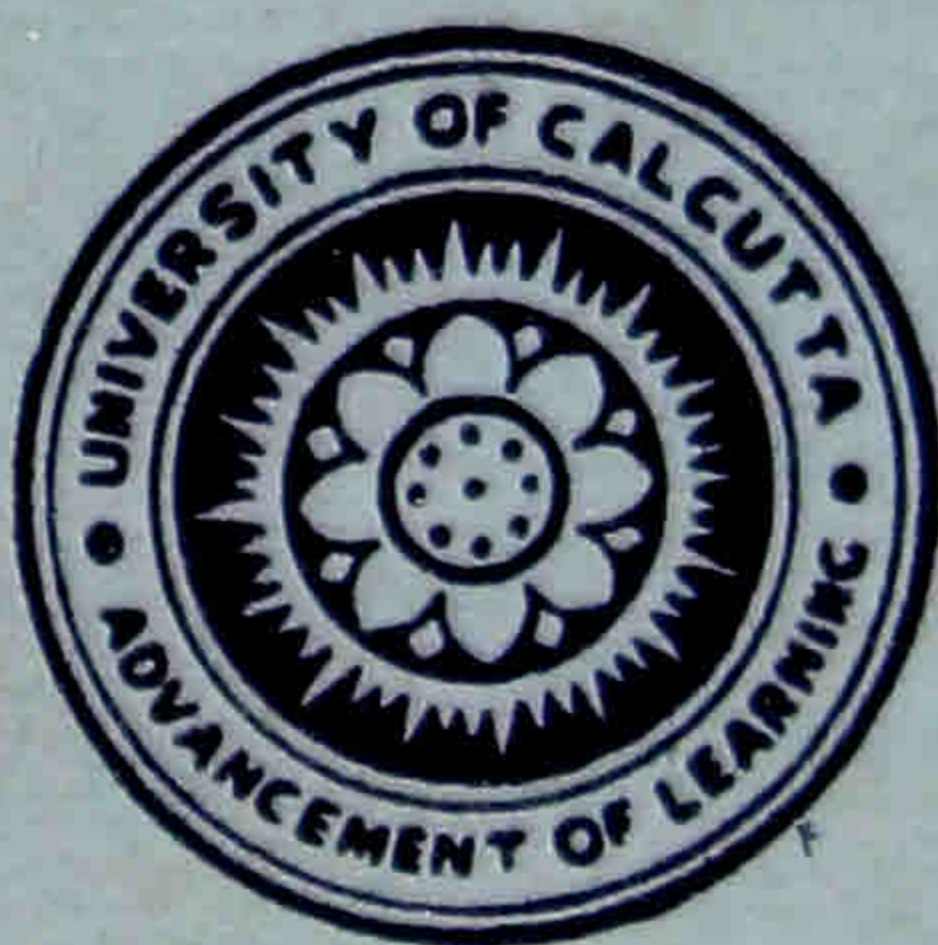


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DEMOCRACY IN EARLY BUDDHIST SAMGHA

GOKULDAS DE, M.A. (*Gold Medalist*)

JUBILEE POST-GRADUATE SCHOLAR AND LECTURER IN THE DEPARTMENTS
OF PĀLI AND M.I.L., CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY, AUTHOR OF
'SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPORTANCE OF JĀTAKAS'.

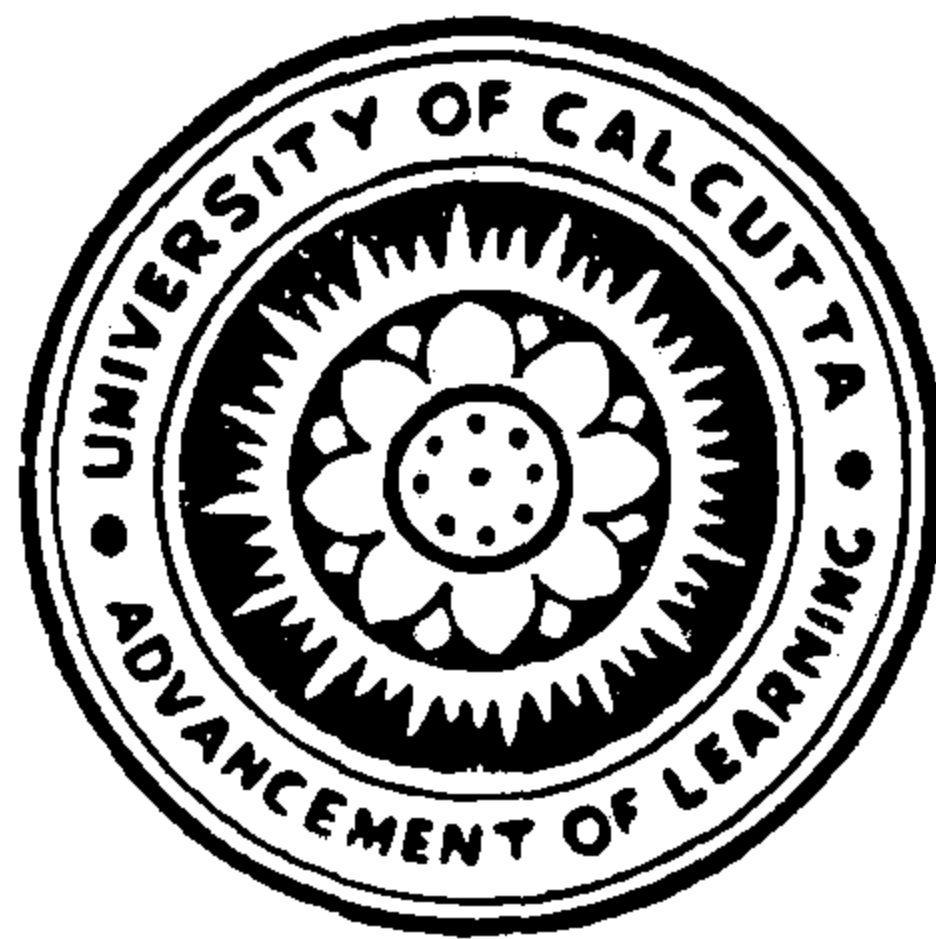


CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY,
1955

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To

MY MOST RESPECTFUL
TEACHER AND COLLEAGUE
DR. B. M. BARUA

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PREFACE

The present work entitled 'Democracy in Early Buddhist Saṃgha' is practically a dissertation of the first four chapters of the Mahāvagga of Pāli Vinaya Piṭaka. Translations of Pāli Mahāvagga into English by Dr. Rhys Davids in the 'Sacred Books of the East' series, Vol XIII and into Bengali by Thera Paññānanda of Nālandā Vidyālaya, Calcutta, have already appeared in the field. But the Vinaya literature, being mostly a record of various ordinances and their occasions not following one continuous thought or action and differing a good deal in form from one another, presents the appearance of a dense forest through which the guideless traveller finds it very difficult to move. The reader is not very often likely to gain his point unless he is aware of the real nature and characteristics of the text. The clumsiness of ideas could not be clarified in those translations and they remain as full of confusion as ever without some critical observations as to the mode of their presentation in the book. In going through the translations, the student is, therefore, not much helped in his search for the main constitution of the early Buddhist Saṃgha as related in the Pāli Mahāvagga.

It appeared during my teaching work that these chapters of which I had to prepare a detailed analysis, betray the essentials of a democracy under the Saṃgha government, although the topics dealt with therein are designated by titles like 'pabbājā', 'upasampadā', 'uposatha', 'vassa vāsa', 'pavāraṇā' etc. all implying monachism only. The rules of discipline under these chapters when synthesised give a very nice system of a democracy which did not certainly come by accident, but, as a matter of policy, being already in vogue in the confederacies of the Sākya, the Koliyas, the Mallas, the Vajjis from which were largely drawn the members of the Bhikku Saṃgha in the lifetime of the Buddha.

The Pāli Vinaya represents the earliest version of the original Vinaya Piṭaka. Dr. Oldenberg has proved this fact by a

comparative study of the various versions of Buddhist Vinaya in the introduction to 'Mahāvagga' edited by himself. This Pāli version is important in this that it contains references to customs and manners of ancient India which cannot be found in the other versions of the Vinaya or even in the most ancient Brahmanical works such as the Brāhmaṇas, the Epics and the Purāṇas, but which nevertheless were Indian institutions. Indologists generally quote extracts of their own selection from this Pāli Vinaya in support of their contentions omitting much which could be proved as much reliable as those selected by them. The text as a whole does not seem to be of any very great import. On a careful perusal of the text, however, it appeared that if the subject-matter of the first four chapters of the Mahāvagga be presented methodically with critical observations between the different topics to show their connections with one another, it would read much like modern history dwelling not only on monachism but also on an organisation of monks formed according to the rules of democracy meant for propagating among the masses the Dharma so long kept confined to the hermitage of Ṛsis in forests away from the habitation of men. I, therefore, could not resist the temptation of presenting this subject-matter to the modern world with a view to giving the readers a picture of this organisation.

But the question arises as to whether the Buddha did have a Saṃgha as described in the Mahāvagga in his lifetime. The general opinion is that he was a monk who wandered from place to place extensively making disciples who were asked, when living apart, to spend their time in meditation and seclusion. Therefore, the Saṃgha if it existed at all in the manner described in the Vinaya arose some time after his demise when Buddhism became very popular with the support of kings and wealthy men. These questions confront the student when he comes to trace the history of the Buddhist Saṃgha from its earliest days. It is mostly for the clarification of this point that the presentation of this work has been made. On a careful perusal of facts as stated in this

work the difficulties centring round this point, I hope, will be automatically solved.

Without his Saṃgha, the Buddha could never have been popular and without the Buddha the Saṃgha could never command the respect and love of the people and wield power in the way it did in the lifetime of the Master. In other words, the Saṃgha, in the absence of the Buddha, would not have been equated with Him and his Dhamma in the Tisaraṇa formula : *Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi,* 'Dhammaṃ Saraṇaṃ gacchāmi' and 'Saṃghaṃ Saraṇaṃ gacchāmi,' if it was not done under the express order of the Master himself. The Buddha was the preacher of a Dhamma intended for the salvation of mankind and he carried on his preaching work for nearly forty-five years in the very heart of northern India with great vigour and zeal. But his Dhamma was very different from those of other religious leaders and it needed a Saṃgha for its propagation and success. Ordinarily a Dhamma has for its ideal a God or a Messiah by worshipping whom its main conditions might be fulfilled. No 'Saṃgha' need ever come to its devotee for assistance to raise him up in his religious practices or in his attainment of spiritual greatness. A single preacher might be sufficient to keep the adherents of such religion faithful and devoted to its tenets. But Buddhism never preached any God, much less a Messiah. It principally rested on individual sacrifice, exertion, self-culture and acquirement of knowledge and its success on the realisation of its *summum bonum* in this very life. Hence the Buddha could not but create a strong band of men and women who acquired these virtues under his personal guidance to be able to inspire others in obtaining the same themselves; and, therefore, with his Dhamma the Saṃgha was inevitably bound up. The very nature of his Dhamma required for its successful propagation the help of a well-trained Saṃgha.

This takes us on to the discussion of the Dhamma in its main features which was responsible for bringing into existence this wonderful congregation of monks unique in the annals of religions in India. The doctrine of the Buddha begins by

accepting the truth that everything in this world is fraught with Dukkha or suffering. Dukkha not only prevails everywhere in view of death, dejection, separation from those we love, hostility of enemies but it also comes from what we call pleasant and beautiful. It is rooted in enjoyments and luxuries. It emanates from the ignorance of the 'Four Noble Truths', the 'Noble Eightfold Path' and the 'Three main characteristics of phenomena'. The four Noble Truths are: 'Dukkha' (suffering), 'Dukkha samuppāda' (the cause of suffering), 'Dukkha Nirodha' (cessation of suffering) and 'Dukkha Nirodhagāmi Paṭipadā' (the path leading to the cessation of suffering). This Dukkha can, therefore, be got rid of by following the 'Noble Eightfold Path'. The Buddha, in his very first sermon 'The Dhamma-Cakka-Pavattana-Suttam' which originally formed the introduction to the code of discipline as chalked out in Pāli Mahāvagga, gives an elaborate exposition of this Dhamma.

It is generally known as the Middle Path avoiding the two extremes, one of self-mortification and the other of rolling in luxury, wealth and pleasure, and consists of eight gradually developed stages culminating in the realisation of supreme knowledge. These are: (1) Sammā Ditṭhi (right view), (2) Samma Saṃkappa (right resolve), (3) Sammā Vācā (right speech), (4) Sammā Kammanṭa (right action), (5) Sammā Ājiva (right living), (6) Sammā Vāyāma (right exertion), (7) Sammā Sati (right recollection) and (8) Sammā Samādhi (right meditation). The whole of the Dhamma-Vinaya of the Buddha in the Canon is nothing but an exposition in the most vigorous and elaborate manner of these eight stages. Now, stages Nos. 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the path are dealt with under the Vinaya and the other Nos. 1, 2, 7 and 8 come within the province of Dhamma. The conditions mentioned in their connection cannot be fulfilled by a layman but by a monk only. Buddhism acknowledging no God, puts forth this scheme of work and mental training for the salvation of mankind instead of worship or propitiation of some Divinity. The Saṃgha was the great body of monks who took upon themselves the task of

working out this scheme of training not only for their own salvation but also for that of many others outside their fold.

This right understanding which forms the first link of the Noble Eightfold Path is the knowledge of the threefold characteristics, *Anattam*, *Aniccam* and *Dukkham* which are inherent in all created things technically, constituted by *Rupa* (form) *Vedanā* (sensation), *Saññā* (consciousness), *Samkhāra* (confections) and *Viññānam* (knowledge). All things of the world are individually characterised by *Anattam*, *Aniccam* and *Dukkham* and there is no individual *Attā*. “If ‘rupa’ was *attā* then says *Mahāvagga*” “it would be able to shape itself in any way it liked and would not be impermanent but since it cannot do that and is subject to death and decay it is not ‘*attā*’.” Whatever is not ‘*attā*’ is ‘*aniccam*’, *i.e.*, changeable and passes away and that which passes away is ‘*dukkham*’, *i.e.*, fraught with suffering.

The same argument holds good with regard to each of the other four constituent elements, *viz.*, *Vedanā*, *Saññā*, *Samkhārā* and *Viññānam*. This is the right understanding of the phenomenal world and with this right understanding will come one after another by following the rules of *Vinaya*: right resolve, right speech, right action, right living, right exertion, right recollection and right meditation leading to tranquillity, peace, emancipation, supreme knowledge, and the bliss transcendental of *Nirvāṇa*. At the last stage the meditator becomes one with supreme knowledge. He becomes omniscient and realizes the ‘Twelve interdependent causations as to how nature has produced the world. They are: (1) *Avijjā paccayā samkhārā*, (2) *Samkhāra-paccayā viññānam*, (3) *Viññāna paccayā nāmarupam*, (4) *Nāmarupa-paccayā salāyatana-*nam, (5) *Salāyatana-paccayā phasso*, (6) *Phassa-paccayā Vedanā*, (7) *Vedanā-paccayā Taṇhā*, (8) *Taṇhā -paccayā Upādāna*, (9) *Upādāna-paccayā bhavo*, (10) *Bhava-paccayā Jāti*, (11) *Jāti-paccayā Jarā-Maraṇa*, (12) *Jarā-Maraṇa-paccayā dukkha-*domanassan upāyāsā sambhavanti.’ This is how the world goes on producing misery which ceases at the dawning of this knowledge.

These were the guiding principles for conducting the affairs of the Saṃgha for which its members had to act differently in different capacities. The Saṃgha as it were was divided into three different compartments each having a set of rules peculiar to itself and the members carrying them out appeared to play three different roles which, though never jarred on one another, differed a good deal in kind.

On its teaching side the Saṃgha was a body whose members from the highest to the lowest ranged from the acknowledged head or the president known as the 'Sangha Thera' to Kākuṭṭepaka Sāmaneras or scarecrow novices who were mere boys below the age of 12 having nothing to do except scaring away crows. The following were the intermediate ranks in order of seniority :

- (i) The Thera or the chief monk of a Saṃgha unit.
- (ii) The Theras of 2nd, 3rd, 4th degrees according to seniority of age and qualifications; who were teachers of the Saṃgha being Ācariyas or Upajjhāyas.
- (iii) Junior monks who were Bhikkhus learning various subjects and undergoing training under the Upajjhāyas and Ācariyas just after ordination.
- (iv) Sāmaneras or novices who were under 20 years of age attached to teacher monks after receiving initiation from them to become monks or Bhikkhus afterwards.

Each succeeding rank was supposed to acknowledge the supremacy of the preceding one and had to perform certain duties and fulfil conditions in justification of its existence. Strict obedience to all superiors was considered indispensable to the spiritual advancement of all these members and its lack was considered a disqualification for retaining membership of the Order. We are not told whether laymen figured as teachers, presumably, they did not, but, it is certain that they participated in the teachings imparted by the Saṃgha.

On the administrative side the members as soon as they passed the rank of Sāmaneras and reached Bhikkhuhood, no matter whether pupils or teachers, were considered equals and were individually entitled to a vote on the occasion of the Uposatha, a fortnightly ceremony where at its first stage, every kind of Saṃgha business was conducted by the joint votes of all the members and at its second, by the votes of the majority. Matters which came up for settlement on this occasion were the following :

(i) Election of the chief Thera or the President who held his post until found incompetent and a new one had to be elected in his place.

(ii) Determination of the purity of the members by the response to the recital of the Pātimokkha—a code of prohibitory rules for the guidance of monks.

(iii) Election of the Speaker on the Dhamma to answer questions relating to it.

(iv) Election of the Speaker on the Vinaya to answer questions relating to Discipline.

(v) Confirmation of Upasampadā or full membership of the Order on novices as recommended by their respective Upajjhāyas.

(vi) Matters of public or private interest in relation to the Saṃgha or any individual member.

(vii) Course of action to be taken on a monk or monks found guilty of violation of Saṃgha rules.

As regards the third point anent the Saṃgha being an organisation in full co-operation with the society at large, we may say that the laity was never considered an unimportant factor in the well-being of the Saṃgha though excluded from it. The fortnightly ceremony in which Saṃgha affairs were settled did not allow any layman to be present much less to vote on the occasion. But this disregard was more than compensated by the institution of 'Vassa-Vāsa' or Retreat during the rains when monks individually or collectively were expected to live under the care and protection of laymen who had thus an

opportunity to form a right estimate of the Saṃgha to which these monks severally belonged. The Vassa-Vāsa terminated with 'Pavāraṇā' or 'Rejoicings' which were shared equally by monks and laymen, the former receiving from the latter gifts of various things especially of clothes and food as humble tributes in recognition of the merits and services rendered by the members of the Saṃgha. There was also a provision for punishment under 'Paṭisārāṇiya Kamma', an act for causing regret to monks who unjustly offended a layman. Under none but the lead of the Buddha could function in perfect harmony these three different departments of the early Saṃgha which formed the basis of the type of democracy we propose to discuss in the following pages.

This democratic Saṃgha was undoubtedly of Buddha's creation for, in the adoration of the Buddha by Mahā Pajāpati Gotami she refers to the existence of such a Saṃgha with ardent, energetic and steadfast members living in unity.

So long as the Saṃgha was ardent, energetic, steadfast and devoted to the welfare of mankind, the Doctrine it represented shone at its highest. It was, therefore, natural that its days of glory were those which were spent along with the Master and so long as his ideal was still luminous after his demise. The authorship of the Master in the matter of the creation of the Saṃgha at the height of its glory cannot be denied.

The early antiquity of these rules testifying to the existence of democracy in the Buddhist Saṃgha of the Buddha's time can also be proved by the evidence of Mahāvagga itself. In pre-Buddhistic times there existed in villages a sort of democratic government (Gramani government, *vide* Significance of Jātakas by the author) which required the votes of all the villagers for its successful operation. The assembly where they used to meet, was called a *sabhā* or a *samiti* and everyone of the village people had access thereto. Important items of business relating to their needs were transacted by votes of them all (J. No. 31). In like manner we find that in the Buddhist Saṃgha,

at its initial stage, the transaction of business was carried on by all the Bhikkhus meeting together and agreeing with one another. But, at a later stage, when Bhikkhus of various provinces entered the Saṃgha its mode of administration was changed to one of majority rule ; and the monasteries not being the personal property of Bhikkhus, the minority had to yield to the opinions of the majority even if their yielding caused their vacating the entire monastery by going out of its fixed boundary. These cases have been recorded in the Pāli Mahāvagga but not in any other later versions of the Vinaya Piṭaka. Unfortunately, this democracy was short lived for, in the Second Council we find that in its place there arose the Ubbāhikā Rules or control of the Saṃgha by a selected few chosen from a vast number of Bhikkhus who became uncontrollable. The last stage which became more or less a permanent feature of Saṃgha government was marked by its control by the State as was the case during the 3rd century B.C. in the time of Emperor Asoka whose order was binding on the Saṃgha or by the chief Thera. All these stages of Saṃgha government have been referred to one after another in the Pāli Vinaya and Mahāvamsa. Therefore, the first stage of democracy indicated by the Mahāvagga rules cannot but be of the earliest time. The seven 'Adhikaraṇa Samatha' rules for settling disputes came into operation for deciding smaller issues of the Saṃgha when the units became separated from one another and the tie of union between them was more or less broken.

The gift of the Buddha to his motherland was this Saṃgha brought into existence to serve humanity rather than his Dhamma which had much in common with the religions of the time. This Saṃgha which earned great reputation and popularity in the country eventually fell when its capacity for doing good to the world diminished, and it became an eyesore to those who could not see eye to eye with its ideals. With the fall of its democracy this man-making Dharma of the Buddha took different colours in different schools of thought separated from the parent religion. The Saṃgha of later days only existed as a seat of

learning and its members thrived on the lands bestowed on it by kings thus causing its fortune to suffer according as they were good or bad. Thanks to the Theravādinās of Ceylon who preserved the old version of the Buddhist Canon without allowing it to undergo change or modification and have thus rendered the re-appearance of Old Buddhism in the land of its birth possible through its study.

In conclusion, I claim no perfection for this small work in which I have attempted to solve the difficulties centring round the study of the Pāli Vinaya in a manner so long unattempted by others and therefore, there might be inaccuracies in it which a more intelligent mind will kindly detect and rectify. I also admit that through my inadvertence in proof-reading some of the references may have been omitted or may have remained incorrectly stated but it is certain that they all come from the Vinaya and none from outside. The abbreviation M. V. and C. V. used throughout the book stands for Mahāvagga and Cullavagga. The others have been given in a fuller manner against the statements they are meant to corroborate and need not be explained. The sections and paras. cited from Mahāvagga and Cullavagga are all from the texts edited by Dr. Oldenberg.

My thanks are due to the Superintendent of the University Press and his staff who have uniformly helped me in getting the book free from diverse errors and in expediting its printing. My ex-pupil Sri Sukumar Sengupta, M. A., who was a Research Fellow in the Pāli Department has very kindly prepared the Index for which my thanks are also due to him. Some portions of this book appeared long ago in the *Calcutta Review* and *Buddhist India* (published from Rangoon but now defunct) and I take this opportunity to thank the editors for making them known to the public before. Now that the book has come out as a whole, it will be, I hope, more readily and gladly accepted.

8th December, 1954

GOKULDAS DE

DEMOCRACY IN EARLY BUDDHIST SAMGHA



BUDDHA-GAYA IMAGE OF THE BUDDHA

[By courtesy of Maha Bodhi Society]

DEMOCRACY IN EARLY BUDDHIST SAMGHA

(According to Pāli Vinaya)

INTRODUCTION

1. Original significance of the term Vinaya

The term Vinaya is at present found mentioned only in connection with the code of discipline meant for the Buddhist Saṃgha, but there is ample evidence on record to show that in pre-Buddhistic days the term connoted simply rules of conduct meant for people in general. In the Jātakas which originally constituted one of the nine limbs of the Buddha's words (Buddhavacana) referring to episodes of bygone days and which, therefore, might be considered pre-Buddhistic in origin, mention is made of the word Vinaya not in the sense of a code of discipline for the Buddhist Saṃgha but in the general sense of rules of conduct meant for all people, especially of kings. The following extracts taken from Jātakas will fully bear out our contention :

(1) Vinaya meaning customs and manners of the people :

Yattha posaṃ na jānanti jātiyā 'vinayena' vā

Na tattha vāsaṃ kayirātha vasaṃ aññātake jane

—J. 304 III, p. 17.

One should not live among unknown people if he cannot understand their customs and manners from their nationality.

