A candidate who requires prompting for five or more times fails.

The written examination is not only on the Pali Canon but also on the Commentaries and Sub-Commentaries. The ten major Commentaries in the ten books and the major Sub-Commentaries in fourteen books cover 17917 pages. Candidates are tested on the doctrinal understanding, comparative philosophy, textual discrimination, taxonomic grouping and analysis and on the interrelationships. Though candidates are not expected to reproduce whole passages as in the oral examination, many of the questions cannot be answered without the ability to recall such passages and to compare diverse passages mentally at the examination desk.

Thus, the Tipitakadhara Examination is one of the longest and toughest examinations in the world.

The Tipitakadhara Selection Examination was held in February, 1949 and when the first Tipitakadhara Examination was held, Ven.Vicittasara who was well known as Venerable Mingun Sayadw who played the most important role in Chattha Sangayana was one of over one hundred monks invited to observe the proceedings. When the result was a disappointment with no candidate successful, he resolved to be the one who can memorize the entire Pitaka in the history of Buddhism in Burma.<sup>2</sup>

Due to negative result, many Buddhist monks and lay people criticized about the exam so they were against the exam because in the ancient time Buddhist monks studied the entire Pitaka in their memory for the entire Pitaka were recorded in palm leaves and marble slabs but now a day those Pitakas were printed on paper as books so Buddhist monks do not need to study the entire Pitaka by heart.<sup>3</sup>

Due to the complain around the country, members of Tipitakadhara Selection Examination held a meeting and made decision that if none of candidates pass the exam in the second time, the exam will be cancelled. In December, 1949, the exam was held for the second and one candidate Ven.Pannasara by name passed the entire Vinaya Pitaka which covers 2260 pages with distinctions so he was conferred “Buddhasasananuggaha visittha vinayadhara.” Due to the gratitude of Ven.Pannasara the Tipitakadhara Selection Examination was keeping on even today.

When the third time Tipitakadhara Examination came around in 1950, Ven.Mingun Sayadaw was ready to sit for the exam which meant to repay the debt to the devotees of the nation. He appeared for the oral exam on 2260 pages of the

---

2. In Honor of Mingun Sayadaw's 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday.p.30, Ti-NiPublishingCenter,Yangon, 1991.  
3. Mya Mya Tun: ChatthaSangayana Grand Ceremony.p.119.

Vinaya Pitaka and passed the entire Vinaya Pitaka with flying color. By that time preparation for the Sixth Buddhist Council was underway.

### **7.3 Preparation For The Sixth Great Council**

The government and the people of Burma had great desire to hold the Council with the intention of promoting Buddha Sasana last long, editing and purification the entire Pali texts and translating the Pitaka into Burmese for those did not understand Pali words so a meeting was held at the Prime Minister's house in September, 1951. The meeting formulated the proposal to start the Council from the full moon day of Kason in Buddhist Era 2498 to the full moon day of Kason in 2500 (Burmese Era from 1316 to 1318) from 1953 to 1955.

The government wanted to hold the Great Council more significantly than the previous ones. The previous Councils were held only one country but in this council, the leading persons in the council wanted to participate other Theravada countries and they wanted to termed not only as the Burmese Council but the Theravada Council organized by five Theravada countries. The government needed the support of other Theravada countries. Therefore, the government sent delegation led by renowned Burmese Venerable monks to Theravada countries respectively.

In 1952, one mission led by Ven. Nyaung Yan Sayadaw and Ven. Mahasi Sayadaw and other two members went to Thailand to organize and meet the Sangharaja of Thailand and discussed the religious matter about holding the Great Council. Thai Sangharaja told them that he did not think that Burma could not convene the Council because they did not have their King and there was no Sangharaja in Burma. Ven. Nyaung Yan Sayadaw responded to the Sangharaja that even though there was no King in the country, there was a government elected by the

people and we have our president so it was just like we have our king. Even though we did not have Sangharaja, we kept on the tradition like pervious as we had our Sangharaja and we also have the hero monks who could memorize the entire Pitaka in our country so due to these sufficient reasons we can convene the Great Council in our country. When the Thai Sangharaja heard about that message, he said, “If it is so, Burma can convene the Council.”<sup>4</sup>

Then, the delegation proceeded to Cambodia and met with the Sangharaja of Cambodia, and discussed the matter to him and the Sangharaja warmly welcomed the convening of the Great Council and then to Ceylon. It is also the intention of the Union Buddhasasana Council to invite foreign Buddhist mission to this country and seek their advice in regared to Sangayana matters.

### **7.3.1 Pali Text Scrutinizing And Editing Groups**

At the conference of the Ovacariya Nayakas held on the 11<sup>th</sup> of February 1953, the following resolutions were passed in connection with the holding the Sixth Great Buddhist Council:-

1. Resolve that there being plenty of errors and omissions made by the scribes in repeatedly copying the five Nikayas and the teachings of the Buddha, it is expedient to hold the Sixth Great Council with aview to purifying the Texts, scrutinizing, editing, recting and arranging all the teachings of the Buddha.
2. Resolved that in order to print these edited Tipitakas in books, to recite them in the Sixth Great Buddhist Council and to distribute these all over the world with the object of promoting Buddha Sasana, it is expedient to hold the Sixth Great Council.

---

4. Mya Mya Tun: ChatthaSangayana Grand Ceremony.p.139.

3. Resolved that in order to enable the Union of Burma, in collaboration with the other Buddhist countries of the world, to propagate Theravada Buddhism in foreign lands, and to promote Buddha Sasana as far as practicable, it is expedient to hold the Sixth Great Buddhist Council.

Of these three resolutions, action has already been taken on the first. The Union Burma Buddhasasna Council is in possession of some of the Tipitakas, formerly scrutinized and edited by the learned Sayadaws of Mandalay under the auspices of the Young Men Buddhist Association of Rangoon.

The remaining portions which were left unedited are being scrutinized and edited by eighty groups of learned Mahatheras who are entrusted with the responsibility of purifying the Texts, scrutinizing, comparing, editing, classifying and arranging all the teachings of the Buddha.

The Pali Text adopted by the Fifth Great Buddhist Council and inscribed on 729 marble slabs at Mandalay will form the basic Texts. The Pali Texts as extant in printed form in Sinhalese script in Ceylon, in Siamese script in Thailand, in Cambodian script in Cambodia, together with the Texts published by the Pali Text Society, England, will form the basic Texts for collation. The Commentaries and Sub-Commentaries will be basic Texts for reference.<sup>5</sup>

### **7.3.2 Provisional Programme For The Proceedings Of The Chattha Sangayana**

The Chattha Sangayana, the Sixth Great Buddhist Council, will be held in the Kaba-Aye (World Peace) pagoda, Rangoon. The proceedings of this Great Council

---

5. The Sangayana Monthly Bulletin, Vol.i.No.1, May, 1953.

will commence on the Visakha Day of 1316 Burmese Era (2498.B.E) and terminate on the Visakha Day of 1318 (2500 B.E).

The Tipitaka comprising the Five Nikayas contains the following number of pages:-

5 volumes of Vinayas	2174 pages,
3 volumes of Suttas	686 pages,
3 volumes of Pannasa	1089 pages,
5 volumes of Samyutta	1206 pages,
Anguttar Nikaya	1418 pages,
Khuddaka Nikaya	3381 pages,
7 volumes of Abhidhamma	4850 pages,
Total pages	14804

In holding the ensuing Chattha Sangayana, there will, provisionally, be five congregations:-

First Congregation begins from the full moon day of Kason 1316 Burmese Era to the full moon day of WAso 1316 Burmese Era.

Second Congregation begins from the 1<sup>st</sup> waning of Tazaungmon 1316 Burmese Era to the full moon day of Tabodwe 1316 Burmese Era.

Third Congregation begins from the full moon day of Tagu 1317 Burmese Era to the full moon day of Waso 1317 Burmese Era.

Fourth Congregation begins from the 1<sup>st</sup> waning of Tazaungmon 1317 Burmese Era to the full moon day of Tabodwe 1317 Burmese Era.

Fifth Congregation begins from the New moon day of Tabaung 1317 Burmese Era to the full moon day of Kason 1317 Burmese Era.

Thus, the total number of chanting hours in 326 working days will be 1600.<sup>6</sup>

### **7.3.3 The Grand Ceremony Of The Sixth Great Council**

The Sixth Great Council, internationally recognized, was held at *Sirimanglathala Mahapasana* Cave in Rangoon in May, 1954 (BE 2498, ME 1316) 2,500 monks participated at this Council. *Abhidhamma-ratthaguru* Ven. *Revada Thera*, known as Nyaung Yan Sayadawgyi, presided over the Council. *Abhidhamma-ratthaguru* Ven. *Suriya Thera*, also known as Masoeyein Sayadawgyi, was the chairman of the executive committee.<sup>7</sup>

*Aggamahapandita* Ven. *Nagavamsa Thera*, also called Bargara Sayadaw, and *Aggamahapandita* Ven. *Visuddha Thera*, known as Vijjalankara Sayadaw, took the secretarial positions. *Aggamahapandita* Ven. *Sobbana Thera*, better known as Mahasi Sayadaw, questioned on the *Tipitakadhara* Ven. *Vicittasarabhivamsa*, the first *Tipitakadhara Dhammabhandagarika*, who was also known as Dhammanada Sayadaw, answered, respectively.

The opening ceremony was honored by Dr. Ba Oo, the president of the Union of Burma. The Prime Minister U Nu submitted a paper to explain how this Council would take place. Political as well as religious leaders of five Theravada countries: Burma, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos made the Council magnificent by their attendance. The president and the Prime Minister of the Union of Burma, Field Marshal P. Pipulsonggram, the Prime Minister of Thailand, Sir John Kotelawala, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Norodon Sihanouk, the King of Cambodia, and H. E. Leng Ngeth, the Prime Minister of Cambodia, H.R.H. Prince Savang Watthna, the Crown Prince of Laos, and H.E. Kow Abhay, the Prime Minister of Laos were leading

---

6. The Sangayana Monthly Bulletin. Vol.i.No.2, June 1953.

7. Ibid.p.207.

figures among the representatives of Theravada countries. Leaders of Mahayana countries, such as China, Korea, Mongolia, Japan, Formosa (Taiwan) and Russia also attended the grand Council and approved the significance of it.

The Council also received felicitation messages from other leaders, such as Queen Elizabeth of United Kingdom, Indian President Dr. Rajindraparasad, and Prime Minister Jawahala Nehru, King of Thailand Bhumibol Adulyadej, and Ambassadors of foreign Embassies in Rangoon. Noted among the leading Sangha leaders from abroad were, Phara Vimaladhamma of Wat Mahathat representing the Samgharaja of Thailand, Laos Samgharaja Phra Buddhajiroras, Cambodia Samgharaja Sumedha-Dhipati jotnana, Sri Lanka Amarapura Nikayadhipati Samgharaja Vimalajoti Maha Thera, and Shama Nikayadhipati Samgharaja Vilivita Dhammakitti Thera, participated in the Sixth Great Council.

At the Sixth Council, though Burma took the leading position, other Theravada countries had an important role in decision-making. Four Assemblies (Sannipatas) were formed, as parts of the Council, each led by the Samgharaja of Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Sri Lanka. These Sannipatas were named respectively as Syama Sannipata, Kamboja Sannipata, Lava Sannipata, and Sihala Sannipata respectively.

The marble inscriptions of Mandalay Great Council served as the foundation for editorial work while other versions of the Pitakas from Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Sri Lanka, and the P.T.S (London) version were also taken into consideration. All the differences in those versions were systematically recorded in the Sixth Council's publications. This Council became the most remarkable one in the history of 2,500 years of Buddhism.

The Sixth Council held in Myanmar was unique in the fact that, unlike the previous Councils, government, people, and Bhikkhus of five Theravada countries united in friendship, cooperation, and understanding between each other was built strongly.

Besides the religious achievements, the Sixth Sangayana helped to build up political stability in recently independent Burma. Burmese government organized this Council in the midst of the chaotic political situation of the country. Around 1950- 54 was the time when the government faced political instabilities. One third of the country was under the control of Communists and ethnic groups, especially Karen. However unstable the situation was, many hundred of thousand of Burmese Buddhists joined this wonderful event. The Prime Minister U Nu used this enormous force to unite the country. He claimed that Communism was a serious danger for all religions and it was supported by people of Burma. Soon after the Council, the government troops launched devastating attacks on the rebels' strongholds and the government took control over the entire country finally.

The rebels withdrew their armies from all regions – cities and villages – and only a few remained hiding in remote areas. Stability, communication, and economy of the country developed. Some opposition parties criticized the Prime Minister U Nu for using religion in political matters. They said that U Nu fought the rebels using the armies of the Dhamma, Samgha, and Sangayana.

Nevertheless, the Sixth Council was a means to build up stability in the country, unity among Buddhists and among Theravada countries, and successful propagation of Buddhism in abroad. Moreover, the disgraceful term, "Hinayana", was replaced by the glorious term, Theravada. Since the Sixth Council, the term Theravada became popular in the Buddhist world.

## **7.4 Pucchaka And Vissajjaka At The Sixth Great Buddhist Council**

### **7.4.1 Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw And The Sixth Great Buddhist Council (1904-1982)**

The name 'Shwebo' in itself is well known to all of Myanmar people as the 'Site of Victory ' signifying the successful restoration of the Konboun Dynasty, the last line of hereditary rulers. It is indeed true and correct.

The Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, the second son, was born on the 29<sup>th</sup> July, 1904 (the third waxing day of the Second Waso, 1266 of the Myanmar Era, U Kan Baw and Daw Ok had three other sons and three daughters besides the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, thus making a total of seven children in all.

It seems probable that the young boy who was the embryo Sayadaw must have been given a name in the like manner with a rhyme. What is really surprising is that the name of the Sayadaw when he was a boy happened to be identical with the name of the wealthy gentleman who would later entrust the Sayadaw with the ecclesiastical administration of the Sasana Yeiktha,, Yangon, through great devotion and reverence. It could be just a coincidence. However, if it is stated that the very name given is nothing but a nimitta-precursor of what the future will be, no one will probably deny.

In his boyhood at the age of twelve, he was novitiated as a novice and became a samanera-under the guidance of his old teacher Venerable Adicca, the abbot. As a samanera the name given to him was 'Shin sobana' which fitted in with his personal appearance and personality. "Shin" is the Myanmar term which means 'novice' and "Ko yin" is also another Myanmar term for 'novice'. His appearance looks calm,

dignified and serene truly reflect his tranquil state of mind and inner peace, sama,dhi, which is far from artificial. There is elegance and gentleness when he talks and walks.

For this reason, the name 'Shin Sobana' which means a person full of grace and dignity that has been given to the young novice is so much in harmony with his handsome physical appearance and dignified personality, that the name itself exactly fits in with the man's personality. Furthermore, it seems that his preceptor must have given him the name of 'Shin Sobana' with wonderful foresight that this young novice, the would-be Mahasi Sayadaw, would rise to the rare qualities of a famous prelate in the hierarchy of Buddhist Monks adroit in the field of practical vipassana, (*patipatti*) and of Buddhist scriptures (*pariyatti*).

Koyin Sobana, the novice, after entering into monkhood, took his lessons on ten Ja,takas (the Birth Stories of the life of the Blessed One in the last ten existences prior to His becoming the Gotama Buddha). The presiding monk being well aware of the young novice's keen intellect taught him the *Vinaya Pali* and *Atthakatha*, (Commentaries) without the foundation of the basic knowledge of the grammar. Thereafter only, the presiding monk let him study the grammar and 'sangaha'- a doctrinal portion of the *Tipitaka Dhamma*.

Shin Sobana's intelligence was more obvious when he was learning the Tikha (Sub-commentary). Even while perusing the Tikha, he was able to memorize it and do the recitation by heart. Not only was his memory good, but also his intellectual faculty of reasoning power or intuition was remarkably penetrating. At an early age of sixteen, he could grasp fully through practice the big book of Arithmetic called 'Ganagambhira' inside a month without the aid of anyone. Shin Sobana being endowed with the attributes of his inborn talent and wisdom coupled with his untiring effort was able to acquire higher knowledge of the *Pali* Commentaries and the *Tika*

even in the capacity of a novice. Particularly, at the age of nineteen when Shin Sobana was still an ordinary young *samanera*, he had learned a lot and accomplished himself with *Sammohavinodani* Commentary and the voluminous *Mulatika* of the *Pitaka*, which ordinary monks would not even dare approach or tackle.

Appraising himself of his position in life as a *samanera*, he had to ponder deeply thus: "Having entered the realm of Sasana, I have studied the Buddhist scriptural texts and literature to some extent. I have been able to acquire the knowledge of *Dhamma* within a few years, which to others would have taken many years to achieve. Therefore, there is no doubt that I have the necessary ability, foresight and aptitude."

It hardly needs special mention as to what kind of decision Shin Sobana had reached at that time. For the decision so made, Shin Sobana who had then reached the age of 19 years and 4 months on Monday, the fourth Waning day of Tazaungmon (November) 1285 M.E. (1923) and received the higher ordination and rose to the rank of a senior monk in the name of 'Ven. Sobana'.

Ashin Sobana was not only bent upon acquiring the scriptural knowledge (*pariyatti*) but also inclined to take up the practice of meditation (*patipatti*). By putting himself into practice, he wanted to know through personal experience that the noble teachings of the Buddha are true and correct. However, at that stage since he had not yet fully accomplished in his scriptural learning, and being comparatively young also, he was constrained to suppress his eager desire for pursuing *patipatti*, but then he proceeded to gain the acquisition of the basic scriptural knowledge only, with relentless effort. Meanwhile, he taught other novices and junior monks too as much as he could. Even within the period of the first four months after he was ordained as a monk, he had seriously observed the auster practices according to the precepts called

'*dhutangas*' viz.: *rukhamu dhutanga* (to live under a tree), *pindapatika dhutanga* (to go for alms), *ekasanika dhutanga* (to eat at one sitting), *pattapindika dhutanga* (to eat only from the alms-bowl), etc.

Examinations had become a fashion of the day among the world of monks in the Union of Burma at the time when Ashin Sobana was admitted to the Order of *Sangha*. The majority of the people would give recognition as a person of erudition only to a monk who had been successful in the examination. Also in matters connected with the affairs of the *Sasana*, there were works which could be beneficially performed if there had been success in the examination. The majority had a notion that only those who passed the examination had reached the required level of status deserving of recognition. As such, in order to be more effective in all his performances and activities concerning the future *Sasana*, Ashin Sobana sat for the first Pathamabyan initial examination conducted by the Government in the year 1924 even before his completion of the first *vassa* as a junior monk. He got through the examination easily despite the fact that he had not the slightest idea as to what type of questions would be set at the examination simply because he had been equipped with the knowledge of the scriptures far in advance of the standard required of such an examination, and also because he had been teaching others.

