THE OFFENCES AND RETRIBUTIONS IN THE VINAYAPITAKA

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Offences And Retributions in The Siyadhaka (1)

The organization of the Buddhist Order (Sāṅgha) developed through a continuous process, as it may be seen in the different versions of the Vinaya texts available to us. After a few centuries from the Mahāpiṇḍīvāna of Gātāma Buddha, the Buddhist Sāṅgha was divided into numerous sects (2). Each sect might have possessed a Vinaya-Pitaka of their own, amongst which some texts have come down to us in different languages. The Vinaya-Pitaka is a code of Buddhist monastic discipline. Sākyaputra Gātāma came across several unprecedented happenings on which he had to lay down different monastic rules for the maintenance of discipline. These rules have been enumerated in details in the Siyadhaka section of the Vinaya-Pitaka. Often the Group of six monks (3) is said to be responsible for doing certain misdeeds which led Gātāma to prescribe such rules. He used to specify the nature of offence (Apatti) for which punishment was to be inflicted on the monks in every case according to the gravity of the misconduct. The offences likewise received different appellations such as Duddāja, Thulācayya, etc.

The Sāṅgha As A Living Organism

It may appear to be a lofty ideal for those who are conversant with the Science of Organizations. The Buddhist Order basically consists of a group of persons coming from different strata of society and having their distinct mental attitudes and aptitudes. The Buddha claimed that his teachings had been imbued with the eight great characteristics of the ocean (4).

It is well known that there were no restrictions of Vedic caste or social Order among the members of the Sāṅgha. But a human being (Jātaka) always bear an individual outlook on account of their mental conditions and efficacies. Consequently, the Buddha had to face several incidents of resistance, disorderliness and even insubordination amongst the members of his Sāṅgha. These incidents prove that the Sāṅgha was comparable to a living organism in which the monks were like living cells.

Apatti (Offence)

According to the monastic rules an offence (Apatti) may be either major (pārakāpatti) or minor (Lahukāpatti). A major one, as a potential cause of asceticism, must be different from all other ecclesiastical minor offences referred to in the canonical texts. In this regard Dr. Bhawadhe Mūchherī has rightly pointed out: Apatti can therefore only mean the minor offences which are outside the scope of the seven types of major offences included in the 'vinaya' (5).

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Apati may be derived from a "pad.Pali.English Dictionary by R.B. Davids and H.C. Slicher, any transgression of the "pādīpādī" or precepts laid down by the Buddha is considered to be an āpatti. Among the offences enlisted in the Pātimokkha (Skt. Pātimokpa) the Pāṭikika and the Saṅghǎdasa are said to be included among the Ārasaṃpattī (also known as Aarasapātī or Dāthasālpattī) and the remaining are said to be grouped under Lakhāpattī (also known as Deśaṅgāmī āpatti or Iṣṭhumālpattī). There is also another classification of the āpattis viz. Āvasesālpattī and Āvasesaṃsavattī. Among the offences of the Pātimokkha, only the Pāṭikika is said to belong to the Āvasesālpattī while the remaining are all said to belong to the Āvasesaṃsavattī.

Dukkaṭa (6)

Dukkaṭa refers to a fault or transgression or a kind of offence on account of "wrong action". All the Skhāya rules if violated involve the Dukkaṭa offence. The dukkaṭa offence has also been classified into eight groups (7). According to the Dharmaguptaka Vivāha preserved in Chinese, "wrong-doing" has been distinguished under two heads—of body and speech, which are together known as "wrong-doing" (8). Some examples of the infliction of the dukkaṭa offence may be cited from the Skhāya of the Theravāda tradition:

1. After the Buddha had granted the monks the permission to carry out the Uposatha like the other hermic sects, he further enjoined the monks to recite the Pātimokkha rules during the Uposatha assembly. But a few of the monks began to recite the Pātimokkha daily being ignorant of how often the Pātimokkha ought to be recited. The matter was reported to the Buddha, whereupon he prescribed that the Pātimokkha ought not to be recited daily but only on the day of the Uposatha. Whoever transgressed this rule, the offence of dukkaṭa would be inflicted upon him.