(2) Vinaya used in the sense of discipline for commonfolk :

No ce assa sakā vuddhi vinaye va susikkhito

Vane' andhamahiso va careyya bahuko jano

Yasmā ca pan' idha ekacce ācāramhi susikkhitā

tasmā vidita-vinayā caranti susamāhitā

—J. 406 III, p. 368.

He has neither intelligence nor any discipline and walks like wild buffaloes of the forest as many people do. But there are some who are well trained in the Vinaya and are looked upon as men of learning and good manners.

(3) Vinaya used in the sense of a royal code of observances :

Ahaṃ khalu mahāraja nāgarāja-r-iva antaraṃ
paṭivattum na sakkomi na so me *vinayo* siyā

—J. 533 V, p. 351.

Indeed, I cannot like the dragon king interrupt my overlord when he is speaking as that would not be my code of discipline.

(4) Vinaya used in the sense of the law of the land :

Upasamkamitvā videhaṃ vanditvā *vinaye* rataṃ
Suvāṇṇavikate piṭhe ekamantaṃ upāvisī ti

—J. 544 VI, p. 231.

She sat on the stool embroidered with gold on approaching the king of Videha who was devoted to the Law of the land.

(5) Vinaya used in the sense of a code of discipline meant for the learned :

Nayaṃ nayati medhāvi adhurāyaṃ na yuñjati
Sunayo seyyaso hoti sammā vutto na kappati
Vinayaṃ so pajānāti sādhu tena samāgamo

—J. 480 IV, p. 241.

A wise man understands the logic and does not take it in a wrong sense. If anything is well said it is well accepted. He knows the Vinaya and blissful is his company.

The 'Arthaśāstra' retains the use of the word 'Vinaya' in the sense of manners to be learnt by women. Under Sec. 155 we come across the following :

“Women of refractive nature shall be taught manners by using such general expressions as ‘thou half naked; thou fully naked; thou cripple; thou fatherless; thou motherless (nagne vinagne nyange piṭṭhe mātṛke vinagne ityanirdeśena *vinayagrahaṇaṃ*)’ ”—Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra, tr. by Shamasastri, p. 197.

2. The place of the Vinaya in relation to the Dhamma

In its accepted sense the Vinaya means the Vinaya Piṭakaṃ which is one of the three main Piṭakas into which the Pāli Buddhist canon is commonly divided. It treats mainly of the Rules and Regulations promulgated only for the Buddhist monks forming the Saṃgha and not for any other people; even, the laity given to the worship of the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṃgha has been completely excluded from the sphere of its operation. The other two Piṭakas are the Sutta and the Abhidhamma. The Sutta Piṭakaṃ exhaustively deals with the subject of the Dhamma as told by the Buddha and the Abhidhamma gives in detail an exposition of the Dhamma and so forms its philosophy.

The Vinaya Piṭakaṃ is further sub-divided into the following works :

(1) The Sutta Vibhaṅga containing the Pātimokkha with commentary and notes.

(2) The Khandakas in 22 chapters in which are included the Mahāvagga and the Cullavagga—the former containing 10 and the latter 12 chapters.

(3) The Parivārapāṭha, a work supplying the index of a comparatively later date being composed in Ceylon.

The other Piṭakas are in their turn sub-divided into various works which, of course, do not form the subject-matter of our present study, as we shall concern ourselves with the Vinaya only especially with the rules of the Mahāvagga.

But, before entering into their discussion, it would not be out of place here to note the different scope of views held in the Vinaya and the Sutta and their respective jurisdictions.

Properly speaking, the Vinaya Piṭakaṃ may be defined as a collection of rules relating to the outward conduct of the Saṃgha only, the laity having been completely left out of its sphere of action. It constitutes the practical Dhamma or the code of discipline of the Bhikkhus, while the Sutta comprising the discourses on the various aspects of the Dhamma, constitutes

the theoretical side of the Doctrine meant for regulating the inward thoughts of the Bhikkhus to be cultivated in strict conjunction with the practical side presented by the Vinaya.

Certain sections of the Vinaya again are found in the Dhamma often occurring in identical words. The reason might be that both of them in their attempt to solve the same problem of deliverance from suffering have had to tread the same path boldly pointed out by expressions for which the monks could only use identical words.

There is also sufficient ground for accepting the contention that originally there was one Piṭaka, viz., the Āgama Piṭakaṃ (āgamapiṭakaṃ nāma akaṃsu suttasammataṃ—Account of the First Council, Dipavaṃsa) and the three Piṭakas especially the Vinaya and the Sutta emanated from it in the Third Council causing overlapping of ideas and statements. The fact of the matter, however, is that the Dhamma cannot be fully understood without some reference to the Vinaya and *vice versa*. The Mahāsaṃghikas have their Dhamma and Vinaya included in the same work Mahāvastu of which the main contents, however, deal with the rules of conduct meant for a Bodhisatta thus pointing to the later origin of those parts.

3. The importance of the Vinaya-Piṭaka and its original version

The importance of the Vinaya lies in the fact that the very existence of the Order depends upon the true and exact codification of its rules, perversion of which causes corruption and destruction to the Saṃgha. Rightly has it been said in the concluding summary of the first Chapter of the Mahāvagga, that, if the Vinaya existed the Doctrine would again start up into existence if it ceased to be or, in other words, the Order remaining pure by observing the laws of the Vinaya would be competent enough to bring to light the Doctrine if it perished :

“pamuṭṭhamhi ca suttante abhidhamme ca tāvade
Vinaye avinatṭhamhi puna tiṭṭhati sāsanaṃ

It is also a matter of great importance to note that the study of the Vinaya drew the foremost attention of monks and scholars of ancient days as a subject demanding their utmost care and devotion. The various divisions which took place in the Order not very long after the disappearance of the Master were mostly due to the differences of opinion regarding the rules of the Vinaya rather than to any misinterpretation of the fundamental belief in the Doctrine (*vide* R. Kimura's *History of Early Buddhist Schools*, p. 100). Such was the position when the "Ten Indulgences" had to be suppressed in the Second Council, but later on differences of opinion regarding the Dhamma caused the several divisions in the Saṃgha as referred to in the Third Council.

The Chinese travellers visited the holy land of India in search of a copy of the original Vinaya which they believed to be absolutely necessary for the well-being of the Saṃgha of their own country. We learn from Fa Hien's travels that his principal object for visiting India was to search for the original Vinaya. In the various kingdoms of North India, however, he had found one master (ācariya) transmitting orally the rules to his pupils, but no written copies which he could transcribe. He had, therefore, travelled far and come on to Central India where in Patna, in a Mahāyāna monastery he found a copy of the Vinaya containing the Mahāsaṃghika rules. The original copy was said to have been handed down in the Jetavana monastery.¹

As to the other 18 schools which rose in the Third Century B.C. each one had a copy with the views and decisions of its own teachers. They all agreed in the general meaning but they had small and trivial differences. The copy found by him was, however, the most complete with the fullest explanation. He further got a transcript of the rules in six or seven thousand 'gāthās' being the Sarvāstivāda version which was observed by the communities of monks in the land of Tsin (China) which

¹ *Travels of Fā-Hien* by Legge, pp. 98-99.

also had been handed down orally from teacher to teacher without being committed to writing.¹

The following notable schools had their own versions of the Vinaya Piṭaka : (1) Sarvāstivādins (2) Vibhajja or Theravādins (3) Mahīṃsāsakas (4) Dharmaguptakas (5) Kassapiyas and (6) Sautrāntikas.

The Vinaya of No. 2 and 3 had much in common between them. A comparative study of the texts belonging to the Mahīṃsāsakas, the Sarvāstivādins and the Theravādins reveals the fact that the Pāli version of the Theravādins of Ceylon did not experience any kind of accretion or modification due to the climatic changes of the place. It is only in the Pāli commentaries that we have abundant references to the incidents of Ceylon. But the canonical texts of the other schools abound with accretions and modifications due to incidental references made in the body of these works to the very conditions of the lands of their adoption. The claim, therefore, of the Pāli version to represent the original Vinaya may be more readily accepted than that of the others (*Vide Oldenberg's Introduction to Mahāvagga*, pp. xi-xvi).

4. The two aspects of the Vinaya —Sīla and Ācāra

The Vinaya is none the less often applied to the set of rules which is collectively known as the code of Pātimokkha—a work which originally bore the designation of Sikkhāpadas meant for the observance of Buddhist monks. (Yāni mayā bhikkhūnaṃ paññattāni sikkhāpadāni tāni nesaṃ Pātimokkhadesaṃ anujāneyyam so nesaṃ bhavissati uposathakamman ti.—M.V.II 3.) Dr. Oldenberg is perfectly right when he regards the Pātimokkha as the fundamental laws of the Vinaya and assigns to it a date agreeing with that of the fundamental doctrines of the Dhamma prior to the compilation of the Piṭakas. In his opinion the fortnightly ceremony of Uposatha at which the Pātimokkha was read aloud might undoubtedly be reckoned as one of the most ancient

¹ *Travels of Fa-Hien* by Legge, pp. 98-99.

element in the life of the Buddhist community creating unity among its members. But these rules of 'uposatha' regulating their outward conduct which helped them to unite with one another might more conveniently be differentiated from the code of the Pātimokkha which was drawn up essentially with a view to maintaining their individual purity rather than their unity. It will be seen that the Vinaya divides itself into two well-defined categories of Sīla-Vinaya and Ācāra-Vinaya. Prohibitions under the Sīla-Vinaya come within the jurisdiction of the Pātimokkha while those under the Ācāra-Vinaya mostly come within the subject-matter of the Mahāvagga and the Cullavagga (cattāri ca pārājikāni terasa saṃghādisesa ayaṃ sīlavippatti, thullaccayaṃ pācittiyaṃ pāṭidesaniyaṃ dukkaṭaṃ dubbhāsitaṃ ayaṃ ācāra-vippatti.—M.V.IV 16).

Therefore, to understand the right application of the term Vinaya, its two aspects, viz., Sīla and Ācāra must be clearly kept in view. The purity of individual monks depended on the practice of the Sīla-Vinaya and the solidarity of the Saṃgha on the observance of the Ācāra-Vinaya, the former embodying the Pātimokkha rose simultaneously with the establishment of the Saṃgha and the latter constituted by the rules of the Mahāvagga and the Cullavagga developed according to the exigencies of circumstances with a history behind each rule. It will be further evident from the contents of the Mahāvagga that rules were formulated not only to effect the unity of the members of different Saṃghas as envisaged under Uposatha in Chapter II but also a well-planned scheme was laid down first, to make the Saṃgha a centre of teaching and discipline in Chapter I and then, to make it work in full co-operation with the laity at large in Chapter III. In considering the constitution of the early Buddhist Saṃgha we shall, therefore, be dealing with these aspects of Ācāra-Vinaya for which the evidence of the Mahāvagga and the Cullavagga is of primary importance.

The 'Vinaya' of the different schools which arose later does not, however, testify to the existence of democracy in the Saṃgha.

It was this Ācāra-Vinaya which eventually underwent changes in different climes as was found suitable to the modes of living of the people adopting Buddhism in those countries. In Tibet besides the Pātimokkha which is called 'So-sor-thar-pa' there is another work of the same name which explains 'Cho-ga' or the rites relative to the observance of the Pātimokkha. It is divided into five parts and treats of subjects as are dealt with in the Mahāvagga though the rules thereof are of a quite different nature. (*Vide* Dr. Vidyabhusana's Preface to *So-sor-thar-pa*) In this work of ours the rules coming under the different aspects of the constitution representing democracy have been dealt with in separate books as they are very different from one another.

BOOK I

GROWTH OF THE BUDDHIST SAMGHA INTO A
CENTRE OF DISCIPLINE AND LEARNING

(Pabbajjā and Upasampadā)

CHAPTER I

LIFE HISTORY OF THE BUDDHA FROM HIS ATTAINMENT OF BODHI TO THE FOUNDATION OF THE FIRST VIHĀRA

1. The Doctrine primarily meant for the spiritually advanced and not the worldly minded people

After his enlightenment the Buddha sat for seven days at the foot of the Bodhi Tree contemplating the 'Paṭiccasamuppāda-Dhamma' or the Law of Dependent Causation the knowledge of which he had just attained. He discovered that the root causes of all troubles were Avijjā (remote) and Taṇhā (proximate) at the cessation of which people became free from all suffering. But this cessation of Avijjā (ignorance) and Taṇhā (craving) was only attainable through intense meditation (ātāpi jhāyato).—M.V.I § 1. This he expressed through an Udāna being a verse uttered under the ecstatic impulse of an emotion.

Rising from the foot of the Bodhi Tree the Buddha sat likewise at the foot of the Ajapāla Nigrodha for seven days enjoying the nectar of emancipation (vimutti sukha) and had occasion to explain to a Brahmin of Huhumka tribe the virtues which characterise a true Brahmin.—M.V.I § 2.

Rising therefrom the Blessed One repaired to the foot of the Mucalinda tree where he also sat for seven days enjoying the bliss of Nirvāṇa while receiving the hospitality of the dragon king Mucalinda during an inclement weather which raged for the whole week. Here also as at each of the above two places, he gave vent to his feelings of joy of emancipation by uttering an Udāna. But he did not unfold his doctrine to the dragon king.—M.V.I § 3.

From Mucalinda he went to the Rājāyatana tree and sat at its foot for seven days. At that time the two merchants, Tapussa and Bhallika, were passing that way from Ukkala (Orissa) towards

Sāvatthi and had just passed by the spot where the Bhagavā was meditating. Attracted by a certain spirit (*devatā*) they were led to the presence of the Buddha whom they offered honey-cakes and whey for breaking his fast which had begun since his enlightenment and had already lasted for a month. The Buddha accepted their offering but did not preach his Doctrine. The two merchants, however, declared themselves to be his first two lay disciples under the Dve Vācika or more correctly one Vācika formula having the Buddha as the sole object of refuge in the absence of the Dhamma.¹—M.V.I § 4.

From the foot of the Rājāyatana he came back to 'Ajapala Nigrodha' where doubts assailed him as to the efficacy of converting the common people who were worldly minded and would not be amenable to his Doctrine attained through extreme exertion. Therefore, he now resolved to keep aloof from preaching and take no pains for the salvation of beings. When he was thus inclined to give himself up to lethargy, the great Brahminā appeared before him and removed his doubts by pointing out the fact that the preaching of the Doctrine was extremely necessary for the existence of a certain section of intellectual people (*apparajakkha*) who were on the verge of extinction not knowing its nature—M.V.I § 5.

The Doctrine must, therefore, be preached to the wise and the spiritually advanced. Impelled by a desire to preach it to his two former teachers, Alāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta, the Buddha became aware through meditation of their demise and resolved next to set the Wheel of Law, *i.e.*, his Doctrine, in motion for the first time in Benares before his former comrades, the Group of Five (*Pañca Vaggiya*).

When he had just started for Benares from Uruvelā, Upaka, a former Ājivaka friend of his, came before him and seeing on

¹ If we accept the Dve Vācika formula at this stage then we shall have to presuppose the existence of Dhamma. The two merchants taking refuge with Buddha and Dhamma certainly meant, by Dhamma, Bhāgavatism which was the doctrine of old sages followed by the masses.

his person a halo of light enquired of him as to how it came about. The Buddha replying that it was due to his attaining Enlightenment and that now being a Jina, a conqueror, he was going to Benares to propound his Doctrine, the Ājivika made a curt reply and went his way.

Though unwilling to accept him as their teacher, seeing the Buddha coming from a distance, the Group of Five behaved like dutiful disciples when he came in their midst.

The Doctrine regarding the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path was unfolded before them and they readily understood it and expressed their desire to become his disciples by receiving ordination from him. Accordingly he conferred on them the ordination (upasampadā) ceremony by addressing them with the words 'Come in, oh Bhikkhus' ('Ehi Bhikkhu' or 'Etha Bhikkhavo' as the number was one or more) in pursuance of the current mode of bestowing it.¹

The Bhikkhus comprising this Group of Five were 1. Koṇḍañña, 2. Vappa, 3. Bhaddiya, 4. Mahānāma and 5. Assaji, among whom Koṇḍañña was known as Aññakoṇḍañña as he was the first to comprehend the Doctrine in a right spirit. These disciples of the Master must have been converted by him under the Ehi Bhikkhu formula with two refuges Buddha and Dhamma.—M.V.I § 6.

Yasa, the son of a rich banker of Benares, was the person to be converted by the Buddha after the Pañca Vaggiya. The point of note in this connection is that the circumstances under which his conversion took place were very similar to those under which the Buddha renounced the world. From this it might be inferred that in those days men of affluent position generally had three kinds of residences built for three different seasons and that their youthful days were mostly spent among dancing girls.

¹ āvhayassu maṃ bhaddante
pabbajjā mama ruccatī ti—Temiya Jātaka.

The case of the Buddha before enlightenment was, therefore, not an exceptional one. — M.V.I § 7.

The parents of Yasa were next to receive admonition from the Buddha who was invited to breakfast at their place. At their prayer he accepted them as his first lay disciples under the formula of the three refuges—Buddha, Dhamma and Saṃgha. Though our text testifies to the existence of Saṃgha as a refuge at this time, there is actually no proof of its formation till some time later.—M.V.I § 8.

At the time under consideration they could only have taken refuge with the Buddha and none else.

The four chief friends of Yasa, Vimala, Subāhu, Puṇṇaji and Gavampati who lived in Benares and hailed from aristocratic families of the city, following the example of their friend, received initiation and ordination from the Buddha by the 'Ehi' Bhikkhu' formula of address.—M.V.I § 9.

In like manner, the fifty householder (gihi) friends of Yasa living in districts and belonging to distinguished families received initiation and ordination from the Master. All of these disciples became Arhats soon after their conversion so that at this time there were sixty-one Arhats in the world, viz., the Buddha, the Pañca Vaggiya Bhikkhus, Yasa, the four friends of Yasa from the city and his fifty friends from the districts.—M.V.I § 10.

2. The ideal of the Buddha's mission set up

The mission of the Bhikkhus was now explained and set up before them. Though the Saṃgha was yet to be, the newly converted disciples, all of whom had become Arhats, were now exhorted by the Buddha to fulfil the mission which he had in view. They were asked to go forth to various quarters singly without a companion and help mankind in obtaining relief from suffering by teaching and preaching the new gospel. The injunction of the Buddha to them was to the following effect: "Go forth, ye Bhikkhus, to different lands for the welfare,

happiness and benefit of many and out of compassion for the world. By your activities bring good, welfare and happiness to gods and men. Do not go more than one, to the same direction where you should preach the Doctrine which at every stage will make people incline to virtue. Be sure there are men who will understand and appreciate you.” After exhorting the Bhikkhus in the above words the Blessed One expressed the desire to go back to Uruvelā (Gayā) to preach the Doctrine to the Jāṭilas.—M.V.I § 11.

Owing to the advent of the rainy season the journey had to be postponed for Vassa Vāsa which the Buddha desired to observe while staying at Benares in pursuance of the custom prevailing among recluses. But his Bhikkhus sent to different quarters to preach the religion continued their activities and brought to his presence numerous candidates for ‘pabbajjā’ and ‘upasampadā’ to be conferred by him personally. This led to the pronouncement of a very important rule which eventually changed the whole outlook of the community of monks making its system of government democratic in every sphere. The Buddha empowered his disciples henceforward to confer themselves on the applicants ‘pabbajjā’ and ‘upasampadā’ in the name of Buddha, Dhamma and Saṃgha¹ in whatever place they might happen to preach and teach. ‘Tisarāṇa’ formula was thus laid down for the conversion of men by the senior disciples of the Buddha who, however, continued to confer when necessary, ‘pabbajjā and upasampadā’ in accordance with the ‘Ehi Bhikkhu’ terms of address.—M.V.I § 12.

At the termination of the Vassa Vāsa the Buddha exhorted his group of disciples who might be looked upon as forming the nucleus of his would-be Saṃgha and gave them his benedictions. He then started on his journey to Uruvelā, the very place of his attainment of Bodhi for the conversion of the Jāṭilas.—M.V.I § 13.

¹ This Saṃgha, it may be presumed, was the designation of the various groups of disciples under the 60 original disciples sent to different quarters by the Buddha.

On his way the Buddha met at a certain grove a group of thirty gentle Bhadda Vaggiya friends who were disporting themselves with their wives in the forest. A 'vesi' (pros), brought for one who had lost his wife, ran away with the articles belonging to the party and they were searching for her when the Buddha's words of remonstrance to the effect that it was much better to search their own minds than a pros, brought them to their sense of remorse and they prayed for 'Pabbajjā and Upasampadā' which were conferred by the Buddha according to the 'Ehi Bhikkhu' terms of address. Arriving at Uruvelā the Blessed One presented himself as the guest of Uruvela-Kassapa in the hermitage of the Jaṭilas.—M.V.I § 14.

3 Conversion of the Jatilas and the formation of the Samgha

Rather half-heartedly at his request, the Uruvela-Kassapa pointed out to the Buddha, his fire-house infested by a dragon for halting there for that night only. Thankfully accepting the offer the Blessed One stopped at the house and freed them from its terror by subjugating the dragon, and in the course of his stay there lasting for nearly two months, performed a series of miracles for the edification and conversion of Kassapa and his disciples in the following order :

- (1) Subjugation of the Nāga King infesting the fire-house.
- (2) Causing the arrival of the four Guardian Angels in the hermitage.
- (3) Causing the descent of the Mahā Brahmā Sahampati in the hermitage.
- (4) Causing the appearance of Indra before him.
- (5) Making a disclosure of the thoughts of Kassapa who wanted the Buddha to stay elsewhere during the performance of a sacrifice by the people of Aṅga and Magadha at the hermitage.—M.V.I §§ 15-19.
- (6) Causing to arise for his own benefit through the help of Sakka, (a) a pond, (b) a piece of stone on which

to wash his garments, (c) the bending of a branch of a tree required for holding when rising up from the pond, and (d) creating a big slab of stone for sunning his garments.

- (7) Presentation of the fruit of the very Jambu tree after which India is called Jambudīpa, before Kassapa.
- (8) Bringing down the Pāricchattaka flower from heaven.
- (9) Placing before the Jaṭilas Āmalaka and Haritaka fruits from different quarters.
- (10) Causing the splitting up of the faggot which refused to break.
- (11) Causing the ignition of the faggot refusing to catch fire.
- (12) Causing the extinction of the fire from the burning faggot.
- (13) Creating 500 vessels of fire (mandāmukhi) for warming the Jaṭilas in a wintry night.
- (14) Walking up and down on a dust-covered spot in the midst of a heavy flood.¹

Even when these miracles were performed Kassapa's mind was still unsettled as to whether or not he should become, in view of the Buddha's superior talents and abilities, a follower of him who finally effected his conversion by gentle words of remonstrance overcoming all his apprehensions. Along with him were also converted his disciples who numbered five hundred. Following their example the Nadi Kassapa and the Gayā Kassapa with three hundred and two hundred disciples respectively, embraced the new faith and became followers of the Buddha. All these Jaṭilas made a formal prayer before him for Pabbajjā and Upasampadā and they were converted according to the 'Etha Bhikkhavo' form of address. With these disciples numbering over one thousand the Tathāgata made his first Saṃgha.—M.V.I § 20.

¹ Some of these scenes also form the subject-matter of sculpture on the railings of the Stūpa of Sāñchi of 1st Cen. B.C.

The Buddha, who always deprecated the performance of miracles, had thus himself had to take recourse to this practice in order to convert the Jaṭilas for the formation of his first Saṃgha. The nature of the Jaṭilas, however, justified the action of the Buddha in their case. A few observations, therefore, are necessary regarding the mental aptitude of these people who composed this premier body. Extremely devoted to their religious heads they wore matted hairs and lived in the forest forming a community of their own. They made themselves well known for their humanitarian works all over the country and entertained great reverence for fire which they stored for worship in a special house called 'Agyāgāra' (fire-house). This was a Vedic form of worship and, according to Dr. Barua, these Jaṭilas were the Vedic Ṛsis of old.¹

Though living in forests they entered villages and helped the people in times of distress (*vide* Pāyāsi Suttanta, Dīgha Nikāya). They believed in the Doctrine of Karma and like all practical people were intensely devoted to the realisation of their philosophy which had much in common with the Dhamma of the Buddha. It was for this reason that the Buddha did not use much of his philosophy in converting them but had recourse to practical demonstrations of his spiritual power to win them over. The Buddha's creation of fire at his mere will making it serve his purpose as also the needs of the Jaṭilas, undoubtedly dealt a heavy blow to the faith they cherished for its worship. They, therefore, threw away into the waters of the Phaggu all their belongings meant for the worship of fire and without uttering a single word followed in the footsteps of their master Kassapa the very moment he embraced the gospel of the Buddha and became his disciple.