In the days of Ashin Sobana, after his success in Pathamagyi examination, the road to examinations came to a dead end. There were no further steps to climb. Nor were there any classes for tuition or examinations as the present day. Since considerable progress had been made in the study of scriptures and since examinations had reached the terminus, it was only necessary to receive doctrinal instructions from the teachers as might probably be found by chance. In some cases of course, it is only through the wise counsel of the teachers that the right way to correct

thinking could be reached. To receive many a wise counsel and fruitful instructions of the teachers, it was imperative to stay where there were a number of teachers (of intellectual fame). Therefore, in the year 1928 after accumulating four vassas as a monk, Ashin Sobana left Seikkhun for the Capital City of Mandalay known as 'Yatanabon' which had the reputation as a centre of spiritual learning with a large number of competent teachers adroit in the field of Buddhist literature. Generally speaking, if a trip had been made to Mandalay, the most learned city in Burma, a person was said to be really learned. As regards Ashin Sobana, however, he had an aptitude and skill in seeking knowledgeable experience.

During those days, at the well-established big monasteries in Mandalay, the student- Sanghas were numerous; and also in almost every group of monasteries (taik- kyaung), a good number of eminent teachers (Sayadaws) were found to be present. It was the time when both the students and teachers alike were making tireless efforts in learning and imparting pariyatti-scriptural knowledge, respectively. Since teachers were many and plenty, mediocre Sayadaws had hardly any chance to gain popularity or rise to fame. At that time in Mandalay, only if a monk was really very intellectual and exceedingly scholastic and smart in the art of teaching, he could hope to become a reputed spiritual teacher. Therefore, if anyone was desirous of acquiring the knowledge of pariyatti, Mandalay city being the seat of spiritual learning must invariably be visited without fail. That was the reason why Ashin Sobana had made his journey to Mandalay leaving behind his native place, his teachers, parents, relatives and others. On his arrival there, he went straight to Bwada Kyaung at Khinmakan Taik in Anaukpyin (western part of Mandalay).

Ashin Sobana again proceeded with his studies in *Pali*, Commentaries and *Sub-commentaries* under the guidance and supervision of the most eminent

Saya,daws while residing at the Bwadow Kyaung of the Kinmakan Taik. At that time, in Anaukpyin, Saya,daw U Lakkhana of Chanthagyi Kyaung was well-renowned and a very popular teacher.

In this manner for a period of over one year, Ashin Sobana had learned all the methods imparted by the teachers who had earned very good reputation in the field of pariyatti. It may be said that the duration of his one year's stay in Mandalay was brief. Nevertheless, since Ashin Sobana was a person of great ability with a sufficient background experience in scriptures, over a year's stay in Mandalay may be regarded as more than adequate.

One day, Ashin Sobana who was then residing at Khinmakan Taik received a letter. This letter was from the Saya,daw of Taungwainggale Taik Kyaung of Moulmein. The letter conveyed a request with an invitation wishing Ashin Sobana to come over to Taungwainggale to give instructions relating to Dhamma to the pupils there. The Saya,dawgyi of that monastery was a native of Seikkun though he was residing at Moulmein as a Presiding Monk. News had already reached him about Ashin Sobana's outstanding success in the examinations and performances relating to pariyatti. That was the reason why he had requested Ashin Sobana to assist him in promoting the *Pariyatti Sasana*.

Taungwainggale is a place being dressed up with its nature's accompaniments, such as lofty trees, forests and mountain ranges that could bring delight and calmness of mind to persons having a glimpse at it, and with monasteries for the community of monks built and donated with noble mindedness by people who have faith and generosity, it has become a paradise or rather a haven fully crowded with the noble sanghas keen on pursuing and practising pariyatti and patipatti Dhamma to gain peace and tranquility.

Not only shouldered the work of teaching the pupils but also personally devoted himself to the study of Paṭi<sup>TM</sup> texts, Commentaries and Sub-commentaries. While doing so, Ashin Sobana had learned and studied wholeheartedly the *Mahasatipatthana Sutta* contained in *Digha Nikaya* (Collection of Long Discourses), and *Majjhima Nikaya* (Collection of Middle-Length Discourses), together with commentaries and Sub-commentaries. Special emphasis was made on the particular *sutta* into which he put his whole energy with care and with heart and soul. Of course, there was reason for doing so. This reason itself had changed or diverted the course of Ashin Sobana's work relating to the affairs of the Sasana.

#### **7.4.2 Ven. Sobhana And Meditation Practice**

The region of Seikkhun village, where Ashin Sobana was born is an outstanding place. It is because this was the region where eminent Venerable Senior *Mahatheras* had taken residence giving preference to the acquisition of the knowledge of *pariyatti* and *pat<sup>TM</sup>ipatti*. Looking from a distance directly towards the North-East from Seikkhun village. A large 'zedi' (pagoda) can be seen standing at a site fairly far off.

This Venerable Thee Lone Saya,dawgyi's reputation in the field of *patipatti*, had spread throughout the country and he was looked upon as an Arahant possessing the attributes of *jhana* and *abhinna*, the super-natural knowledge or faculty.

Again, directly to the South-East of that Seikkhun village, about five miles away, also stands the Mahabo village where Mahabo Sayadawgyi was a Prelate who gave *patipatti* an unqualified priority and who found happiness living in seclusion in the jungle.

The two Venerable Saya,dawgyis pre-eminence in the field of patipatti being widely spread in the areas to which they belonged, Seikkun village which is situated between the two tracts of Thee-Lone and Mahabo is filled with fragrance of the noble qualities of those two celebrated personalities. A study of the line of descent of Ashin Sobana's teachers will reveal that they were the descendants of Thee-Lon Saya,daw and Mahabo Saya,daw.

Since Ashin Sobana had reached the status of a teacher giving scriptural lessons, he had also acquired ample knowledge of the literature concerning Buddha's teachings. Numerous teaching and discourses relating to the methods and practices leading to the attainment of *magga-phala* are contained in the Pa,ITM<sup>i</sup> scriptural texts. The practical methods of meditation exercise in accordance with the Pali scriptures have been described in the *Visddhimagga*. Therefore, he had yearned for the achievement of the discriminat knowledge through practical application of the theoretical aspects of the facts which he had studied and acquired. Even while performing the duties of the Sa,sana in the role of a teacher and a lecturer, he had propelled his mind towards the domain of pat-ipatti building himself up as 'I shall personally pursue the knowledge through experience and put myself into paractice', with a firm resolve-and irresistible urge indeed!

It is entirely impossible for a person to put into practice the teachings of the Buddha with benefit if he is doing meditation exercise with skeptical doubts. It is definite that if one practises with faith, it will surely reveal that what has been realized in practice is in entire agreement with the teachings of the Buddha.

A person who wants to practise pat<sup>TM</sup>ipatti should choose any one of the methods to his liking from among the many. It will be found that in the *Visuddhi magga*, Path of Purification.

From the time of his becoming a sa,man<sup>TM</sup>era, Ashin Sobana had become interested in what had been stated in the last portion of the *Maha,satipattha,na Sutta* after having gone through it and found the guaranty offered therein. This guarantee is: 'If mindfulness exercise (*satipatthana*) is diligently practised, one can become an Arahat or an *Anagami* within a time period of seven years at the most or seven-days at the least (shortest)'. This guaranty or undertaking given by the Buddha is really good to be accepted and practised. Therefore, if a person, who intends to practise the *kammatthana* meditation exercise, is one who has found and known this 'guaranty', it is absolutely certain that he will select the method of *satipatthana*.

After arriving at a decision to pursue and practise the *satipatthana vipassana*, meditation, Ashin Sobana had carefully and thoroughly studied the *Satipatthana Sutta*. Thereafter, he checked it up with the Commentaries and Sub-commentaries, and seriously studied it until he was able to grasp fully the essence of the Buddha's words. He had earnestly learned the Commentaries with all his might till he could memorize them. As such, when he was about to leave Taungwaingale, he was already fully equipped with knowledgeable experience academically. In any kind of work which requires practical application of knowledge and effort, it would be far-reaching only if reliance is made upon a teacher or a guide who has the necessary practical experience. Only then, he will be able to avoid loss of time and labour. If the instructions of and experienced teacher are complied with, it will bring him a lot of benefit. He can also make sure of himself that he is on the right path.

In all kinds of practical work, a teacher or an instructor is so much essential. In the absenced of any teacher or instructor, it will be something like a blind elephant rushing through the jungle hitting recklessly here and there, and in the like manner as one will be groping in the dark, as it were, experimenting and guessing the work, it is

extremely difficult for him to step on the right track. For this reason, the Lord Buddha had said, "*Yanthabhutam– nanaya satta, parivesitabbam,*" which means "To achieve the true and correct knowledge, one should seek for and rely upon a teacher."

It can be said that the right methods and techniques of *satipatthana* meditation exercise had become increasingly widespread and popular up to a period of one thousand years after the demise of the Buddha. In this connection, Ashin Sobana may be said to be fortunate. At that time, in Thaton, a town not too far away from Moulmein, a Venerable Sayadawgyi popularly known as "Mingun Jetavan Saya,daw" was teaching practical methods of *satipatthana* meditation exercise. As it was stated that this methods has been taught since about thirty years, the presumption is that the method and technique shown by the Sayadawgyi relating to *satipatthana* meditation practice is true and on the right lines. When making further enquiries, Ashin Sobana surprisingly found out with delight that the Sayadawgyi was of the lineage of the famous Thee-Lone Sayadaw. In the light of these favourable circumstances, Ashin Sobana had come to a decision to approach the Venerable Jetavan Sayadawgyi as a Teacher to be able to dedicate himself to the practice of *satipatthana*.

### **7.4.3 Taking Meditation Instrcutin Under Jetavam Sayadawgyi**

Ashin Sobana considered that the time was ripe to visit the Venerable Jetavan Sayadawgyi at Thaton, and accordingly made his decision. He then had to seek permission from Taungwainggale Sayadawgyi. The Sayadawgyi was in fact reluctant to allow him to leave Taungwainggale. However, as it would be improper to deter him in the matter concerning the pursuit of *satipatthana vipassana*, meditation, the Sayadawgyi was constrained to acquiesce. After receiving permission, Ashin Sobana

left Taungwaingale January in the year 1931, and this was the beginning of his long journey in search of the practical Dhamma.

It may be recalled that Ashin Sobana, who had left Moulmein to practise meditation, first visited Kaylatha Hill, etc., without proceeding directly to Jetavan Sayadawgyi. By his innate nature also Ashin Sobana's mind was bent upon practising *kammatthana*. Now, he had also consulted with the persons who were pursuing meditation practice with great endeavour and zeal at their respective places where he had visited. He had also personally taken part in the practices they themselves had indulged in. The mind that had already had its natural tendency to *kammatthana* meditation practice was again animated and glazed with *kammatthana* and made more keen with added zeal. The influence of the work of meditation practice had pervaded the whole of Ashin Sobana's mind. For this reason, without the slightest delay on the very day of his arrival at the feet of the Jetavan Sayadawgyi, Ashin Sobana had sought for the *kammatthana*. As requested, the Sayadawgyi also started giving instructions on the methods of *kammatthana* meditation and let Ashin Sobana carry on with the practice immediately.

He then went on persevering with the work of practising meditation as instructed. Having come over to this place with his solemn determination to practise seriously, Ashin Sobana put his inexhaustible energy into the practice with unremitting effort constantly rubbing the two hard stones (flints) without any relaxation. It involved no less than many days refraining himself from uttering a single word for about four months in the course of his meditation exercise, avoiding total sleep by continuous exertion to gain concentration and mindfulness and by noting every movement of the limbs without a miss while walking to and fro throughout the whole day during the time he indulged himself in such meditation

practice. It was amazingly noticed that inspite of his vigorous practices with utmost diltgence without the slightest regard for the health of his bodily Self, his physical body and strength remained normal- extremely strong and alert, robust and free from any kind of ailment. On one day when chance came in his way, Ashin Sobana respectfully related to the Saya,dawgyi an accout of the state of physical condition experienced by him. The Venerable Sayadawgyi then remarked with an exhortation: "In the personality of an individual who is practising satipattha,na meditation, the qualities of the *bojjhangaDhamma* are taking places; and because of the faculty of these *bojjhargas*, dieases and ills have been got rid of. Hence, the present condition of good health is the attribute of the power and faculty of the *bojjhargas*, and this fact should be properly noted and remembered."

#### **7.4.4 Preliminary Discourse On Kammathana Delivered**

In the year 1300 M.E.(1938), however, Ven. Sobana, the presiding Sayadaw of Taungwainggale Taik Kaung, returned to his native village, Seikkhun with a view to give his blessings to his relatives there, and then, took his residence at Ingyintaw Taik Mahasi Monastery of that village. The main object of his return to Seikkhun was to preach and give practical lessons to all and sundry living in that village on the methods of *satipattana vipassana*, meditation. Ashin Sobana therefore, started teaching a lengthy discourse covering a wide range on the system of appama,da *Vipassana*, (meditation through mindfulness with vigilance) at the Mahasi Kyaung. After having listened to the Dhamma as taught by the Saya,daw, the number of people wishing to take up a practical course in meditation increased gradually with the result that it had come to a stage requiring to give practical instructions on the methods and techniques of vipassana, meditation exercise. Those who went through a

course of vipassana, meditation practice in accordance with the instructions given by the Saya,daw, by and large, tasted the flavour of the noble Dhamma attaining practical realization with a fair amount of success.

In Seikkhun village, those who earnestly took the course of practical *vipassana*, exercise as pioneers were U Tun Aye, U Po Chon (Saya,daw's first elder cousin-brother), and Saya Kyan (Sayadaw's first younger cousin-brother). The manner in which these three persons had practise was not superficial in the nature of past-time relaxation, but was really serious putting their heart and soul into the practice with utmost vigor.

These three persons were the first, or rather the earliest disciples connected with the Venerable Mahasi Saya,daw's method of *kammattana* meditation exercise. On the third day of their devoted contemplation with respect, faith, seriousness and diligence, they reached the state of udayabbaya na,na thereby gaining awareness of the incessant arising and passing away of *rupa* (mind) and *nama*, (matter) i.e., the knowledge of the psycho-physical phenomena. Having also found by personal experience the appearance of radiant light with rapturous feeling and serenity of mind, they were said to be overwhelmed with extreme happiness to have tasted the noble Dhamma when they were not yet advanced in age. The continuation of the discourse on this Dhamma was most gratifying for those who have not yet exercised in the practice of meditation and was worthy of emulation.

#### **7.4.5 Ven.Sobhana And Abhayarama Sayadaw**

After seven months of devotion to teaching *vipassana*, at Seikkhun, returned to Taungwainggale in response to the call of his duty. After backing at Taungwainggale, he had to resume his efforts in imparting lessons on scriptures also

while living into the practical field of insight meditation exercise - thus combining the theoretical and practical knowledge of the Dhamma.

Abaya,rama Sayadaw was a well-known personage who had written and published a considerable number of books on *Nissaya* (translation) which served as a resourceful guide for the Buddhist monks, in both Ma,gadha (Pali) and Sakka,ta (Sanskrit), such as New Nissaya Dictionary (Abhidham), Moggalla,na New Nissaya, Muddha Boda New Nissaya, Hitopadesa Nissaya, Amarakosa Nissaya, Katanta Nissaya, etc. Being a scholarly Senior Monk of much learning well-versed in the field of both Ma,gadha and Sanskrit languages, he was highly esteemed and respected by the sanghas irrespective of whatever their learnings might be to any sect or school of thought. He was the literary genius capable rejecting and tackling or explaining all difficult problems relating to the Buddhist literature. Therefore, Ven.Sobana had often visited the Abaya,rama Sayadaw residing at Abaya,rama monastery and sought for elucidation on many difficult and ambiguous points found in Buddhist literature with particular reference to certain words-formation, sense development and derivatives from the etymological and grammatical points of view appearing in '*Kammavaca*' and some Pali Commentaries and Sub-commentary to all such queries, Abaya,rama Sayadaw had given clear explanation and interpretation as to what alphabets were deficient in what sort of vowels, what verbal roots were unrepresentative in Pali and what verbal forms had disappeared and so on.

#### **7.4.6 Standards were laid down**

In 1302 B.E (1940), after the arrival of Ven. Sobana at Taungwaingale, the then Government under the British Administration further raised the standard of Pathamabyan Examination by introducing a new system of qualifying examination for

degree in teaching Dhamma. The standard required of this degree examination was comparable to that of the examination held by the Mandalay Pariyatti Sa,sanahita Association and Rangoon Zediyingana Pariyatti Association. In the year 1302 M.E. (1940), the first of this kind of examination was held in Mandalay at Sudhamma rest house, and only those who had passed the Pathamagyi Examination were permitted to sit for the examination conducted by the Government.

Ashin Sobana had heard of such a qualifying examination for Diploma in Teaching. Having himself passed the Pathamagyi Examination; he decided to appear for that Diploma Examination. Of course, the basic foundation of *patipatti* lies in *pariyatti*. It would be adequate enough for a person who has no knowledge of *pariyatti* to carry on the practice of meditation for his own good provided he has a teacher to be relied upon. However, for those wishing to teach others, it is absolutely necessary to become well proficient in the knowledge of *pariyatti*. Only if they are adept in the theoretical knowledge of the scriptures, they will be able to appreciate the true value and essence of the Buddha's teachings, and then, only if they possess such knowledge, they will be able to take up the practice personally in accordance with the Teachings and also to impart his knowledge of the Dhamma to others as well. There is hardly any doubt that Ven. Sobana had grasped these significant points. For this reason, he had made himself thoroughly proficient in *pariyatti*. It is quite obvious that mere personal acquisition of proficiency alone in the theoretical aspect of the Dhamma is not sufficient enough. It would require the recognition of the people in general that one is really proficient. Then only they will have confidence in what one teaches and accept what he teaches. However, it would be improper to blow one's own trumpet of his own academic achievement just for the sake of publicity or letting others know his ability. It would therefore be essential for a person to attain a degree of

education or a degree or to reach the required standard of proficiency which is generally recognized by the public.

As this Dhammacariya examination in the teaching of Dhamma is to be held every year alternately in Rangoon and Mandalay, the year 1303 M.E. (1941) found Rangoon as an examination centre. Taungwaingale Saya,daw Ashin Sobana therefore had to come down to Rangoon, and sat for this examination in the month of Nayon (June) in that year. Since he had been originally accomplished with the knowledge of the scriptures prior to the examination, he got through it quite easily. Out of the nine subjects, viz.: three main compulsory texts and six subsidiary or optional texts, he passed the three main and five optional texts with the exception and occupied the degree of '*Siri' pavara Dhammaca,riya'* along with a certificate to that effect.