2. Similarly, the Buddha said down that the recital of the Pātimokkha thrice a fortnight (i.e. on the 8th, 14th and 15th days) would also lead to the infliction of the offence of dukkaṭa and it was permissible to recite the Pātimokkha only on one day, i.e. the fourteenth or the fifteenth (9).

3. The offence of dukkaṭa was also to be inflicted upon the persons who committed the following offences:
   a) Asking questions on the contents of the Vinaya while the assembly is in progress;
   b) Responding to questions on the Vinaya uncailed upon in the midst of the assembly;
   c) Releasing a monk for an offence without taking his leave;
   d) To perform indisputable acts in the midst of the assembly (10).

Many other instances of infliction of the dukkaṭa offence may be cited from other chapters of the Vinaya which require a separate study.

As regards the retribution of the dukkaṭa offence, it may be said that the retributions depended on the gravity of the offences.

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The opinion of Rhsa Davids & Oldenberg may be cited: "Those slight offences which were not embodied in the pàtimokkha are called dukkha- offences. They range, as to their gravity, with the Pàcittiya offences of the Pàtimokkha. For him who had committed a dukkha-offence, no further penance was required than a simple confession of his fault" (11).

Dubbhàsàìàpatti (12)

(Skt) Dubbhàsà, (Ch) Wu Shuo refers to "An offence of bad speech. It may be against the Buddha, Dharma or Saṅgha or against any person. It is one of the āpattis grouped under Adutthullàpatti or Lahuðàpatti or Desanãgàmini āpatti (i.e. light offence)" (13).

The Paràvàta mentions "Dubbhàsà is that which has been heard according to the truth. Dubbhàsà is bad speech, those words that are impure are termed in this way (dubbhàsà). (14) The dubbhàsà is of rare occurrence as compared to the other offences mentioned. It is clear that all kinds of offensive language or speech used by the monks when speaking to anyone was considered to be an offence of "Dubbhàsà".

As it has been grouped under minor offence, its retribution would therefore evidently correspond to that of other minor offences, viz. a simple confession before any other monk or before the Saṅgha would probably suffice in this case.

Thullaccaya (15)

Thullaccaya is however "A grave offence. Thullaccaya is one of the offences which may be amended for by confessing the "offence" before another monk, it is the most serious one amongst all such offences"... An offence similar to Pàdakkà or Saṅgàdìsàsa may be considered as Thullaccaya" (16).

In the pariñâna we find the following interpretation of "Thullaccaya":—

"The Thullaccaya is that which has been heard according to the truth. That which is confessed for one reason, is considered to be (a Thullaccaya). A transgression of which there is no equal, is known as (the Thullaccaya) (17).

Some examples may be cited from the Vinàya-Pàtàka (Theravàda) regarding the infliction of the Thullaccaya. In the Uposaṅha-khandhaka of the Mahàvagga in pàli, it has been recorded that on the day of the Uposaṅha if four or more resident or guest monks have assembled to carry out the Uposaṅha and a number of monks either fewer, equal or greater in number arrive during the course of the Uposaṅha, if the monks already present carry out the Uposaṅha and recite the Pàtimokkha with the intention of creating schism among the Saṅgha, then the offence of Thullaccaya is inflicted upon them (18).

Similarly, on the day of the Uposaṅha if four or more resident or guest monks have assembled to carry out the Uposaṅha and having seen or heard signs of the presence of other resident or guest monks, carry out the Uposaṅha and recite the Pàtimokkha with the intention of creating schism among the Saṅgha, then the offence of Thullaccaya is inflicted on the monks concerned (19).
As regards the retribution of the Thullaccaya offence, it has already been mentioned above that the Thullaccaya is the most serious of the offences that may be amended for by confession.