Taking his cue from a bush-fire which was raging on the opposite hill, the Buddha taught them his Doctrine of the abandonment of the objects of the senses which were compared to

¹ Gayā—a place sanctified by the residence and religious rites of the matted-hair who represented an old order of Vedic ascetics.—Dr. Barua, *Gayā and Buddha* Gayā, p. 134.

the fire which destroyed everything it stood upon by a discourse which is known as the 'Āditta Pariyāya Suttam'.—M.V.I § 21.

4. Establishment of the first Buddhist Vihāra

The first saṃgha was formed but there was no Vihāra for the accommodation of all the 'bhikkhus' forming the Saṃgha. The sixty disciples sent to sixty different directions were gathering groups of monks under the 'Ti-saraṇa' formula of the new Sākya Doctrine and spending their days in teaching and preaching living temporarily in 'āvasathāgāras'¹ without having a fixed place of abode. The question, therefore, of having a fixed place of rest for the Sākya disciples became uppermost in the mind of the Great Teacher.

From Gayā he repaired to Rājagaha with all his disciples mainly consisting of the Jātilas and took up his residence at the Latthivana garden. King Bimbisāra accompanied by twelve myriads of Brāhmins and Vaisyas paid the Buddha a visit to which the king was so eagerly looking forward. The doubt which overtook his men on approaching the Buddha, as to whether the Buddha was the teacher of Uruvelakassapa or Uruvelakassapa of the Buddha, was set at naught by Kassapa's declaring the fact that he had accepted the Buddha as his teacher having abandoned his worship of fire seeing in it impurity and attachment. The king then became a lay devotee of the Buddha by taking refuge in the three jewels, viz., the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṃgha and invited him to breakfast at his palace. The event of great consequence which took place here was the acceptance by the Buddha of an Ārāma for the residence of his Saṃgha. To make it acceptable an Ārāma must possess the following characteristics: (1) It should be situated not far from villages and not too close to them. (2) It must be easily accessible to the people of towns and villages who wished to go there. (3) It

¹ Mote-halls of villagers where religious discussions and meetings of the village people for carrying business took place.

must be free from commotion by day and noise of animals by night. (4) It must not be very windy. (5) and (6) It should be fit for human habitation and be conducive to meditation. The Veluvana Ārāma satisfying all these conditions was accepted by the Buddha as a gift from king Bimbisāra who dedicated it to the Saṅgha by sprinkling water from a gold-pitcher.—M.V.I § 22.

At Rājagaha there was an assembly of Paribbājakas of which Sañjaya was the head and Sāriputta and Moggallāna the chief disciples. The doctrine of Sañjaya, however, failed to satisfy these two chief disciples and they mutually came to an understanding that on meeting a proper teacher they would join him and leave their assembly of Paribbājakas. The venerable Assaji was at that time preaching in Rājagaha and on learning from him the Doctrine of Nibbāna they came to the presence of the Buddha and not very long after became his two chief disciples.—M.V.I § 23.

Upon learning the fact of their conversion by the Buddha, Sañjaya was deeply agitated and tried his best to bring them back to his 'gaṇa' by offering them joint proprietorship of his assembly, then looked upon as a position of great dignity which, of course, they rejected. Sañjaya felt so much dejected at this that he began to vomit blood and died soon after.

Buddha's doctrine of Renunciation, instead of creating a favourable atmosphere, evinced much hostile criticism if not direct opposition from the people of Rājagaha who regarded him not as a saviour but as one who came there for depopulation by depriving wives of their husbands and noble families of their sons. The inauguration of the first Buddhist Vihāra at Rājagaha was thus hailed not with acclamation but received coldly by the common people.—M.V.I § 24.

CHAPTER II

VIHĀRA DEVELOPING INTO A RESIDENTIAL UNIVERSITY

1. Beginning of the Vinaya rules with the origin of Upajjhaya and Saddhiviharika

Learning combined with discipline was to be the motto of the Buddhist Saṃgha. To combat 'avijjā' or ignorance the Saṃgha should in right earnest take up the mission of diffusion of knowledge in justification of its existence. Education, intellectual and spiritual, must be made available to the masses and not kept confined to the literary circles of a few Brahmin scholiasts or to the sylvan abodes of Ṛsis. Such problems must have attracted the attention of the Saṃgha and its Founder soon after its formation.

The rules of the Mahāvagga begin by narrating a very undesirable state of things regarding the outward conduct of the disciples of the Buddha. This was highly improbable under the existing conditions.

The great achievement, *i.e.*, the attainment of Bodhi by the Buddha is said to have taken place on the full-moon day of the month of Baisākha in the thirty-fifth year of Tathāgata's life. From his life history we further learn that in the beginning of the following spring he visited Kapilavatthu at the invitation of his father, king Suddhodana. Judging from his activities at Uruvelā it appears that he came to Rājagaha in the beginning or the middle of winter prior to his departure for Kapilavatthu. He could then remain at Rājagaha for only two or three months at best. During this short period when people were not likely to be converted by thousands, the fire-worshipper Jāṭilas who virtually composed his Order and were esteemed by him as to be afterwards free from the probation ceremony (parivāsa § 38 M.V.I), could not have been so unruly as to cause, according to our text, the pronouncement of the several rules meant not

merely for guidance, but for the complete control of the 'Saddhi-vihārikas' reading under their 'Upajjhāyas.' It stands to reason that the Saṁgha with such dutiful disciples had not as yet become unmanageable for the Master who could certainly exercise direct authority over a few hundreds of them if Uruvela Kassapa could alone guide five hundred. As a matter of fact, these hard and fast rules of the Mahāvagga dealt with under § 25 to have been caused by an occasion of the kind mentioned in the text, came into existence not at this time but much later when the Saṁgha had grown more developed and its business more and more complicated under the patronage of kings and wealthy men in time to come. This is proved by the fact that these very rules have been enumerated in the Cullavagga along with those which were promulgated in later years.—C.V. VIII § 3.

What seems to have taken place at this time was the codification of the Pātimokkha. The disciplinary codes of the Brāhmanical, Jaina and Paribbājaka schools abounded with rules on the observance of strict Brahmacharya (perfect life) as advocated by the Buddha. It was, therefore, easy for the Tathāgata and his senior disciples to consider them as a whole and accept the ones (augmenting them with others of their own) found necessary for the maintenance of the standard of morality required by the Saṁgha and form a scheme of Sikkhāpadas for its guidance. The Pātimokkha¹, though not free from later accretions, may be looked upon as having come into existence in this way simul-

¹ *Pātimokkha*. A few allied rules quoted from earlier or contemporary schools of thoughts in the time of the Buddha will throw more light on the subject. These are the Vedic rites in connection with Uposatha with which the rules of the Pātimokkha in Buddhism are more or less connected:

(1) *Baudhāyana* says: "It is necessary to have the hair of the householder's head, his beard, the hair on his body, and his nails cut on each 'Parva' day and the rules of purification are obligatory on him."

"Two kinds of purification which 'Sishtas' reverentially practise are mentioned in the Vedas external (purification) which consists in the removal of impure stain and fowl smells and internal which consists in the abstention from injuring live creatures."

"The body is purified by water, the understanding by knowledge, the soul of beings by abstention from injuring and the internal organ by truth."

taneously with the formation of the Saṃgha while the rules of the Mahāvagga beginning from the duties of a pupil towards his Upajjhāya under § 25 grew up not in a day but in the course of a long period in accordance with the exigencies of circumstances which the Saṃgha had to face from time to time.

Division of disciples into groups of teachers and pupils took place in the Saṃgha immediately after its Originator intended it to become a centre of teaching and discipline. The pupil came under his teacher by an act of declaration expressed in words and gestures. It has to be assumed, however, that the previous attainments, intellectual or spiritual of a Sākya disciple were the criterion by which this status of a teacher or a pupil was determined. To come under a teacher the pupil had to observe the following procedure: Placing his upper garment on one shoulder he should salute the feet of his teacher and squatting on the ground pray unto him with folded hands three times: 'Reverend Sir, be my upajjhāya', upon which his teacher would declare in gestures and words 'All right, be my pupil, etc.' If proper gestures and words were not used, the declaration of the pupil and its acceptance by the teacher would become null and void.—M.V.I § 25, para. 7.

2. The duties of a pupil towards his Upajjhāya

The 'bhikkhu' after being declared a pupil had to fulfil certain duties towards his teacher.

These duties, in general, comprised works of three kinds: (a) works concerning the pupil himself, (b) works required for the service of the teacher and (c) works meant for the general

(2) *Gautama* in the "Penance of Kandrāyana" holds:

"He shall fast on the day preceding full-moon."

"He shall fast on the day of the new-moon and during the bright-half of the month daily increase his portion by one mouthful."

(3) *Āpastamba* lays down:

"And both the householder and his wife shall fast on the days of the new and full-moon."

"To eat once on those days in the morning that also is called fasting."

welfare of the Saṃgha as those relating to general hygiene. We hear of no servants being engaged by the Saṃgha for doing manual works which all had to be done by the pupils themselves.

The works required for the service of the teacher were as follows :

Rising early in the morning the pupil should leave aside his sandals and adjusting his upper robes on one shoulder provide for his preceptor, a tooth stick and water for cleansing his mouth. He should next prepare a seat and after washing a cup with water offer it to his teacher filling it with some rice-gruel, if there was any. When he had finished drinking the contents, the pupil should very cautiously lay down the cup at its proper place having washed it again with water. On the Upajjhāya rising, his seat should be removed and the ground be cleansed by sweeping.

If the teacher desired to go to the village for alms the pupil should give him a fresh undergarment taking away the one worn by him and then hand him over his cloak after folding it properly. He should also give him his bowl while it was still moist having been washed in water. When going along the road the pupil should follow his teacher keeping a moderate distance from him.

When the teacher was engaged in conversation with others he must not be disturbed by the pupil with stray words but should be restrained if he indulged in speeches calculated to undermine the dignity of the Saṃgha. The contents of the bowl when full should be taken over by the pupil who must return to the monastery earlier and keep ready for his teacher a seat, a foot-stool, a foot-towel and also water for washing his feet. The teacher returning, the pupil should approach him and take his robes and bowl from him and hand him over an undergarment for wearing. If the upper robe was moist it should be kept in the sun for a little while and then being properly folded be consigned to its proper place which was a piece of

rope or a bamboo stick kept hanging from the ceiling. The girdle should be laid upon a hook.

There being food in the bowl and the teacher desiring to partake thereof, the pupil should place it before him with a glass of water just near a seat prepared beforehand. During his meal the teacher should be asked if he wanted any more water. When he had finished his meal the pupil must keep ready some water for washing his hands and lay the bowl back at its proper place after drying it in the sun and cleansing it very cautiously without rubbing.

If the teacher was disposed to bathe the pupil should supply him hot or cold bath as desired. When going to the bath-room for shampooing the teacher should be followed by the pupil carrying a bath-room stool to be handed over to him upon his entrance thereto. The pupil would then take back from his teacher his 'civara' and give him some powder and a lump of clay prepared beforehand for use. At his discretion the pupil should enter the bath-room provided he observed therein the principles of hygiene and the rules of decorum when serving the teacher.

When the teacher was inclined to give lessons by holding conversations or lectures the pupil must attend his class. It was thus in the afternoon that the classes were held in the Buddhist Vihāra.

The cleansing of the Vihāra (*i.e.*, the room of the teacher) probably as an alternate affair, should be effected by the pupil when necessary in the following way :

The robes and the bowl of the teacher should be removed first and placed on one side. The bed consisting of a rug or a carpet spread on the cot should be removed next. When removing the cot care should be taken not to come against the wall or the door. The stool, the mat, the pillow, the stands on which the cot rested, the spittoon, the armchair and lastly the carpet lying on the floor should be removed in due order after clearly observing the exact position of each so that every one of them might be duly put back on its original place.

When clearing the room cobwebs must be removed first from the sides and then from the air-holes. If the yellow coloured wall or the black floor appeared dirty it should be cleansed by having a piece of moist cloth rubbed against it. The floor should be swept having water sprinkled on it first and then the refuse matter should be discarded outside the Vihāra compound. If the wind blew very strongly outside, the windows must be closed. Generally, in summer they should be closed by day and opened by night. In winter the procedure should be reversed.

After clearing the room the articles should be accurately placed back in their original positions after being thoroughly cleansed and warmed in the sun.

The other constituent parts of the monastery, besides the Vihāra, were the 'Parivena' (cell), the Koṭṭhaka (store-room), the Upatṭhānasālā (prayer-hall), the Aggisālā (fire-room) and the Vaccakuṭi (the privy)—all of which were also to be cleansed by the pupil when required.

In certain matters the pupil was expected to behave towards his teacher as if he was his equal, if not superior. When the teacher lost his faith in the Doctrine, the duty of the pupil was to inspire faith in him by having recourse to religious discourses. If the teacher held views tending to become heretical, the pupil's duty was to have them removed by reasoning. If the teacher committed an offence requiring punishment according to the rules of Parivāsa or Mūlāyapaṭikassanā or Mānatta or Tajjaniya or Pabbājaniya or Paṭisārāniya or Ukkhepaniya or after serving his term of punishment if the teacher required rehabilitation according to Abbhāna, it was the duty of the pupil to expedite the operation of these acts and see that the ceremony is gone through without any undue delay.¹

The pupil also had to do himself or get done by others the following works for his teacher :

¹ For a fuller explanation of these Samgha-kammas *vide* Cullavagga, Chaps. I, II & III.

(1) Duly washing his robes, (2) supplying him with a new set of robes when necessary, and (3) Dyeing his robes in 'gerua' colour.

Without the permission of the teacher the pupil was not allowed to give his bowl to any member of the community or take one from him. The permission of the teacher was also required when the pupil wanted to enter a village for alms, when going to a crematorium and when travelling abroad.

Teaching undoubtedly was the main work of the Bhikkhus entrusted with it and learning the principal avocation of pupils living in a vihāra, but it was certainly discipline on which more stress was laid by the Bhikkhus in the early days of the rise of the Buddhist Saṃgha.—M.V.I § 25.

3. The duties of a teacher towards his pupil

The teacher also in his turn was not immune from the duties towards his pupil who was entitled to his kind care and attention imbued with sympathy and love when receiving lessons and admonition from him. The rules required that the teacher must be solicitous for the welfare of his pupil as a father is for his son. When the pupil was unwell the teacher must reciprocate every act of service done to him by the pupil except following him as an attendant monk when the pupil went on his begging rounds. The services rendered by the teacher to his pupil should be continued till the latter recovered from his illness and resumed his normal work.—M.V.I § 26.

4. Punishment imposed for neglect of duty

For improper conduct the pupil must be taken to task by the teacher who would order him to clear out from his room with the robes and bowl. He would further ask the pupil not to come near him refusing to be served by him altogether. But, the anger of the teacher must be expressed in both words and gestures or otherwise his order would not be valid. Again,

if after this serious display of resentment on the part of the preceptor, the pupil begged his pardon he should be pardoned forthwith and reinstalled in his place. Failing in this the teacher committed a 'Dukkata' offence.

Herein lay the violation of proper conduct by the pupil— (1) Not feeling great affection for his teacher, (2) Not having great inclination towards him, (3) Not having much shame, (4) (5) Not having great devotion and reverence for his teacher. The violation of proper conduct by the pupil constituted a 'Dukkata' offence. Needless to add that the possession of these qualities constituted proper conduct on the part of the pupil.—M.V.I § 27.

5. Democracy introduced into the Buddhist Samgha

Hitherto the right of conferring Pabbajjā and Upasampadā was vested in individual monks who were Upajjhāyas, i.e., teachers. But the denial of Upasampadā to a certain Brahmin who thereupon grew pale and emaciated served as the signal for introducing into the Samgha the 'Natticatuttha Kamma' according to which the business of the Samgha, such as the bestowal of Upasampada, etc., was to be conducted by the entire assembly at a formal sitting and not by the monks individually. The procedure lay in having a proclamation (ñatti) repeated four times by a capable Bhikkhu in the assembly which signified its consent by remaining silent after which the said proclamation regarding the particular item of business was declared to be carried and passed—M.V.I § 28.

This was certainly not an innovation by the Buddha but must have its origin in the system of the Gāmani Government which was then in vogue in the country (*vide* Author's Polity in Jātakas) more so in the confederacies of the Sākyas, Koliyas, Malias, Vajjians, etc.

6. The Samgha rules made more stringent

It so happened that certain Bhikkhus who received initiation and ordination behaved improperly and when rebuked replied

that although they wanted 'Pabbajjā' they were not prepared for Upasampadā which is higher ordination. The rule, therefore, was laid down to the effect, that Upasampadā should not be conferred along with Pabbajjā which, however, being separated from the former would remain in the charge of individual teachers (Upajjhāyas) and that the Saṃgha should confer Upasampadā only at the especial prayer of the candidate made in a formal way consisting in the following words :

“Saṃghaṃ bhante upasampadaṃ yācāmi, ullunipatu maṃ bhante saṃgho anukampaṃ upādāya dutiyaṃ, pi yācitabbo—la—tatiyaṃ pi yācitabbo—la—etc.” ‘I pray for Upasampadā from the Saṃgha. Let the venerable Saṃgha raise me up in its mercy.’ This he should repeat thrice after approaching the Saṃgha in a proper way (*vide* Acceptance of teachers § 25 para. 7).—M.V.I § 29.

The next was the rule regarding the declaration of the 'Four Great Resources' (cattāri Nissayā) at the time of Upasampadā. At that time the Saṃgha received invitations from various people for accepting gifts of food, hard, soft and full of taste as well as of fine clothes and residences. To avail themselves of these benefits many Brahmins got themselves admitted into the Saṃgha. With a view to checking the admission of such greedy people, the rule was issued to the effect that the Four Great Resources must be made known to the candidates at the time of their admission. These were (1) Piṇḍiyālopabhojanam, *i.e.*, the Bhikkhus should only live on the food they obtain by begging, (2) Paṃsukulacivaram, *i.e.*, they should wear only those robes which were made out of rags thrown away by laymen, (3) Rukkhamūlasenāsanam, *i.e.*, they should endeavour to live in open space under trees and (4) Pūtimuttabhessajjam, *i.e.*, they should only use excreta and urine (of cows) as medicine during the time of their illness.—M.V.I § 30.

The mention of these Resources at the time of Pabbajjā was, however, forbidden as it had a very baneful effect on the growth

of the Order itself and was allowed only at the time of Upasampadā, *i.e.*, higher ordination. Violation of these rules constituted a Dukkata offence.—M.V.I § 31.

7. Introduction of Nissaya (sampatti) and the system of teaching
made more effective

Appointment of an additional teacher became imperative in the interest of education. With a view to attaining higher and better training, importance was attached to the selection of proper teachers. The instance of Upasena Vamgaputta who accepted a pupil only one or two years junior to himself caused great displeasure to the Buddha who promulgated the law that no monk unless older than his pupil by at least ten years could be his teacher and that he must, at the same time, be sufficiently learned.

It was found that the Upajjhāya, however competent he might be in conferring Pabbajjā on his pupil and in teaching him the elementary principles of the Doctrine and Discipline, was found unfit to train him up for the higher life and responsibilities of the Sākyaputtiya Samāṇa. It also happened in many instances that the 'Upajjhāya' left off his teaching work to practise himself in solitude for his own spiritual advancement, meditation, and the 'Dhutaṅgas' for the purification of the mind and the body. The 'Saddhivihārika, *i.e.*, the pupil who found himself thus stranded in the midst of his studies reverted to his former mode of living in the world. To make good this deficiency in the system of teaching, the rule allowing the appointment of an Ācariya or another teacher better equipped for the work of teaching specially of an additional subject was issued in the Order along with which was introduced the rule fixing the term of studentship for a period of ten years known as the 'Nissaya' or 'Nissaya-Sampatti' for the pupil under those teachers (Upajjhāya and Ācariya). The designation of the student under his Ācariya was Antevasi while that under Upajjhāya we know to have been 'Saddhivihārika.' From this it is evident that he was a constant companion of the Upajjhāya who con-

ferred Pabbajjā on him and that he associated himself with the Ācariya only at fixed hours while living near him. (Ante).—M.V.I § 32.

The Upajjhāya was not altogether lost to the student ; he returned to the monastery after a certain time and took his classes with the Saddhivihārikas. The terms Ācariya and Upajjhāya, therefore, lost their distinctive values and became merely relative terms.

The duties of an Antevāsi towards his Ācariya and *vice versa* correspond exactly to those of a Saddhivihārika towards his Upajjhāya and *vice versa*. The violation of these duties in each case constituted a Dukkata offence. It is not, however, our intention to discuss the possibility or otherwise of the practical application of these rules simultaneously to the cases of the Upajjhāya and Ācariyas. We are only stating the fact as put down in our text which never mentions when and where these rules should be observed. It is, however, apparent that the duties towards both the teachers could not be fulfilled at the same time or on the same day by the same pupil.—M V.I §§ 33, 34, 35.

8. Nissaya determining the qualifications of a teacher in the Saṃgha

The question when cessation of Nissaya should take place gave rise to the enumeration of characteristics of a teacher possessing which, as we shall see later, a pupil qualified himself as a teacher and his Nissaya ceased. With the promulgation of the Nissaya or more correctly Nissaya Sampatti for the pupil for a term of ten years under the Upajjhāya and the Ācariya, the Vihāra appeared like what in modern days would be called a residential university with this difference that its teachers and a large proportion of pupils belonged entirely to the monastic community. In regard to the Nissaya Sampatti the Aṅguttara Nikāya makes the following observation :

Duly at fixed hours a monk would approach another monk versed in the Suttas (Bshussuta) or in the various divisions of the Buddhavacana (Āgatāgama) or in the Doctrine (Dhamma)

or in the Discipline (Vinaya) or in the Digest (Mātika) and ask him questions as to how and why things were in the form as recorded under a particular subject on which the learned monk would make clear what was difficult and explain what required explanation and remove doubts in matters wherein doubts arose. While the pupil was thus passing through a state of acquiring knowledge he was said to be possessed of Nissaya-Sampatti.—Vol. I, Ch. III, 20 P.T.S. This acquirement of knowledge no doubt took place at a considerable sacrifice of personal comfort of the pupil observing the rules of discipline under his teacher.

Naturally, therefore, the question of competency of teachers enjoying the services of the pupil, arose in the Order especially in view of the fact that the cessation of Nissaya was rendered difficult at the mere option of the pupil by the issue of the rules to the effect that (1) Nissaya would cease only when the Upajjhāya departed, (2) when the Upajjhāya returned to worldly life, (3) when he died, (4) when he went over to a schismatic school, (5) when he turned out the pupil, and (6) when the Ācariya and the Upajjhāya met each other the Nissaya to the Ācariya ceased while that to the Upajjhāya only remained.

The requisite qualifications of a teacher, divided into eight groups each containing five conditions, were laid down as follows :

- (A) 1. When he was himself possessing full perfection in what belonged to moral practices.
2. When he was himself possessing full perfection in what belonged to self concentration.
3. When he was himself possessing full perfection in what belonged to wisdom.
4. When he was himself possessing full perfection in what belonged to emancipation, and
5. When he was himself possessing full perfection in what belonged to knowledge and insight into emancipation.

- (B) 1-5. When he was able to help others in acquiring the above five conditions.
- (C) 1. When he was believing. 2. Modest. 3. Fearful of sinning. 4. Energetic, and 5. Of ready memory.
- (D) 1. When he was not guilty of moral transgressions.
 2. As regards the rules of conduct he was not guilty of transgressions.
 3. As regards belief he was not guilty of heresy, and
 4 & 5. He was learned and wise.
- (E) 1. When he was able to nurse or get nursed an Antevāsika or a Saddhivihārika.
 2. When he was able to appease or cause him to be appeased when discontent had sprung up within him.
 3. When he was able to dispel or cause to be dispelled according to Dhamma doubts of conscience which had arisen in his mind.
 4. When he knew what an offence was, and
 5. When he knew how to atone for it.
- (F) 1. When he was able to train an Antevāsika or a Saddhivihārika in the precepts of proper conduct.
 2. When he was able to educate him in the elements of morality.
 3. When he was able to instruct him in what pertained to the Vinaya.
 4. When he was able to instruct him in what pertained to the Dhamma, and
 5. When he was able to discuss or make another discuss according to the Dhamma a false doctrine that might arise.
- (G) 1. When he knew what an offence was.
 2. When he knew what was not an offence.
 3. When he knew what a light offence was.
 4. When he knew what a grave offence was.

5. When the two Pātimokkhas (Bhikkhu and Bhikkhuni) were perfectly known to him in their entirety with all the divisions of their whole course and with the entire discussion according to the single rules and to the single parts of each rule.