At the time when Ven. Sobana passed the Dhammacariya examination although Burma was peaceful and calm, it was nearly two years that the World War II had erupted in Western Europe. It was the time when Germany, had been seriously battling with the British and French. The British and the French were, in fact, unprepared for the war and a situation had arisen whereby they were in great fear of the imminent danger of a German invasion and conquest of the British Isles. As regards Burma, the conflagration of the war had not yet spread to its premises and therefore it was a moment of quiet happiness for the Burmese people, while, on the other hand, the British Imperialists, who had once annexed the country, subdued its people and put them under their thumb as mere underlings, were gasping. As is usually the case when a country is on the verge of war and disaster, prophecies, predictions and omens became the fashion of the day and were indeed rampant. 'Lightning strikes the umbrella stick' was the kind of presage that was then in vogue and that means Germany or Japan, the 'Lightning', was about to strike the British, the umbrella stick.

The 'Lightning' which symbolized Germany or Japan was expected to come, and the people were awaiting in eagerness and looking forward to the arrival of the benefactor particularly from the East. It was a moment of suspense mingled with fear to accept and welcome the saviour along with the risks and dangers of the war. On the other hand, the British government was making full preparations in Burma to prevent the danger of the approaching war.

(1941), the course of events took a different turn and became accelerated. On that very day, Japan declared war on the British and the Americans and opened a new war front simultaneously followed by heavy and ruthless bombing raids on the Pearl Harbour, Hawaii, with its air force planes.

The British by then had calculated that Japan would soon expand its theatre of war and reach Burma. The British were also under the impression that the Japanese forces would enter Burma and annex it by switching its forces through the Shan States via Canton.

As Moulmein Taungwaingale was in close proximity of air-field, and not being out of danger zone all those residing in the monasteries and rest-houses (zayats) in the neighbourhood of Taungwaingale and the air-field were ordered by the army to shift to other danger-free places within seven days from the date of the order. Although the promulgation of the order of the British government caused a frightful shudder, panic and unhappiness to others, it was a god-gifted opportunity given to Ven. Sobana of Taungwaingale. As a matter of fact, though Ven. Sobana, by force of circumstances, had to reside in Taungwaingale, it was against his will, as his mind was bent towards Seikkhun, the site of his own victory in his work of imparting vipassana. Having experimented his first work in disseminating the seeds of vipassana, at Seikkhun, he became very enthusiastic to continue boosting up his

partially victorious task more effectively. But as he had had his duty to fulfill at Taungwaingale, it had not been possible for him to leave that place. Now that the British Government's Orders had afforded him the best opportunity to quit Taungwaingale; therefore, immediately after the Government's orders were made known to him, he decided to return to Seikkhun.

#### **7.4.7 Promoting Vipassanana At His Native Place**

Although Burma, as a whole, was said to be terribly suffering from the onslaughts of the war, some of the fortunate villages in the outlying areas had escaped from such inflictions. Fortunately, these villages were free from the dangers of the war in contrast to other places which had to undergo a lot of hardship and trouble. Seikkhun village begin included in the list of such lucky villages, Ven. Sobana, who had arrived back to that village, was able to disseminate widely the seeds of the knowledge of *vipassana*, meditation exercise by way of preaching and teaching while residing at the Ingyintaw Taik Mahasi Kyaung in the village of Seikkhun. Because of the Sayadaw's fine ability in teaching others to become highly interested and of his very effective and practical way of teaching, the number of yogis who came to meditate had increased from day to day and years to years.

Those who had personally found the taste of *Dhamma* after practising meditation strictly in accordance with the the instruction of the Sayadaw, became desirous of letting others also taste the sweets of *Dhamma* like themselves. It is something like wishing other to equally share the experience of very good and tasty food after one had enjoyed tasting an extremely delicious food. It was however impossible to invite all others to come over to Seikkhun. They came to realize that the most feasible line of action to be taken in the interest of all others would be to write a

text book on *Dhamma* and to publish it. For this very reason these yogi devotees earnestly solicited Ashin Sobanna to write a book on practical vipassana, meditation and the methods to be exercised as might be considered suitable for people with varying degrees of intellectual ability or knowledge, namely, of immature intellect, mediocre and mature intellect. In consideration of the request made by these lay devotees, the Sayadaw had written the Text bearing the title of 'The Method of *Vipassana, Meditation*'.

#### **7.4.8 The Method Of Vipassana Meditation' Text Written**

After obliging the request of his lay devotees, Ven.Sobhana wrote the text on Dhamma entitled 'The Method of *Vipassana, Meditation*'. It was the time when the British and the Americans were embarking on the stage of their air attack in various parts of Burma. Shwebo town was under foray of air-strikes and was bombed almost every day. Yet amidst the continuous roar of bombs, the Sayadaw had completed writing the two volumes of 'The Method of *Vipassana, Meditation*' within a period of only seven months.

After writing this magnificent text, the responsibility for printing had cropped up. Being a war time period, it was not at all easy to print because of the scarcity of various printing materials.

After having gone through the press, the first volume of ' The Method of *Vipassana, Meditation*' text was brought back without a hitch from Ywathitgyi to Seikkhun. However, the second volume of the text while remaining in the press-forms after being printed but before it went into the process of book-binding was destroyed by fire when Ywathitgyi village was badly hit by the incendiary bombs dropped from the aircraft belonging to the British and the Americans. As the fair manuscript draft of

the second volume of the text had been consumed by the fire, another fair manuscript copy had to be re-written.

#### **7.4.9 Quality Of The Text**

'The Method of *Vipassna*, Meditation' Text on Dhamma resembles the building belonging to the second category. Form whatever viewpoint it is read and whatever may be the chapter or portion of the book that is read, all are to be found amazingly good and perfect. To put it in another way, this book "**The Method of Vipassna, Meditation**" is very much like a grand dinner table prepared and richly laid with sumptuous and delicious dishes.

Therefore, if anybody says that he is keen on reading a few good portions of it or passages in the book 'The Method of Vipassna, Meditation', it is only left to advise or instruct him to go through the whole of the lengthy text book from the beginning to the end.

A considerable number of books on *vipassana*, have been written and published in Burma. However, none has yet been found like text book on 'The Method of *Vipassna*, Meditation' which is remarkably comprehensive in the field of practical vipassana,. The statements presented therein making comparisons between the practical aspects and the authentic references as are contained in Pali Commentaries and Sub-commenatries, are as really outstanding as they are exquisitely delightful. It could provide a new outlook or a view just like looking at a familiar building from an entirely new and different angle. Minute instructions and details are found to have been given so as to enable others to clearly understand and carry out correctly on the right lines the work of vipassana, without ambiguity. Such an aptitude to be able to instruct so minutely is because of one's own personal assimilated experience and the

ripe experience that has been reaped by teaching others in a practical way in the field of *vipassana*, meditation.

It is exactly like one recounting his personal experiences. It is quite certain that a yogi who has received such minute instructions cannot possibly deviate from the right path. Therefore, if this chapter V is read through from the beginning to the end, it can be realized by mere guess alone that the author of this text book is by means a person of ordinary calibre but a personage who has reached a very high stage concerning *vipassana*,.

#### **7.4.10 Well Known As Mahasi Sayadaw**

While residing at Mahasi Kyaung of Seikkhun village, Ven.Sobhana had directed his energies in endeavouring to promote the *Patipatti Sa,sana* by immersing himself in teaching *Vipassana*, Dhamma, teaching practical method of meditation exercise and writing of books on Dhamma. His fame and popularity had grown more and more just as there had been an increase, day by day, in the number of people who came to know him. Since about that time, both laymen and monks in the neighbourhood called him the Venerable Mahasi, and then latter used to address him as Mahasi Sayadaw. From then on, up till present, he has become famous as Mahasi Sayadaw.

At the entrance of that monastery there was huge Kokko tree. When this lofty Kokko tree was uprooted by the force of a violent storm, its huge trunk was found to be hollow inside. The hollowed trunk having a barrel shape was ready to be transformed into a big drum. Therefore, the big trunk was then cut off and after being hewn with a few finishing touches in the interior to put into shape, it was covered with dried animal skin that was strained over the ends of cylindrical frame and turned

into a Big Drum. The monastery assuming the Burmese Vernacular name of the 'Big Drum' bears the name of 'Mahasi Kyaung-Taik'.

### **7.5 Sir. U Thwin, The Pioneer For Buddhist Revival In Burma**

In Burma, there is hardly any person who does not know Sir U Thwin. He was reputedly a very wealthy person, opulent and rich in both tangible and intangible property so much as that he had been popularly addressed as a 'multi-millionaire'. He was also a person who had unremittingly performed many things in the interest of the country. Therefore, during the British regime, he was honoured with knighthood. During the time following Burma's achievement of Independence, he was conferred upon with a very eminent title of 'Thado Thiri Thudhamma'. He had made energetic efforts in the highest interests of the people of Burma, his religion and Sasana. This is quite evident from the list of his numerous meritorious deeds, and with an unwavering respect for deep devotion to the Sasana, he had done enthusiastically all that which would help to flourish and promote the Sasana. He was, however, not fully satisfied with the way the British had supported the Sasana in Burma. He had in his heart the spiritual welfare of his country and kept his mind at work as to how he would carry into effect for the enhancement of the Sasana when Burma gained Independence.

To fulfill this objective, after the Second World War when the country regained her Independence, Sir U Thwin, started making preparations to implement his project for the everlasting development of *Sasana*. In his program for planning this scheme, priority was given to the founding of a religious organization in which all influential persons in power on the Government side starting from the President of the Union of Burma and the Prime Minister should partake, his idea being that this

organization should make it a point to encourage all activities relating to the Sasana within the entire country.

In considering the affairs of the *Sasana*, there was not much difficulty to promote *Pariyatti Sasana*. However, in regard to the matter of promoting *Patipatti Sasana*, it was found not so easy. The problem was of course, the availability of a teacher in patipatti. A meditation teacher must be a person who could instruct the right method of meditational practice in accordance with the Teachings of the Buddha. Since he ought to be a person who would be placed in high esteem and reverence throughout the life time as a spiritual teacher, he must be worthy of respect and reverence from all viewpoints. To find such a person was far from being easy. Therefore, Sir U Thwin, the millionaire, was making enquiries on his own to get a qualified meditation teacher. He had to inquire as such to put himself in readiness when responsibility was given to him to look for a teacher in patipatti after the establishment of an organization for future promotion of the *Sasana*. Thus, while making consultations with the Prime Minister and other persons for the purpose of establishing an organization for the welfare of the *Sasana*, he was at the same time enquiring to find out a teacher in patipatti of his own liking.

### **7.5.1 *Buddha Sasana Nuggaha* Organization And Sasana Yeiktha**

*Buddha Sasana Nuggaha* Organization was founded by Sir U Thwin and other respectable persons on the thirteen day of November, 1947. Sir U Thwin was then elected as the President of that Organization. The aims and object of this Organization are to promote the Sasana both in the field of pariyatti and patipatti to the best of its ability with utmost endeavour. With this end in view, when consideration was made to set up a meditation centre for the enhancement of Patipatti Sasana, Sir U Thwin

himself took the initiative in generously donating outright a plot of garden land, measuring over five acres, the place where the present Sasana Yeiktha, is situated in September, 1948. Therefore, full preparations were urgently launched for the construction of the buildings on the site where Sasana Yeiktha, now stands.

In fact, without even personally hearing the discourse taught by Mahasi Saya,daw, a person would perhaps know the aptitude and many-sided genius of the Saya,daw and being an adept in both pariyatti and patipatti if he had the chance of reading through the Text 'The Method of *Vipassana*, Meditation' written by the Saya,daw. Sir U Thwin was in real earnest to meet the Saya,daw personally and judge him closely from all aspects. Hence, his request to U Ba Thin to invite the Saya,daw despite the fact that the time was during vassa- (rainy season for four months, a period of retreat for the Buddhist monks during which they are ordinarily forbidden to travel).

At the time of delivering the discourse, Sir U Thwin occupied an appropriate place in the Hall from where he could see and observe and then hear the Sayadaw as he had already planned. From the time the Sayadaw alighted from the automobile, Sir U Thwin had been making his observation. While also listening to the discourse, he was constantly observing and watching the Sayadaw personal behaviour, and manner of speech. Having been satisfied with regard to the Sayadaw's reputation since the time he had heard of him from U Ba Thin, Sir U Thwin had warily and discreetly examining with his own eyes, the entire physical structure and frame, limbs, joints etc., of the Saya,daw whether anomalies or abnormalities would be detected or not. In examining the Sayadaw's physical complexion and body, Sir U Thwin found no anomalies or defects whatsoever, and only noticed an extremely satisfactory state of the Sayadaw's striking personality and demeanour. From the moment of taking his

seat on the *Dhammasana* throne or the pulpit, the Sayadaw was seen teaching in a state of serenity and calmness without even moving any part of his limbs. He was teaching with utmost dignity in a tranquil state of mind without any distraction. He was found delivering the discourse fully engrossed without slur, slander, scandal or prattle and without any superfluity, emphasizing only on the essence of the Dhamma. On that occasion, the discourse delivered was on *MalukyaputtaSutta* discourse. The *Dhamma* that was so expounded went in harmony with the composure, respectable appearance and behaviour of the Sayadaw. These facts had been mentioned by Sir U Thwin to persons of his close acquaintance after the return of Mahasi Sayadaw. On hearing the teachings of the Sayadaw, Sir U Thwin was highly pleased and therefore, mentally gave recognition to the Sayadaw as, "This eminent teacher is the saviour I have been searching for."

Now Sir U Thwin, the millionaire, had held great veneration for Mahasi Sayadaw with a feeling of delight from the time he had first met the Sayadaw. These were the two personages who would jointly make their ceaseless efforts to re-enhance the Patipatti Sasana in Burma with glory and splendour. Who could deny that such two great persons were not either the two brothers or close relatives in their previous existences? Amidst these congenial circumstances, the Sayadaw's name in his childhood was surprisingly found to be identical with the name of the Millionaire. The strange meeting between the two U Thwin(s) was indeed a memorable incident which should invariably be recorded in the history of the *Buddha's Sasana*.

### **7.5.2 Leaving For Rangoon Sasana Yeaktha**

Sir U Thwin proposed the name of Mahasi Sayadaw of Seikkhun, Shwebo Township, whom he had met and whose discourse he had heard, as the most suitable candidate for the appointment of a meditation teacher. With great delight this proposal

was unanimously accepted by all members of the Executive Committee of the Organization who gave their consensus for approval to appointing the said Saya,daw as a meditation teacher, and also resolved that the Saya,daw be invited to Rangoon.

At the time while the Saya,daw was preaching and teaching at that meditation centre, it so happened that the Prime Minister was at Shwebo on tour and was paying his visit to Myodounk Pagoda. The elders of the town who accompanied and escorted the Prime Minister to that pagoda, had incidentally mentioned in the course of their conversation, of the presence of Mahasi Saya,daw at the meditation centre located at the foot of that Shrine. Thereupon, the Prime Minister immediately called on Mahasi Sayadaw and after paying obeisance solicitously requested the Saya,daw to come over to Rangoon for the purpose of teaching Dhamma. The Sayadaw bearing in mind that the work of teaching Dhamma was his paramount duty, promised to visit Rangoon. After receiving the solemn assurance of the Sayadaw, the Prime Minister entrusted the persons concerned with the responsibility of making arrangement.

### **7.5.3 The Growth Of Meditation Centers**

When making his way to Rangoon, Mahasi Sayadaw carried with him only the eight requisites of a Buddhist monk, such as, the robes, begging bowl, etc., and he had no other extra things for his personal use, except a pair of slippers he had put on. Not even a diary was with him. At that time, there were only a few buildings at Rangoon Sasana Yeiktha,.

The yogis who would take up the practice of meditation were then still lacking. However, immediately after his arrival at the yeiktha,, the Saya,daw had expressed his desire to teach the method of meditation if there were people who were bent upon meditating. From then on, the number of people desirous of taking up

meditational practice had increased gradually reaching up to twenty-five in number in the month of Natdaw (December). Therefore, on the full moon day of Natdaw, the Saya,daw gave a discourse on the basic practice of the satipatthana vipassana, to the group of the said twenty-five yogis. In the days that followed, every time the new yogis came over to stay at the yeiktha, the Saya,daw had given them the same methodical training in the right system of *satipatthana vipassana*.

This '**Discourse on the Basic Practice of the *Satipatthana Vipassana***,' as its name implies, is the Dhamma which conveys instructions in detail to those who had originally on basic knowledge of the practice of kammatthana. It carries the same spirit as contained in chapter V of the book 'The Method of Vipassana, Meditation'. However, as it is an instruction on practical training in meditation between the teacher and the pupil and as it is meant for the beginners only to gain fairly sufficient knowledge, it is not as fully amplified as in chapter V.

This method of examining the yogis daily is one of the most satisfactory methods of training in the system of practical meditation adopted and prescribed by Mahasi Sayadaw. By following this method, there is no need to worry about the yogi going astray from the right path and getting on to a wrong track. As this path has been personally tordden and also with the availability of a fully qualified tecacher, it is indeed most encouraging. No feeling of anxiety need be entertained as to what one should be done dependeing upon the progress that has been achieved. Because of this fine system of training in meditation practice, Mahasi Sayadaw's method of *kammatthana*, practice has met with great success.

Not many years after the arrival of Mahasi Sayadaw at Rangoon, a considerable number of meditation centres had been established in vairous parts of

Burma. Latter, meditation centres under the tutelage of Mahasi Sayadaw appeared in countries outside the frontiers of Burma, such as, Thailand, Sir Lanka, etc.

#### **7.5.4 Reveiving The Eminent Title Of *Aggamahapandita***

Just more than two years after his arrival at Sa,sana Yeiktha, in 1313 M.E. (1951), Mahasi Sayadaw was conferred upon with the title of *Aggamahapandita*.

The title of *Aggamaha,pandita* is not the kind of title gained through an examinationg. As it is the kind of title that is bestowed upon the Saya,daw in recongnition of their virtues and attributes of *silā, samadhi* and *panna,*; it is highly eminent and distinctively superior. That is the title which can be received only by eminent Saya,daws endowed with the qualities of *silā, samadhi* and *panna,*. In brief the title of *Aggamahapandita* is on par with or analogous to the title of '*Raja Guru*'that was given in the long ages past. Having accepted this title conferred upon by the Govenment, Mahasi Saya,daw has automatically reached the status of a high ecclesiastic of equal rank with the holder of the title of '*Raja Guru*' who was revered and paid homage to by the monarch.