**Dutthulāppati (20)**

The Pāṇḍita and Sāṅghādīsesa are called Dutthulāppati. It is also known as Garulkāpatti (21). A dutthulāppati is a grave transgression of the Rules of the Order, viz. the four Pāṇḍita and the thirteen Sāṅghādīsesa (22).

"The term dutthulāppati is used also in the ninth Pācittiya rules, and the Old Commentary (Sutta-bhāsāga) there states that by ‘grave offences’ those belonging to the Pāṇḍita and Sāṅghādīsesa are understood" (23).

In the Pātimokkha, the word dutthulāppati appears in the ninth and the sixty-fourth Pācittiya rules as follows:

Pācittiya 9. "Yo pana bhikkhu bhikkhussa dutthulāpīn āpattim anupassampannassa asceto yā niyata bhikkhu sammutiyā pācittiyo. [Trans.—If a monk tells an unordained (anupassampanna) about a grievous offence (dutthulāpatti) of another monk without his permission, a pācittiya shall be inflicted upon him.]

Pācittiya 64. Yo pana bhikkhu bhikkhussa ānāṁ dutthulāpīn āpattim pañjicchāsaya pācittiyo. [Trans.—If a monk knowing conceals a grievous offence (dutthulāpatti) of another monk—a pācittiya shall be inflicted on him.]

Its retribution may correspond to that of the Pāṇḍita or Sāṅghādīsesa according to the gravity of the offence committed.

The offences discussed in the present paper are mostly to be found in the Sāṅghādīsesa. These names have not been used in the Pātimokkha (except Dutthulā) although some of the offences referred to in the Pātimokkha are equivalent to those mentioned in the Sāṅghādīsesa. Similarly, we find no mention of the offences of the Pātimokkha in the Sāṅghādīsesa. The reason may be presumably that "the authors of the final recension of the Vinaya" did not consider it reasonable to introduce new names into the Pātimokkha or to the later offences, in order to retain the original character of the Pātimokkha (24).

In the Suttavibhāsa, consisting of two books—the pāṇḍita and the Pācittiya—the different kinds of offences (āpatti) in the Pātimokkha have been classified in detail. The occasion for the offence as given in the Pātimokkha has been quoted, alongwith the injunctions by the Buddha, followed by the commentary on each of the rules and the different conditions for the perpetration of the offences. Apart from the main offences enumerated in the Pātimokkha, the Thullaccaya has been taken etc. also have been enlisted, among which the offence of dubbīsāta also rarely appears.

As it has been rightly pointed out by I. B. Horner regarding the origin of such rulings, it is probable that some of the rules were prescribed during the lifetime of
Sākyamuni Gautama, and some by his disciples after his parinirvāṇa as and when the need arose. It is also quite likely that some of the offences were actually committed by the monks while other rules were prepared beforehand as a preventive measure for the monks and nuns.

Similarly regarding the authorship of the rules, although all the rules were attributed to the Buddha himself, we cannot be sure that all the rules enunciated in the Skandhaka were prescribed by the Buddha in person. It does not seem probable that each and every rule and sub-rule was framed by the Buddha personally nor that every trivial matter was reported to him. Inconsistencies in the fixing up of the penalties also leave room to hold that the rules were drawn up on different occasions (25). For example, an incident from the “parivāra” may be cited:

“How many offences are associated with their? Three offences are associated with it. Pāñcika, if it is an article worth five māsās or more, ‘Thullaccaya’ if it is an article worth more than one māsā, but less than five; and ‘Dukkata’, if it is an article worth one māsā or less” (26).

On scrutiny of such offences and retributions, some new light may be thrown on the development of the monastic organization founded by Sākyamuni Gautama in the pre-Christian period in India. In this regard, the Chinese sources help us to make a survey of the growth of the saṅgha from its earliest times and that requires a separate study.