(H) 1-4. The first four conditions noted above, and

5. When he had completed the tenth year after his Upasampadā ordination—M.V.1 § 36.

Needless to add, that when he did not possess all the above conditions laying special stress on the knowledge and the practice of the rules of the Vinaya evidently dealing with law, medicine and religion, he was debarred from joining the rank of teachers. No doubt the list contains many repetitions but these were certainly in view of the great importance of the matter indicated by them.

9. Qualifying himself as a teacher the nissaya of the pupil ceased

After spending the Vassa Vāsa at Rājagaha in the second year of his mission the Buddha continued to stay there for the whole year round until the end of the next Vassa Vāsa. To this the people of Rājagaha took exception for such a custom was contrary to the mode of living meant for monks. The Buddha, therefore, in deference to the wishes of the people repaired to Dakkhināgiri situated on the south of Rājagaha with a Bhikkhu Saṃgha which was unfortunately very small by reason of the unwillingness of the members to follow him in violation of the terms of Nissaya. The mention of this event is very important in the history of the Saṃgha rules inasmuch as it definitely proves that at a very early stage in its history the Saṃgha rose to be a centre of teaching and discipline.

The period of Nissaya was, however, reduced from ten years to five at the instance of the Buddha who maintained that this rule should be followed only in the case of capable monks who would qualify themselves as teachers while in the case of those who could not develop the virtues of a teacher the period would

continue indefinitely¹ (*vide* § 53, para. 4). The idea underlying the system was no doubt that a member of the Saṃgha must either be a teacher competent to keep attendants or remain as a pupil. We would, therefore, not err if we concluded that all the members were tied together by the bonds of Nissaya as teachers and pupils and that none was allowed to remain by himself without acknowledging some kind of responsibility for some work meant for the benefit of the Saṃgha. The system of government of the Saṃgha in this way rested on mutual agreements among its members forming a sacred trust for the advancement of knowledge for mankind.—M.V.I § 53.

These conditions existed only in the Vihāra. But outside its jurisdictions a Buddhist monk was perfectly at liberty to live in solitude or alone by himself being free from the worries and responsibilities of a Vihāra-life.

The particular rule in this connection was that Nissaya would cease to function under the following circumstances :

(1) When a monk was travelling abroad, (2) When he was sick or when he was attending the sick, and (3) When he was living comfortably in a forest.—M.V.I § 73.

10. 'Parivāsa' or the Probation ceremony for the new-comer

Further restraint was imposed on the membership of the Order by the introduction of the Parivāsa ceremony requiring the applicants from heretical sects and those who had left the Order after joining it, to undergo certain restraints during a particular period.

It so happened that a monk of a heretical sect after his admission into the Saṃgha put his Upajjhāya to silence when remonstrated for improper conduct and went back to his former school. He came back again and prayed for Upasampadā. The law was, therefore, laid down to the effect that this particular monk should not be admitted but if another came who had no quarrel with his Upajjhāya or a new-comer, he should be admitted

¹ Anujānāmi bhikkhave vyattena bhikkhunā patibaleṇa pañca vassāni nissāya vatthum, avyattena yāvajivam.

under the conditions of the Parivāsa restraint which enjoined that he should remain on probation for a period of four months fulfilling the following conditions : (1) He should enter a village late and come back early. (2) He should never frequent the society of harlots, widows, adult girls, eunuchs and nuns. (3) He should show himself skilful in the various works his fellow Bhikkhus had to do. (4) He must be diligent, able to consider how things should be done, able to do things himself and give directions to others thus : (5) He should show keen zeal when the Doctrine was preached to him and when questions were put in what belonged to morality, contemplation and wisdom. Lastly, (6) he must be glad and satisfied when anything against his former school was spoken but angry and displeased when anything against the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṃgha was uttered. He succeeded if he fulfilled these conditions.

If the applicant came naked as in the case of the Ājivikas, the duty of the Upajjhāya was to provide him with a set of robes. If he came with his head unshaven as in the case of Paribbājakas and Jaṭilas, the permission of the Saṃgha was required to have his head shaven.--M.V.I § 38.

Exception from Parivāsa was allowed only in the case of fire-worshipper Jaṭilas and the Sākiyas. Not certainly because of the intimacy of the Buddha with the former or his relationship with the latter but because both these people were already familiar, to a large extent, with the Doctrine and Discipline taught by him. The former were a sect renowned for their acts of philanthropy and belief in the Doctrine of Karma and the latter were familiar with a system of government having much in common with that obtaining in the Saṃgha.

11. Subjects for study in a Vihāra

We have already observed that apart from its philanthropic works the Buddhist Vihāra took up in right earnest the teaching work for its own members as well as for those from among the laity who had any desire to receive education therefrom. It had,

therefore, to be organised on the ideals of a residential university for the monastic members only and appeared as a day school for the laity; and its teachers were selected from those monks who were highly cultured, experienced and educated. They came mostly from the Jaṭila sages who had formulated the Upanishads in their former school and after their conversion by the Buddha, formed his first Saṃgha. Therefore, it will not be out of place here to refer briefly to the various branches of knowledge which were taught in these Vihāras by the Saṃgha teachers—Upajjhāyas and Ācariyas—to their respective pupils. These teachers dealt with special subjects in which they were experts and taught them to their pupils who wanted to specialise in them (Culla-vagga, Chap. IV). Again, the teachers of allied subjects had their seats arranged in close proximity to one another and those teaching subjects different in character had their seats placed in different apartments. The pupils who came from the families of lay devotees had their names and addresses enrolled on the registers of the Vihāra as will appear from a rule requiring a visitor monk to learn this fact on his first arrival at a Vihāra (Sekha sammatāni Kulāni pucchitabbāni. Culla Vagga, Chap. VIII § 1). Not only these lay pupils learnt secular subjects but also discourses on the Dhamma and Vinaya in these classes. This becomes evident from a rule on Vassa Vāsa to the effect that the monks were allowed to break the vow (of Vassa Vāsa) on the ground that they had to go to a layman to learn a particular Suttanta likely to be lost in the community of Bhikkhus. [M.V., Chap. III § 5]

From the Cullavagga we learn the names of subjects that were taught in the 'Vihāra'. In the list given in Chap. IV § 4 'Tiracchānakathā' appears to be one of them. It is not any one subject but comprises various branches of knowledge relating to worldly matters. These might come under what is appropriately denominated as Aparā Vidyā or Tiracchāna vijjā as opposed to 'Parā Vidyā' which relates to the knowledge of spiritual matters leading to the realisation of 'Nibbāna'. It can fairly be

assumed that such knowledge of worldly things was ordinarily imparted to laymen who came to the Vihāra in quest of them for earning their livelihood in the world.¹ With reference to 'Tiracchānakathā' we are told in Chap. V § 6 of Mahāvagga that it included the following topics : (1) Tales of kings (rājakathā), (2) Tales of robbers (corakathā), (3) Tales of ministers (mahāmattakathā), (4) Tales of war (senākathā), (5) Tales of battles (Yuddhakathā), (6) Tales of food, drink and clothes (Annapānavatthakathā), (7) Tales of relations and acquaintances (Ñātikathā), (8) Tales of villages and towns (Nagarajanapada kathā), (9) Tales of women (Itthikathā), (10) Tales of heroes (Surakathā), (11) Speculations about the creation of the land or sea (Samuddakkhāyikaṃ), (12) Discussions about the existence or non-existence of the self (Ittibhāvabhava kathā), etc. In fact, the 'Akkhānas' in verse which were narrated and sung by the bards for the education of common people in villages from pre-Buddhistic times were the sources of these subjects and their topics. Later on, the 'Jātakas' which developed in the Buddhist Samgha were practically drawn from these Akkhānas. King Pasenadi, it is said, being unsuccessful in his wars against Ajātasattu sought the advice of Bhikkhus in a monastery for learning a better method of forming battle array and eventually with such knowledge gained in a Vihāra, he defeated Ajātasattu and took him prisoner [Vaddhaki Sukara Jātaka No 283].

The Aṅguttara Nikāya further furnishes us a list of Theras and Theris who held the topmost places in certain subjects for which they were given the title 'agga' along with the mention of their respective subjects by the Buddha. The list is significant, in that it shows that these branches of knowledge were not only known to certain Theras and Theris but were actually sought by many in the very life-time of the Master for study and culture. We give below a few names from the list as follows [P-I. Ch. XIV, pp 23-26 P.T.S.] :

¹ It must be definitely understood that these subjects were never meant for Bhikkhus and that those who were in charge of them merely discussed them with a view to bringing out their morals.

1. Aññakoṇḍanna—The head of those who were renowned for their experience (rattaññūnaṃ aggo), *i.e.*, general knowledge.
2. Sāriputta—The head of those who were vastly learned (mahāpaññānaṃ aggo), *i.e.*, specialised knowledge.
3. Mahāmoggallāna—The head of those possessing magical powers (iddhimantānaṃ aggo), *i.e.*, knowledge of supernatural power.
4. Anuruddha—The head of those having supernatural vision (dibbcakkhūnaṃ aggo), *i.e.*, knowledge of things that are coming to be.
5. Lakuntabhaddiya—The head of those who had musical voice (manjussarānaṃ aggo), *i.e.*, music.
6. Piṇḍolabhāradvāja—The head of those who had powerful voice (Sihavādikānaṃ aggo), *i.e.*, military art.
7. Puṇṇmantāniputta—The head of religious preachers (Dhamma kathikānaṃ aggo), *i.e.*, art of preaching.
8. Mahākaccāyana—The head of those who could expound short sayings into long essays (Sankhittena bhāsitaṃ vitthārena atthaṃ vibhājetānaṃ aggo), *i.e.* art of developing Suttas into Suttantas, etc.
9. Upasena Vaṅganta—The head of those who know the commentaries (Samantapāsādikānaṃ aggo).
10. Kumāra Kassapa—The head of those who could beautifully narrate stories (vatthukathikānaṃ aggo).
11. Sobhita—The head of those who mastered the subject on previous births (pubbenivāsānāsaṅgānaṃ aggo).

12. Upāli—The head of those who knew the Vinaya (Vinayadharāṇaṃ aggo).
13. Ānanda—The head of those who knew the Suttas (Bahussutāṇaṃ aggo).
14. Sāgata—The head of those who were skilful in creating heat and cold simultaneously (Tejo-dhātukusalāṇaṃ aggo) *i.e.* Scientific knowledge.

The titles mentioned against the names of the Bhikkhus occupying the topmost places in their respective subjects will undoubtedly show the vastness of the cultural activities systematically carried on in the monasteries of the Buddhist Saṃgha. All these Theras were the immediate disciples of the Buddha and, therefore, the list proves the early existence of the Saṃgha as the centre of learning and discipline.

Even if a part of what is stated regarding its cultural activities be true it will show how great must have been the regard for monks of common people seeking knowledge from them and why pupils so obediently followed their teachers with humility and reverence in their endeavour to learn their particular subjects. In every branch of these studies the example of the Master must have been the guiding factor to his disciples for attaining the topmost place therein and the best days of the Buddhist Saṃgha must have been marked by such intellectual and spiritual activities. 'Navakamma'¹ was also a subject which we find mentioned on the Stūpa of Bharhut and in the 'Milindapañha'. It was the knowledge of erecting, repairing and supervising building works of the Saṃgha and was imparted by the Saṃgha teachers. Engineering thus, though referred to in later works, might have been also a subject of study in these early monasteries.

¹ Bhadatasa Aya Isipālītasā Bhānakassa Navakamīkassa dānaṃ.—N. W. Quadrant, 1st Pillar; Bharhut stūpa. 2nd Cen. B.C.

Kissa pana ime bhikkhu uddisanti paripucchanti Suttam Geyyam Vedallam, Navakammena palibujjhanti—Milinda. p. 263. 1 Cen. A.D.

CHAPTER III

ORDINATION OF BOYS

1. Ordination of Nanda and Rahula

When the Buddha at the instance of his father king Suddhodana, paid a visit to Kapilavatthu in the first year of his mission, he had Nanda, his brother, and Rāhula, his son, admitted into the Saṃgha through his disciples and did not ordain them himself. He asked the venerable Sāriputta to confer Pabbajjā along with Upasampadā both of which were given at that time simultaneously on Rāhula in accordance with the Tisarāṇa formula for men henceforth to be applied also to the case of all boys who became Sāmaṇeras. Deeply moved by this act of his son king Suddhodana is said to have made a formal prayer to the Buddha that the process of conversion being an extremely painful one for the parents, permission should be obtained from them before ordaining their sons. This was granted and a rule was made to that effect and its violation constituted a Dukkata offence in the Saṃgha.—M.V.I § 54.

2. Upasampada not to be conferred below the age of twenty

In the beginning, therefore, the Saṃgha did not make any difference in respect of the bestowal of Pabbajjā and Upasampadā between adults and boys below the age of twenty. Attracted by the comfortable and commodious life of the Bhikkhus which became a matter of gossip among the people of Rājagaha, some of the guardians of boys concluded that instead of being educated in the arts of writing (lekhā) arithmetic (gaṇanā) and sculpture (rupaṃ), etc., if their wards were admitted into the Order they would be happier and feel more comfortable in life. They, therefore, allowed these boys to join the Order and receive Pabbajjā and

Upasampadā there. But boys were boys all the world over and their manners proving unbecoming of monks, it was laid down that no person below the age of twenty should be ordained and at the same time, it should also be observed that none below the age of fifteen received Pabbajjā. From the age of fifteen up to twenty the boys should remain in the Saṃgha as Sāmaṇeras attached to Upajjhāyas who gave them Pabbajjā.—M.V.I § 49, 50.

Deplorable circumstances made it imperative that even boys below the age of fifteen should also be admitted into the Order in view of their situation otherwise proving fatal. But they were to be taken in under a special kind of Pabbajjā called Kākuṭṭepaka Pabbajjā after which the only work which was assigned to them was to scare away crows from the Vihāra compound—the task for which they were unmistakably capable.—M.V.I § 51.

When the Blessed One was sojourning at Sāvattī in the monastery of Jetavana a boy was sent to the venerable Sāriputta from the family of a certain lay disciple of his for 'pabbajjā'. But, as it was not possible, according to the Saṃgha rule to maintain two Sāmaṇeras at a time, the venerable Sāriputta could not confer 'pabbajjā' on the boy. (*vide* § 52 M.V.). To enable the venerable monk to confer 'pabbajjā' on the boy the rule was modified to the effect that a competent monk might retain two or more Sāmaṇeras at a time if they were kept under proper teaching and discipline.—M.V.I § 55.

3. Discipline for Samaneras

The system of discipline meant for the Sāmaṇeras was somewhat different from that of the Bhikkhus. It consisted in the observance of the ten precepts only called 'Dasa sikkhāpadāni' which were (1) Abstaining from taking life (Pānātipātā veramani), (2) Abstaining from receiving what is not given (Adinnadānā-veramani), (3) Abstaining from sexual intercourse (Abrahmacariyā veramani), (4) Abstaining from speaking falsehood (Musāvādā

veramani), (5) Abstaining from taking spirituous liquors (Sura-meraya-majja-pamādatṭhānā veramani), (6) Abstaining from taking food in the afternoon (Vikālabhojanā veramani), (7) Abstaining from visiting the places of amusements (naccagīta-vādita-visukadassanā veramani), (8) Abstaining from using unguents, flowers, garlands, etc. (mālāgandhavelepanadhāraṇa-maṇḍana-vibhusanaṭṭhānā veramani), (9) Abstaining from high and spacious beds (uccāsayana-mahāsayanā veramani) and (10) Abstaining from accepting gold and silver (jātaruparajata paṭig-gahanā veramani). Apart from this code which in reality was an abridged form of the Pātimokkha (Sila Vinaya), the rules of the Mahāvagga (Ācāra Vinaya) were certainly not meant for their observance and we are not told if they had to go through the lessons given by their Upajjhāyas under 'Nissaya' which came into force only after 'Upasampadā,' i.e., when a sāmaṇera became a Bhikkhu in a full-fledged form.

4. Punishment for refractory boys

Punishment in the shape of 'āvaraṇa' or restraint had to be meted out to those who did not live according to the requirements of the Saṃgha and offended against its rules. They were restrained from living in or visiting the places they frequented within the monastery. (Yattha yattha vā vasati yattha yattha vā paṭikamati tattha āvaraṇam kātum.) But the lay devotees were highly dissatisfied with this mode of punishment as they could not offer food to the lads who badly required it at the appointed places and in consequence, this rule had to be withdrawn in respect of delicate boys by the order of the Buddha.--M. V. I § 57.

Again, the punishment of Āvaraṇa could only be inflicted by the Upajjhāyas of the Sāmaṇeras concerned and not by any other Bhikkhu of the Order. Also, the boys could not be threatened with expulsion by any one other than the 'Theras' to whom they were attached, as such threats on the part of the Cha Vaggiya Bhikkhus led to disorder and mismanagement in the Saṃgha.—M. V. I §§ 58, 59.

Practices of immoral conduct on the part of certain novices led to the promulgation of the ordinance that if a novice be found committing any one of the following ten crimes he must be immediately expelled from the Order :

(1) Taking life, (2) Stealing, *i.e.*, taking what has not been given, (3) Violation of Brahmachariya, (4) Drinking liquor, (5) Speaking falsehood, (6), (7), (8) Speaking against the Buddha, Dhamma, and Samgha, (9) Entertaining false views and (10) Committing rape on nuns.—M.V.1 § 60.

Thus we see that with the admission of Nanda and Rāhula as novices in the very first year of the Tathāgata's mission, the initiation of boys in the Order began from its very early stage. The practice of Brahmachariya by boys in the elementary stage of their education amounting to leading a strict religious life was a thing of common occurrence in ancient India, but the continuation of such a life as a monk with yellow robes on was very uncommon being confined to certain classes of ascetics who lived in forests away from society. It was perhaps the Buddha who for the first time sheltered within his fold of brotherhood the juvenile members of humanity in his endeavour to uplift society while carrying on his activities in its midst.

It will appear from the rules regarding the discipline of novices that the Buddha was by no means lenient towards them. For, certain offences as speaking ill of the Buddha, Dhamma and Samgha, etc., which evoked only milder punishment in the case of Bhikkhus fully allowing them to retain their membership of the Order, caused in the case of novices complete expulsion from it.

CHAPTER IV

RULES OF DEBARMENT

1. Saṃgha not to admit the idlers, the diseased and those having liabilities for others

Evidently the Buddhist Saṃgha, on account of its originality of policy and new methods of work, was much better off than the other religious communities and becoming more and more popular not only with the people but also with the custodians of law and order, *viz.*, the kings and their courtiers in which bankers were also included in those days. Apart from the Parivāsa ceremony, further restriction was put on the admission of undesirables who sooner or later proved to be a great handicap. Under the general notion that the precepts which the Sākyaputtiya Samanas kept and the life they led were commodious enjoying good meals and sleeping on beds protected from winds, etc., as also for the fact that Jivaka, the celebrated physician of king Bimbisāra, attended on the members of the Saṃgha in times of illness, people joined it in large numbers when ill and left it after their recovery. The law was, therefore, laid down to the effect that men suffering from diseases such as leprosy (*kutṭham*), boil (*gaṇḍo*) dry leprosy (*kilāso*), consumption (*soso*) and fit (*apamāro*) should be debarred from joining the Order—M.V.I § 39.

In the interest of the state soldiers in active service had to be excluded. A robber openly wearing the emblem of his crime like Angulimāla, a robber who broke out of jail, a thief whose name was written in the palace and condemned to death, a person punished by scourging, a person punished by branding, a person who was in debt, a runaway slave and also a guild like the Smith who having quarrelled with his family joined the Order, had also to be debarred from entering the Order

evidently in view of the liabilities they bore to the state and society.¹ It is to be noted that all these people belonging to the class mentioned above were actually taken in and ordained by the Saṃgha but in deference to the popular opinion for which the Buddha had great regard they were subsequently excluded. A few facts from the text might also be noted here in connection with 'soldiers in active service' and 'writing'. The Minister in charge of the army (*senānāyaka mahāmatta*) grumbled at not finding certain soldiers in the army and complained to king Bimbisāra that they had joined the Saṃgha. King Bimbisāra referred the matter to the Minister in charge of Law (*Vohārika mahāmatta*) who said in reply that these soldiers should be put to death along with those who were involved in their conversion. The term 'lekha' occurs in connection with thieves written in king's palace. It appears that 'writing' was then looked upon as unholy to be used only with criminals, etc., and not good men. —M.V.I §§ 40-48.

2. The Saṃgha to consist of members who were fit both
physically and morally

(A) The following class of people should be permanently excluded from the Order and expelled if found therein :

- (1) One having sexual intercourse with a nun.
- (2) A eunuch monk who approaches low people for immoral purposes.
- (3) One having stealthily joined the Order asking for Upasampadā.

¹ (a) na bhikkhave *rājabhaṭṭo* pabbājetabbo
 (b) na bhikkhave *dhajabaddho coro* pabbājetabbo
 (c) na bhikkhave *kārabhedako coro* pabbājetabbo
 (d) na bhikkhave *likhitako coro* pabbājetabbo
 (e) na bhikkhave *kaṣāhato katadaṇḍakammo* pabbājetabbo
 (f) na bhikkhave *lakkaṇāhata katadaṇḍakammo* pabbājetabbo
 (g) na bhikkhave *iṇāyiko* pabbājetabbo
 (h) na *dāso* pabbājetabbo
 (i) *anujānāmi bhikkhave saṃghaṃ apaloketuṃ bhaṇḍukammāyā ti*

- (4) Animals endowed with human consciousness as the nāgas.
- (5) A matricide.
- (6) A parricide.
- (7) A murderer of an Arahāt.
- (8) A creator of schism in the Saṃgha.
- (9) One shedding blood of an Arahāt.
- (10) A hermaphrodite.

(B) The following to be debarred from obtaining Upasampadā but allowed to retain their 'Pabbajjā' in the Order :

- (1) One having no Upajjhāya.
- (2) One having Saṃgha as Upajjhāya.
- (3) One with a portion of the Saṃgha as Upajjhāya.
- (4) One with a eunuch as Upajjhāya.
- (5) One with a person who had stealthily attached himself to the Saṃgha as Upajjhāya.
- (6) One with a person gone over to the heretical sect as Upajjhāya.
- (7) One with an animal as Upajjhāya.
- (8) One with a matricide as Upajjhāya.
- (9) One with a parricide as Upajjhāya.
- (10) One having no alms bowl.
- (11) One having no robes and walking naked.
- (12) One having neither bowl nor robes.
- (13) One having borrowed alms bowl.
- (14) One having borrowed robes.
- (15) One having borrowed robes and alms bowl.

—M.V.I §§ 69, 70.

It appears, therefore, that certain 'pabbajitas' who did not come under Upajjhāya were allowed to live in the Saṃgha but not allowed to take part in its business or its teaching works. They were looked upon as strangers only who participated in Saṃgha's food at meal times.

(C) The following who were physically unfit were also debarred from joining the Order :

- (1) One whose hands were cut off
- (2) One whose feet were cut off
- (3) One whose hands and feet were cut off
- (4) One whose ears were cut off
- (5) One whose nose was cut off
- (6) One whose ears and nose were cut off
- (7) One whose fingers were cut off
- (8) One whose thumbs were cut off
- (9) One whose tendons (of the feet) were cut off
- (10) One who had hands like a snake's hood.
- (11) One who was a humpback.
- (12) A dwarf.
- (13) A person having a goitre.
- (14) A person having been branded.
- (15) A person having been scourged.
- (16) A proclaimed robber.
- (17) A person having elephantiasis.
- (18) A person afflicted with bad illness.
- (19) A person giving offence to those who saw him.
- (20) A one-eyed man.
- (21) A person with crooked limb.
- (22) A lame person.
- (23) A person who was paralysed on one side.
- (24) A cripple (pidha sappi).
- (25) One weak from age.
- (26) A blind person.
- (27) A dumb person.
- (28) A deaf person.
- (29) A deaf and dumb person.
- (30) A blind, deaf and dumb person.—M.V.1 § 71.

The list given above, though it pretends to be fully exhaustive even with repetitions, is not really so formidable as it appears to be at first sight. Put in a few words it reduces to this that

the criminal, one who is morally guilty, certain species of animals and men suffering from bad illnesses and bodily defects were not allowed to join the Order and expelled if found in it. At the same time one who was himself eligible as not belonging to any of the types mentioned above but with no Upajjhāya or an Upajjhāya who was not himself eligible, was dealt with more leniently being denied the privilege of receiving Upasampadā but not of retaining 'Pabbajjā' received through some agency other than the Upajjhāya of the Saṃgha. He was an outsider and did not belong to the Order of Bhikkhus. The recruitment of Bhikkhus thus took place in the Order from among the best type of men, strong both physically and morally, through recognised teachers only without whose aid residence in a Vihāra was practically of no avail. It is, however, evident that intellectual deficiency proved no bar to the membership of the Order which took upon itself the task not only of supplying this deficiency by its system of teaching but also of taking definite steps towards the advancement of learning by throwing open all the doors of knowledge to entire humanity with no idea of gain or remuneration.