He had held the key position of *ChatthaSangiti-Pucchaka* and had performed his onerous task on the occasion of the Sixth Buddhist Council; had desseminated the seeds of vipassana, in promoting Sa,sana in the foreign countries; and had subscribed his talented genius to the welfare and interests of the Sa,sana and of the Buddhists excelling other by making it possible for thousands of people to taste the flavour of Dhamma according to one's own *paramifas* (perfections) and attain practical

Knowledge of the Dhamma. He had also contributed to the Buddhist literture in his own wonderful way of writing many books on Dhamma.For these reasons, on

the part of the Government, it is fully justified and really worth donating by conferring upon the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw the title of *Aggamahapandita*.

### **7.5.5 Journey To Thailand And Cambodia**

From the time of its Independence, the Government of the Union of Burma started making arrangements for convening the Sixth Buddhist Council. The sincere intention was to make it more distinguished than the conventions of the Buddhist Council held in the past. It was usual to hold such conventions only by sanghas of the country that sponsored it. However, with regard to this Sixth Buddhist Council, the intention was that not only the Burmese sanghas but also the sanghas (bhikkhus) from other Theravada countries should collaborate and participate. The objective was to hold this Council jointly by all five countries which had embraced the Theravada Buddhism instead of by Burma alone. To achieve the mission, it could be possible only if the Governments of the Theravada countries and Sanghas therefrom, such as, Thailand, etc., would assist and participate. Therefore, other Theravada countries take part in the convention.

For that purpose, the Governments of the Union of Burma deputed and sent a religious mission to Thailand in the year 1314 M.E. (1952) to implement the organization scheme for the ensuing Sixth Buddhist Council. This mission was led by Nyaungyan Sayadaw payagyi and Mahasi Sayadaw representing the Order of Sanghas, while Shwe-pyadaw U Ba Thin who was to act as a translator for the Sayadaw and U Than Sein, Parliamentary Secretary in the role of a lay attendant, represented the laymen. This four-member mission headed by Nyaungyan Sayadawpayagyi left Burma by air on the sixth waning day of the month of Thadingyunt (October) in 1314 M.E. (1952).

The mission first visited Thailand where they called on the Supreme Head of the Sangha (Sangha Raja), and apprised him of the fact relating to the proposed Sixth Buddhist Council. The hierach expressed his opinion that it would be impossible to hold such a council in the absence of a ruling monarch and a Sasana-paing (in Burmese) - the chief monk of the hierachy of monks in Burma under whose auspices such a council was usually to be held. The Venerable Nyaungyan Sayadawpayagyi, however, explained that undoubtedly there was no king in Burma, but being a republic, there was a President, popularly elected by the people of Burma, and he was a de facto as well as de jure Head of State who must be considered a king. The Sayadawpayagyi then contintued to make it cler that through there was no Sasana-paing in Burma, the entrie assemblage of monks who constituted the Order of Sanghas had been relentlessly making effort for the promotion of Sa,sana in the field of both oariyatti anf patipatti, and that because of this sustained effort, Burma had now already produced an eminent personage who was able to recite from memory the whole of Buddhist Scripture, i.e., the Tipitaka, unsurpassed in her hidtory, Under these circumstance, Nyangyan Sayadaw precisely and effectively stated that Burma was competent to hold the Buddhist Council as envisaged.

At that time, Ven. Vicittasarabhivamsa had not yet attained the title of Tipitaka Saya,daw but had already passed with distinction in the five divisions of *Vinaya Pitaka* ( a great Code of Monastic Discipline), and had been endeavoring to appear for the oral examination of reaciting the first portion of the seven texts on *Abhidhamma* - Buddhist Scriptures). It seems therefore that Nyaungyan Sayadawgyi had left without an atom of doubt about the future success of Ven. Vicittasarabhivamsa in the coming oral examination and that had prbably prompted him to say that a Tipitaka Saya,daw in Burma, the Sasana-paing Sayadaw - the chief

patron of Sasana of Thailand responded; " If that it so, Burma alone was in a position to hold the proposed Buddhist Council," and further stated, "when Burma convened the Buddhist Council, Thailand would have no objection whatsoever and would even gladly encourage that holding of a Buddhist Council."

After having done what was to be fulfilled in Thailand in conformity with the terms of reference laid down for the mission, the Sayadaw and party flew to Cambodia (the then Republic of Khmer). On the day of their arrival at Phnom Penh, it coincided with the day of celebration for the veneration of Buddha's sacred relics brought from India.

After meeting with the Cambodina Chief Monk at the said monastery where they stayed, the affairs of the Sixth Buddhist Council were promptly discussed. As the Cambodina Chief Monk was originally interested in and satisfied with idea of holding such a Convention as the Sixth Buddhist Council.

### **7.5.6 The Sixth Buddhist Council And Mahasi Sayadaw**

The name Sixth Buddhist Council had become widely known since the eve of Burma's Independence. Soon after the attainment of the Independence, the Burma Government had made a decision to hold the Sixty Buddhist Council for the promotion of the Buddha's Sa,sana with all its might. The holding of this Buddhist Council would add lustre and bring about improvement to the Sa,sana. It would also harmonize and erase the discrepancies in Buddha's teachings appearing in many Pali texts of the Dhamma which would thereby bear the fruits of future positive beneficial results. With these aims and objects, the governments had striven in haste to hold the general council of Buddhist monks.

Strictly speaking, the business of the Buddhist Council is exclusively the function of the Sanghas. However, a tremendous task such as this Council could not possibly be borne by the sanghas without the assistance of the lay benefactors. Moreover, as it was intended to make the Sixth Buddhist Council a grand ceremonious function of magnificent splendour with the joint participation and effort of the five Theravada countries namely, Burma, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Thailand, Cambodia (Khmer) and Laos, the volume of work involved became all the more expansive and wider in scope. In this regard, the Government of Burma took over all the responsibility that would normally be performed by the lay benefactors. In shouldering this responsibility, the Government not wishing to reserve the privileges entirely to itself, benevolently shared the responsibilities with the people to whom the chance of becoming benefactors of the Synod had been given, thereby making this Buddhist Council's Convention a glorious achievement of the entire populace.

The task of convening such a Buddhist Council was really stupendous since it had to be performed with world-wide co-operation. To implement such an enormous project to reach a successful completion, leaders of outstanding ability were indeed essential. It was probably because of the greatness and remarkable glory of the nature of the Sixth Synod or of the Sasana's honourable fame and suremacy, three most essential prominent figures of distinctive character and ability had appeared figures of were (1) Mahasi Sayadaw; (2) Vija-Lakara Sayadaw Ven. Visuddhabhivamsa and (3) Tipitakadara Dhamma-Bhandagarika Ven. Vicittasarabhivamsa.

### **7.5.7 Organizing Committee Members Of Sangayana**

There were two main significant items of business or divisions of workload in the matter of holding such a convention. One was the performance of ceremony of the Sanga,yana or Buddhist Council and the other - the work of printing the Pitaka

Scripture after close scrutiny and dissection. The above mentioned three Sayadaws had taken active part in the performance of these two immense tasks. Sayadaw Ven. Vicittasarabhivamsa had with utmost endeavour personally indulged in two of these supremely important tasks, while Sayadaw Ven. Vicittasarabhivamsa took the responsibility in sifting, analyzing and amending the Pitaka Scriptures apart from taking the role of the Sayadaw in answering and explaining the questions put to him on Pitaka Scriptures which might contain dissentient views or ambiguities. Mahasi Sayadaw competently performed the arduous duties of revising and printing the Pitaka Scriptures and also acted unremittingly as the Main Interrogator (*Chattha-Sangifti-Pucchaka*). In the Organizing Committee of sanghas, which might be regarded as the Central Committee with full authority of the Sixty Buddhist Council, Mahasi Sayadaw and Ven. Vicittasarabhivamsa were also included as members.

### **7.5.8 The Final Proof-Reading Sayadaws**

Sangayana means the assembly of Sanghas of the Buddhist hierarchy for deliberation and recital of all the Buddha's Teachings or scriptures through consultations to harmonize the points of divergence and of errors found in the scriptural texts. There cannot be a Synod if there are no good, faithful, correct and errorless specimens of Pitaka Scriptures. That is the reason why this task of paramount importance in vetting, amending, interpolating and explaining the abstrusive or erroneous writings or misleading words or phrases contained in the Pitaka Scriptures, was given the top priority.

First and foremost, for the purpose of amending the Pitaka, the Scriptures were sent to all places within the Union of Burma with a request to all intellectual Theras to compare the various draft copies with the originals of the scriptures within the ambit

of their knowledge and capability, and correct the mistakes. The Sayadaws who first took the work of amending or correcting, purifying and cleansing the scriptures, are called *Mula Visodhaka* Sayadaws. Then, the amended drafts sent by them were again scrutinized and corrected by another Committee of Visodhaka formed for the purpose at Rangoon (first at Sasana Yeiktha and later at Kaba, -Aye). This was done to make it more perfect and thorough by eliminating all possible mistakes in the least. These Sayadaws were called *Pati-Visodhaka*. The fair and final drafts were sent to the Buddha Sasana Printing Press only after the final vetting and approval of the said *pati-Visodhakas*. After putting the drafts into the printing press under the close supervision of skilful printers and presscorrectors, these had reached the stage of proofs. Again, these proofs were repeatedly put to careful scrutiny and then, the final proofs were put up to the Committee consisting of five Sayadaws. This Committee again went through the final proofs and after corrections were made where necessary, these were eventually approved as the final fair drafts and sent back to the press for final printing. The last Committee which vetted the proofs that came out of the printing press was called *Osanasodeya Pattapathaka* Committee. Later, it was given the name of Osana Committee, in brief.

Mahasi Sayadaw was one of the members of the said Osana Committee. The responsibility of the Osana Committee was really onerous. Although *Mula Visodhaka* and *Patii-Visodhaka* Sayadaws' duties were to examine and confirm the correctness of the words and usages, *Osana* Sayadaws had to sift, correct or interpolate the words and usages of *Pali* from the outset. They had also to examine thoroughly the sequence of tenses, appropriateness of the chronological order, the spelling, the punctuation marks, etc., and of the terminology; In short, the responsibility of Osana Committee

was to vet and cleanse all the expressions, passages and writings in the whole book, and to make it faultless and flawless.

Mahasi Sayadaw had to invariably perform the duties as a member of that extremely responsible Committee. At the initial stage, the Buddha Sasana Council being accommodated within the precincts of Sasana Yeiktha, the meeting place for Osana Committee was allotted at the Monastery where Mahasi Sayadaw was residing. The five Sayadaws together with a layman editor sat together for consultation in a group at that monastery and implemented the Pitaka Pali Scriptures for the Sixth Synod. When they came across difficult grammatical expressions, etymology and dictions, the other members of the Committee sought for the opinion of Mahasi Sayadaw, and they were generally pleased to accept his decision. Mahasi Sayadaw had performed this task of Osana from start to finish. The Osana Committee had to go along with the Buddha Sasana Council when it changed its headquarters to Kaba, Aye just before the commencement of the Sixth Synod. At that time, Mahasi Sayadaw had to attend to his duties of Osana by daily visiting Kaba, Aye. Eventually when he had to sift and examine the drafts relating to the Commentaries and Sub-commentaries, there was hardly any time for him to go to Kaba, Aye and to carry out his duties there.

After the Pali Scriptures had been recited and approved by the Synod, the Commentaries and Sub-commentaries had to be also vetted and approved which thereby necessitated the printing of these amended scriptures. Mahasi Sayadaw again had to take the role of a member of Osana responsible for the vetting of the Commentaries and Sub-commentaries, and therefore it behoved him to carry out his duties. Sayadaw Ven. Visuddhabhivamsa who was responsible for making arrangements in this work being greatly satisfied with the aptitude and intellectual

ability and the mental attitude and behaviour of Mahasi Sayadaw. Mahasi Sayadaw realizing that he had been so much relied upon in carrying out his task, never avoided the responsibility given to him by Sayadaw Ven. Visuddha-bhivamsa, despite the fact that he was engaged in his multifarious duties. The entrustment of the work of vetting and rewriting of *Visuddhimagga* Commentary to him by Sayadaw U Visuddhabhivamsa, bore testimony to the extent in which absolute reliance and confidence was put on Mahasi Sayadaw by the former. Knowing fully well that Mahasi Sayadaw was an adept in Visuddhi Magga text with his background experience as a *Kammathanacariya*, the two text books on *Visuddhimagga* Commentary were given to Mahasi Sayadaw alone for the purpose of vetting and editing them. As had been entrusted, Mahasi Sayadaw also examined, vetted and amended, putting his all-out individual effort also examined, vetted and amended, putting his all-out individual effort without any one's aid. In the history of the Synod, 'Sangayana', Mahasi Sayadaw stands prominent as the only person who has ever been entrusted with the work of vetting, sifting, amending and editing single-handed for a single Text Dhamma.

Mahasi Sayadaw had amended the scriptural texts connected with the Synod with his extraordinary ability, talent and supreme efforts. The number of Dhamma texts which had been so vetted and amended were not ten, fifteen, twenty-five, or thirty in number but came to 117 in all, including all Pali Texts, Commentaries and Sub-commentaries. Each text book having contained about 350 pages, the total number of pages involved had reached an aggregate of over four thousand. These achievements would surely bestow immeasurable benefits upon posterity. This account of Mahasi Sayadaw's performance and activities in connection with the affairs of the Sixth Buddhist Council was known only to a few.

### 7.5.9 Pucchaka Sayadaw

While performing the task of cleansing and amending the Pitaka Sūriputta on the one hand, Mahasi Sayadaw had to shoulder another responsibility relating to the affairs of the Buddhist Council, on the other. The assumption of this responsibility by Mahasi Sayadaw was generally known by the people since it was related to his performance in the capacity of a Pucchaka, the Interrogator. Sangayana had been already explained as relating to the group recitation or rehearsing of the scriptures. As is usually the custom, each and every one of the Pali scriptural text had to be examined. And to prove to the hilt that the teaching was actually made by the Buddha, preliminary questions had to be put in the following manner;

1. At which place (or Where) was this Sutta (Discourse) delivered by the Buddha?
2. For whose sake (or To Whom) was this discourse delivered?
3. Why was it delivered, and so on.

These were repeatedly asked and put to scrutiny. Only after being fully satisfied with the result of this scrutinization, the discourse was accepted and confirmed; and then, to make it more evident that it has been accepted and confirmed, all Sanghas had to recite simultaneously. Such a process and mode of performance is called the convening of the Buddhist Council or Saṅgāyana.

Both the Interrogator and the person giving the answer would have to declaim from memory. Then, the most difficult aspect is to speak both in Pali and Burmese when interrogating and answering. Such being the case, the two responsible Sayadaws must be well-versed and competent in Pali language and should also be able to speak Pali eloquently.

Of the two persons who were to be assigned with the duties of an interrogator and of a Recite, respectively, luckily the quest for a Saya,daw who was to do the recitation had become easy. It was because of the availability of a Tipitaka Sayadaw Ven. Vicittasarabhivamsa who could memorize and recite all the contents of the three Pitakas. This Saya,daw had passed with distinction in all subject both in written and oral examinations of the Tipitaka primarily held by the Buddha Sa,sana Nuggaha Organization.

Mahasi Sayadaw had to perform the duties of Cattha Sangiti pucchaka. These two personalities were so compatible with one another that everthing went off smoothly without a slightest hitch. They had discharged their duties ably befitting the grolly of Sangayana which was made possible by their attributes to be celebrated with great success on a mangnificent scale.

#### **7.5.10 Introduction To Visuddhimagga Written**

'*Visuddhimagga Nida,naka,tha*'s fundamental aim and object was to explain and refute the false accusations made in the statement against the commentator Acariya Maha, Buddhaghosa. Nevertheless, not being fully contented with mere refutation of the false statement, Mahasi Sayadaw had also written a praise-worthy account in connection with Acariya Buddhaghosa as was considered proper after collection all the true facts from various texts of Dhamma

First of all, after false allegations made by Dhammananda Kosambhi had been fully refuted with sufficient evidence and authentic factual statements, a continous account of the development process of the Buddha's doctrines had been explained from the time of Buddha's death (*Mahaparinibbana*) up till the time of Acariya Buddhaghosa. After the Second Buddhist Council (at Vesali), various sects with

doctrinal differences appeared Later, in Ceylon various Schools of Thought (Sects) such as Abayagiri Dhammaruci, etc., had sprung up. In the 'Introduction', mention was also made of the new faith called Vetulla which was generally despised in Ceylon, and as to how Jetavanavasi Sect had appeared in Ceylon. Thence, the biography of Acariya Buddhaghosa was explained and commented upon supported by fully verifiable statements. While making such comments, written comparisons were made between the Visuddhi Magga and the Vimutti Text which had now undeservedly received a good name through mere hearsay. Some had even alleged that a few of the Commentaries said to have been written by Acariya Buddhaghosa, were not product of his genius, but the work of any other contemporary Thera. Such allegations had been commented and criticized with all honesty of purpose supported by fair and truthful statements after proper scrutinization. Briefly stated, '*Visudhi Magga Nidanakatha*' may be claimed as a new biography of Acariya Buddhaghosa, which had been accepted and confirmed by the Sixty Buddhist Council.

Indeed, Burma has gained much benefit by its brilliant achievement of the Sixth Buddhist Council. It has reached a high status in regard to Sasana, and the achievement of this position has given Burma a place to be highly respected by the world at large insofar as it concerns the affairs of the Sasana. The Pali Pitakas, Commentaries and Sub-commentaries having been carefully vetted, cleansed, revised and printed so as to become more reliable as fine specimens of Buddhist Canons, these have served as a big reward to all learned Pali scholars all over the world including Burma.

### **7.4.11 Journey To India**

This was not the first trip to India for Mahasi Sayadaw. Previously, he had been to many places of pilgrimage in India. For those people who had not been to India before, a program was included to enable them to visit the most renowned sacred places. Moreover, Sayadaw himself having had an intention to revisit certain places of pilgrimage which were worth keeping in memory forever, and to visit new places where Sayadaw had not been before, the overall pilgrimage tour that had been covered was pretty extensive. In the course of visiting such places, Sayadaw had also delivered discourses and made consultations relating to Dhamma to gain benefits for the Sasana. He had also taken notes of a number of things which were worthy of special attention.