NOTES

2. Skandhaka (P. Khandhaka) refers to the different sections in the Vinaya-Pitaka dealing with ordination, Uposatha, (monastic observance for self-purification) rainy-season retreat, etc. In Pali, the Khandhaka includes two books—The Mahāvagga and the Cullavagga. In Chinese it is translated as Foan in Tibetan as Gahi. Tibetan Gahi suggests “vastu” in Sanskrit, Fa in Chinese means dharma.

2. Sīhaṇḍarādīna (Theraṇāśāra) Vīśākhā, Dvārakottaya, Bhadraśānikas, Sammathyas, Mahāvagga, Dharmaguttakas, Kāpyapās, Sāsanaṃtikas, Uttarāyaṇas, Mahāsāṅghikas, Ekaṇavāṭakas, Kāpiṭṭhakas, Pañcālāyaṇas, Upāsikas, Aparāśīlaṇas, Sarvāśīlaṇas (Vide Buddhist Sects in India—Naliniśkha Dut Ch. 11).

3. P. Chavaggāja Bikkhu (St. Sedawgga Bikkau) Ch. An. Ch. Chin. A group of monks who lived during the Buddha’s time and are known to have committed different vinaya offences. The names of the two monks are Assaj, Parabbasu, Panthukka, Lohitaka, Mettiya and Bhunajja. These monks were all form Siavathi and are said to have divided into three groups after entering the Buddhist Order. Each group had about five hundred followers. Of them, the followers of Panthukka and Lohitaka were said to be the most virtuous. They accompanied the Buddha on his tours and did not transgress Vinaya rules like the others.


6. Skt. Daksita Ch. Tu Chi Luo TiBhānas Byas Mahaṃvīutasati (abbrev Mvy, 9225). The Mulavaravatipās (Transliteration) hold Sītisara bhāvati (Gilgit Manuscripts Vol. 3, Pt. 4) Paschabhasa for dukkhastra (TiBhānas Byas mahāṃvīutasati) whereas the Chinese versions record Tu, Chi, Luo in all the cases.


8. Foxue Tu Tau Tien—Ting Fu Pao, Pg. 1578, Wrong-doing has been translated in Chinese as Wu Tsuo.


In the other Vinaya versions, viz. the Dharmaguptaka and the Mahāśāsaka preserved in Chinese, similar incidents have been narrated although the infliction of the dukkhastra offence has not been mentioned. (Comp. Dh. Vinaya Taisho Vol. 22, Pg. 817c22; M.I. Vinaya Ptg. 121b17f). However, the point that the Peh. rules were to be recited only once a fortnight (the fourteenth or the fifteenth) has been emphasized in all the cases.


It may be noted in this connection that these rules have not been mentioned in any of the other Vinaya versions.


12. Skt. Durvīutas. Ch. Wu Shuo


15. Skt. Śrīśāṅgavā Ch. Tōun Lan Che (Transliteration) TiB. Nes Pai Shom Po, (Mvy, 9224)

16. D.B.M.T. - C.S. Upasak. Pg. 110


"Dubbhāsitañ ti yan vuttañ, tañ sunoхи yathākathāñ Dubbhāsitañ durvīutasā, saṁkittāñ ca yanı padeñ. Tañ ca vimūr garaññati, tenetāñ iti vuccati."

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20. Skt. Duṣṭhūlī or Dausthūlīya Ch. Kuo Wu Tih. Gnas Nan Len Moy, 2102 8424, 8473


22. Pali English Dictionary—Rhyds Davids & Steine under “duṣṭhūlīpatti”.


24. Rhyds Davids & Oldenberg


Also Vinaya Pitaka Vol. I. Edited by Hermam Oldenberg. Introduction Pg. XIX-XX.

Similar opinions have also been shared by Vidyasekhara Sastri (Pātimokkham. with Bengali translation and commentary Introduction Pg. 58)


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