CHAPTER V

DEVELOPMENT OF UPASAMPADĀ CEREMONY

1. Further enactment of rules on 'Nissaya'

Probably at a later stage in its history another rule had to be added on to those of 'Nissaya' evidently as its need was strongly felt in the interest of the Saṃgha. It was to the effect that no Bhikkhu should bestow Nissaya on or receive Nissaya from another Bhikkhu who was shameless (Alajji), whose character was, therefore, to be judged by the monk concerned by associating with him for 3 or 4 days previous to the bestowal or acceptance of Nissaya.—M.V.I § 72.

2. The Upasampada ceremony in its final form

At the time of proclamation at the Upasampadā ceremony it was necessary to announce the name of the teacher (Upajjhāya) but Ānanda could not utter the name of Mahā Kassapa whom he revered at the proclamation of the Upasampadā of a pupil sent by him. It was, therefore, laid down that the family name of the Upajjhāya might be substituted for his own at the proclamation of the Upasampadā ceremony.

Further, when the number of novices was more than one the rule was issued to the effect that more novices than one might be ordained under the same proclamation.—M.V I. § 74.

A review of the rules regarding the Upasampadā ceremony or admission of novices to the Order as Bhikkhus would thus bring to light the several stages in its procedure which finally became as follows :

(a) A competent monk had to be selected by the candidate or some other monk for instructing him (the pupil) as to how the undermentioned points should be answered properly :

(1) Whether the pupil monk was free from diseases as set forth in the rules.

(2) What kind of man he was.

(3) If he had obtained permission from his parents.

(4) If he was twenty years old (the age might be calculated from the time of conception instead of actual birth).

(5) If he had with him the necessary robes and bowl.

(6) What his name was, and

(7) What the name of his teacher (Upajjhāya) was.

(b) The candidate should be instructed in all the above points not in the assembly but outside it. The instructor should first come to the assembly and inform it of the object and if the assembly permitted, the pupil came next.

(c) The declaration ceremony by the pupil of his taking refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṃgha and the making of a formal prayer before the Saṃgha for his Upasampadā.

(d) A competent monk rising from his seat and asking the pupil questions on the seven points noted above.

(e) The pupil satisfying them, a declaration (ñatti) was made by a competent monk to the effect that so and so under so and so as Upajjhāya was praying for Upasampadā from the Saṃgha.

(f) The Saṃgha remaining silent after the proclamation was made by a competent monk for three times, that the pupil under so and so as Upajjhāya received the ordination being permitted by the Saṃgha, the conferment of Upasampadā was sanctioned.—M.V.I § 76.

The Upasampadā ordination was then registered by the following acts of the Saṃgha :

(1) The measuring of the shadow to find the exact time and also taking a note of it.

(2) Noting the date of the month and the season of the year.

(3) Noting the part of the day.

(4) Noting the entire procedure (Samgiti) observed in the ceremony, and

(5) The announcement of the four Resources (Cattaro nissayā).
—M.V.I § 77.

The four interdictions which were non-atonable offences were also to be brought to the notice (akaraṇiyāni ācikkhitum) of the pupil who was now a full-fledged Bhikkhu being entitled to the full membership of the Order. This was done in consequence of a certain member violating Brahmachariya after meeting his former wife when going on his begging rounds just after his Upasampadā.

Besides the mention of the four interdictions to the newly admitted Bhikkhu, the rules further required that he should go about on his begging round not singly but being accompanied by another monk (dutiyaṃ dātum).

These interdictions agreeing identically with the four Pārājikas, viz., that a Bhikkhu should be expelled from the Order if he commits (1) any kind of sexual intercourse, (2) if he accepts what was not given, (3) if he intentionally takes life, and (4) attributes to himself any superhuman faculty, establish with certainty the respective dates of the Pātimokkha and the Mahāvagga rules.

It is evident from the context that these conditions (ṭhānāni) to be fulfilled by a monk had already existed as a text in archaic language and that a particular occasion only necessitated their repetition under designations which could be easily understood by ordinary people. 'Pārājikā' was thus interpreted as Akaraniyāni Ṭhānāni. This explains the different lines on which the development of the Pātimokkha and the rules of the Mahāvagga took place. The Pātimokkha was formulated in the beginning as a text, but the rules of the Mahāvagga arose later to make it effective.—M.V.I § 78.

3. Privilege of a Bhikkhu after Upasampada

The acts which were considered as offences in the Saṃgha leading to temporary suspension were (1) Refusing to see an offence as an offence, (2) Refusing to atone for an offence, and (3) Refusing to renounce a false doctrine. A Bhikkhu

committing any one of the above might still be retained in the Saṃgha if he signified his desire to undo the wrong any time in future. But if he ultimately declined and the Saṃgha was not unanimous in its verdict, the offence was no offence and he was allowed to remain in the Saṃgha as a pure Bhikkhu.—M.V.I § 79

4. A short summary of the aforesaid sections :

Section 79 brings to a close the chapter on what is designated in the text as 'The Admission to the Order of Bhikkhus'¹ practically giving, as we have seen, an account of the growth of the Saṃgha as a centre of learning and discipline. We shall, therefore, recount in brief what we have set down in details regarding this history of the Saṃgha's culture.

After his enlightenment, the Buddha quite naturally had his doubts as to the efficacy of converting the worldly-minded to his Doctrine and hence his whole energy was directed to the conversion of those who had already renounced the world in the hope of a better existence and were practically at a much higher stage of spiritual attainment. The Pañca Vaggiyas, Yasa and his friends, the Bhaddavaggiyas and the Jaṭilas were all more or less disciples of this type. The Upasampadā ordination was then conferred by a very simple ceremonial, if we can call it so, consisting of an address of welcome by the Blessed One containing only two words 'Ehi Bhikkhu' or 'Etha Bhikkhavo' according as the number of converts was singular or plural. The applicant or applicants thus addressed immediately became a Bhikkhu or Bhikkhus without having to undergo the many formalities introduced later.

Shortly after the despatch of the first batch of Bhikkhus who in their turn began to bring in a large number of disciples to be ordained by the Master entailing on him unnecessary trouble and worry, the rule was issued empowering every Bhikkhu to ordain in behalf of the Buddha all such disciples under the 'Tisarāṇa'

¹ 'Pabbajjā and Upasampadā'

formula, wherever they might be found. The Blessed One, however, continued to ordain them by that original mode of address, though such ordination took place only in exceptional cases, as long as his earthly career lasted.

In the second as well as in the third year of his mission when the Buddha remained at Rājagaha for a long time much to the dissatisfaction of the people who complained that his activities were causing depopulation to the country, stricter laws were promulgated in the Order for the restriction of the ill-advised masses that sought the Saṅgha for better care and protection. The entire community of disciples already divided into groups of teachers and pupils required for its discipline the manifold rules on duties of a pupil and a teacher towards each other known under the designations of Saddhivihārika and Upajjhāya Vatta respectively. And, except in this that the Upajjhāya was empowered to confer on his Saddhivihārika 'Pabbajjā and Upasampadā,' for general conduct each was accountable to the other.

Not very long after this, the example of a disheartened Brahman who grew pale and emaciated by not getting Pabbajjā from any one of these Upajjhāyas, moved the Buddha to introduce into the Order the democratic form of government in its every transaction by having the rules of the "Ñatticattuttha Kamma" or "Settlement of affairs by a proclamation repeated four times," strictly applied thereto.

The minimum number of 'Bhikkhus' to compose such an assembly varied from 4 to 20 according to the importance of the matter under discussion, while the Upasampadā ordination was to be conferred under the Ñatticattuttha Kamma by an assembly of not less than ten Bhikkhus. The new system effected a radical change in the whole outlook of Saṅgha affairs having entirely done away with favouritism of individual members and leaving everything to the judgment of wise and unbiassed monks forming the assembly.

Concrete cases of misapplication being found, Pabbajjā and Upasampadā were differentiated from each other and not given simultaneously. The award of Pabbajjā or mere initiation remained in the hands of individual teachers as before and the conferment of Upasampadā at the express prayer of the candidate, was vested in the assembly.

Sooner or later it was discovered that the Upajjhāya who was competent to train disciples in their elementary stage was ill-equipped with matters necessary for higher culture for which he sometimes abandoned his pupils to cultivate himself self-exertion and contemplation leading to better spiritual attainments.

To compensate this loss of Upajjhāya though it might be for the time being only, the next important change which was introduced into the Saṃgha was the appointment of the Ācariya in addition to the Upajjhāya.

In the absence of the Upajjhāya, the Ācariya was the higher teacher or the professor capable of training his disciples in everything they required. But when the Upajjhāya came back they had to attend the classes of both the teachers and the terms Ācariya and Upajjhāya became relative ones. With reference to their qualifications it may be observed that in particular the teacher was expected to command obedience of his pupils being able to infuse into their minds the inner spirit of the Doctrine, while the pupils had to give him their 'Nissaya' or 'declaration of dependence' being zealous, ready-witted and submissive.

This bond of dependence given by the pupil to his teacher would continue to exist between them until the pupil possessed the virtues of the teacher rendering himself competent to teach other pupils after a period of five years fixed for studentship.

Thus, we see that the work of teaching continually went on in the 'Saṃgha' being first laid in the hands of the Upajjhāya through whom the pupil received 'Pabbajjā' and at a developed stage 'Upasampadā' after which his career of studentship continued according to the terms of Nissaya under the same Upajjhāya and an additional teacher called Ācariya up to such

time after a period of five years, as he qualified himself as a Saṃgha teacher capable of training other pupils. At the head of them was the Buddha who embodying in his person all that was great and good would inspire now and then his assembly of monks with a passion for learning and discipline as the only means of attaining the highest goal of 'Nirvāṇa' the Bliss Eternal.

Boys of tender ages were also admitted to the Order through a special system of Pabbajjā known as Sāmanera or Kākuṭṭepaka, as the case might be, and were taught to practise the ten precepts only without being required to attend the classes of the Upajjhāyas and learn the lessons imparted therein.

In conformity with the high moral standard of the Saṃgha further restrictions on admission were made by debarring particular sets of people who were immoral or had any liability to the society or to the state, such as soldiers, criminals, guilds, etc. Also men suffering from bodily defects or diseases and addicted to vice, were not allowed to join the Order. Thus, the whole body of the Saṃgha discarding everything that was vile and defective presented a very strongly organised centre of learning and discipline with the Buddha as the central radiator.¹

There is absolutely no ground for accepting the view that the growth of the Buddhist Saṃgha into a centre of learning did not take place till some time after the demise of the Buddha. We have abundant evidence in the body of the text itself that the control of the Saṃgha by the majority of its members came into existence towards the latter part of the life of the Buddha. But, in the beginning it was unanimity of opinion that truly settled its affairs.

The very last section, § 79, referring as it does to this unanimity of opinion as the only factor in determining the offence of a Bhikkhu must, therefore, be dated at a very early stage in the history of the Saṃgha-rules.

¹ Published in Buddha Day Number of *Buddhist India* now defunct, from Rangoon in July, 1927.

BOOK II
CO-ORDINATION OF SAMGHA-UNITS
(Uposatha and Pātimokkha)

CHAPTER I

EARLY PHASE OF DEMOCRACY

1. Brief reference to Uposatha and Pātimokkha

In the Aṅguttara Nikāya (I-Devaduta Vagga, III, § 37) there is a reference to the observance of Uposatha as a very old ceremony extolled much before the gods by Sakka when he was exhorting them to take notice of this ceremony if they wanted to become king of gods like him :

Cātuddasī pañcadasi yāva pakkhassa aṭṭhami
Pāṭihāriyapakkhañ ca aṭṭhaṅgasusamāgatam
Uposatham upavaseyya yo passa mādiso naro.

That it was essentially a religious ceremony meant for laymen is then made clear by the Buddha who said that the avowed purpose of this ceremony was to go to heaven and not 'Nirvana'. It further appears from his instruction to the lady disciple, the virtuous Visākhā (Aṅg. III, § 70) who came to him for instructions while observing Uposatha by fasting, that the best mode of observing this ceremony was to keep the eight precepts out of the ten intended for the monks, on two days, in each fortnight, viz., the 8th and 14th or 15th.

From Pañca Uposatha Jātaka No. 491 we learn that Uposatha was a very ancient observance which laymen kept to restrain the senses 'Kāma', 'Kodha', 'Lobhā', 'Mohā', 'Mada', etc., and acquire merit thereby. It was a pre-Buddhist ceremony coming down from the Vedic times, laid down for both recluses and laymen for the purification of the body and the mind.

“Tasmā hi nārī ca naro ca sīlavā aṭṭhaṅgupetaṃ
upavassūposatham
Puññāni katvāna sukhudriyāni aninditā saggaṃ upenti
thānaṃ”

Pātimokkha was a ceremony intended for monks. The term '*pātimokkha*' is best derived from the word '*mokṣa*' meaning freedom with the prefix '*prati*' which reverses its meaning when joined to it (cf. *pratisrota*, *pratigāmi*, *pratikūla*, etc.) *Pratimokṣa*, an adjective, meaning 'opposed to freedom' 'bound down', when changed to a noun becomes *prātimokṣa* which in Pāli takes the form '*pātimokkha*' meaning that which is 'binding upon' and it is exactly in this sense that the code '*Pātimokkha*' is used. In the *Jātaka* verses we find sentences like this '*taṃ saṅgaram paṭimokkhaṃ na muttam*, i.e., that contract is still binding upon me and I am not free (Jataka No. 513). The provisions of Pāli *Pātimokkha* are binding upon all the members of the Order.

In the days before the Buddha *Pātimokkha* consisted in some general instructions given by religious reformers to their bands of disciples every six years as testified to by the *Mahā Apadāna Suttanta*. The recital of the following verses constituted the *Pātimokkha* ceremony of the previous Buddhas.

Khanti paramaṃ tapo titikkha
 Nibbanam paramaṃ vadanti Buddha
 Na hi pabbajjītot parupaghati
 Samāno na hoti paraṃ vihetṭhayaṇo—
 Sabbapāpassa akaranam kusalassa upasampada
 Sacittapariyodapanam etaṃ Buddhāna sasanam—
 Anupavādo anupaghatō patimokkhe ca saṃvaro
 mattaññutā ca bhaddasmiṃ pantañ ca sayanasanam
 Adhicitte ca āyogo etaṃ Buddhāna sasanam.

Long-suffering patience is the highest form of penance, the highest state is the attainment of Nibbana as declared by the Buddhas. One is not verily a homeless anchorite if he oppresses living beings and he is not a monk by harassing people.

The avoidance of all evil acquirement of merits and purification of one's own mind are the teachings of Buddhas.

Not reviling, not striking, but restraint according to the *Pātimokkha*, moderation in eating, living in solitude and

application to the cultivation of higher thought, all these constitute the Doctrine of the Buddhas.

These gāthas were later on incorporated with the gāthas of the Dhammapada.

The Bodhisattva-prātimokṣa sūtra of the Mahāyānists containing many rules of the Prātimokṣa type mixed up with admonitions characteristic of the Mahāyāna texts, contains rules regarding the duties of a disciple towards his Ācārya, Upādhyāya, Sahadhar-mika, etc. It also contains sermons on dāna kṣānti, self-preservation, the duties of gr̥hi-bodhisattvas and so forth.¹

2. Monks to congregate at the Uposatha ceremony to be observed
by the recital of the Pātimokkha

In particular instances the Buddha seemed to have appropriated perhaps, only the designation of some of the well-recognised customs and manners of his time which, in prescribing for his Saṃgha, he modified and altered to such an extent that except in their names they were perfectly new and original. Such was the case with the observance of the Uposatha ceremony which he introduced into his Saṃgha at the suggestion of King Bimbisāra of Magadha in pursuance of the custom prevalent in other schools such as the Jainas and the Paribbājakas who by discussing their respective Dhamma on this particular occasion before laymen gained in strength with large numbers of adherents (M. V. II § 1). But, the Buddha's injunction to his disciples regarding the observance of this ceremony of Uposatha was that, instead of discussing the Dhamma which was also conceded later on among themselves only, they should recite on this particular day the 'Sikkhāpadas' embodying the code of rules for their own guidance, to be henceforward known as the 'Pātimokkha' (M. V. II § 3).

The day for the observance of Uposatha fell according to the prevailing custom, on the 8th, 14th or the 15th day of a bright or a dark fortnight, but in the Saṃgha it was to be held only

¹ N. Dutta, *Aspects of Mahāyāna Buddhism*, pp 290-91.

once in a fortnight either on the 14th or the 15th and not on the 8th (M. V. 1 § 4). The Bhikkhus were further enjoined to see during the recital of the Pātimokkha that they were pure in respect of all the provisions enumerated therein which must have been ready at the time in question. It may be rightly inferred that since the inauguration of Ācariyas and Upajjhayas the general body of the Bhikkhus were being enlightened on the several rules of the Pātimokkha and its commentary, in the assemblies which were primarily held in the Buddhist Samgha from time to time. Therefore, to the Buddha who was ever ready to recast the old systems of procedure in a manner more worthy of current environments it occurred for the first time that instead of discussing the mere theories of the Dhamma before laymen, the more important practical rules of the Discipline as chalked out in the Pātimokkha should be fully recognised and given effect to by all the members of the community who must regularly meet in the assemblies every fortnight in celebration of the Uposatha. It was exactly here that the originality of the religion of Sakya-Muni, later on designated as Buddhism, lay.

In the course of our study we shall see further that 'Uposatha' literally meaning 'to live near' stood in the community in the sense of 'assembling together in a special manner' which made for unity among its members and not in the sense of acquisition of merit by performance of religious injunctions as it implied among laymen.

As to the effect of this Uposatha on the members of the Order we may observe that the different Samghas which quickly grew up in large numbers all over India, especially in the North, freely transacting their respective business in very different manners had now to mind a particular work which concerned every individual of every Samgha in a way common to all. The following statement from 'Janavasava Suttanta' of the Dīgha Nikāya will give us an idea as to the number of different places over which the Master travelled in a never-fatigued manner, times without number, extensively making disciples :—

“Tena kho pana samayena Bhagavā parito parito janapadesu paricārake abbhātite kālakate uppattisu vyākaroti : ‘Kasi Kosalesu, Vajji Mallesu, Ceti Vam̐sesu, Kuru Pañcālesu, Maccha Sūrasenesu ti’”.

These were : Kāsi, Kosala, Vajji, Malla, Ceti, Vam̐sa, Kuru, Pañcāla, Maccha and Surasena. Thus at a particular time in all the Saṃghārāmas the same procedure was to be followed by the monks of all denominations belonging to different parts of India and by this method they would be drawn together faster and faster into a Saṃgha *par excellence* strong enough to resist everything that stood in the way of their attaining what they thought to be the highest good for mankind. Later on, this tie of union was made all the stronger by providing within the acts of the ceremony rules facilitating hearty reception of monks coming from distant places and restricting movements of residential monks from a Vihāra and its fixed jurisdiction on the day of the Uposatha. Thus, inter-communication among residents and visitors was made easy for creating what might be looked upon as the ‘Fraternity in Buddhism’.

The motive was no doubt to make them live together in peace and harmony. The system of government obtaining in the Saṃgha being of a pure democratic nature, individual opinion in it carried considerable weight which in no other community was considered so highly a deciding factor for conducting its business. Even, when it was expressed through the minority it had its value. This made the Saṃgha invincible and, as such, it was destined to work wonders in the history of the Indian people not very long after its inception.

3. Mode of recital of the Patimokkha at the Uposatha ceremony

The recital of the Pātimokkha which at first was the only item of business at the Uposatha ceremony was to be conducted in the following way :

The Saṃgha assembled for the purpose must be addressed by a venerable and competent monk in the following words :
“ Let the respectable assembly hear me. To-day is the 15th day

of the lunar fortnight set apart for holding the Uposatha. If the Saṃgha deems it fit let it observe the Uposatha and recite the Pātimokkha. In the first place, let the Saṃgha make sure that the purity of its individual members is well maintained and guarded.

I am going to recite the Pātimokkha which all of us present here must attentively hear and remember. If any one is guilty of any of the offences he must confess it, if not, let him remain silent and in this way the purity of the venerable members will be ascertained. The recital will be made three times and will be regarded as if it was addressed to the members individually. If any member wilfully conceals his offence then his action will amount to a deliberate utterance of falsehood which has been denounced in various ways by the Blessed One as a hindrance to the realisation of Nibbana. Therefore, Bhikkhus, with an eye to keep yourselves pure you must be frank in regard to your omission and commission."

This address to the members of the assembly was then followed by the recital of the Pātimokkha along with a sort of commentary on the words used in the text evidently because of its being composed in a language with which the members were not quite familiar—a fact undoubtedly pointing to the origin of the text in an archaic language prior to the formation of the Saṃghas in different places.

The recital of the Pātimokkha being over (i.e., Nidāna, 4 Parajikas, 12 Saṃghādisas and 2 Aniyata) the purity of the individual members was ascertained and the meeting then came to a close. If any offence was committed by any member it had to be atoned by confession and if no fault was committed nothing was done (M.V. II § 3).

4. Determination of boundaries of the Uposatha centres

With reference to the multiplications of the rules of Discipline which the Saṃgha introduced one after another, we have to take note of the fact that the determination of the many amendments

depended as much upon the actual carrying out of these rules with the co-operation of the members as upon a proper understanding of the spirit in which they were originally made. A transgression, wilful or otherwise on the part of the violator of a rule, was followed by a further modification of its application until its scope became large enough to bring the offender under its operation. To preserve the purity of the Saṃgha was the idea and not the laws for their own sake which grew up in a natural course out of a desire to check certain situations which threatened its existence and interfered with its scheduled works. It was largely the exigencies of circumstances that finally settled the code of the Vinaya. On the other hand, if a rule was found unworkable it was forthwith removed provided that the regulated lives of the Bhikkhus and their standard of morality were not affected thereby.

The date and the nature of the work of the Uposatha ceremony being fixed, the question arose as to where it should be held, it being taken for granted that there were different centres lying at distant places from which it was not possible for the Bhikkhus to meet together at a common Uposatha on the appointed day. This necessitated the selection of the site for its observance and a clear demarcation of the area occupied by the Bhikkhus holding it. As a sequel to the Cha Vaggiya monks—a general designation for certain mischief-mongers—holding the Uposatha at different places not very far from one another to suit their ignoble purposes, the rule was issued to the effect that it should be held by a complete fraternity¹ where

¹ With regard to the holding of full assemblies by the people of India prior to the formation of the Buddhist Saṃgha, for conducting business, religious or secular, references cited from non-Buddhistic works may be found elucidating. These assemblies known as 'Sabhās' were meant to be attended by every one belonging to the locality as will appear from the following :—

(a) yathā nadi ca pantho ca pānāgaram sabhā papā
evam lokitthiyo nāma nāsaṃ kujjhante paṇḍitā

- p 302 I !.

completeness meant the holding of the ceremony by the entire community of monks residing within the jurisdiction of one residence (M.V. II § 5) to be known as an *Āvāsa*. By this was meant that the Bhikkhus of Rājagaha, Sāvattthi, Vesālī, Kosambi, Gayā, Banaras, or Kapilāvattthu, all being centres of the Buddha's earliest activities, were not expected to meet at a common Uposatha but hold different Uposathas according to their '*Āvāsas*' (place of residence) each with its own jurisdiction, which lay far away from one another. But, they were not allowed to have different Uposathas within the jurisdiction of the same *Āvāsa* (residence). For holding the Uposatha ceremony the following could be held as residences: Vihāra (a monastery), Adḍhayoga (a golden bungalow), Pāsāda (a storied house), Hammiya (an attic) and Guhā (a cave), provided the assembly agreed to their being considered as such (M.V. II § 8). After the sanction was obtained from the assembly approving any one of the above-mentioned residences as *Āvāsa* for holding the Uposatha, it was called an '*Uposathāgāra*' (M.V. II § 8).

The term *Āvāsa* now meant the jurisdiction of an Uposathāgāra and it was further held, that it could not be of a dimension with its outskirts lying beyond three

Just as a river or a road or an alehouse or a sabha or a well is meant for all (*sādhāranā* - commentary) also is the woman of the world with whom no wise man will get angry. — Jātaka Verse.