### **7.5.12 Meeting With Prime Minister Nehru**

The next day after his arrival at New Delhi, Mahasi Sayadaw gave his blessings to all down-trodden Untouchable who were Buddhists, and all of them took the Eight Precepts as given by the Sayadaw. Sayadaw visited the Foreign Office where he had an interview with Shri Nehru, the Prime Minister of India

The conversation that had taken place between the two were as stated below;

**Nehru:** "Your Reverend Sir. Have you ever been to India in the past? If so, what were the places you have visited?"

**Sayadaw:** " Yes I had been to Bodhgaya, Sarnath and Kusinara previously. I'm very pleased with my present trip for having found a lot of improvement in a number of Buddhist shrines, temples and other religious edifices for which repairs have been done. I hope the Government will continue to make more endeavour in bringing about better improvements."

**Nehru:** "Your Reverend Sir. It has been possible for the Government of India to make such improvements in view of its policy to hold the Buddha Jayanti Celebration."

**Sayadaw:** "O, Yes. According to the old saying of Buddhist religion, the coming 2,500<sup>th</sup> Mahaparinibbana Annual Celebration will be a precursor of the revival of Buddha's Sasana and Dhamma in the Continent of India."

**Nehru:** "If the Rules of Life and Discipline, the preachings and the teaching of the Buddha, can be propagated more widely, it would, I think be of great benefit to this country. This point would also concern the whole world which really needs to have that kind of doctrine. This kind of noble Dhamma which can bring the inner peace of mind and serenity will be able to extirpate and dispel the growing vicious and raging inner feelings and thoughts of human being and the inherent dangers of atomic bombs."

**Sayadaw:** (Getting pleased). "In this mundane world, greed (lobha), hatred (dosa), and delusion (moha) are at the root of all of quarrels and conflicts. All kinds of activities relating to the affairs of the Sasana are meant to eradicate or completely destroy all vices, evils and injustices. I'm hoping against hope that the Prime Minister will give encouragement to the affairs of the Sasana."

**Nehru:** " In this Universe even during the lifetime of the Buddha, the existence of good and virtuous men and women who had striven hard to lead a noble life and of those who had held dissentient or diametrically opposite views of thought had brought about much trouble and annoyance. I have my deepest reverence and regards for the Buddha's Dhamma (Teachings). However, as a Prime Minister, I cannot possibly give special favour to any one particular religion in preference to another. In any case, as all the Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists and other religionists living in the country have been doing their best for the welfare and interests of the people, I must

inevitably encourage all their religious doctrines. The business of propagating the Dhamma is, of course, within the domain of the missionaries or senior monks like the Saya,daw."

**Sayadaw:** (With metta, to the Prime Minister) - "I give my best wishes for your Excellency's personal happiness and well-being and prosperity of your country."

### **7.5.13 Trip To Ceylon (Sri Lanka)**

As has been stated earlier, the primary intention of Maha,sif Saya,daw's leaving Burma for abroad was to visit Ceylon. His travel tour in India was merely incidental as it was on the way. That was the reason why on the 6<sup>th</sup> Waning day of Pyatho (January) 1320 M.E. (1958), he proceeded to Ceylon from Madras by air.

McCarthy Centre is the Main Mahasi Meditation Centre in Ceylon. In Sinhalese, it is called Bha,vana,madrechattana. In Pali, it is known as *Bhavanamajjhathana*. At the time of Saya,daw Ashin Suja,ta and party's first visit to Ceylon to promote Sasana, as there was no proper Main Meditation Centre (Headquarters), the seeds of Vipassana, Sasana had not been very widely disseminated. To be able to expand the Sa,sana to a considerable extent, the Lanka Vipassana, Propagation Society had established that McCarthy Headquarters. The present visit of the Saya,daws was to open the said Headquarters of the McCarthy Meditation Centre and to leave behind the three Kammatthana.

The moment Mahasi Sayadaw and Saya,daw Ashin Sujata had arrived at the Headquarters of the Meditation Centre, old yogis both male and females appeared to pay homage. At the assembly, the total number of yogis had reached a figure of about two hundred. Seeing the audience sitting in a proper posture, calm and tranquil, it behoved Mahasi Sayadaw to impart his teachings. Meanwhile, as a Ceylonese monk

who knew Burmese had appeared, Mahasi Sayadaw commenced his teachings for over an hour letting the discourse delivered by him to be interpreted by the said monk, The next day was spent in persuing different kinds of scriptural text books at the house of Mrs.Nissanka.

On Sunday, the ninth Waning day of Pyatho (January), opening ceremony of the Main Meditation (Bhavana,) Centre was inaugurated. At this ceremonial function, speeches were made by Sayadaw of the respective Religious Sects or Schools of Thought. Later, U Chan Htoon (Justice), the President of the World Buddha Sasana Organization, and Mr. Bandaranaike, the prime Minister of the Government of Ceylon, gave their speeches. Then, the ceremony came to a close after a brief talk in Pali given by the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw and Sayadaw Ashin Sujata respectively.

The trip to Ceylon was not the first for Mahasi Sayadaw. Sayadaw had been to Ceylon for first time in the year 1314 M.E. (1952) as a member of the Religious Mission from Burma sent out in connection with the affairs of the Sixth Buddhist Council. On that occasion, his stay at Ceylon was not fairly long as this trip because the former visit made was for the purpose of convening the Sixth Buddhist Council. At that time, he had not been to many places as was done during this trip. On the present occasion, the sole purpose of this visit being to propagate vipassana, Dhamma, his length of stay in Ceylon was a little more than a month. During this period of over one month, the program for itinerary was tight being occupied almost every day with travelling and teaching.

Sayadaw's trip to Ceylon was not merely for pleasure, but it is a journey lending out a gift of Dhamma. Ceylon owed much gratitude to other countries in connection with Theravada Sastras and Theravada Pali Scriptures. Commentaries

and Sub-commentaries which had been relied upon and taught in Burma up till the present day are mostly the product of Ceylon. As a matter of course, it was Burma's reciprocity in return for the thanks owed to Ceylon. Relating to the scriptural text, the Pali Grammar called 'Saddhati' compiled by Ashin Aggvamsa Thera of Pagan, was considered as a gift of Dhamma offered to Ceylon by Burma as a gesture of goodwill and thanks in return.

#### **7.5.14 Visit Indonesia For Promotion Of Buddhism**

During the latter part of Pyatho (January) and Tabodwe (February) months 1315 M.E. (1953), before the Convention of the Sixth Buddhist Council, a person happened to visit the Rangoon Sasana Yeiktha, a middle-aged man who looked like a Malaysian would be found practising meditation. This person had a very fair complexion, neat, tidy and immaculate. His gait and mannerism were graceful and saintly befitting a yogi practising vipassana, on the right lines with all seriousness. He was wearing a white garb which went in harmony with the holiness of the meditation centre. He put on a pair of trousers very much like the 'Shan' pants, and thus, bore the semblance of a young Malaysian. He was however, not a Malaysian. He was an Indonesian national, a teacher of a Chinese school, by his profession, by the name of Mr. Boon Aun, who had come over to practise meditation at the feet of the Venerable Maha,si Saya,daw.

It would appear strange to find an Indonesian national contemplating Mindfulness. The majority of us know that Indonesia is a country which has adopted Islamic Religion. Out of a population of eighty-two millions (as estimated in 1956), Muslims formed a majority. From the President of the Republic of Indonesia down to the lower echelon of Government Officials, all are Muslims having faith in

Mohammedan religion. It is therefore surprising that a national of a country where Muslims reigned supreme, had come over to Burma to take up the practice of vipassana, meditation, which is a Buddhist Doctrine.

Mr.Boon Aun having diligently practised meditation in accordance with the instructions given to him by Mahasi Sayadaw and Sayadaw U Nyanuttara, soon attained a stage in the path of progressive insight which enabled him to appreciate, assess and gauge the degree of his own personal achievement in the knowledge of the Dhamma by comparing it with his relative theoretical knowledge. On the third Waxing day of Ta,baung (April), Mahasi Sayadaw elucidated the full exposition of the progress of insight to Mr.Boon Aun.

Thereafter, as he had become very enthusiastic in Buddha's Dhamma, Mr.Boon Aun decided to join into monkhood. On the fifteenth Waning day of Tabaung 1315 M.E. (5<sup>th</sup> April 1954), Thado Thiri Sudhamma Sir U Thwin and his wife took the role of his benefactors for his higher ordination as a senior monk at Sima in the precincts of Sasana Yeiktha,, where the sayadaws headed by Mahasi Sayadaw formally admitted Mr.Boon Aun to the Order of *Sanghas*. His *kammatthana* teacher, Mahasi Sayadaw, casted himself at this Ordination Ceremony in the role of a Preceptor.

The newly ordained Indonesian monk was given the name (title) of 'Jinarakkhita', which means 'a person deserving of care and attention by the Lord Buddha, the Victorious'. It is exactly so. It is only with the blessings of the Lord Buddha and the help of the celestial devas, would Ashin Jinarakkhita be able to make his endeavours in firmly rooting the Theravada Buddhism in the soil of Indonesia as he had hoped for.

As has been earlier mentioned Mr.Boon Aun as a monk had attended the ceremonial function of the opening of the Sixth Buddhist Council, and had submitted his memorandum. After devotedly studying the Buddhist doctriness under the supervision of Mahasi Sayadaw over a period of one year, Ashin Jinarakkhita returned to his native country-Indonesia.

When leaving Indonesia, Ashin Jinarakkhita was a layman in the name of Mr.Boon Aun. On his return, however, donning the browish-yellow robe of a monk, he had found it difficult even to put up or a day in his native place. Where would he find a Buddhist monastery in a country where the name of Therava,da was hardly known and where the Muslims formed the ruling class in majority? Ashin Jinarakkhita having been properly trained in accordance with the Rules of Discipline (Vinaya), he could not possibly live under the same roof with the laymen. Hence, while spending his days temporarily at the monasteries in Malaysia, Singapore and Ceylon, he visited Indonesia only occasionally, and gradually taught the Buddha's Dhamma to those who were acquainted with him. With unremitting effort, zeal and ardour for five yerars at a stretch, he strove to promote the Sa,sana, and as a result, was able to establish two monasteries (viha,ras) in Indonesia. Indonesia Buddhist Organizations led by Ashin Jinarakkhita made arrangements to invite a number of missionaries from the five Theravada countries, viz.: Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, Laos and Cambodai for the enhancement of Sa,sana in Indonesia.

The organizations working in cohesion sent a letter of resquest to the Buddha Sa,sana Council of Burma through the Burmese Embassy in Indonesia to depute missionaries from Burma to Indonesia. The Buddha Sa,sana Council after making consultations eventually decided to send the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, Ashin Jinarakkhita's own Preceptor, Whom they considered as the most suitable delegate,

and then requested the Sayadaw to visit Indonesia for the promotion of Sasana on behalf of the Union of Burma. Sayadaw had pondered upon this matter and then considering that through he was unable to teach the Dhamma in a foreign language, Indonesia would greatly profit if he, as a teacher of Ashin Jinarakkhit, were to personally encourage the promotion of Sasana finally accepted the proposal of the Council and later proceeded to Indonesia.

It was a marvelous historic event to be recorded in the history of that Island since so many Theravada Buddhist monks had assembled in Indonesia for the first time during the period of one thousand years! These Theravada monks including Mahasi Sayadaw visited many cities and villages throughout Indonesia and propagated the Sasana. They also visited and worshipped the world famous shrine Borobudur. They had also included in their itinerary such places as Madura Island and Bali besides Java, and had disseminated the Sasana in all these places. They had come across various kinds of people who had put all kinds of searching questions relating in these places.

The most significant contribution made in the interests of the Sasana by these Theravada missionary Sayadaw including Mahasi Sayadaw were the consecration of a *Sima* for the holding of *pabbajja*, ceremony (novitiation into monkhood), and higher ordination of senior monks for admission into the Order of Sanghas.

### **7.5.15 Promotion Of Buddha Sasana In Thailand**

The Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw had previously been to Thailand on a religious mission and also to give encouragement to the commemoration of Buddha Jayanti on the occasion of the 2,500th anniversary of the Sasana Year. He had not been there for the mere purpose of promotion the Sasana. However, at the request of Sangharaja to

send one *Kammatthanacariya*, Mahasi Sayadaw deputed his disciple Sayadaw U Asaba together with U Indavamsa as an assistant to proceed to Thailand commencing from the year 1314 M.E. (1952), for the propagation of *Sa,sana*. Due to their untiring effort, Mahasi Sayadaw's method of *Satipattana vipassana*, meditation had spread far and wide in Thailand.

#### The Problem of Life Existence

After Burma's attainment of Independence, modern intelligentsia class has been paying more attention to the Buddhist doctrines. They become interested in Dhamma. According to the extent they have become interested, their devotion to the study of the Dhamma has become diligently intense. Whatever has been observed and known relating to the point of Dhamma, they start deliberating and analyzing them with application of modern knowledge which they have acquired.

Among such intellectuals, Wunna Kyaw Htin Dr. U Myint Swe was one. U Myint Swe was one of the off-springs of U San Kyu, a well-known physician of Mandalay. Like his father, he was a pious and sincere devotee of *Buddha Sasana*. Being devoted to Mahasi Sayadaw and being closely acquainted with the rich man, Sir U Thwin, he had out of sheer compassion and with the humanitarian spirit, extended his free medical treatment to all meditating yogis and *Kammatthanacariya* Sayadaw in Mahasi Yeiktha, (Rangoon *Sa,sana* Yeiktha,) to enable them to pursue Dhamma and meditate without having worry about their health.

U Myint Swe being an educated person of modern times and a medical doctor as well, was used to making a critical observation of things from modern educational point of view and the aspect of medical science in learning and examining the facts relating to Buddha's Dhamma. When critically analyzing the facts about Dhamma

with his background knowledge, he had found a number of points which he wished to understand clearly and precisely.

U Myint Swe had his firm conviction in the Dhamma in that a person has to go through the present life existence and future existences. However, the true nature of Dhamma need be realized and noted with an unshaken resolve. He wanted to know vividly how life continuum of life existence has come about after death in spite of the fact that both matter and mind have ceased and dissolved when a sentient being is said to have ceased and dissolved when a sentient being is said have deid.

He had in fact previously requested other Sayadaws for clarification on this point. These Sayadawgyis had answered him describing the manner in which the law of causation, origin of life and cause and effect of a thing are interrelated according to the method of patthana (Dhamma relating to Causes). Although the answers given by the Sayadawgyis were true and correct according to the phenomenal nature of living beings, he had not been fully satisfied as the terminology used and spoken were not clear enough for the present-day educated man like U Myint Swe, to understand. In the same way, according to the Western medical science many diseases are caused by the diseased germs. To prevent or cure the disease caused by these germs, doctors have to use drugs and injections that can kill the germs. In this regard, U Myint Swe wanted to know the answer explicitly whether by administering such drugs or by giving injections to kill these disease-carrying germs according to the knowledge of the present-day medical science, doctor will have committed the sinful act of killing living beings (act of *panatipata*) or not.

Moreover, U Myint Swe was keen to verify and draw comparisons between the cause to produce another life existence for a living being by way of conceiving in the mother's womb, or in other words, the production of foetus as contained in the

Buddha's doctrines, and the stated process of causing pregnancy as is apprehended by the modern medical school of thought. According to the view point of the present-day biologist, life becomes noticeable (viable) at four month of gestational period, he therefore desired to make a comparative study of this assumption as against what was contained in the Dhamma that 'life called *jivita* occurs simultaneously at the moment of conceiving in the mother's womb' and as to how these two views should be reconciled.

Dr. U Myint Swe had thus come across such obstacles or impediments concerning the doctrinal points of view. From the conceptual point of view of modern educated man, these doctrines have become very interesting. U Myint Swe had faced with the problem of finding a person who would be competent to explain categorically the problematic points in issue that could be accepted by a person endowed with the knowledge of modern medical science. He had searched for learned person, both from among laymen and monks adroit in Buddhist doctrines, and had inquired every time he came into contact with such learned persons, but received no satisfactory answers to his queries. Fortunately, one day he met Mingala U Aung Myint with whom he had a chat on this subject matter. On U Aung Myint's suggestions, he had the chance of submitting these problematic issues to the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw for clarification.

Dr. U Myint Swe didn't put up the problematic points by word of mouth but in writing. His written queries contained the points for which he wanted clarification as also the concepts of medical science which were fundamental to the points raised by him.

Mahasi Sayadaw after accepting U Myint Swe's written queries gave the answers also in writing. In answering the interrogations, Mahasi Sayadaw first set

forth his explanations with the remarks: "U Myint Swe's set of questions involves four major difficulties as cited in the Texts of Dhamma. All questions are not only difficult to be answered satisfactorily but also required to be fully explained citing practical examples with full references so much so that they have become all the more difficult." And then, only after revealing the importance of seriously accepting the points stressed in this regard with firm conviction, Mahasi Sayadaw proceeded to give convincing answers to the entire satisfaction of U Myint Swe.

The answer given by the Sayadaw was invariably firm and amenable to satisfactory acceptance by modern educated persons simply because the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw is fully competent in dealing with the Texts of Dhamma and the law of nature and is capable of giving satisfactory answers with relevance to the Dhamma and the Law of Nature. It is clear, brilliant and precise like a beam of bright light that has dispelled the darkness of the night by illumination. The answer which was couched in easily understandable expression of simple language for ordinary people to grasp the difficult knowledge relative to the past existence and future (new) existences, is really worthy of note. It is extremely remarkable to find an explanation on the correlativity between the two concepts, viz.: what is stated according to the Buddhist Scriptural Texts and what is set forth in modern medical science as to how pregnancy is conceived in the mother's womb. As regards the statements of answer relating to diseases and the commission of the act of killing and its kammic effects, these should be read and noted by all those who may be interested.

After receipt of the answers from Mahasi Sayadaw, Dr. U Myint Swe again approached and solicited the Sayadaw for elucidation of certain points which were not yet convincingly clear to him. Sayadaw had accordingly given further elucidation. Having received all the answers he wished to have, to his full satisfaction,

U Myint Swe printed the said questions and answers for the benefit of the people in general in a book from under the title 'The Problem of Life Existence' in the year 1958.

### **7.5.16 Texts Written And Compiled**

In the course of writing the outstanding Dhamma texts, such as *Visuddhimaggamahatika Nissaya*, etc., Mahasi Sayadaw had also compiled smaller Dhamma texts which would be of benefit to the reading public. These texts are the Dhammas which the Venerable Sayadaw had taught in a number of places where he had visited including Sasana Yeiktha, where he had resided. These Dhammas that were delivered as discourses had been originally tape-recorded at the time of delivery and thereafter only, they were transcribed and printed in book form and then published. He composed a number of books throughout the period of about 38 years and had so far published over 76 religious text books.

### **7.5.17 Mahasi Sayadaw And Foreign Nationals**

It cannot be gainsaid that Mahasi Sayadaw has already become world famous. Therefore, foreign visitors from various countries usually visit the Sayadaw to pay homage. They generally put to him questions on many points which they wished to know and discussed candidly with him. As the subject of discussion and the nature of queries were connected with religion; some of them were profound and found to be difficult, while a few others were such that they were not considered fit to be answered. These points and questions were thrashed out and answered by the Sayadaw to the satisfaction of the persons making the interrogations and discussions.

Foreigners who have come to see Mahasi Sayadaw include not only those who are bent upon discussing religious matters, but also many others desirous of practising kammattana meditation according to the instructions of the Sayadaw.

In the past, it was U Pe Thin, a veteran Mahasi yogi, who had assisted the Sayadaw to obviate difficulties in discussing religious matters with the foreigners, and in imparting lessons on meditation. In the interests of the foreign yogis, U Pe Thin had translated the abridged version of the 'Method of Vipassana, Meditation' as contained in Chapter V of 'The Method of Vipassana, Meditation Exercise' written by Mahasi Sayadaw, the smaller edition of the text of Dhamma on 'The Purpose of Practising Kammattana Meditation', and the 'Lessons of Practical Basic Exercise in Satipatthana Vipassana, Meditation' taught by the Sayadaw. These texts in English version were printed and published by the Buddha Sasana Nuggaha Organization. When U Pe Thin grew old and decrepit, Myanaung U Tin, another veteran yogi continued to perform the role of an interpreter to assist the foreign yogis from 1961 onwards (up till about 1975).

It was because of these two gentlemen that Mahasi Sayadaw found success in effectively teaching the foreigners and in discussing with them. These two yogis happened to be the right hand men of Mahasi Sayadaw in so far as foreign dealings were concerned. Since they had emerged at an opportune moment in response to the need of the glorious virtues of Vipassana, Sasana and the afforded them to assist in making the method of Sayadaw's vipassana, meditation known throughout the length and breadth of the world. These two remarkable men were indeed deserving of our emulation.

It has been described earlier under the heading 'Promotion of Sasana in Ceylon' about the publication of a book written by Ven.Nyanaponika, a German

monk; after he had practised meditation under the personal guidance of Mahasi Sayadaw. In this connection also, mention has been made under the same caption about Dr. Graham Howe. Dr. Howe had visited the Mahasi Meditation Centre at Rangoon and practised meditation in the year 1952. Thereafter, in 1958, Rear-Admiral E.H. Shattock came to this Yeiktha, from Singapore for the purpose of practising meditation. He had assiduously indulged himself in practical vipassana, meditation in accordance with the instructions of Mahasi Sayadaw, even under the oppressive heat of the summer weather in Burma. On his arrival back to England after completing the course of practical meditational exercise, this Rear-Admiral had written and published a book of Dhamma entitled 'An Experiment in Mindfulness'. In that book at one place he had written as stated below (not a direct quotation) in connection with method (of meditation) prescribed by Mahasi Meditation Centre.

"That method (Mahasi method) is very, very easy and simple. As a matter of fact, as it is extremely easy, this easiness becomes one of the main difficulties. If it is to be stated in terms of the expression used in the West, Sasana Yeiktha, is not only a Teacher's Training College for practising the exercise of the human mind but also a college where rigid and severe discipline is enforced to maintain orderly discipline since time schedule has been stipulated for exercising meditation practice."

As per above statement, Admiral Shattock had expressed his views in brief on the method prescribed by Mahasi Sayadaw and on the present condition of Sasana Yeiktha,. He had had his opportunity to observe with a correct opinion of the Sasana Yeiktha, where he himself had resided while practising meditation. That is why he had given his candid remarks on the strength of his observation stating that Sasana Yeiktha, was something like a Training College for practising mental exercise. Rigid rule of discipline and conduct relating to the mode of living at the Centre

(Yeiktha,) and of the procedural method of meditation involving lengthy hours extending to about twenty hours each day, having been specifically mentioned in his statement, it is quite evident that Sa,sana Yeiktha, is obviously not a place for those who intend to take up meditational practice in a perfunctory manner.

Just like Admiral Shattock, the other person who looked upon Sa,sana Yeiktha, as an institution for mental training was Mr. Colin Wyatt. This person had visited Burma and practised meditation at Sa,sana Yeiktha, after attending the World Buddhist Conference held in Nepal in the year 1958. After his arrival back to England, he had contributed an article to *amgazing* called 'The Middle Way', wherein information about his experiences at Sa,sana Yeiktha, was given describing how he had practised Contemplation on Mindfulness under the instructions of Mahasi Sayadaw. In that article, he wrote: "This Sa,sana Yeiktha, is similar to a school where practical psychology was taught, unlike in any other ordinary or traditional religious institution. The method adopted at Sasana Yeiktha, is abiding, pragmatic, thoughtful and straight forward, i.e., devoid of guile. There is absolutely nothing which tends to cause one to become highly emotional with hidden uncontrollable, violent temper."

Similar to the persons mentioned above, a gentleman who had written a book on 'Dhamma Concerning Vipassana, after taking a course of satipatthana meditation practice under Mahasi Sayadaw, was Mr. Robert Duve, a Frenchman, living in California, U.S.A. He had visited this Centre about the year 1961 and had diligently meditated. After first taking up the meditation practice as a layman, he entered into monkhood and was ordained a bhikkhu by Mahasi Sayadaw who had acted as his preceptor- a spiritual teacher. Yogi U Tin was then his benefactor for the ordination. After completion of the course of meditation, he made his way back to France, and compiled a text relating to Vipassana, Kammatthana meditation. Before this book was

sent to the printing press, the first draft was dispatched to Mahasi Sayadaw for vetting. Mahasi Sayadaw together with Sayadaw U Nyanuttara scrutinized and edited this draft text, and then, returned the same to the compiler.

The fine reputation of this method of satipatthana vipassana, meditation along with the celebrated name of Mahasi Sayadaw and his talented wisdom and also the name of Sa,sana Yeiktha, have spread all over the world. It is, in fact, due to the teachings and writings for the promotion of Sa,sana by the aforesaid foreigners who had practised vipassana, meditation under Mahasi's directions.

In the present day, it seems that there is hardly any person among those interested in developing the mental faculty, who has not heard of, or read or practised Mahasi method on Vipassana, Mindfulness. This is the reason why an abbreviated account of Mahasi Sayadaw's personal history was found in the World Directory called 'Who's who in the World' wherein biographical sketches of world-famous personalities were mentioned. As the names of the persons whose popularity is inconspicuous cannot be expected to get a place in that big book of directory, mere inclusion of the name in that 'Book' clearly reveals Mahasi Sayadaw's pre-eminent position in the dazzling list of great individuals who have received world's recognition.

It is because Sayadaw's fame has become world-wide, he is, up till the present moment, receiving a number of correspondences from foreigners, wherein queries were made relating to Dhamma and permission was sought for admission to the Centre to be able to practise meditation. As Mahasi Sayadaw is well-versed in both the field of pariyatti and patipatti, he is capable of tackling all questions and of solving the problem raised relating to scriptural knowledge and religious practices, i.e., the practical aspects of meditation. Hence, in the present era, much as Mahasi Sayadaw happens to be an outstanding figure on whom most reliance is to be made by

Buddha Sasana, he occupies a position standing firm in the forefront as a saviour of all Buddhists in Burma, and accordingly, his place as one of the leading Sayadaws of eminence who could hardly be substituted.

### **7.5.18 Last Days**

In 14<sup>th</sup> August 1982, he succumbed to a sudden and severe cerebral stroke which he had suffered the night before. Yet on the evening of the 13<sup>th</sup>, he had still given an introductory explanation to a group of new meditators. He was one of the very rare personalities in whom there was a balanced and high development of both profound erudition linked with a keen intellect, and deep and advanced meditative experience. He was also able to teach effectively both Buddhist thought and Buddhist practice. His long career of teaching through the spoken and printed words had a beneficial impact on many hundreds of thousands in the East and the West. His personal stature and his life's work rank him among the great figures of contemporary Buddhism.

### **7.6.1 Venerable Vicittasarabhivamsa, Mingun Sayadaw (1911-1993)**

The boy who was to grow up to receive 3 certificates was born to U Hson and Daw Hsin in Kyeebin village, Myingyan Township, Central Burma (now Myanmar) on 1<sup>st</sup> November, 1911. He was the second son of three children. His grandfather, a medical practitioner and an adept in astrology named the boy as Maung Yan Shin and the boy was lovable family and friends so he was called as Maung Khin.

His father died when he was four years old and he went to live with his grandfather. By the time he was six years old; he was sent to the local monastery and was initiated into the Sangha community as a novice. He was looked after by

venerable Sobhita, his preceptor who recognized the special intellectual abilities of the young novice. He named the novice (Koyin in Burmese language) Vicittasara to emphasize the special intellectual abilities.<sup>8</sup>

The precepts for novices are ten in number and due to previous meritorious deeds in the past; one can gain the luxury of a Universal Monarch. The life of a samanera is much more benefit than the life of a Universal Monarch so he observed the precepts adorably and strictly.<sup>9</sup>

From the time the introducing Buddhism to Burma, Buddhist monks have been played the most important role in education as well as religion in the country. Every Burmese boy and girl started their learning from monasteries in respective places. It means monastery is the center for education in Burma.

As a stereo type of monastic education, the syllabus is divided into three in basic level and the text books are *Kaccayana*, *Dvematika* and *Abhidhammathasangha*. Every student must study those books by heart because at that time there was no writing examination but only oral test. There is any other township examination, too.

Religious examinations play a pivotal role in monastic education in Myanmar. At the age of 13 years old, he studied *Kaccayana* Grammar under his preceptor. At that time, there was a famous oral test examination in Myingyan Township. He sat for that exam and passed the township oral test examination in reproducing the book called 'Kaccayana Grammar' from his memory with no error and no prompting. He participated in it the next year with 'Abhidhammathasanghaha' and at the age of 15 he sat for the writing examination in the primary level which is called *Pariyatti* exam (monastic exam) in Myanmar and passed it.

---

8. The Chronicle of Sagain Sasana.p.347, Ven.Kelasa, Religious Press, 1979, Yangon.

9. Ibid.

Ven.*Sobhita*, his preceptor taught him the syllabus of *Pitaka Pali*, commentaries when he was 14 years old and the preceptor told him to try to write poems and guided him how to compose them. He gave him the book called '*Poranadipani*' which has two volumes. The books made the novice to compose the poems. He completed the middle level exam at his 16 and passed it successively.<sup>10</sup>

Soon after the funeral of his preceptor, he was taken to *Dhammananda* monastery for his higher studies in Mingun, Northwest of Mandalay across the Ayeyarwady River. Landing there at night he heard the voice of novices who were reciting Buddhist scripture and he realized that he had come to the right place to advance his learning.

Ven.*Pannacakka*, the In-Charge monk of *Dhammananda* mona-stery held in great reverence the books which contained the Pali Canon. He placed them on an altar and regularly paid respect to the Doctrine. He daily read a passage from the Canon so that when the year came round he had completed reading the whole Canon. The novice, *Vicittasara* was to acquire the same respect for the *Pali* Canon.

A day's study schedule for the novice was heavy. In the morning, the In-Charge monk lectured on *Moggalana* Grammar. After lunch the *Abhidhamma* was studied. In the afternoon, the Tikathit (new sub-commentary) treatise was taught. In the early evening the *Pathana* was studied and at night *Bhedacinta* (the Pali aphorisms) and *Kaccayanasara* (resume of the *Kassayana* Grammar) were learned. On Sabbath days the stories from the *Dhammapada* had to be written in Pali. Rhetoric was taught and the Maghadeva poem was studied for facility in versification. Composition of *ratu* (lyrical ode on the seasons, love, etc) and auspicious eulogies was practiced. Later, more advanced material such as the text of the Pali Canon, the

---

10. The Chronicle of Sagaing Sasana.p.348.

major commentaries, sub-commentaries, exegeses and expositions were studied.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the high priest imparted the knowledge to the novice.

He was the fortunate one meeting in the person of the nun *Daw Dhammacari* who provided not only material support but also instructed him in conduct in keeping with the Rules. On the day when Shin Vicittasara came to Dhammananda monastery, the nun *Daw Dhammacari* arrived at the monastery and talk to him and she was very satisfied with him after to him so she said to him, “My little novice, don’t worry anything. You can rely on me and I will support you whatever you need.” Then, she went to meet the high priest and said to him, “I want to offer daily meal to the novice, Vicittasara.”<sup>12</sup>

*Daw Dhammacari* came from a family of silk merchants of Mandalay and she was a learned person. At the age of 16 she became a nun and traveled to Sri Lanka when she was 20 years old and studied there for two years. On her return she studied under many learned monks and herself taught aspects of the Dhamma to nuns and girls. She composed the famous *Saccavada Tika* (the sub-commentary on the Four Noble Truths) in Pali. Because of her learning she was well connected not only with leading learned monks but also with the leading lay personages in Mandalay and Yangon. It was she who brought him to the attention of Sir. U Thwin, one of the most prominent devotees on high society.

*Daw Dhammacari* told Sir U Thwin about the brilliant novice and she suggested the sponsorship for the ordination. Thus, *Vicittasara*, the novice, was ordained with his preceptor Ven.*Pannacakka* in 1931. On that year, Ven.*Vicittasara* passed the Government Pariyatti Examination in the higher level. The next year he passed the Sakyasiha student course exam. In the fourth year, he passed teacher’s

---

11. The Chronicle of Sagaing Sasana.p.350.

12. Ibid.

course examination and also the Government pathamagyaw having stood first. For his outright success in the Sakyasiha Teachers Course Examination he won the title of Vatamsaka (head garland) '*Bhaddanta Vicittasarabhivamsa pariyatti sasanahitadhammacariya vatamsaka*'.

In 1949, one year later after the independence of the country from British, with the support of the Government, Buddhasasananuggaha Organization held Tipitakadhara Selection Examination for the first time in Burma. The exam has two parts: oral and writing. Every candidate monk has to reproduce the prescribed book orally and only if the candidate passes oral examination, he can sit for the writing exam so this exam is the most difficult one in the world.

One decade before Burma regained her independence, Sir U Thwin, one of the most prominent devotees on high society and his wife Daw Daw Thein from Burma went to Sri Lanka to pay homage to the Tooth Relic of the Buddha. At the farewell party, the minister of the Tooth Relic said to him, "there are many educated scholar monks but we have never heard that they memorize the entire Pitaka." After hearing the words, he was very sad and before leaving Sri Lanka, he resolved to pay homage the monks by holding Tipitakadhara Examination after the country regain her independence.

By the time the country regained her independence in 1948, it was coincidence that Buddhism came to the 2500 years anniversary. Burmese people wanted to celebrate that anniversary by holding the Sixth Great Buddhist Council because among Theravada Buddhist Countries, Burma is the strongest and promoting one. The responsible persons consulted with the other leaders from the four countries. They agreed to hold the Council but they said, "Only if the monks who possess the entire Pitaka appear it is better by holding the council. There was no Tipitakadhar monks in

Burma so they should try to appear the person who can comment on memory the entire Tipitaka.” Therefore, Sir U Thwin was eager to hold the Tipitakadhara Selected Examination so it was held in 1949.

### **7.6.2 Searching For Tipitakadhara Hero Monk For Great Council**

Ven.Vicittasara was one of the one hundred monks invited to attend the First Tipitakadhara Examination held by the newly independent Union of Burma. He observed the President holding high the palm brought together in reverence and never lowering them throughout the opening ceremony. He noticed the disappointment on the President’s face and on the face of his Ordination Sponsor when the result was announced that no candidate monk had passed. Ven.Vicittasara felt that the reverent palms were directed towards all the assembled monks in search of a Sasana hero to emerge. He felt that the debt of reverence should be repaid so he resolved to endeavor to reverence to become a Tipitakadhara (bearer of the Tipitaka). He informed Daw Dhammacari, his foster mother in religion and declared his intention to Sir U Thwin. He said, “I will return the gratitude of you by participating Tiptakadhara Exam coming year. I will try to gain at least ‘Vinayadhara’ but if I’m felling healthy, I intend to occupy ‘*Tipitakadhara*’ title.”<sup>13</sup>

Studying the teachings of the Buddha by heart is called Bhanaka Tradition in Theravada Buddhist history. We can trace this tradition from the time of the Buddha. This tradition was handed down from generation to generation until the Fourth Great Council held in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) but after that Council bhanaka tradition disappeared till the middle nineteen century A.C. it was reintroduced in Burma after the country regained her independence.

---

13. The Well-Known Mingun Sayadaw.p.43.

Ven.Vicittasara enrolled for the Third time Tipitakadhara Selection Examination. He started to commit memory the Pali Text of Vinaya Pitaka which has five volumes and it contains 2260 pages. At the oral exam, he reproduced the entire Vinaya Pitaka without hesitation and error and the audience felt very satisfied with his great task and he passed it so Buddhasasananuggaha Association conferred him 'Visittha vinayadhara' and in writing exam he passed with distinction so he was awarded the title 'Visittha Vinayadhara mahavinayakovida' and as a result of passing that exam he was given free first class pass ticket for ship and train.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> time, he recited the first part of Abhidhamma Pitaka which consists of five books and passed the written exam with distinction on the same year. He kept on reproduced the last part of Abhidhamma Pitaka which has eight volumes and which has 4988 pages. He completed both oral test and written exam with distinction so he was conferred the title of 'Buddhasasana visittha abhidhammika mahaabhidhammakovidha'

In the sixth time of the exam, he committed into memory the Sutta Pitaka which has three volumes and contains 779 pages and passed it exceptionally so he was conferred the title of 'Buddhasasana dighabha-naka mahadighanikayakovida'.

### **7.6.3 Restored The Lineage Of Bhanaka Tradition In Theravada Buddhism**

In the Third *Tipitakadha* examination, Ven.Vicittasarabhivamsa successfully recited the Vinaya Pitaka and passed the written examination with distinction. In the fourth exam, he recited the first part of the Abhidhamma Pitaka, the second part being recited in the fifth exam. In the Sixth Tipitakadhara Examination he successfully recited the Sutta Pitaka so Tipitakadhara Dhammabhandagarika (Bearer of the

Tipitaka and Keeper of the Dhamma Treasure) appeared to restore the lineage of Bhanaka tradition in Theravada Buddhism.

The President of the Union of Burma presented Ven.Vicittasara bhivamsa with the Title, Insignia and prerequisites of the Honor in a ceremony held in February 1954, barely three months before the convocation of the Sixth Buddhist Council which was held in the manmade Mahapasana cave on Kaba-Aye Hill, Rangoon.