(b) '*Purimāni bhante divasāni purimatarāni tadahu posathe paṇṇarase pavāraṇāya rattiyaṃ kevalakappā ca devā Tāvatiṃsā Sudhammāyaṃ Sabhayaṃ sannisinnaṃ honti sannipatitā* etc. — Mahā Covinda Suttam. — D. N.

In ancient days and in the days which were still more ancient in the night of Pavāraṇā on the full moon day when the entire body of gods sat in the assembly of Suddhamma

(c) '*Yāva kivaṇ ca Ānanda Vajji saṃggaṃ sannipatisanti samaggā vuttha-hissanti samaggā vajji kammaṇi karonti*' —

— '*Mahā Parinibbāna Suttanta*'

So long as the Vajji will all assemble together in a body, rise in a body and do their business in a body, etc.'

(d) '*Tasmim gāme tiṃsa eva kulāni honti, te ca tiṃsa kula manussā ekadivasaṃ gāmamajjhe thatvā gāma kammaṃ karonti* — Jātaka No. 31. Vol. I, p. 199

In that village there were thirty families and men from these thirty families met together in the middle of the village and conducted its business. — Jātaka prose.

yojanas (1 yojana = $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles) or about 15 miles from the centre *i.e.* Uposathāgāra (M.V. II § 7). And, within this jurisdiction there should, on no account, exist two Uposathāgāras (M.V. II § 8 para 3) the boundaries of which, again, were to be determined by enumerating the places on them such as a hill (pabbata), a hillock (pāsāna), a forest (vana), a tree (rukkha), a highway (magga), an anthill (vammika), a river (nadi) and a sheet of water (udaka) (M.V.II § 6).

On no account the boundaries should extend to the other side of a river or a sea or a lake or overlap the boundary of another Uposatha area.

Later, the difficulty in fixing the boundaries was overcome by declaring the existing boundaries of a 'gāma' or a 'nigama' near which it was situated as those of the Uposathāgāra itself (M.V.II § 12 para 7).

It was quite possible that within the jurisdiction of the same Uposatha area there might be different resting places of Bhikkhus or 'vihāras' and so there arose some difficulty as to the particular 'vihara' where the ceremony should be held. The rule was, therefore, laid down to the effect that the 'vihāra' where the 'thera' (the chief thera) lived should be the place where Uposatha should be held (M.V.II § 12 para 7). The use of the term 'thera' in the sense of the chief monk of the particular area is peculiar to the Vinaya text in which references to other 'theras' in terms of Dutiya-thera, Tatiya-thera and so on, establish almost with certainty that the Bhikkhus of a particular area were not only classified into teachers and pupils but also into 'theras' or teacher-monks of different ranks (M.V.II § 17). Therefore, the Uposathāgāra was the seat of the head-monk or 'thera' of the Āvāsa or the Uposatha jurisdiction. When the Uposathāgāra was found to be too small to accommodate all the Bhikkhus of a particular Āvāsa, for Uposatha a space as large as required around the Uposathāgāra could be used by them to be designated as 'Uposathapāmokkha' (M.V.II. 9). It should be noted that the settlement of each of the issues referred to above

required the formal sanction of the assembly without which no act was considered valid. Thus, arose in the Uposatha assembly the consideration of various questions requiring *chanda* of the members apart from the *pārisuddhi* required for the Pātimokkha. In case, when an act passed by the assembly was to be found in contravention of the existing rules it had also to be modified or annulled when necessary, by the common consent of the assembly.

§. Observance of the Uposatha and the recital of the Pātimokkha under different circumstances

The site for the Uposatha having been agreed upon and its jurisdiction fixed by the assembly, it became the duty of the senior monks (theras of different ranks) of the Āvasa to assemble earlier than the junior ones so that the ceremony might not be delayed or prolonged to the untimely hours of the afternoon (M.V.II § 10). After finishing their begging rounds in the morning earlier than usual and having assembled at the Uposathāgāra or Uposathapāmomkha, as the case might be, the senior monks should order the junior ones to do the following works, viz. :

- (1) to cleanse the place by sweeping,
- (2) to arrange the seats in proper order,
- (3) to place a lamp on the spot, and
- (4) to keep ready sufficient food and water for the Bhikkhus who might come there from distant quarters and require them before midday (M.V.II § 20).

No further proof is necessary to show that the Uposatha was not observed by the monks by fasting. In the matter of food and drink they were evidently as free on this day as on others avoiding only 'vikāla bhojanam' or taking meals in the afternoon. When these arrangements were completed, the 'thera' or the chief monk being the elected head of the assembly, took the chair and with the consent of the assembly (na anajjhittena) started the ceremony by first taking up the recital of the Pātimokkha (M.V. II § 16) which at that time consisted of only five parts : (1) the introduction

(Nidāna), (2) the four Pārājikas (cattāri pārājikāni), (3) the thirteen Saṃghādisesa rules, (4) the two Aniyata Dhammas and (5) the commentary on the text. The rule was laid down to the effect that all these should be recited in full and in a voice audible to the members (M. V. II 16, para. 7).

When the recital was over, questions regarding the Dhamma and the Vinaya were raised and discussed in details and the Bhikkhus intending to raise questions on the Dhamma or the Vinaya as well as those who wanted to explain them must be duly proposed and seconded by a competent monk in each case. The Saṃgha should also give its sanction to the Bhikkhu in question by means of the 'ñatticatuttha kamma' (M. V. II § 15).

Now, what appears to a casual observer as very strange is the rule requiring that the questions and the answers of the speaker on the particular subject must suit the standpoint and temperament of the sitting members of the assembly (M. V. II § 15, para. 11). The object being that feelings of bitterness and animosity might not be created but goodwill earned though it might be at the expense of right knowledge.

If there was the likelihood of any irreligious piece of legislation being passed, the virtuous monks, if their number fell below four or five, were forbidden to protest against the act openly and were enjoined to content themselves with simply expressing their opinion in the negative. In case there was only one upright monk in the assembly he was enjoined to remain silent while determining in his mind that the act passed was unlawful.

When a member of the assembly wanted to accuse another member of any breach of rule he should first obtain leave of the person against whom his accusation was to be framed which must be done in words calculated not to give him the slightest offence. (E.V. II § 16, paras. 1-5). A cool sense of judgment with an idea of decency must not be allowed to be carried away by a heated debate which cannot but result from unrestrained accusations which must therefore be fully suppressed. Here we have an instance as to how the Doctrine of the Buddha became so diverse in different

schools. Opportunity for modifying the Doctrine was present from the very beginning at the Uposatha ceremonies in which Buddhavacana could be adopted in any aspect which any community of a particular locality was in favour of. There was however sufficient provision in the code of the rules to guard against the encroach of entirely un-Buddhistic principles relating to the Doctrine or Discipline.

The proceedings referred to above were considerably modified when circumstances under which the ceremony took place proved unfavourable; and also, when the attendance of Bhikkhus fell short of the minimum number which was four. It was held that the recital of the Pātimokkha should be made in its several abridged forms according to the degree of intensity of dangers arising from (1) kings, (2) robbers, (3) fire, (4) water, (5) human beings, (6) non-human beings, (7) beasts of prey, (8) reptiles, (9) ruffians threatening the lives of the Bhikkhus and (10) apprehension of violation to their chastity. When there was a grave danger, the introduction alone was to be recited and as to the rest it was to be taken for granted as read and known to the assembly. In case a lesser danger was apprehended the introduction and the four Parājikas alone were to be recited and the rest to be accepted as read and heard. In times of ordinary dangers the Introduction, the four Pārājikas and the thirteen Saṃghādisesa rules alone should be recited and the rest to be accepted as read and heard. In the case of probability of a danger, the Introduction, the four Pārājikas, the thirteen Saṃghādisesa rules and the two Aniyata Dhammas were alone to be recited from the full text which contained besides the portions mentioned above, a commentary on the words used therein, a sample of which has been given under § 3 of the text of Mahā vagga Chap. II. (M. V. II § 15).

Again, when the number of monks assembled was three or two, the procedure for Uposatha was that these Bhikkhus should remain quiet having satisfied themselves with the knowledge of one another's purity. If it existed nothing was to be done, if not it must be acquired by confession in the usual way. If there

was only one Bhikkhu present, he was enjoined to sweep the place, be it a refectory or a hall or the foot of a tree or any other sanctioned residence, provide food and water, prepare seats and place a lamp on the spot and wait for others to come in and perform the ceremony with them. If none turned up he should meditate being composed and self-possessed (M.V. II § 26).

6. Observance of the Uposatha made compulsory for every Buddhist monk

Irrespective of age or rank or qualification the Bhikkhus from the highest to the lowest degree must take part in the Uposatha ceremony forming themselves into an assembly. The Buddha's exhortation to Thera Mahā Kappina serves as an illustration to show what great importance was attached to this observance which should be looked upon in all seriousness by every member of the community (M. V. II § 5). To facilitate the attendance at the Uposatha for the members coming from long distances, the Buddha allowed by the rules of 'Tevivarena Avippavāsa' the carrying of extra robes by monks so that when any one worn got soiled on the way it could be removed for washing (M. V. § 12). Among other facilities as we have seen previously, the rule was issued to the effect that the distant side of a river or a lake or a mountain was not to be fixed as boundary although it might lie within the sanctioned distance. The only Uposatha held by a complete congregation was considered valid while the one from which even a single member was absent was invalid and required a fresh holding when the absentee turned up. Originally when the Saṃgha was composed of Bhikkhus educated and advanced in spirituality no difficulty was experienced in effecting completeness, but when others of less intellectual caliber joined the Order and became its working members certain obstacles appeared in the way. Bhikkhus were enjoined to count the days of half-months so that there might be no mistaking the exact date of Uposatha ignorance of which should not be pleaded as an excuse for absence. It became the duty of the 'thera' or

the chief monk, to proclaim at meal times the date of the Uposatha in order to prevent the Bhikkhus from going on that day to distant places for alms as likely to cause delay to their attendance (M. V. II § 12). The Bhikkhus residing within the area were also asked to count their number either by troops, (gaṇa) or by tickets (salākā) so that the case of an absentee might be detected and dealt with according to law (M. V. II § 18).

Another point which was held imperative was the recital of the Pātimokkha at the Uposatha ceremony. Naturally, when other items of business were introduced into its observance, the main one, i.e., the recital of the Pātimokkha, failed to attract that much attention of the members which it originally did being the only item. Good care therefore must be taken to ensure its recital and uphold the purity of the Saṃgha according to its several provisions. When all the members of an 'Āvāsa' were not well informed of the Pātimokkha they should immediately send one to an Āvāsa where the Bhikkhus knew it, to learn from them either the whole text or one of its abridged forms and then return to his former Āvāsa where the Uposatha would be observed by the others on hearing the recital of the Pātimokkha from him.

When the member thus sent failed to learn the Pātimokkha, all the members of his assembly should in a body resort to the Āvāsa where Pātimokkha was known (M. V. II § 17).

7. Declaration of 'Parisuddhi' and 'Chanda' was necessary for the absentee on the ground of illness

Leave of absence from the Uposatha was granted only in case of illness when the sufferer was unable to walk the distance from his place of rest to the Uposatha centre provided he sent in his declaration of Parisuddhi to the assembly through a messenger who must be a Bhikkhu competent to take part in the Uposatha ceremony. Approaching him the sick monk should squat on the ground and adjusting his upper robe on one side of his shoulder implore to him with folded hands thus : "I give you my declaration of 'Pārisuddhi'. Please, convey it to the assembly

and make it known there.' To make the declaration valid it must be expressed in both words and gestures.

If the sick monk did not meet a pure Bhikkhu or met one not willing to convey his 'Pārisuddhi' he would have to be taken to the assembly by means of a conveyance (mañca or piṭha). But his illness proving serious as likely to endanger his life during his removal to the Uposatha assembly the Saṃgha was required to meet at the place where he lay and observe the Uposatha. Under no circumstances the assembly should meet to observe the Uposatha being legally incomplete. A violation of this rule constituted a Dukkāṭa offence.

The bearer of the Pārisuddhi had in his turn to fulfil certain conditions until he reached the assembly and delivered his message for the acceptance of the assembly. He should not fly away. He should not go back to worldly life. He did not die. He did not relinquish the precepts. He did not commit a heinous crime. He did not go mad. He was not fickle. He was not afflicted with pain. He was not excommunicated for not relinquishing a false doctrine or for being obstinate. And lastly he did not belong to the category of men permanently excluded from the Order (M. V. I. §). If, however, the bearer came to be recognised as not fulfilling any one of the above conditions after his delivery of the Pārisuddhi, its declaration by the sick monk and his delivery were considered valid (M. V. II 22).

In like manner the sick monk had also to send in his 'Chanda' for the passing of an act at the Uposatha ceremony other than the declaration of his purity (M. V. II 23).

8. Procedure when a Monk was forcibly detained within the Jurisdiction

When a monk was forcibly detained outside the Uposatha-pāṃokkha¹ but not outside its sanctioned boundaries by his relations or kings or robbers or rascals or hostile monks, it was

¹ Vide p. 67, l. 34.

the duty of the monk thus detained to ask those people to allow him to come to the assembly for the time being and finish his Uposatha. Failing in this he should ask them to give him leave to send in his declaration of Pārisuddhi and Chanda. This attempt also proving unsuccessful he should implore them to take him outside the boundaries of the Uposatha area till the ceremony was over (M. V. II § 24).

In the event of a Bhikkhu going mad as in the case of the monk Gagga he was to be given the madman's leave (M. V. II § 25).

By no means the ceremony was to be observed by the monks of a particular area forming into an assembly which was legally incomplete.

This idea of democracy in its perfection and the manner in which it was carried into operation can hardly be excelled. Even it might seem utopian and impracticable. Every individual of the Samgha had his rightful place in this system wherein his 'yea' or 'nay' was sufficient to lead the whole body of Bhikkhus to any direction good, bad or indifferent and might even paralise its activities. Such a Code of laws could be worked only by the Bhikkhus of equal minds and saintly character with full knowledge of their responsibilities and duties and therefore it might be looked upon as belonging to the earlier phase of the constitution under the direct lead of the Buddha.

CHAPTER II

LATER PHASE OF DEMOCRACY¹

1. Unanimity of the Saṃgha gives way to majority Control

As we have already seen, the Buddhist Saṃgha which in the beginning of its formation consisted of members with very high spiritual attainments like the 'Pañcavaggiya' group (M. V. I § 6), the Kassapa brothers of Uruvelā and their followers better known as the 'Jaṭilas' (M. V. I §§ 16-20), the 'Bhaddavaggiyas' (M. V. I § 14), Sāriputta and Moggallāna of Rājagaha (M. V. I § 24) etc., enlisted when formally established in the country, men who in their ignorance could not even calculate the date of the fortnightly assembly called 'Uposatha' regularly held for determining the purity of the Order and conducting its multifarious business. It became, therefore, the duty of the elected chief monk bearing the designation of 'Thera' in the Vinaya (M. V. II § 11) to give timely information to the resident monks (āvāsikā bhikkhū) about the date and hour of this Uposatha assembly lest their attendance which was obligatory on all be delayed or withheld (M. V. II, § 19). In the case of a 'bhikkhu' being laid up with illness at some other place causing his bodily removal to the Uposatha hall dangerous to his life the Saṃgha was asked to hold the meeting where he lay as the quorum consisted in the sitting of the full assembly and the non-attendance of even a single member, no matter under what circumstances it took place, invalidated the entire proceedings (M. V. II § 5).

The rules of the Saṃgha in the Vinaya Mahā Vagga dealing thus far with the 'Chanda' (vote) even of the sick monk and his declaration of Pārisuddhi (purity) required for validating the

¹ Published in the *Calcutta Review*, Nov.-Dec., 1931, under the caption 'Democracy in Early Buddhist Saṃgha'.

enactments of the Uposatha (M. V. II §§ 1-23) may be conveniently looked upon as belonging to an early date when these monks spiritually advanced were fully alive to their duties being of the same mind.

But, with the rapid development of Saṁgha-organisations throughout the country in the very life-time of the Master, his best endeavours to make the Uposatha as established by the aforesaid laws a success seem to have failed, as irregularities of every description began to creep into its observance due to some monks who in their quest for freedom could not be bound down to a fixed constitution.

“Tena kho pana samayena sambahulā bhikkhu bālā avyattā
disaṁgāmikā ācariyupajjhāye na āpucchanti etc., etc.”

(M. V. II § 21).

It must be assumed, however, that to have come to this stage it took the Saṁgha much time and not long before the closing years of the Tathāgata himself when due to old age his personal interest became less keen in the affairs of Saṁgha units which were then widely scattered all over the country sheltering within their respective folds a considerable number of members of very poor intellect. It was impracticable if not impossible to obtain a full gathering for a quorum at the appointed time on the occasion of Uposatha as some of the Bhikkhus would be at long distances on that day and could not meet punctually (M. V. II §§ 28-32).

In a spirit of democracy, therefore, which dominated the minds of the Sākyaputtiya Samaṇas (followers of the Buddha) new Uposatha rules were enacted in modification of the older ones making them as far consistent as possible with the ideal of unity in purity which the Saṁgha held aloft before the world, although, on a closer inspection they seem to betray a desire on the part of their framers to maintain its unity rather than its purity.

These rules can justly be looked upon as ushering in a period of majority control in the whole history of the Buddhist

Samgha marking the time of its ascendancy in popular faith and esteem.

2. Main Principles of the phase of Democracy under majority control

This control of the Samgha by majority soon became manifested in full vigour through what might be looked upon as its outlets or veins of activities which kept up the flow of its life-stream and maintained its strength.

The activities of the Samgha feeding this life-stream are again brought under four different heads or principles as follows :

(1) *The Uposatha ceremony and its acts were to be considered valid if it was held by the majority of members present at a centre (M. V. II §§ 23-33).*

(2) *Resident monks could claim no special privilege for continued residence in a Vihāra enjoying as they did equal rights with the visitors (M. V. II § 34, paras. 1-9).*

(3) *Residents and visitors must make common cause of their demands and were expected to stand united at a Uposatha meeting (M. V. II § 34, paras. 10-13).*

(4) *Residents were not allowed to change their residence in anticipation of being overpowered by visitors or on any other personal ground on the day of Uposatha (M. V. II § 35).*

On a further discussion of these rules, it will be found that those under head (1) while validating the passing of an act or acts by the majority of Bhikkhus in the absence of the minority, did not absolve their authors from the guilt of being members of an incomplete assembly except when four or more 'Bhikkhus' not knowing that other resident 'Bhikkhus' were absent held the Uposatha in accordance with the 'Vinaya'.

The above rule further testifies to the fact that Samgha business (Kamma) could not be carried on at a Uposatha meeting where less than four 'Bhikkhus' were present.

Under all other circumstances the majority were blamable according to the magnitude of the wickedness of their purposes as the following will show :

Bhikkhus when perfectly knowing that other resident Bhikkhus were absent or feeling doubt as to their fitness for holding the ceremony or given to misbehaviour, held the Uposatha being in the majority, were individually guilty of a 'Dukkata' (minor) offence; and, committed each a 'Thulla-ccaya' (major) offence when they did the same with a view to creating schism in the Samgha (M. V. II § 29-32).

In every case, however, if a larger number of Bhikkhus turned up at the meeting while its business was being conducted or just finished but the assembly had not risen either partially or fully, the business had to be gone through anew with a fresh recital of the Patimokkha. But, if the same or a lesser number of monks came in, what was done was considered well done whether or not the authors were blamable according as stated above.

Thus, the very fact of a Uposatha assembly being held by the majority was sufficient to give the acts, good, bad or indifferent, passed therein, the stamp of validity even though the members might be personally guilty of minor or major offences under particular circumstances.

Coming under the head (2) we find that such a state of things, however, could not go on for an indefinite length of time at any centre as the evil designs of mischief-mongers referred to in the Vinaya as the 'Chavaggiya Bhikkhus,' were rendered inoperative by the rule enjoining that the residents of a 'Vihāra' could claim no special privilege on account of their continued residence and must be prepared to welcome visitors from other Vihāras who might come there in larger numbers to nullify their acts and resolutions (M. V. II § 34).

In this connection the rules of the Vinaya point to a still later origin as legalising a third day, viz., the first day following the fifteenth, a full moon or new moon day as the case might be, as a proper date for holding the Uposatha which hitherto fell

either on the fourteenth or fifteenth only. The selection of the date for Uposatha, as is evident from these rules, depended on local customs and varied with different centres.

In case there was a difference as to the date for holding the Uposatha between the residents and the visitors having it on the fourteenth and the fifteenth respectively or *vice versa* and the visitors outnumbered the residents, the latter had to perform Uposatha jointly with the former.

“Sace āgantukā bahutarā honti, āvasikehi āgantukānaṃ anuvattitabbam” (M. V. II, § 34, para. 1).

But, if the number of visitors was the same or less, then they had to accommodate themselves to the requirements of the residents. The same was the procedure when the difference in dates for Uposatha between the residents and the visitors was in respect of the fifteenth or the first.

It will thus be seen that when visitor monks entered a Vihāra in larger numbers the residents thereof had not only to yield to them in all business matters relating to the Saṃgha but also with respect to the date for holding the Uposatha. In fact, under such circumstances the visitors became the masters of the house and its erstwhile residents, unless they could prevail over the visitors by reason of arguments, stood vanquished.

If, however, the visitors or the residents forming the minority could not come to an understanding with the majority, they were perfectly free to hold a separate Uposatha of their own provided it took place outside the original boundary (simā, M. V. II § 12) in which case they had no other alternative but to walk out of the jurisdiction of the Vihāra leaving it to the care of the majority.

“āvāsikānaṃ nākāmā dātabbā sāmaggī āvasikehī nissimaṃ gantvā uposatho kaṭabbo” (M. V. II § 34, para. 4).

4. Due recognition was given to the minority

The danger of disunion which threatened this scheme of Saṃgha activities by compelling the minority to withdraw if they so desired to some unclaimed jurisdiction was sought to be neutralised by the promulgation of the rule appearing under head (3) that neglect

on the part of the parties to explore all avenues of mutual settlement was a violation of law (M. V II § 34, paras. 10-13).

Even a joint Uposatha of the residents and the visitors without a mutual discussion and settlement (*abhivitaranam*) of their respective differences was illegal as it was felt desirable that in the event of disagreement they must hold separate Uposathas.

“*Idhā pana bhikkhave āgantukā bhikkhū passanti āvasike bhikkhū nānāsaṃvāsake * * te pucchanti pucchitvā nābhivitaranti anabhivitaritvā ekato Uposatham karonti apatti dukkaṭassa * * **
(M. V. II, § 34, para. 10).

The rules enjoining upon the residents and the visitors to meet together for settling points of common interest or differences were as follows :

When, after seeing signs of the presence of the resident monks, the visitors felt doubtful about them and finding them after making searches, held Uposatha together or not finding them held Uposatha apart, it was lawful. But if after feeling doubtful the visitors made no enquiries about the residents and held Uposatha apart they committed each a Dukkata (minor) offence, while a Thullaccaya (major) offence was committed when Uposatha was held apart with a view to creating schism in the Samgha.

The same rules equally applied to the residents in their dealings with the visitors.

Lastly, under head (4), a law was enforced giving the maximum advantage which could possibly be obtained by the resident monks under the above Samgha constitution though its promulgation curtailed more or less the free movement of monks requiring a change of residence. The law was that except in danger or along with the entire Samgha the ‘Bhikkhus’ individually or collectively could not leave their residence on the day of Uposatha (M. V II, § 35).

It was thus against the Vinaya discipline to deplete the number of resident monks by the voluntary departure of some of them from the declared area on the day of Uposatha. This rule might then be looked upon as calculated to retain intact the strength of

the existing 'Saṃgha' in an Āvāsa at least on the day when its main issues were to be discussed and settled. In case of extreme necessity a 'Bhikkhu' could only leave his monastery when the residents of the 'Āvāsa' he wanted to go to, were of the same views as he himself cherished and he covered the journey in the same day, *i.e.*, the Uposatha day (M. V. II, § 35, para. 5).

5. The underlying principle of Democracy

It would not be improper here to make an attempt to get at the principal idea underlying this democratic system of the Saṃgha government in ancient India.

The Uposatha wherein all matters of importance relating to the relevant Saṃgha were discussed and settled was to be only one within the same boundary ¹ (sīmā) and those desiring to have a different one held it inside or outside the boundary according as they were in the majority or minority irrespective of their being visitors or residents. But, before deciding upon having separate Uposathas, the first thing they should do was to make an attempt to adjust their differences; which solved they should hold one complete Uposatha, if not, different ones as noted above. It was also admitted that different outlooks and opinions there must be 'due to residence in different centres (nānā saṃvāsakā) of 'bhikkhus' who, on failing to reach an agreement, must do their Uposatha works separately, joint action in which case was looked upon as a hindrance to the attainment of the ideal.

It was undoubtedly expected that the 'Bhikkhus' of different outlooks perhaps due to their belonging to different nationalities must sink after mutual discussions, all provincial and dialectical differences that might exist between them and try their utmost to meet at a common Uposatha and perform it as one people subscribing to the same views. But, graver were the consequences and more imminent was the peril when unmindful of the existing

¹ The propriety of this procedure was contested by the Vajjan monks in one of their indulgences one hundred years afterwards. Therefore the pre-existence of this rule is automatically established by them.

friction the parties undertook to hold one Uposatha out of mere courtesy. Far from being justifiable such an action constituted a breach of Saṁgha discipline.

Discord in the Saṁgha should be avoided at any cost but not suppressed as contrary views had their due place outside it.

The sin of preaching irreligiously, it may be noted, was expiated only by an expression of regret (*Pācittiya Dhammā*, §§ 55, 56, 57, etc.) but that for trying to create schism in the Saṁgha was a more heinous one and punishable with greater severity, however religious in other respects the member or members committing it might be (*Saṅghādisesa rules*, § § 10, 11). Acknowledging as they did in unambiguous terms the value of every shade of opinion, the democratic Bhikkhus of ancient India only made it imperative that views tending to create disunion must be segregated and not fostered in the same community. That unity in variety is the law of nature and diverse opinions if differently located might ultimately lead to peace and concord in a wider field of which they might form parts, was the guiding principle on which the democracy of the Saṁgha was based.

To the early 'Sākyaputtiya Samaṇas' by which term the followers of the Buddha were known, 'concord' was almost synonymous with 'purity' itself. To succour the disciples living in concord was a part of the prayer which pleased the great Teacher (*Samagge sāvake passa esā Buddhāna vandanā*).¹ A particular Saṁgha rule enjoins that however guilty a monk might be if he be found not guilty by the community at any subsequent time he should be thereafter recognised as innocent and pure (*M. V. I § 79 para. 4 and II, § 27, para. 15*). Only for concord, if for nothing else, the verdict of the Saṁgha whenever and wherever it might be pronounced was to be respected and upheld and a scrupulous recognition of this principle practically amounted to fulfilling the conditions of holiness.

¹ The prayer of Mahā Prajāpati Gotamī.

It would, therefore, be not unreasonable to ascribe to the authors of ancient Indian democracy, of which the Samgha government was only a special form made suitable for the monks, the belief, be it fundamental or not, that truth and purity lay in harmony and unity.

BOOK III

CO-OPERATION WITH THE LAITY

(Vassa Vāsa & Pavāraṇā)

CHAPTER I

VASSA VĀSA

1. Vassa Vasa and its application to the Buddhist Samgha

From the Vedic period onwards a sacred idea was associated with the four months of the rainy season which, on account of its unusual character having excess of moisture in the atmosphere, seemed appropriate for the cultivation of thoughts connected with poetry, philosophy or religion. In pre-Buddhistic days the notion in respect of Vassa Vāsa as represented in the Mahā Govinda Suttanta was that if any one spent the period in constant meditation cultivating thoughts of love (*mettā*) towards all creatures without changing his seat he would meet the great Brahmā and converse with him face to face after attaining the highest state of spirituality. Later on, there developed out of this notion of meditation the Brahma-Vihāras consisting in the four kinds of thoughts, *i.e.*, '*mettā*' (love), *muditā* (joy), *karuṇā* (compassion) and *upekkhā* (equanimity) in Buddhism which held in particular that the attainment of such a state in meditation constitutes the highest state of bliss in an individual. In pursuance of such a notion the minister Mahā Govinda of the Suttanta named after him practised the four thoughts in meditation during the four months of the rainy season and actually met at the expiry of the term, Brahmā Sanaṃkumāra face to face who explained to him the path to the attainment of Brahmā heaven.

Buddhism holds also that the best place for meditation is society full as it is with woes and cares and that there must be a desire on the part of the meditator to do good to it. The motto of the Bhikkhus should be to live peacefully among people burdened with cares and woes and to live without trouble in the midst of those afflicted with troubles :

Susukhaṃ vata jīvāma ātūresu anāturā
ātūresu manussesu viharāma anāturā

Good thoughts, they believed, if cultivated within evil surroundings, had the wonderful capacity of turning those surroundings into auspicious ones. The Buddha laid more stress on the life of a monk when led in a Vihāra situated in the neighbourhood of men who being given to the enjoyments of life were averse to religion and were undergoing perpetual agony and distress than if it had been spent in seclusion away from their haunts. The Sākyaputtiya Samaṇas were expected to make themselves object lessons for those who could not become monks themselves. By cultivating good thoughts in meditation amidst men of the world during Vassa Vāsa they would be rendering unto the society besides themselves an inestimable benefit calculated to accomplish the uplift of humanity from its state of stupor and dejection. This was perhaps the idea underlying the institution of Vassa Vāsa in the Buddhist Order though, of course, the difficulties which arose in travelling on foot during the rains were no less an important factor in giving rise to it in the Saṃgha as it had done among the Paribbājakas of ancient India.

The Buddhist Saṃgha with its greatly elaborated scheme of Pabbajjā and Upasampadā together with the rules of the Uposatha and Pātimokkha, offering facilities for inter-communal accord and maintaining the purity of the Order, was at the height of its activities pushed far and wide beyond its original centres of Rājagaha and Sāvattī, and needed a period of rest by way of recreation. The injunction 'Go forth O monks and travel from place to place for the welfare, good and benefit of men and gods' given by the Buddha to his disciples who were literally following it in their everyday lives was now to be suspended.

The Vassa Vāsa, although it seemed to offer relief to monks from their works of preaching and teaching, appears from its very nature to be contrary to the tenets of Buddhism—essentially a Doctrine of diligence—causing as it did, an ever-active Fraternity to incline, though for the time being, to a life of indolence. But, the need of some respite from constant activities

was not at all to be overlooked by the Master who generally set forth before his disciples a scheme of meditation to be practised by them in their hours of solitude away from the clamour of Vihāra life. That the Buddha was himself observing the Vassa Vāsa from the beginning of his mission in recognition of its being a custom of recluses, is evident from his life history. But though observing it himself he was more or less reluctant to make Vassa Vāsa a period of rest for the entire community of monks as likely to cause them indolence or because its need was not felt so keenly in the Order due to its being already observed by many elderly Bhikkhus in pursuance of the ancient custom. On account of either or both its promulgation in the Order for the observance of the entire community was deferred till as late as the 18th or the 19th year if not later still, of the mission of the Buddha. From the text we learn that the Buddha after introducing Vassa Vāsa into his Order at Rājagaha and having spent it himself there, repaired at its termination, to Sāvatti for the training of his disciples at the Jetavana monastery. Now this event falls according to very authentic account of his life in the 17th and the 19th year of his mission leaving out the 6th when the Jetavana monastery itself came into existence. Therefore to the enactment of Vassa Vāsa in the Saṃgha an earlier date cannot be assigned if the evidence of the text is to be relied upon.

The introduction of Vassa Vāsa at a much later stage will be further evident from the fact that it was more honoured in the breach than in the observance as will appear from the list of numerous exceptions legalising its violation. It widely differed in this respect from the observance of the Uposatha which was compulsory for all the monks of the Order. These exceptions can only be accounted for on the ground that the Vassa Vāsa was not considered to be of much importance either to the development of the Saṃgha or to the welfare of humanity which it was originally intended to accomplish and that by the time when Vassa Vāsa was promulgated there had arisen in the

Order certain practices not compatible with its spirit and therefore they could not be stopped unless with determinate effect on the Saṁgha itself.

The promulgation of Vassa Vāsa is ascribed by our text to the general clamour of the people who did not like the Sākyaputtiya Samaṇas to change their abodes during the rainy season not because of the difficulty they experienced in travelling but because in the act of walking they could not but destroy newly grown vegetation and insect-life under their feet contrary to the principles of their Doctrine. Vassa Vāsa had therefore to be enacted with a view to stopping this clamour and satisfying the people. But, curiously enough, the extent of protection it afforded to newly grown vegetation or insect-life can well be gauged when we find that it did not restrain the movements of monks on open lands or roads but simply aimed at keeping them within particular Uposatha jurisdictions (Āvāsa) in which they were as free to move as ever. Consequently, the newly grown vegetation and insect-life within those jurisdictions were as much exposed to danger arising from their movements as they were before its promulgation in the Saṁgha. Indeed, the extent of protection which the rules on Vassa Vāsa gave to the creeping lives was very little and certainly it was not with that end in view that this observance was primarily instituted in the Order. We must therefore look elsewhere for the causes which led to its enactment. It will be made abundantly clear from the rules on the subject that it was not so much for the spiritual uplift of the Saṁgha or of worldly people that Vassa Vāsa was introduced as for the desire which the Saṁgha entertained for reconciling the lay opinion to its mission of bringing welfare unto humanity in a manner quite new in the annals of recluses in India.

2. Vassa Vāsa, primarily instituted out of consideration for the opinion of the laity and its welfare

Vassa Vāsa was introduced into the Order at the time when the Buddha was sojourning at 'Kalandaka Nivāpa' (feeding

ground of squirrels) in the Veluvana ārāma of Rajagaha. People murmured at the behaviour of the Bhikkhus who toured the country in all the seasons thus injuring during the rains, newly grown vegetation and insect-life under their feet. We have already remarked that although some of the elderly theras did observe the Vassa Vāsa, the community as a whole was still unmindful of this practice and went on with the philanthropic works at all times of the year in conformity with ideals set up by the Master :

“Caratha bhikkhave cārikam, etc.”

A considerable time must have elapsed before people could take exception to this unerimital manner of the Sākyaputtiya Samaṇas and to have raised a clamour against its continuance. In deference to this popular feeling Vassa Vāsa was promulgated in the Order (M. V. III § 1).

Two were the occasions when Vassa Vāsa could be entered upon by the Bhikkhus. One was earlier and the other later. The earlier one fell on the day following the full-moon day of the month of Asāḷha and the later one fell on the day just a month afterwards and in either case it was to last for three months only¹ (M. V. III 2).

Taking it into their heads that Vassa Vāsa was not obligatory on all the members of the Order, the Cha Vaggiya Bhikkhus went about from place to place during its observance and the laity felt much aggrieved at this. The Buddha enjoined that none should walk about during the Vassa and that by their acting to the contrary they committed each a Dukkaṭa offence (M. V. III § 8).

Cha Vaggiya Bhikkhus expressing their desire not to conform to the observance of Vassa Vāsa it was further laid down that the observance was obligatory on all the Bhikkhus who must not transgress their respective Āvāsas during the period in question. This was no doubt a considerable modification of the original injunction prohibiting walking of any description as it

¹ Originally Varṣāvāsa was meant for four months (cāturmāsyā).

allowed free movements of monks within the jurisdiction of their respective 'Āvāsas' each covering an area having a radius of about 15 miles from the Uposatha centre.

In the matter of entering upon Vassa Vāsa the Bhikkhus should fix the date in consonance with the wishes of a lay devotee as for example a king, that is, they must act according as he wanted them to observe it earlier or later (M. V. III § 4). Primarily it was intended to be observed in the midst of relations and friends of the Bhikkhus. (Etha tumhe bhikkhave samantā Vesāliṃ yathāmittaṃ yathāsandiṭṭhaṃ yathāsambhattaṃ vassaṃ upetha—*Mahāparinibbana suttanta*.)

After spending the Vassa Vāsa at Rājagaha the Buddha repaired to Sāvatti and subsequently, when he was sojourning there at the Jetavana monastery a devotee named Udena erected a vihāra during the Vassa and expressed the desire that the Saṃgha should come to him for accepting the Vihāra and instruct him in the Doctrine though it was observing the Vassa Vāsa. The rule was therefore laid down to the effect that if a devotee or devotees, etc. constructed a 'vihāra' or any suitable abode for the benefit of the Saṃgha and desired that the Saṃgha should instruct him in the Doctrine after accepting the said premises, it should go to the spot even in violation of Vassa Vāsa and stay there for seven days and then return to its original place.

In like manner if he or they prepared for the benefit of one Bhikkhu or many Bhikkhus or Bhikkhu Saṃgha or one Bhikkhuni or many Bhikkhunis or one Sikkhamānā or many Sikkhamānās or one Sāmaṇera or many Sāmaṇeras or one Sāmaneri or many Sāmaneris any of the following :—

- (1) A residence for a monk (vihāra), (2) A golden bungalow (aḍḍhayoga), (3) A storied house (pāsāda), (4) An attic (hammiya), (5) A cave (guhā), (6) A cell (pariveṇa), (7) A store room (koṭṭhaka), (8) A refectory (upatthānasālā), (9) A fire room (aggisālā), (10) A warehouse (kappiyakuṭi), (11) A place to walk on (caṃkama), (12) A house to walk in (caṃkamasālā), (13) A well (udapāna), (14) A hall containing a well (udapānasālā), (15) A lotus pond (pakkharāṇi),

(16) A pavilion (maṇḍapa), (17) A park (ārāma), (18) A site for a park (ārāmavattthū), and desired that the Bhikkhus should come and accept it, they should go and halt at the place for a week only and then come back but they should not go if not invited.

The list is significant in that it contains more names of the gifts intended for the Buddhist Saṃgha than those enumerated in the chapter on Uposatha and this makes the introduction of Vassa Vāsa into the Saṃgha at a further subsequent date very clear.

But one might here very well be tempted to remark that the attitude of the Saṃgha in violating Vassa Vāsa was in this case more in its own interest than in that of the layman concerned though in those days of plenty and much wealth people might have thought otherwise. The next rule leaves no doubt as to the position of the Saṃgha that it was really actuated by a policy of co-operation with the laity in the hours of its need and anxiety.

If an Upāsaka (devotee) or an Upāsikā (female devotee) prepared for his or her own benefit any one of the following :

(1) A sleeping room (sayanighara), (2) A stable (uddosita), (3) A tower (atṭa), (4) A one-peaked building (māla), (5) A shop (āpaṇa), (6) A market hall (āpanasālā), (7) A storied house (pāsāda), (8) A mansion (hammiya), (9) A cave (guhā), (10) A cell (pariveṇa), (11) A store room (koṭṭhaka), (12) A refectory (upaṭṭhānasālā), (13) A fire room (aggisālā), (14) A kitchen (rasavati), (15) A privy (vaccakuṭi), (16) A place to walk on (caṅkama), (17) A house to walk in (caṅkamanasālā), (18) A bath-room (yantāghara), (19) A hall containing a bath-room (yantāgharasālā), (20) A lotus tank (pokkharāṇi), (21) A pavilion (maṇḍapa), (22) A park (ārāma), (23) A site for a park (ārāmavattthu) or on the occasion of the marriage ceremony of his or her son or daughter or when he knew how to recite a celebrated 'suttanta' likely to fall into oblivion, then if he or she sent a man to the Bhikkhus asking them to come to him or her for giving necessary instructions the Bhikkhus should go and halt at his or her place for a week only and afterwards return to their original place though it be in violation of the Vassa Vāsa. But they should not go if not sent for.

We are further told that every member of the Buddhist Saṃgha whether a Bhikkhu or a Bhikkhuni or a Sikkhamānā or a Sāmaṇera or a Sāmaṇeri should under similar circumstances, act likewise (M. V. III § 5).

The Bhikkhus were also enjoined to travel in violation of Vassa Vāsa if they were asked to come and nurse a brother or a relation when ill (M. V. III § 7).

In the case of illness of parents however, the Bhikkhus were asked not only to go when invited but also when not invited, merely on being informed of the matter (M. V. III § 7).

3. The interests of the Saṃgha to be fully safeguarded during Vassa Vasa

Bhikkhus were compelled to travel in violation of Vassa Vāsa to the Vihāra where their presence was required even when they were not invited, under the following circumstances :

(1) When a monk or a nun or a sikkhamāna or a sāmaṇeri was sick (gilāna).

(2) When inward struggle (anabhirati) had befallen a monk or a nun or a sāmaṇera or a sikkhamāna.

(3) When doubts of conscience (kukkuccam) arose in the mind of a monk or a nun or a sāmaṇera or a sikkhamāna.

(4) When a monk or a nun took to a false doctrine (ditṭhi-upagatam).

(5) When guilty of a grave offence he or she required to be sentenced to 'parivāsa' discipline.

(6) When a monk or a nun required to be sentenced to recommence penal discipline (mūlāya paṭikassanā).

(7) When a monk or a nun required to be sentenced to mānatta discipline.

(8) When a monk or a nun required to be rehabilitated (abbhanāraho).

(9) When the Saṃgha was required to proceed against a Bhikkhu according to 'tajjanīya' a 'nissaya' or 'pabbājaniya' or 'paṭisārāniya' or 'ukkhepaniya kamma' (M. V. III § 6).

These rules make it very clear that during Vassa Vāsa the Uposatha assembly must function within the 'āvāsa' in the usual way. Moreover, if for want of members its works were likely to suffer in an 'āvāsa' the Bhikkhus of other 'āvāsas' must go there and complete its works. At all events, they should endeavour to finish its business either by doing the work of proclamation or forming the quorum of the assembly (ussakkam karisāmi va anussāvessāmi va gaṇapurako vab havissāmi). Evidently by travelling from one 'āvāsa' to another they would not be guilty of violating Vassa Vāsa under such circumstances.

When the 'vihāra' (room) of a saṃghārāma was leaky, allowed rain water to come in and was in need of repair, then, if an Upāsaka having collected some wood in a forest invited the Bhikkhus to come there and accept it for making the necessary repairs they should go to the place though in violation of Vassa Vāsa, and accept the offer in the interest of the Saṃgha (M. V. III § 8).

4. Violation of Vassa Vasa justified in the interest of personal comforts of the Bhikkhus or when threatened with a schism

1. When troubled by (1) beasts of prey (vāḷa), (2) snakes (sirimsapa), (3) robbers (cora), (4) demons (pisāca), (5) want of food due to villages being burnt down (gāmo agginā dadḍho), (6) residences catching fire (senāsanam dadḍham), (7) villages flooded with water (gāma udakena buḷha), (8) residences flooded with water, the Bhikkhus should travel in search of a suitable place even in violation of Vassa Vāsa (M. V. III § 9).

2. When the village in which the Bhikkhus were living, was infested by robbers they must leave that village and go to another village where there were no robbers and its people lived in peace.

When the villagers were found to be divided in their opinions, the Bhikkhus must live with those who were well disposed towards them (yena bahutarā saddhā pasannā tena gantum) (M. V. III § 10).

3. When the Bhikkhus got neither coarse nor fine food to the extent they required they could depart from the place of their rest.

Similarly, violation of Vassa Vāsa was no offence to the Bhikkhus under the following circumstances :

4. When getting both coarse and fine food they did not get sustaining food.

5. When getting all the above they did not get the services of a layman (upatṭhāka).

6. When getting all the above including the services of a lay man they did not get medicine.

7. When there was the likelihood of their falling into temptation.

8. When they found an ownerless treasure in the vicinity of their 'āvāsa'.

9. When there was the danger of disunion in the Saṃgha (Saṃghabheda) likely to be caused by some of its obstinate members. The particular sub-clauses in respect of this last rule were :

(1) When a Bhikkhu found or heard of a number of Bhikkhus striving to cause divisions in the Saṃgha he must depart thinking. May no division arise in my presence "mā mayi sammukhibhute saṃgho bhijji"; or (2) When a Bhikkhu heard that in such an 'āvāsa' some Bhikkhus being his friend or friends of his friends were trying to cause or had actually caused divisions, he should go to exhort them and stop the act, failing in this he must depart from the 'āvāsa'.

Bhikkhunis were also enjoined to act likewise under similar circumstances (M. V. III § 11).

We may note in this connection that towards the latter part of the life of the Buddha the Saṃgha was threatened with a schism of a rather serious character when Devadatta, a very influential member of the Saṃgha being himself a cousin of the Buddha, sought the patronage of king Ajātasattu and under the pretext of reforming the modes of lives of the monks wanted them to live a life of strict celibacy not in exact conformity with the

motto of the Saṃgha. Though strongly reprimanded by the Buddha he appears to have succeeded in creating a separate congregation for himself under the name of 'Gotamaka'. The reference to the sub-section of the last rule as stated above thus points to their later origin which must have been caused by the exit of Devadatta from the Saṃgha.

5. Confirmment of 'Pabbajja' also, should not be postponed during Vassa Vasa

The Bhikkhus came to an understanding among themselves that none should be initiated or given Pabbajjā during the observance of Vassa. It so happened that a grandson of the female devotee Visākhā approached the Bhikkhus asking for Pabbajjā during the period of Vassa Vāsa but was refused on the above ground. Now, when Vassa Vāsa was over he changed his mind and was no longer disposed to receive Pabbajjā from them, whereupon Visākhā became sad and she murmured. She approached the Buddha and brought to his notice the baneful effect which the aforesaid resolution of the Bhikkhus had produced on the mind of her grandson. Needless to add that at the instance of Visākhā such a resolution had to be withdrawn.

Confirmment of Pabbajjā not being a business of ñatticatutthakamma of the Saṃgha was left to individual monks (Upajjhāyas) to be given at their discretion. Therefore the Bhikkhus (Upajjhāyas) were not very wrong neither were they unmindful of their duties to the Saṃgha in postponing it till they were free from the handicap of Vassa Vāsa. But, lay opinion must be conceded and hence this particular rule had to be given the go-bye.

Further, the withdrawal of this rule establishes beyond any shade of doubt that it was enacted at a time when the age of the Buddha was in the neighbourhood of eighty which means that he was practically at the end of his life's journey. From his life-history we learn that Visākhā was only a girl of seven when at the age of thirty-six or thirty-seven he first set the Wheel of Law (Doctrine) in motion. To become a grand-mother of a

boy competent to receive Pabbajjā she must have had to wait at least for thirty-five years after her marriage which took place at the age of sixteen. The age of the Buddha at the time in question must be therefore, somewhere in the neighbourhood of eighty, *i.e.*, the age at which he passed into 'Parinirvana'. (*i.e.*, $(16 - 7 = 9) 36 + 9 + 35 = 80$) (M. V. III 13).

**Fulfilment of promises of Vassa Vāsa by a monk to a layman
in the midst of Saṁgha kamma**

A Bhikkhu promised to a layman to put up with him during the earlier (purimikā) Vassa Vāsa but while going to that Āvāsa he found on the way two 'Āvāsas' where robes were plentiful. With a view to obtaining plenty of robes if he spent his Vassa in these two Āvāsas he committed a Dukkhaṭa offence and, as to his promise for his observance of the earlier Vassa Vāsa it stood cancelled.

A Bhikkhu promised to a layman to spend the earlier Vassa Vāsa with him but while going to that Āvāsa he observed Uposatha outside by entering a Vihāra on the 'paṭipadā'. He must not depart from that Vihāra without finishing his business partly gone through (akaraṇiyo) or having new business to go through (sakaraṇiyo) even should the work fall on the day of his promised arrival. He must first finish the business of the Vihāra and then proceed to the residence in question.

Also a Bhikkhu under similar circumstances must not also depart from the Vihāra after staying there for two or three days if he did not finish his work yet to be finished or left undone or partly done what could be finished in a week. But if he departed leaving undone or partly undone a piece of work which could be finished in a week and returned to the Vihāra in the course of the same week, his promise as well as his spending of the earlier Vassa Vāsa stood vindicated.

These rules were moreover applicable to the case of a Bhikkhu who entered a 'Vihāra' for observing the Uposatha while actually residing with a layman during the Vassa Vāsa.

The departure of a Bhikkhu from a Vihāra under the circumstances referred to above a week before Pavāraṇā constituted no violation of Vassa Vāsa rules.

The same was the procedure for Bhikkhus in respect of the observance of the later (pacchimikā) Vassa Vāsa, only in place of 'Pavāraṇā' the expression 'Komadi cātumāsini' should be added (M. V. III 14).

The chapter on Vassa Vāsa is thus full of rules which deal with its violations and might more appropriately be titled 'anti-Vassa Vāsa' instead of 'Vassa Vāsa'. The only rule referring to the main question is that the Bhikkhus should observe the Vassa for three months while staying in their respective Āvāsas which they should not transgress during the period of its observance. But the whole lot of other rules following this injunction in quick succession only points out the innumerable ways in which it could be violated with impunity. One might therefore be excused if he came to the conclusion that the observance or non-observance of Vassa Vāsa had no abiding interest for the Buddhist monk whose sole object in following this time-honoured custom was to please the laity and at the same time not to be unmindful to the works of the Saṃgha which was to be his primary concern. It was found inexpedient to stop certain practices which came into vogue by the time when Vassa Vāsa was promulgated that raised the Saṃgha in popular estimation. These Saṃgha kammās constituted violations to its observance and were largely responsible for the origin of these 'anti-Vassa Vāsa' rules.