*Visitthatipitakadhara mahatipitakakovida vicittasarabhivamsa tipitakadhara dhammabhanddhagarika*

As mentioned earlier, Ven.Vicittasarabhivamsa had passed the entire Pitaka with distinction in every steps taught by the Buddha and it took four years for him to do that great difficult task so he was recorded the first ever person who recited and memorize the entire Pitaka for life so he was occupied the title of ‘*Tipitakadhara Dhammabhan-dagarika* Mingun Sayadawgyi’ and the government has given free first class travel ticket in Land. The appearance of Tipitakadhara in Buddhist world is very rare chance so he was praised by the entire nation as well as Theravada Buddhist countries.<sup>14</sup>

#### **7.6.4 The Guinness Book Of Records Of 1985 Has This Entry**

**Human memory;** Bhandanta Vicittasara recited 16,000 pages of Buddhist canonical texts in Rangoon, Burma in May 1954. Rare instance of eidetic memory the ability to reproject and hence “visually” recall material are known to science.”

#### **7.6.5 The Sixth Great Buddhist Council And The Role Of *Ven.Vicittasara-Bhivamsa***

---

14. The Chronicle of Sagaing Sasana.p.354.

The Sixth Great Buddhist Council had been waiting for a learned monk to assume the role for respondent. This critical role could only be filled by a monk thoroughly and completely versed in the Pali Canon, Commentaries and Sub-commentaries, capable of immediately recalling and reproducing without error and hesitation passages under discussion and material relevant to the passage. It was a miracle that Ven.*Vicittasara bhivamsa, Tipitakadhara Dhammabhan-dagarika*, should emerge at such a time. It resembled so much Ven.Ananda becoming an Arahant the night before the First Meeting of the First Buddhist Council in Rajagaha three months after the passing away of the Buddha.

It was 2500 years after the final passing away of the Buddha. Two thousand four hundred and thirty-seven monks from Burma and one hundred and forty-five monks from foreign countries especially Theravada Buddhist countries assembled in the manmade cave named Mahapasanaguha, on Kaba-Aye hill, Rangoon, Burma. Over two hundred thousand lay devotees participated for grand opening ceremony for the Sixth Great Buddhist Council.

Even while Ven.*Vicittasara* was preparing for the *Tipitakadhara* Examination he was busy editing the texts for the Sixth Council, first as a member of a primary regional redaction committee, then as a member of higher committee. He was later to become a full member of the Central Executive Committee. Among the mission of Ven.*Vicittasara*, the heaviest duty was the respondent of the council which means he has to answer all questions raised by the questioner. Ven.*Sobhana*, later known as Mahasi Sayadawgyi acted as a questioner. Appointed the Respondent, Ven.*Vicittasara*'s performance was awe-inspiring. His statements as Respondent were broadcast every evening when the whole country turned in to listen with reverence.

He responded whatever the question put forward in the assembly. He replied it both in Pali and Burmese pleasantly and sweetly.

### **7.6.6 Compiled The Great Chronicle Of The Buddhas**

While lecturing and preaching, he composed the Great Chronicle of the Buddhas which has six volumes and eight books. When he passed the *Vinaya* portion of *Tipitakadhara* examination, U Nu, the Prime Minister, requested him to write a Great Chronicle of the Buddhas. He declined he was preparing for the *Tipitakadhara* examination. When he became *Tipitakadhara*, the Prime Minister again requested him and he declined again by saying that he was busy with the Sixth Great Council. When the redaction of the Pali Canon was completed the Prime Minister requested him for the third. This time he could not refuse. He started the compiling work in 1956 and completed the six volumes in eight books of the Great Chronicle of the Buddhas in 1969. The magnum opus may be seen in four parts. Part One is a chronicle of the earlier Buddhas. Part Two is a chronicle of the Buddha jewel and provides an account of the life of Gotama Buddha. Part Three is devoted to the Dhamma jewel and presents the principles suttas and doctrines. Part Four gives an account of the lives of the chief Arahants, male and female and the main devotees. The writer drew information from the Pali Canon, the Commentaries, Sub-commentaries and Exegeses. The information supplied is encyclopedic. The style is both literary and readable and inspires reverence, awe and comprehension.

The Ven.Mingun Sayadaw was invited everywhere. He went even into the remotest villages to give devotees the opportunity to gain merit. He wanted everyone, the rich and the poor to have a part in the meritorious deeds of building pagodas,

monasteries, seats of learning and in providing the four requisites of monks. Donors came forward with offers for his own monastery but he diverted them.

He went everywhere invited by plane, train, steamer, country boat or bullock-cart. When delivering a sermon, he would first recite the Pali, give the paraphrase and then explain in Burmese. When paraphrasing he would insert rhymes and parallelisms. When explaining in Burmese he syntax would be perfect with no dangling phrases. The sermon would be supported with reference from the commentaries and sub-commentaries. He had a full engagement year. When asked to reduce his travel and sermon schedule he replied that a monk he was doing what a monk should do. He did not wish to be unemployed.

As the father of Tipitakadhara, he had a thought that it is better to emerge other Tipitakturadhara hero monks in the near future in the country. He considered that it would be beneficial to have a bridging examination. To attempt the Tipitakadhara examination in one try is onerous and almost prohibitive. Then, he considered the benefit which would accrue if an institution be established where would-be candidates for the Tipitakadhara examination could dwell without anxiety about material support and study material. So, he consulted the Momeit Pagoda Trustees. They pointed out that the buildings in the area were fully utilized only a few days in the year at the annual pagoda festival. If an institution were established for would-be candidates there those building would be better utilized for the benefit of religion. Therefore, he set up 'Tipitakanikaya monastery' in Moe Meik hill and organized 'Tipitaka-nikaya Missionary Organization'.

### **7.6.7 Serving The Duty Of The Sangha**

In February, 1978, he donated all the money awarded by the Government as Tipitakadhara Dhammabhandagarika to the newly established Tipitaka-Nikaya Monastery. On the Burmese New Day of that year, the Momeit Pagoda Trustee Committee was enlarged and converted into Tipitaka-Nikaya Missionary Organization and he occupied as supreme patron Sayadaw. In December, 1979, the Minister for Religious Affairs toured the country and supplicated leading monks on the desirability of convoking a congregation of all order for the purification, perpetuation and propagation of Buddhism. Ven.Mingun Sayadaw agreed to help. He too toured the country and approached the Sayadaws to support the idea. The congregation of all orders from the meeting was held in Mahapasana Cave in 26 May, 1980. He was selected General Secretary of the governing Sangha Mahanayaka Committee. As the General Secretary he performed the perpetuation of Buddhism carefully in accordance with Dhamma and Vinaya.<sup>15</sup>

When the monks who are going to sit for the Tipitakadhara examination in Rangoon have no residence place for them so he established the Tipitaka-Nikaya Monastery in Rangoon was opened on 23 November, 1980.

### **7.6.8 Founded Modern Buddhist Universities**

During the first congregation, the Sanghamahanayaka Committee adopted monastic education scheme which laid down the principles for the establishment of Sate Pariyattisasana University. One of its objectives is that to produce monks capable of missionary work at home and abroad and to develop the spirit to serve in areas urban or rural, poor or prosperous. The Sanghanayaka Committe felt that a modern

---

15. The well-known Mingun Sayadaw.p.109.

Buddhist University should be instituted into two: one in Mandalay and the other in Rangoon.

Ven. Mingun Sayadaw had at his disposal an experienced and widespread body in the Tipitaka-Nikaya Missionary Organization so the Sanghanayaka Committee resolved to request the General Secretary in person to undertake the task of establishing the Monastic university together with the required buildings. Ven.Mingun Sayadaw traveled the length and breadth of the country accepting donations towards the monastic universities. With his Missionary Organization as the mainstay ministrative committee (Upathaka) was formed to continue the work. The two monastic universities opened in June, 1986.

In reverent honor and high recognition of Ven.Mingun Sayadaw's pure moral conduct, deep and extensive learning, encyclopedic literary effort, inspirational sermons and great service to the Sasana, the Government conferred Aggamahapandita in 1979 and the highest title Abhidhammaharathaguru in 1984.

Though he is now 80, Ven.Mingun Sayadaw continues to travel and to preach. He is greeted by huge crowds wherever he goes and his sermons are well attended. His voice is still firm, his mind clear, his reasoning incisive, his judgment unerring, and his health is good though he is still thin. His energy is unflagging, his resolve unshaken, the vision of his task undimmed as he journeys onward from his eightieth birthday. While carrying for the welfare of the nation as well as Sasana, he passed away at the age of 82 but the name, and virtues of the Venerable Mingun Sayadawgyi echoes forever in the heart of Buddhist community in Myanmar.

### **7.7.1 From The Speech Broadcast By The Cambodian Sangharaja**

“The sole purpose of my mission to Burma is to consult with the Ovadacariya Sayadaws to the Sixth Great Buddhist Council. When I returned to Cambodia, I shall consult with my Sayadaws to take their advice on matters relating with my people their and give my best help to Burma.

May the people of Burma and the whole world enjoy peace and prosperity!

May the Saddhamma endure for long!

May the Sixth Great Buddhist Council meet with success!

May the whole world be flooded with the light of the Buddha’s Sasana!

May all beings of the world be hale and hearty!

### **7.8 A Message From Prime Minister Of Thailand**

A message from His Excellency Field Marshal P. Pibun Songgram, Prime Minister of Thailand to the Burmese people’s expressing congratulations and best wishes for the success of the Chattha Sangayana, and mentioning that the Great Buddhist Council, the Tipitaka Sangayana, is for promoting the real peace and bliss of the world and is worthy of admiration. He further calls the following g blessings: “May the Triple Gem bless this Great Buddhist Council with success, and may all who participate in the Great Buddhist Council gain happiness and prosperity, endowed with physical and mental forces susitable to their great work and energy in this Chattha Sangayana.”

### **7.9 Message From Wrold Fellowship Of Buddhists**

On this most auspicious occasion, when Sri Lanka sends visible tokens of hier fealty and affection to Suvannabhumi, I convey the most cordial greetings of the

World Fellowship of Buddhists to the Buddhists of Burma. May the members of the Mahasangha accept our deep homage and the laity receive our assurance of continued cooperation in all that redounds to the promotion and the welfare of the Buddha Sasana. I have recently returned from a tour of many lands, having gone round the world in the course of my travels. Everywhere I saw unmistakable signs of the resurgence of Buddhism, not only in Buddhist lands but also in countries where other faiths have so far prevailed. The world needs the sublime Doctrine of the Buddha, now more than ever before. Burma, Ceylon and Thailand have had the unique privilege and good fortune of having preserved that Doctrine in its pristine purity for more than two thousand years. The duty is, therefore, incumbent upon the people of these lands to take steps to make known throughout the world the Dhamma, "glorious in the beginning, glorious in the middle, glorious in the end for the good of the world, the benefit of the world the happiness of gods and men."

The Buddhist world has been recently thrilled by the news of the wonderful and far-reaching activities undertaken by the pious Buddhists of Burma, with the magnificent assistance of the Government, for the promotion of the Sasana. I know that it is the heartfelt wish of Buddhists everywhere that these activities shall reach speedy and completely successful culmination, so that thereby the Glory of the Buddha's Message may shine resplendent in the Three Worlds.

I, personally, have a most vivid recollection of the almost unbelievable kindness and hospitality that was lavished on me when I visited Burma in 1951. Burma then was only beginning to put her house in order after her independence. But already the signs were there for the deep piety of the nation and their determination that Buddhism shall come back into its own in their motherland and that Burma shall assume her due position of leadership in the Buddhist world. I am

extremely happy to see that the promise of those propitious signs has been so rapidly fulfilled.

Next year, the third conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists is due to be held in Burma. I know that the gathering will be attended by many delegates from every continent for now there is hardly a country where Buddhist groups, large or small, do not exist. These delegates will come to share in the merit of participation also in the Chattha Sangayana, so nobly and so courageously conceived and so magnificently being carried out. There are Five hundred and fifty million Buddhist who eagerly await the termination of the mighty undertaking. May this fact spur you on to ever greater efforts! The day is not too far away when all mankind will find peace and happiness in the Doctrine of the most Compassionate One, the Supremely Awakened Tathagata.<sup>16</sup>

---

16. The Sangayana Monthly Bulletin, Vol.i. No.4, August, 1953.

## CONCLUSION

The Buddha was the one who had discovered the way leading to realization of the Truth in the six century B.C and He imparted his doctrines and disciplines called *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* to the world for the welfare and happiness of the world. He served His mission for forty-five years. Soon after his demise, his disciples tried to preserve his teachings by gathering at Rajagaha and it is called Great Council, *Sangiti* or *Sangayana*. Due to the effort of His senior great disciples, His doctrines and Disciplines have been studying and practicing them in every corner of the world even today. In the history of Buddhism, Ven.*Mahakassapa* played the most important role by leading the Order of the *Sangha*. Due to the great effort of Ven.Mahakassapa Thera the Dhamma and Vinaya of the Buddha have been surviving until now.

The 'Council' in the field of Buddhism is rendering of the Pali and Sanskrit '*samgiti*' or '*samgayana*'. The term means 'collective chanting or recitation or rehearsal. This had the main function of reconciliation and collective sanction or authorization. When certain concerns arose, the *Sangha* members were assembled to arrive at common decision, ironing out whatever differences there were. The history of the councils can be traced through reliable sources in Buddhist literatures.

In the history of Buddhism, the one who leads the Order of the *Sangha*, was Ven.*Mahakassapa*. He was called the father of the *Sangha*, *Sanghapita* for he was entrusted the duties to serve the *Sangha* by the Buddha himself. By exchanging the robes when the two met, it was indirectly entrusted him the responsibility when the Buddha has gone. Due to his dutiful noble task the Teaching and Disciplines of the Master have been preserving for 2600 years even today. Everyone either Buddhist or

non-Buddhist alike can enjoy the essence of Buddhism due to the great effort of Ven.*Mahakassapa* and elderly monks.

Ven.*Mahakassapa* came and paid his final homage to the Master's remains and when he arrived, he walked around the pyre three times, reverently, with clasped hands, and then with bowed head paid his homage at the feet of the *Tathagata*. When his group of monks had done likewise, the pyre burst into flames by itself. After cremation, he turned his thoughts to the preservation of the Master's spiritual heritage, the *Dhamma* and the *Vinaya*. The necessity for this was plainly demonstrated to him by *Subhadda*'s challenge of the monastic discipline and his advocacy of moral laxity.

Ven.*Mahakassapa* took this as a warning of what the future held in store unless clear strictures were established now. If *Subhadda*'s attitudes were to spread and there were groups of monks who shared this attitude even while the Buddha was alive-it would rapidly lead to the decline and ruin of both the *Sangha* and the Teaching. To prevent this at the very start, Ven.*Mahakassapa* proposed holding a council of elders to rehearse the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* and preserve them for posterity.

With that suggestion, he turned to the monks gathered at Rajagaha. The monks agreed, and at their request Ven.*Mahakassapa* selected five hundred elders all but one of whom were Arahants. The one exception was Ven.*Ananda*, whose position was ambivalent. As he had not yet succeeded in reaching the final goal, he could not be admitted to the council; but as he excelled in remembering all the Buddha's discourses, his presence was essential. The only solution was to give him an ultimatum that he must reach Arahantship before the council began, which he did on the very night before it opened. Thus Ven.*Ananda* was admitted to complete the five hundred members of the First Council. All other monks were to leave *Rajagaha* for the duration of the meeting.

As the first time of council's proceedings, the *Vinaya*, the code of monastic discipline, was recited by Ven.*Upali*, the leading *Vinaya* expert. The second item was the codification of the teachings laid down in the *Suttas*. Here it was Ven.*Ananda* who, on being questioned by Ven.*Mahakassapa*, recited all those texts which were later collected into the five collections (*nikaya*) of the *Sutta Pitaka*.

Ven.*Mahakassapa* had performed his duties as entrusted him by the Buddha. He had carried out his noble task successfully for preserving the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* by collecting them systematically. The task performed by Ven.*Mahakassapa* and elderly monks is termed as '*sangiti*' or '*sangayana*' and later it came to be known as the Great Council. Due to the noble task, the essence of Buddhism and the message of the Buddha have been exercising even today. Therefore, he was called the father of the Sangha, Sanghapita in the history of Buddhism.

We gave a detail account of the different versions of the assembly of the Council found in Buddhist literature such as Theravada, Mahasanghika, Sarvastivada, Dharmagupta, Mahisasaka. The Dhamma was systemically compiled just after the demise of the Buddha with the intention of safeguarding it in its authentic form and making it available to the next generations. This was the main motivation of the First Sangiti. The Dhamma should remain in place of the teacher. Buddha himself had pointed his disciples out the Dhamma to be their teacher when he passed away.<sup>17</sup>

The Pitaka compiled at the First Council was reconfirmed again at the Second Council one hundred years later. The Theravada tradition continued to be privileged until then. One hundred year the Buddha, in Vesali, monks from Vajji proposed an idea to deduct some minor and sub-minor rules from the *Vinaya*.<sup>18</sup> Their proposal came out with ten points of controversy. The controversy occurred at the time of the

---

17. D.ii.p.50.

18. *Vinaya commentary*.vol.3. p.134. *Sarathadipanitika*, vol,1. p.111.

Second Sangiti both Theravada and Mahasanghika Schools. Theravada Conservatism claimed that no rule should be removed or changed: not even minor rules.

When we read the Vinaya carefully, we can see that Buddha himself treated the Vinaya rules flexibly in order to harmonize with the situation. The second Sangiti with its 700 participants was an attempt to deal with ten questionable monastic practices. Yasa Thera was the president of this Santiti, Revata Thera the questioner and Sabbakami Thera gave answers to the questions. The council declared that the practices proposed by the Vajjian monks were unlawful. The Vajjian confederacy, with its ten thousand members, was charged with holding to unlawful Dhamma and subsequently exiled from Vesali.

The conflict between the orthodox traditionalists and the non-conformist sects in the Buddhist Sangha reached its climax at some time in the reign of Asoka Maurya in the third century B.C. with the growth of numerous sects issuing from the Mahasanghika group as well as the Theravada group, new theories and interpretations on the Dhamma Vinaya became a regular feature.<sup>19</sup>

In the time of Asoka (262 B.C) the Theravadins gained ascendancy in the area around Pataliputra and they were able to win the sympathy of the monarch. To suppress the dissenting views of the opposing sect and claim superiority for the teachings of the Theravadins an assembly of Elders of the Theravada was convened at Pataliputta. The Theravadins during this period found an able exponent of their views in Moggaliputta Tissa, a monk of deep learning, well versed in the Vinaya and the orthodox tradition and an able dialectician. In the assembly at Pataliputta he presented the Kathavatthu, a work on the Abhidhamma, in which he denounced the views of the opposing sects after comparing them with the teachings of Theravada.