We shall see further that in deference to popular opinion certain places were enumerated as proper for observing the Vassa Vāsa and some as improper though the latter received the sanction of non-Buddhistic sects.

The Bhikkhus if they so liked were allowed to spend their Vassa Vāsa in a cattle-pen (Vajā), in a caravan (Sattha) and in a ship (Nāvā). This last-named place evidently proves that it was quite possible for a Buddhist monk to spend the three

months of the Vassa among the traders who undertook long journeys in boats visiting places of interest probably seaports for the disposal of their merchandise—a fact which might have largely helped the propagation of Buddhism outside India. On the other hand, the following places were forbidden for the purpose of Vassa Vāsa :

- (1) The hollow of a tree (rukḥhasusira)
- (2) A forest (rukḥhaviṭapi)
- (3) Open air (ajjhokāsa)
- (4) A place not meant for rest (asenāsana)
- (5) A house where dead bodies were kept (chavakuṭi)
- (6) An umbrella (chatta)¹
- (7) A big earthenware vessel (cāṭi)

These it should be noted were actually being used by non-Buddhistic recluses during the Vassa but people raising objection to their being used by the Bhikkhus of the Order they were forbidden (M. V. III 12).

Vassa Vāsa or anti-Vassa Vāsa, these rules prove without doubt that the Bhikkhus were expected to keep themselves in close touch with the laity during the period.

The insignificance into which laymen were cast at the normal sessions of the Saṁgha especially at the observance of the Uposatha ceremony in which even their very presence was forbidden, was more than compensated for during the Vassa Vāsa when practically they were the overlords of monks offering them shelter and food not to be obtained during this period by begging from door to door. Vassa Vāsa thus afforded an opportunity to laymen to examine very closely the inward nature and character of any member or members of the Saṁgha and be satisfied with a first-hand knowledge of the conditions obtaining in a Vihāra. The popularity of the Bhikkhus and of the methods of their works remained for the most part to be judged by the

¹ The term 'chatta' should really mean a place where people were fed free of charge being derived from 'satra' and not 'chatra'.

manner of treatment they received from lay people during this season. The festival of Pavāraṇā which marked the termination of Vassa Vāsa was an index of the extent of goodwill and sympathy for the Saṃgha shown by them with offerings of food and clothings in their enthusiasm for acquiring merit.

CHAPTER II

PAVĀRAṆĀ OR THE END OF VASSA VĀSA

1. Pavarana—an index of love and esteem entertained by the laity for the Order.

The ceremony of Pavāraṇā in the Order undoubtedly arose with the promulgation of Vassa Vāsa with which it was inseparably associated from very early times. In the Suttanta literature we are told that “in ancient days and also in the days which were still more ancient, on the full moon day of Uposatha when Pavāraṇā was held in the night, the entire body of gods belonging to the heaven of Thirty-three sat in their assembly called Sudhammā making it full etc.” (Purimāni bhante divasāni purimatārāni, tadahu ‘posathe paṇṇarase Pavāranāya rattiya kevalakappā ca devā Tāvatiṃsā sudhammāyaṃ sabhāyaṃ sanni sinnā honti sannipatitā etc.’—Mahā Govinda Suttanta). The previous existence of Pavāraṇā is thus clear according to the testimony of the Pali Canon itself. The very day on which it was held further proves that it synchronised with the Uposatha ceremony which was also held during the earlier part of the same day. The Uposatha being held in the morning, the ceremony of Pavāraṇā had to be conducted in the evening thus making it also convenient for laymen to attend it. The particular Uposatha rule forbidding the presence of laymen at the ceremony was absent in the observance of Pavāraṇā though as to the exclusion of other undesirables, its procedure was the same as that of the Uposatha. Thus Pavāraṇā solemnising the termination of Vassa Vāsa was a very ancient custom and must have been introduced into the Order along with Vassa Vāsa itself. A separate reason for its origin as ascribed by the text to a particular occasion, need not be stated.

Etymologically Pavāraṇā is the same word as the Vedic ‘Parva’ or ‘Pārvaṇa’ or more commonly ‘Pāraṇa’ which meant the breaking

off of an observance or a vow with merriments and feasts being the very common constituents of the Pavāraṇā of the Buddhist Order. The literal meaning of Pavāraṇā as derived from the √ var, to choose, used in the causative sense, meaning to make, to choose, with the prefix *pa-* and the suffix *-aṇa*, reducing it to pavāraṇā in feminine meaning 'being caused to be chosen' was just applicable to the ceremony in which each Bhikkhu, whether senior or junior, had to entreat the Saṃgha to choose and reinstate him as a monk free from any sin likely to accrue from his private residence during the Vassa Vāsa (M. V. IV § 1 para. 14).

It may be assumed that coming as it did after the Uposatha ceremony held on the same day its importance in the matter of certification of the purity of individual monks was of secondary character (*idāni uposathaṃ pureyya Pātimokkham uddiseyya āgame komudiyā cātumāsiniya saṃgho pāvāreyya*) and that there must be some other reason of primary importance to justify its existence as a especial observance of the Saṃgha. We may be almost certain that although not much stress was laid on the same formulas as those which had to be gone through by the members of the Order for their purity and unity at the Uposatha held in the earlier part of the same day, the importance of Pavāraṇā did not fall below that of the fortnightly ceremony itself. The pent-up feelings of the Buddhist monks generally accustomed to having a broad view of the world being now confined to a narrow circle of lay devotees during Vassa Vāsa, were after its termination animated by a passion of missionary zeal to go abroad and certainly had a large share in the inordinate joy and acts of merriments caused by the presentation of gifts by laymen on this occasion. In fact, Pavāraṇā might be looked upon as inaugurating a new era of life and development for the Bhikkhus who after their period of confinement and rest broke forth upon the world with redoubled vigour having with them the advantage of the experience of their past, backed by the encouragement and support they received from the laity on this occasion (*evam mayam imamhā phāsuihārā paribahirā bhavissāma*) (M. V. ch. IV § 13 para. 3).

The first full-moon day of the month of Kattika or the day previous to it was generally held to be the day of Pavāraṇā. If 'Vassa Vāsa' had begun from the full moon day of the month of Āsāḍha or the day previous to it, it would have just covered four months on the Pavāraṇā day referred to above though truly speaking it ought to be known according to our text as 'Komudi cātumāsini' day instead of Pavāraṇā (M. V. III § 14 para. 11). But in the case of later Vassa Vāsa beginning from the full-moon day of Srāvana which fell in the month of Bhādra, this Pavāraṇā or better 'Komudi cātumāsini' day would just complete three months as sanctioned by the Buddha in contravention of the common practice of Vassa Vāsa of four months (cāturmāsya). But taking into consideration the fact that the Bhikkhus used to observe it later being disposed to put off the day of entering upon Vassa Vāsa to the last date, we may observe that it was the later Vassa Vāsa which received recognition in the Saṃgha, i.e., its beginning was made in the month of Bhādra and termination in the month of Kattika with the celebration of Pavāraṇā which should be correctly speaking, 'Komudi cātumasini' day.

2. Common features of 'Pavarana' and 'Uposatha'

Excepting the manner in which it was held, in every other respect the Pavāraṇā ceremony might be looked upon as a duplicate of the Uposatha falling with which on the same day as a rule it was held after sunset. The avowed objects of the Pavāraṇā as is said to have been expressed by the Buddha, were (1) mutual cooperation (aṇṇamaṇṇānulomatā), (2) purification from sin (āpatti vuṭṭhānatā) and (3) holding fast the ideals of the Vinaya (vinayapurekkhāratā) (M. V. IV § 1 para. 13) all of which might with equal emphasis, if not more, be claimed for the Uposatha though their enunciation has not been made in connection with its rules. We have already shown in the chapter on Uposatha that the unification of the Saṃgha units was largely effected through it wherein lay its special usefulness

in the Buddhist Saṃgha. It is only natural that objects being the same the constitution of both Uposatha and Pavāraṇā would be the same so far as the aspects common to both were concerned. Let us, therefore, first confine our attention to the aspects that were similar to both.

Like the Uposatha, Pavāraṇā was imperative on all the members of the Order. In the case of the sick monk or any other member detained outside, the procedure was the same as in the Uposatha, only instead of sending in 'Pārisuddhi' he had to send in 'Pavāraṇā' through a competent Bhikkhu (M. V. IV 3).

The recital of the Pātimokkha which constituted the main work of the Uposatha was however totally absent in list of the several items of business meant for the Pavāraṇā. The manner therefore of the confession of sin has been rather lightly touched upon in this ceremony by simply mentioning that atonement for any misconduct was equally essential and important for the Bhikkhus.

With reference to the manner of the holding of the assemblies and the validity of the acts passed therein the rules were the same as in Uposatha.

The residents and the visitors enjoyed the same rights as in the Uposatha regarding the observance of the ceremony inside or outside the Āvāsa according to their respective numbers. (M. V. IV §§ 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13). And, excepting in the case of the pious layman, the rules—regarding the exclusions of other undesirables from the ceremony were also the same (M. V. IV 14).

We may however submit that inspite of these rules for exclusions existing on the statute-book a good deal of relaxation marked the execution of the ceremony of which the principal constituent elements were the acts of merrymaking. The laws of exclusions were not capable of being so rigorously applied to it at the time of Pavāraṇā as during Uposatha. Because, Pavāraṇā was meant for giving a practical demonstration of the ideal of

brotherhood in a more general and wider sense than Uposatha embracing within its domain all kinds of people from which monks though with guilt could not possibly be excluded.

3. Distinctive features of the Pavarana ceremony

Under ordinary circumstances when the acts of merrimaking were over and the assembly of monks had gathered and seated in proper order, the Pavāraṇā ceremony in so far as the Saṃgha was concerned would begin as follows: A competent monk should address the assembly with these words: "Let the venerable Saṃgha hear me, Tonight (ajja ratti khapita § 15) is our Pavāraṇā, if the Saṃgha deems fit let it hold the Pavāraṇā ceremony here." Thereafter every senior 'thera' placing his upper robe on one side of his shoulder and squatting on the ground with folded hands should address the Saṃgha three times saying: Brethren, I beseech the Saṃgha to choose me as one free from any guilt seen, heard or known or any such charge that might be laid at my door. If the brethren will kindly let me know of any instance of guilt of which I may be suspected and if I consider that to be an offence I shall atone for it by undergoing a suitable punishment" (M. V. IV 1).

Without having to wait for the consent of the Saṃgha the turn passed on to the next Bhikkhu in seniority and in this way when every one had finished his say, the meeting automatically came to a close. All the members of the assembly would remain kneeling down while the Pavāraṇā declarations would be going on except in the case of the one who was old and feeble. He would only remain kneeling down so long as his turn was not over and when it was over he would sit down as usual without waiting for others to do so (M. V. V 2).

This, in short, is the manner of holding the Pavāraṇā ceremony in which the Pātimokkha specifying the types of guilt to which the Bhikkhus might be liable, was not recited. The acknowledgment of purity in the Pavāraṇā

was thus largely dependent on mutual co-operation and individual conviction which went a great way to effect unity in the Saṃgha on a broader scale than the Uposatha. But such a system was not without its dangers; for, it left the way open for strifes and discord in the case of disagreement among the Bhikkhus regarding the commission of a particular offence which could not be found in the code of the Pātimokkha. Material prosperity of some becomes an eye sore to others who are without it. Gifts which accrued to the Saṃgha and the especial regard accorded to worthier Bhikkhus at the time of Pavāraṇā perhaps became in time a source of trouble and weakness to its solidarity as can be witnessed by the charges and counter-charges made by the Bhikkhus against one another which marked the proceedings of Pavāraṇā later on. This forms the subject-matter of the latter part of the same chapter (M. V. IV § 16, 17). We shall therefore confine ourselves to the earlier part.

Under circumstances when most of the night was likely to be occupied with merrymakings and offerings of gifts by laymen and very little time remained for all the members to say their 'Pavāraṇā' individually it was especially enjoined that without interrupting such festivities the Bhikkhus should wait till these were over when they would spend the remaining portion of the night in going through the Pavāraṇā by short-cut methods as for example by repeating the formulæ only twice or once instead of thrice and if necessary in conjunction with the Bhikkhus who were of the same age. This is a clear indication of the fact that merriment or in other words co-operation with the laity was the essential feature of Pavāraṇā wherein other functions played only a subordinate part (M. V. IV 15).

Short-cut methods were also allowed when the Bhikkhus made it an occasion to please laymen by the display of their intellectual feats engaging themselves in loud discussions of their respective subjects, Sutta, Dhamma, Vinaya, Mātikā, etc., and not infrequently in quarrels among themselves occupying most

of the night having at their disposal very little time to say their Pavāraṇā individually (M. V. IV 15).

So also the short-cuts were adopted when the clouds presented overhead a threatening appearance and there were scanty materials for sheltering the assembly of monks gathered on the ground below or when dangers were apprehended from aborigines, kings, thieves, fire, water, common people, non-human beings, beasts of prey, reptiles, violation of Brahmachariya or of a proper mode of life (M. V. IV 15).

When the number of monks forming the assembly fell below five but above one the Bhikkhus had to perform 'aññamaña Pavāraṇā' distinguished from Saṃgha-Pavāraṇā. Accordingly, in the speech as of the individuals the term 'Saṃgha' was to be substituted by 'āyasmanta' (M. V. IV § 5).

When the number was one, the procedure was the same as in the Uposatha, *i.e.*, the member had to sit patiently on the spot waiting for others to come in keeping in his possession the necessary supply of food and drink (M. V. IV § 5 para. 8).

Pavāraṇā was thus the fulfilment of a policy as chalked out by the Great Teacher of mankind in his primary address to the early bhikkhus "Go forth ye for the weal, benefit and good of many." The originality of Buddhism lay not in its monachism but in bringing out the sublime truths of monachism from the sequestered dwellings of the sages of the forest to the door of the ordinary layman for his spiritual uplift enabling him to solve the problems of life and be at ease. Such a constitution could only have evolved from the mind of a very powerful personality of the calibre of the Buddha who was brought up under the watchwords of Fraternity and Equality and Justice though his disciples soon made a god of him in their extreme regard for his person which they found to be the very embodiment of all that was good and great. Of the main rules none but the Buddha could have been the author.

With the end of Pavāraṇā is brought to a close the main subject of democracy in the Saṃgha in early Buddhism in

so far as it can be gathered from the first four chapters of the Vinaya Mahāvagga which only deal with the subject. The rest of the Khandakas devote themselves to the discussion of substantive laws with reference to the introduction of several articles for the use of the community like shoes, kaṭhina-robles, medicine, robes in general as well as of those relating to the imposition of punishment, methods of procedure during accusation and counter-accusation with occasional reference to the main constitution. For the present we have confined our attention to the treatment of the central organisation of the Saṃgha regarding its formation, co-ordination and stabilisation which were certainly of primary importance to its main stay under the caption of 'Democracy in Early Buddhist Saṃgha'. Practically all the other phases of its activities centred round this constitution and the whole of the Buddhist empire if not Buddhism itself depended on a smooth and systematic working of this system. Its fall in India was, therefore, responsible not in a small measure, for the decline of Buddhism in the land of its birth.

APPENDIX

DECADENCE OF DEMOCRACY

Last Days of Democracy in Early Buddhist Samgha

In the last days of democracy in the Buddhist Samgha the rules that were introduced were reminiscent of its glorious past. What seemed quite unimportant and unnecessary in the brightest days of its multifarious activities, had to be introduced when those activities showed signs of decay and diminution. A few of them as recorded in the Cullavagga might be cited here for illustration.

In subsequent years when the Buddhist monk wanted to leave a monastery and enter a new one, his responsibilities and duties as recorded in Cullavagga, Chapter VIII, tell a very sad tale of the decadence of democracy of the earlier days. The commotional and commodious life in a Vihāra appears to have suffered a great setback and monasteries which grew like mushrooms in the heart of northern India in the very life time of the Buddha dwindled greatly in number, power and grandeur they had attained. Being depleted of monastic members they appeared like deserted houses bearing only the memory of their past glory. Such a state of things might have taken place when the final recension of the Canon was complete under the state control and democracy was replaced by hierarchy in the third century B.C. in the reign of Emperor Asoka. Individual monks had now no voice in the management of monasteries which got merged in bigger ones and became fewer in number.

Through all this process of change while he was perfectly aware that his legal rights and privileges would be duly recognised in all the ' Samghārāmas ' of different places, the Buddhist monk was not immune from fulfilling certain duties which, however unpleasant they might be, were newly imposed on him when

leaving or entering a monastery. Attention to persons gave way to attention to the furniture of the Vihāra.

Duties of a monk when departing from a monastery

To prevent furniture and utensils being lost and damaged as a result of monks departing from a Vihāra without informing the other residents thereof, evidently their number being proportionately small, the following rules came into operation (C. V. Ch. VIII § 3): The departing monk should keep in good order all the wooden furniture and clay utensils of the room used by him. He should close the windows and bundle up the bedding and then inform the resident monks before leaving the monastery. If no resident monk could be found an attendant monk (Sāmanera) must be informed; in his absence, the man in charge of the monastery (Ārāmika) and when all of them were absent he should proceed to work in the following way: He should place a cot on four pieces of stone and the other cots of the room over it. Similarly, he should place stools upon stools and put the bedding in a heap over them and then after closing all the doors and windows of the room, he should take his departure from the place. But if the roof of the room was leaky allowing rain water to come in, he should first get it thatched or make an effort to that end before he started. If he was unsuccessful, he should, in the same order as before, place the furniture in another room which was proof against the rains. In the event the whole monastery with all its apartments required a thorough repair, the articles must be taken to a neighbouring village or an effort should be made to have them so removed. If this process also failed, then, in exactly the same order, they must be left in an open space and after covering them with a layer of grass or palm leaves the monk should depart thinking that some portions of the articles at least would be left behind for showing the remnants of an once existing Vihāra (*appeva nāma angāni pi seseyyuma ti*) (C. V. Chap. VIII § 3).

Duties of a monk when entering a monastery

The visitor monk when entering a monastery must take off his sandals and after beating off the dust from them, must carry them low in his hands. He should expose his head by closing his umbrella and putting his upper robe on one shoulder he should slowly walk into the monastery compound. When walking over the compound he should carefully mark the place constantly used by the residents thereof coming out or going in, be it the service hall or the pavillion or the foot of a tree. There he should go and lay down his robes and bowls and wait, taking a seat befitting his rank. On meeting somebody he should learn from him where drinking water and food were available and going thereto should partake of them if necessary. Before taking his food he should wash his feet by pouring water on them with one hand and cleanse them by another. The same hand should not be used for both pouring water and cleansing the feet. If he was a junior monk he should clean his sandals himself by rubbing a dry piece of cloth against them or he should do it with the help of a piece of moistened cloth. The piece of cloth should then be properly washed and laid on one side. If he was a senior monk he should cause his sandals to be cleansed by a junior monk in the way as mentioned above.

The visitor monk should salute the resident monk if the latter was senior in age, but, if he was a junior the visitor monk should cause the resident to salute him. He should then learn from the resident monk which were the rooms of the monastery meant for the guests to live in and whether such rooms were being used or closed for a long time. He should also learn how far the jurisdiction of the Vihāra (āvāsa?) lay and how many were the families that received education therefrom. He should mark the positions of the latrines and urinals and should learn how the Vihāra was being protected (kattaradaṇḍa) and also any understanding which the residents must have come to as regards the time of entering into and going out of the Vihāra. When entering a room uninhabited for a long time, he should wait for a

moment after knocking at the door without opening it. While still standing there he should produce a sound by beating two sticks together and then push open the door. Before entering the room, its inner parts should be clearly observed with a view to avoiding dangers coming from reptiles. If the room was dirty and the cots were found placed one upon another or if he found the stools heaped upon one another or the bedding lying in a heap all covered with dust then he should cleanse them in the same way, as a pupil cleansed his teacher's room and its furniture. If there was no drinking water in the reservoir it should be stored by him. If there was no food he should cause it to be prepared and if no water was found in the water-vessel (*ācamana kumbhi*) he should also fill it with water (C. V. Chap. VIII § 1).

The duties of a resident monk towards the visitor

The visitor monk was never recognised in the Buddhist monastery as a guest however distant might be the place from which he came. The time-honoured custom of honouring a guest as a 'guru' was never observed in the *Vihāra*. He was only recognised as an incoming member of the *Samgha* itself. His rights and privileges were practically the same as those of the resident monks who were therefore relieved of a great burden of formalities to be observed in especial honour of visitors. Those that were observed were only just sufficient for maintaining a corporate life which the *Bhikkhus* were expected to keep up. These were: The resident monk should receive the visitor monk with courtesy and take him to the place of rest fixed for the visitors. He should enlighten him as to whether such place was being used or had remained unused for a long time. He should tell him the exact jurisdiction of the *Vihāra* and the places that lay outside it. He should also bring to his notice matters relating to (1) families receiving education in the *Vihāra*, (2) positions of *Vihāra* urinals and privies, (3) the manner in which the *Vihāra* was guarded, (4) the place where food and

drinking water were available, and (5) any understanding to which the members might have come with reference to the time of departing from and entering the monastery.

On seeing a visitor monk senior in age, the resident monk must prepare a seat for him, keep water ready for washing his feet, also provide a footstool and a napkin for his use. The resident monk should rise to receive the visitor on his arrival at the Vihāra and after saluting him take from his hands his robes and bowl and enquire whether he required drinking water. He should then remove the dirt from his sandals by a piece of cloth in the aforesaid manner.

If the visitor monk was a junior then he should be asked by the resident monk to place his robes and bowl at their proper places and take his seat in a room. He should then be shown the proper apartment for his stay there and other necessary places as mentioned already. The unpleasant task of cleansing the room assigned to him unquestionably fell to the lot of the visitor (C. V. Chap VIII § 2).

These rules by no means easy of performance served a death blow to the free and frequent movements of monks from one place to another. They also hampered a good deal the inter-communication of monks with their brethren of different provinces causing monasteries to be controlled for the most part by the local monks and be self-dependent without outside help. Depopulation in the Vihāras and perhaps want of sufficient cultured monks must have caused democracy to be replaced by hierarchy leaving everything to be settled by the chief monk of the local *samghārāmas*, i.e., to the rule of one individual. The old ideal of unity which the samgha held aloft before the world had to be dropped and in its place rose the ideal of pure monachism giving rise to different schools of thoughts which developed later on as Vaibhāsika, Sautrāntika, Yogācāra and Mādhamikā in the first century A.D. No great importance was attached to the formation of the Uposatha assembly which must have turned into a formal ceremony of a particular monastery only. The question of

guarding the monastery and its properties became uppermost in the minds of all the members through the co-operation of the laity who certainly had great regard for them and took care of them when vacated by the Bhikkhus as they were still functioning as seats of learning and discipline. This particular rule proves that when vacated the ownership of the monasteries was vested in the management of the local people.

DEMOCRACY DIES

Democracy in Early Buddhist Saṃgha which must have been the reflection of some republican system of government current in certain states in the time of the Buddha, thus came to an end not very long after his demise when these states were themselves unable to maintain their own forms of government. How far and in what form, pure democracy is suited to the genius of India will appear from what we have recorded in this book. Without mental, moral and physical training the principle of adult franchise failed in India. Democracy had every chance of being reduced to mob rule if the members were oblivious of their duties and responsibilities in the state. This sort of democracy should be avoided at any cost. Even to a community of enlightened monks such as the Bhikkhu Saṃgha of the earliest days, the approval of their acts coming from their ideal man was essential. Hence it was that every rule or an ordinance had to be sanctioned by the Buddha before it became a law. Such notions which certainly arose out of the beliefs in sage-worship of the time as 'Na hi Tathāgatā Vītatham bhananti'—'The Buddhas never tell an untruth' or 'Anatthasmim setughāto Tathāgatānam'—'The Buddhas never do anything that might lead to mischief and misfortune', were at the root of peoples desire for soliciting the approval of these religious men for good government. Want of higher education and of a thorough knowledge of discipline was the cause of failure of democracy in India and, therefore, it was that any great man of saintly character became easily the dictator of any administration which

brought in peace and prosperity in the country causing, democracy to give way to autocracy and in the realm of religion to heirarchy or the rule of the chief 'thera'.

Democracy in the Buddhist Samgha failed but it achieved one thing for the Indian people. The ideal of unity and fraternity penetrated the masses and paved the way for the building up of an Indian Empire by Chandragupta Maurya and his grand son Asoka generally accepted as the greatest king of India.

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