---

19. Dipavamsa. Verse.36,43.

No figure in Indian history has been evaluated for his place in history with as much intensity and by as many diverse interest-groups as Emperor Asoka, the third monarch of the Mauryan Dynasty (C.273-236 B.C.). Asoka was attracted to Buddhism because of the serene demeanor of a Buddhist monk as contrasted with the usual conduct of the Brahman priests whom the court had traditionally supported. He was convinced that his patronage of Buddhism was not complete until and unless a child of his entered the Sangha. Asoka modeled himself after the Buddha, and worked for the welfare and happiness of his subjects, whom he considered 'my children'. He carried out the principle of Love that the Buddha had stressed by extending his hand of friendship even to the peoples outside his domain.

Emperor Asoka of India and King Devanampiyatissa of Sri Lanka (Lankadipa) were contemporaries. The Chronicles relate in detail the mutual relationship between Asoka and Devanampiya Tissa and the exchange of gifts between the two monarchs, as a token of friendship. The efforts of the Theravada Sangha in the Magadhan area undoubtedly favored the policy of Asoka's territorial expansion and for this reason they no doubt received all necessary support from the Emperor. To enhance their position and stabilize themselves, they decided to dispatch missionaries to the outlying districts of India and the adjoining countries.

It was Ven.Mahinda who had established the monastic Order in its traditional pattern, hence those who joined the Order after his time did so as men who followed the footsteps of the great Elder.<sup>20</sup> Ven.Mahinda not only established the Order of monks but also encouraged the teachings and traditional monastic practices. Thus he is extolled in the Mahavamsa;

---

20. Itivutaka Atthakatha, 258 EHBC, 56.

The next king of importance was Vattagamani Abhaya (43 B.C.) and his reign is characterized by the two important incidents connected with Buddhism and the monastic Order. The reign of Vattagamni is an important landmark in the history of Buddhism in Ceylon. Up to this time the sacred scriptures of Buddhism, as originally recited by Mahathera, were committed to memory and preserved as oral traditions. Arrangements were now made to commit them to writing, and five hundred reciters and scribes were employed for the purpose. The *Pali Tipitaka* which was the result of their labor, still survives as the sacred Canon of which the original disappeared long ago from India without leaving any trace. As mentioned above, the Pali Canon has been preserved in its entirety in this island and Ceylonese Buddhism had great influence upon Burma (now Myanmar), Cambodia, Thailand and Laos, the countries where Theravada Buddhism flourishes today.<sup>21</sup>

When the Buddha's teachings were recorded at the First Buddhist Council, the Elders of that Council divided the Buddha's teachings into different categories. There were several divisions. We could not find any solid record that which Pali texts were written on palm leaves in the Fourth Council thought the Council were held. We can trace from the *Samantapasadika*,<sup>22</sup> the commentary on *Vinaya Pitaka* composed by Ven. Buddhaghosa.

Burma (now Myanmar) as the nation has been known throughout history and it is one of the major countries following Buddhist doctrines especially Theravada Buddhism. Buddhism and the people of Burma cannot be separated from each other because Buddhism is the life blood of Burmese in literature, cult, arts, architecture, ways of life and culture. It was during the reign of Asoka in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C that Buddhism came to be known all over India and neighboring countries. Burmese

---

21. P.V. Bapat: 2500 Years of Buddhism.p.66. Government of India,1956.

22. *Samantapasadika*.p.13.

chronicles say that Thaton in Lower Burmese received Buddhism from Ven. Sona and Uttara, the leaders of the two missionaries of Asoka sent forth from Pataliputta.<sup>23</sup> The history of Buddhism in Burma began with Sona and Uttara. Burmese and Mon traditions asserted that the monks leading the mission established a monastery at Kelasa Mountain on the outskirts of the city.

The archaeological remains at Hmawza, about five miles from modern Prome, and the Chinese accounts leave no doubts that the Theravada form of Buddhism with Pali canonical texts was introduced in the region round Prome not later than the fifth century A.C. Anawratha, the founder of Bagan and champion of Buddhism, ascended the throne of Pagan in 1044 A.C and he was dissatisfied with the prevailing religion of his people, which was a mixture of Tantric Buddhism with native animistic beliefs. In making Buddhism the official and national religion of his people, Anawratha was acting under advice of Shin Arahan, whom he appointed as the primate of his empire. Anawratha of Pagan was the patron par excellence of Buddhism in any part of Burma.

The monastic system in ancient Burma was also socially important as a democratic leveling agency. The sons of princes and of fishermen enjoyed the same status at the monastery, for entrance was open to all alike and all were subjected to the same discipline. The system undoubtedly helped translate ethical precepts into social mores. Buddhism provided a logical relationship between goodness and personal destiny and offered to the pious a pathway of refuge and escape through the Triple Gems: the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha.

Protecting and supporting Buddhism was not enough for a righteous king but the purity of the Sangha and the Pali texts, the teachings of the Buddha, was essential for the continuous thriving of Buddhism for five thousand years ago. In the ideology

of Burmese Kingship, it was the function of the righteous kings to ensure that the purity of the Sangha be maintained. The purification of Buddhist Texts is as important as the purity of the Sangha for the survival of Buddhism.

In late Konbaung Dynasty, King Mindon was described as the king who most supported Buddhism during his reign.<sup>24</sup> When Mindon came to power in 1853, the kingdom he inherited from his brother was in bad shape both economically and politically. Unusual in the Myanmar conception, though not new in the Asokan tradition, King Mindon had the Tipitaka text inscribed on 729 stone tablets, and convened the Fifth Buddhist Council.

With the purpose of further purification of the texts, King Mindon initiated a grand meeting of 2,400 monks in his palace from 15 April 1871 to September of the same year to revise the Buddhist scriptures. By holding the Fifth Council, the King wanted to earn the grand title of “Convener of the Fifth Buddhist Council”, the title he cherished most in his life. Mindon had gone through many valuable experiences in the reigns of his three predecessors. Born at the time of the height of Konbaung power, he must have had childhood memories of affluence and power during his grandfather Bodawpaya’s reign. Mindon’s respect for religion was quite exemplary among the Konbaung kings.

In early 1947, one year before Burma regained her independence, members of Anti-Fascist People Liberation (AFPL) and members of government had a future plane for the country. The projects were national unity, independence, education, economy and perpetuation of Buddhism. Those projects are the infrastructure of the country. Among those projects, *Chatthasangayana* which is the Sixth Great Council project was one of them. To hold the council the force of monks as well as the rumor

---

24. Myanmarmin Ok Chokpon Sadan. Part.III.p.90.

that *Chatthasangayana* will be held happened coincident so *Tipitaka* Selection Examination and convening *Chatthasangayana* linked one another.

In 1950, the parliament enacted Buddhist law and after enacting the law, **Buddha Sasana Council** was formed in 13<sup>th</sup>, November 1950 with the intention of performing necessary work at home and abroad. The Sixth Great Council was organized by Buddha Sasana Council. In 1948, the first year of independence from British rule the government considered the need to purify, perpetuate and propagate Buddha Sasana, to promote the emergence of a heroic Sasana personality with the ability to memorize and recite by heart the entire Pali Canon called Tipitaka and to seek out personalities with special intellectual powers to receive the reverence and praise of the devotees. The government decided to hold the Tipitakadhara Selection Examination.

The government and the people of Burma had great desire to hold the Council with the intention of promoting Buddha Sasana last long, editing and purification the entire Pali texts and translating the Pitaka into Burmese for those did not understand Pali words. The government wanted to hold the Great Council more significantly than the previous ones. The previous Councils were held only one country but in this council, the leading persons in the council wanted to participate other Theravada countries such as Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and other Mahayana countries and organizations and they wanted to termed not only as the Burmese Council but the Theravada Council organized by five Theravada countries. The government needed the support of other Theravada countries. Therefore, the government sent delegation led by renowned Burmese Venerable monks to Theravada countries respectively.

In holding the ensuing Chattha Sangayana, five groups or congregations were held:- First Congregation begins from the full moon day of Kason 1316 Burmese Era

to the full moon day of Waso 1316 Burmese Era; Second Congregation beings from the 1<sup>st</sup> waning of Tazaungmon 1316 Burmese Era to the full moon day of Tabodwe 1316 Burmese Era; Third Congregation begins from the full moon day of Tagu 1317 Burmese Era to the full moon day of Waso 1317 Burmese Era; Fourth Congregation begins from the 1<sup>st</sup> wining of Tazaungmon 1317 Burmese Era to the fool moon day of Tabodwe 1317 Burmese Era; Fifth Congregation begins from the New moon day of Tabaung 1317 Burmese Era to the full moon day of Kason 1317 Burmese Era. Thus, the total number of chanting hours amounted to 326 working days. The Sixth Great Council, internationally recognized, was held at *Sirimanglathala Mahapasana* Cave in Rangoon in May, 1954 (BE 2498, ME 1316) 2,500 monks participated at this Council.

In conclusion, we have discussed the Great Buddhist Councils especially convened in the history of Theravada Buddhism. Actually, the Council is nothing but preserving, purification, perpetuation and promotion of the teachings of the Buddha from generation to generation until 21<sup>st</sup> century both theoretically and practically for the welfare and happiness of the world.

## APPENDIX

# 1<sup>st</sup> Council, Rajgir, India



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Council, Vaisali, India



## 3<sup>rd</sup> Council, Patna, India



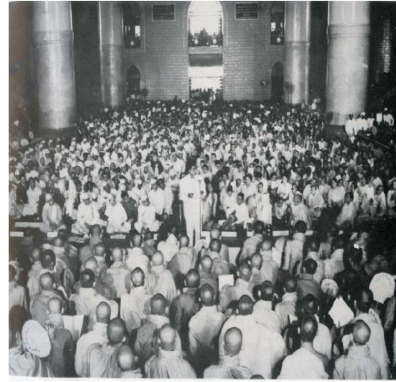
## 4<sup>th</sup> Council, Matale (Sri Lanka)



## 5<sup>th</sup> Council, Mandalay, Myanmar (Burma)



# 6<sup>th</sup> Council, Yangon (Rangoon), Myanmar (Burma)



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### 1. Primary Sources and Translations

#### ORIGINAL SOURCES

**References to Pali texts are the Chathasangayana (Six Great Council) editions. It is easy to access and find any word, passage, sutta with the help of CD-ROM available in everywhere created by VRI (Vipassana Research Institute, Literature, India)**

- Buddhavamsa Chatthasangayana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma,1956.  
Cariyapitaka Chatthasangayana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma,1956.  
Dhammapada Chatthasangayana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma,1956.  
Dighanikaya: Chatthasangayana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma,1956.  
Itivuttaka Chatthasangayana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma,1956.  
Jataka Chatthasangayana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma,1956.  
Kathavatthu Chatthasangayana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma,1956.  
Mahanidessa Chatthasangayana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma,1956.  
Majjhimanikaya Chatthasangayana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma,1956.  
Milindapanha Chatthasangayana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma,1956.  
Samyuttanikaya Chatthasangayana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma,1956.  
Suttanipata Chatthasangayana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma,1956.  
Thera-Therigatha Chatthasangayana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma,1956.  
Udana Chatthasangayana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma,1956.  
VinayaChatthasangayana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma,1956.  
Visuddhimagga Chatthasangayana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma,1956.

## 2. Commentaries

- Buddhavamsa- atthakatha Chatthasangayana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma,1956.
- Atthasalini-atthakatha Chatthasangyana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma,1956.
- Cariyapitaka- atthakatha Chatthasangayana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma,1956.
- Dighanikaya- atthakatha Chatthasangayana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma,1956.
- Itivuttaka-atthakatha Chatthasangyana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma,1956.
- Jataka- atthakatha Chatthasangayana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma,1956.
- Majjhimanikaya-atthakatha Chatthasangyana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma,1956.
- Pancapakarana-atthakatha Chatthasangyana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma,1956.
- Suttanipata-atthakatha Chatthasangyana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma,1956.

### ORIGINAL TRANSLATION SOURCES

- Atthasalini: The Expositor. Trans. PeMaung Tin; 2 vols. PTS.1920.
- Buddhavamsa: The Chronicle of Buddhas. Trans.I.B. Honer. In Minor Anthologies of the Pali Canon.part3. PTS, 1975.
- Dhammapada: The Dhammapada: The Buddha's Path of Wisdom. Trans. Acharya Buddharakkhita. BPS,975.
- DhammapadaAtthakatha: Buddhist Legends. Trans.E.W. Burlingame.3 vols. Cambridge: Harvard University Press,1921
- DighaNikaya: The Long Discourses of the Buddha, Maurice Walshe, Wisdom Publication, Boston, U.S.A,1995.
- MahasiSayadaw Myanmar Translation, (Vol.I), 1979.
- Milindapanha: Milinda's Questions. Trans.I.B. Horner.2 vols. PTS.1963-64.

SamyuttaNikaya: An anthology. Trans. JohnD. Ireland, BhikkhuNanananda, and Maurice WAlshe.3 parts.BPS.1967-85.

SamyuttaNikaya: The Book of the Kindred Sayings. Trans.C.A.F. Rhys Davids and F.L. Woodward. PTS,1910-30.

Suttanipata: Tans.H. Saddhatissa. London: Cuzon, 1985. The Discourse Collection. Trans. K. R. Norman, PTS,1969.

Udana: Inspired Utterances of the Buddha. Trans. John D.Ireland.BPS,1990.

VinayaPitaka: The Book of the Discipline. Trans. I. B. Horner. 5 vols. PTS,1938-66.

Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification. Trans. BhikkhuNanamoli. Colombo,1954.

### **Secondary Sources**

A.K. Warder, Indian Buddhism, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, 1970.

A. P. Buddhadatta, Jinakalamali, PTS, London,1929.

Ahmar, Daw, Kabaakyisonesaroke, Moe Press, Mandalay, 1973.

AshinThittila, Essential Themes of Buddhist Lectures, Hope Services Published, Bangkok, 1986.

Aung Thaw, Historical Sites in Burma, Sarpaybhikman Press, Rangoon, 1972.

Bapat, P.V, 2500 Years of Buddhism, the publications division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India,1956.

Bhikkhu Bodhi, A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka,1993.

Chi Lin Nunnery, The First and Second Buddhist Councils (Five Versions), Hong Kong, 2008.

Collected Wheel Publications, Vol.VI, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy,

D.C Vijayavardhana, The Rvolt in the Temple, Colombo, 1953.

Dutt.N, The Early History of the Spread of the Buddhist Schools, London, 1925.

E.J. Thomas, History of Buddhist Thought, London, 1927.

- E.W. Adhikaram, Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon, BPS, Kandy, 1970.
- Ferguson, John.P Symbolic Dimensions of Burmese Sangha, Cornell University,  
Ph. d, Diss, 1975.
- Gems of Buddhist Wisdom, Buddhist Missionary Society, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia,  
1983.
- GunaratanePanabokke, History of the Buddhist Sangha in India and Sri Lanka,  
Buddhist Cultural Center, Colombo, 1979.
- Harvey, G. E History of Burma, Frank Cass and Co,Ltd, London,1967.
- Jawaharlal Nehru, The Discovery of India, London, 1960.
- Kelasa, Ashin Mandalay Sasananwin (Vol.I), Nay Lin Press, Rangoon, 1980.
- Kelasa, Ashin Chatthasangayanathamaingdawgyi, (Vol.I), All Burmese Buddhist  
Association, Yangon, 1997.
- Kelasa, Ashin, The Chronicle of SagaingSasana, Religious Press, Rangoon,  
1979.
- Lamotte, Etienne. History of Indian Buddhism from the Origins of the sacra Era.  
Trans. By Sara Boin-Webb. Louvain-Paris: Peeters Press,1988.
- Lu Pe Win, U Buddhaghosa and Burma.JBRS, LVII, I, Oct, 1975.
- Luce.G.H Old Burma Early Bagan (Vol.I) New York, 1969.
- M.Winternitz, History of Indian Literatuer, II, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi,1970.
- Mahadhammathingyin, Sasanalankarasardam, Hanthawaddy Press, Rangoon, 1956.
- Malalasekera, G.P. Dictionary of Pali Proper Names. 2 vols. London, 1937-38.
- Malalasekera, G.P. The Pali Literature of Ceylon, M.D. Gunasena, Colombo,1928.
- MaungHtin Aung, A History of Burma, Columbia University Press, New York,  
1967.

- MaungMaung Tin KonbaungHsetMaharyazawindawgyi (Vol.III), Ledimandaing press, Rangoon, 1968.
- Mya Ke Tu King Mindon and Dried Fish, Rangoon, 1966.
- Myasedi Inscription, Bagan
- NyanaponikaThera and HelluthHecker, Great Disciples of the Buddha, BPS, 1997.
- NyanatilokaThera. Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. BPS,1988.
- Pe Maung Tin, U Zambudipa U HsaungKyan, Burma Research Society, Rangoon, 1960.
- Radha KumudMookerji, Asoka, Banarasidas, Delhi, 1972.
- Scott, Sir James George, Burma as it Was, as it Is, and as it Will Be, London, 1886.
- Smith Donald Eugene Religion and Politics in Burma, Princeton, Ne Jersey, 1965.
- Sri Lanka,2010
- Sukumar Dutt, Early Buddhist Monachism, Motilal Banarasidass, Calcutta, 1994.
- T.W. Rhys Davids, Buddhist India, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi,1971.
- Tin Naing Toe Konbaungminhsetyokeponhlwar, Pyaesoen Press, Yangon, 2003.
- Tin, U Myanmarminokchokponsardan, Part.III, Baho press, Rangoon, 1970.
- U KalaMahayazawintawgyi, The Great Chronicle, (Vol.II) Myanmar Research Society, Rangoon, 1959.
- Ven.Nyanatiloka, Guide Through Abhidhamma, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, 1949.
- Ven.Silananda, Hand book of Abhidhamma Studies, SBVMS, Malaysia, 2012.
- Venerable H. Gunaratana Mahathera, Mindfulness in Plain English, W.A.V.E, Malaysia,1991.

W. Giger, Mahavamsa, The Great Chronicle of Ceylon, Buddhist Cultural Center,  
Colombo,1912.

### **Journals**

Report of Union Buddha Sasana Council Enquiry Committee, State Buddha Sasana  
Council, 1962.

The Sangayana Monthly Bulletin, Vol.i.No.1,May, 1953.

The Sangayana Monthly Bulletin, Vol.i.No.2,June, 1953.

The Sangayana Monthly Bulletin, Vol.i.No.4,August, 1953.

The Buddhist Councils at Rajagaha and Vesali, in Journal of the Pali Text Society,  
Vol.VI.1908.