CHAPTER III

Missionary Life of the Buddha and the Samgha

Missionary Life of the Buddha

The Buddha renounced his home at the age of twenty-nine for pursuing the good and for seeking the supreme path of tranquility and came to Uruvela. He abode there and undertook great efforts. He practised severe austerity for six years. But truly, this austerity was not the way to Enlightenment, he went to several townships and villages begging for ordinary food and lived upon it. Then the five mendicants left him and went to Isipattana. The Bodhisatta (the future Buddha) came early in the morning and sat at the foot of the Nigrodha tree. Sujata gave him the milk-rice which he ate. That evening he proceeded towards the Bodhi tree and sat cross-legged, meditating on the ten perfections. The Blessed One sat cross-legged continuously for seven days and experienced the bliss of liberation. Ignorance was driven away, and knowledge had arisen. Thus, he attained Enlightenment and became the Buddha.

Soon after his Enlightenment the Buddha thought of declaring the law first to the five mendicants and went to Banarasa, Isipattana, Migadaya, When they saw him
coming from a far they decided not to show any reverence to him. But as he drew nearer they could not keep their resolve. They received the Buddha with due respect and reverence. The Enlightened One then delivered his first discourse to them. In Pali literature this is known as the "Dhammacakkavattana"¹ (turning of the wheel of Law). These five mendicants having seen, attained and known the Dhamma requested the Buddha to receive ordination. "Come monks" the Lord said, "well taught is Dhamma" so this came to be the venerable one's ordination.

As a result of this the five ascetics were converted to the new faith and became famous as the Pancavaggiya Bhikkhus. Thus was laid the foundation of the Bhikkhu Samgha.

At that time in Vārānasi there was a youth named Yasa who approached the deer-park at Isipattana. The Buddha explained to him the teaching on Dhamma. Impressed by the teaching, Yasa became a monk. Four householder friends of venerable Yasa, Vimala, Subāhu, Punnaji and Gavampati also put on the yellow robes and became Bhikkhus². In this way the number of monks increased. At that time there were eleven Arahatas in the world.

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Then parents and former wives of Yasa, having heard Buddha's discourses became his lay-devotees i.e. Upāsakas. Shortly after his fifty friends who heard that Yasa, having cut-off his hair and beard, having put on yellow robes had become a monk and disciple of Buddha likewise embraced the new faith and became Bhikkhus.  

From the information above, we can confirm that the number of Bhikkhus increased day by day. There were also the lay-devotees who followed the teaching of the Buddha without renouncing their homes and families.

There were then sixty-one monks who were free from all types of worldly bondage and attained complete emancipation. The Buddha wanted to propagate his doctrine far and wide instead of keeping it limited to a small number, with the co-operation of this band of selfless workers.

The very first resolution made by the Buddha after the attainment of Summona Bonum was to become a religious preacher and save mankind from worldly cares, sufferings and miseries. Hence he formed them into a band of missionaries, of whom he was the Sattha, the leader. He ordered them not to stay at one place for a long time, but to wander from one place to another preaching the Dhamma to the people of all walks of life.

3. Ibid., p. 22.
In Samyutta Nikāya the Buddha addressed the monks and said, "Go ye now, O Bhikkhus and wander, for the gain of the many, for the welfare of the many, out of compassion for the world, let not two of you go the same way, preach the doctrine which is glorious in the beginning, middle and the end, in the spirit and in the letter, proclaim a consummate, perfect and pure life of holiness. There are beings whose mental eyes are covered by scarcely any dust, but if the doctrine is not preached to them they cannot attain Salvation. They will understand the doctrine. And I will go to Uruvelā Senanigāma in order to preach Dhamma." 4

At that time, the monks brought (to the Lord) from various quarters and districts the aspirants wishing for ordination. The number was so large that both the monks and those wishing for ordination got tired. Therefore, the Buddha allowed the monks to ordain those who wished ordination. He told them the very simple method of ordination. He said, "First, having made him cut his hair and beard, having made him put on yellow robes, having made him arrange an upper robe over one shoulder, having made him honour the monks' feet, having made him sit down upon his heels, having made him salyte with joined palms he should be told to say thus, "I go for refuge to the

Enlightened, I go for refuge to the Law, I go for refuge to the Order, and so second time, and third time. I allow monks the Pabbajjā and Upasampadā ordination with these three declarations of taking refuge.  

The Buddha did not remain content with putting the responsibility of ordination and propagation of Dhamma, on the shoulder of the monks. He himself also left for Uruvelā to propagate his new doctrine. On his way, he sat at the roof of certain tree. At that time, a group of thirty friends of respectable families (Bhaddavaggiyas) with their wives, were amusing themselves in the same grove. One of them had no wife so a woman of low standing was brought for him. While they were enjoying themselves that woman taking their belongings ran away. While searching for that woman they saw the Buddha and enquired, whether or not he had seen any woman passing that way. The Buddha replied to them that it was better to seek their own selves and not the woman. This had a salutary effect on them and the Buddha gave a discourse on the fruits of gifts and moral habits. As a consequence of this discourse all of them became monks.  

In the course of his travelling, Buddha eventually reached Uruvelā, where dwelt at that time, three ascetics

with matted hair. They were Uruvela Kassapa, Nadi Kassapa and Gayā Kassapa. Uruvela Kassapa the eldest brother had five hundred disciples, Nadi Kassapa the second brother had three hundred and Gayā Kassapa the youngest one had two hundred. The Buddha converted these three fire worshipping Jatila brothers by preaching to them the famous sermon known as the "Fire-sermon". 7

Then the Blessed One having stayed at Uruvelā as long as he wished, proceeded to Gayā-Sisa together with a large order of monks with the same thousand monks who had formerly been matted-hair ascetics. From Gayā-Sisa he proceeded to Rajagaha along with his followers to redeem the promise he had made to the king, Bimbisāra. There he stayed at Rajagaha in Supatittha-Chetiya at the Latthivana park. Having heard of his arrival the king accompanied by a large number of Brahmanas and the householders of Magadha came to visit him. The Buddha then explained to them the fundamental teaching of his Dhamma. At this king Bimbisāra along with a large number of householders became Buddha's lay-devotee. The next day the king donated

7. Ibid., p. 34.
his Bamboo Grove to the Order of monks. 8 "Thenceforth throughout his long life he became one of the truest friends and patrons of the Buddha and his doctrine." 9

The Buddha then resided for some time in Bamboo Grove Veluvana and concentrated more on the missionary work.

At that time there lived at Rājagaha an ascetic (Paribbājaka) named Sanjaya who had two hundred and fifty disciples among whom were Sāriputta and Moggallāna. These two young men were the sons of a Brahman family and were close friends. They promised to each other that he who would first attain immortality should tell the other. One morning Sāriputta saw the venerable Assaji, a disciple of the Buddha, on his begging round at Rājagaha. Being highly impressed with his perfect deportment, Sāriputta approached him and asked about his teacher's doctrine. Then the venerable Assaji told him that his teacher was a great recluse of the Sākya family. On hearing the essence of Buddha's teaching from Assaji Sāriputta became immensely glad and went to his friend Moggallāna and told him what he had heard from Assaji. Both of them then decided to join the

Buddhist Samgha. They then approached Sanjaya and told him that 'they would embrace Buddha's doctrine. Then Sanjaya's other two hundred and fifty disciples also wanted to go with Śāriputta and Moggallāna to join the Buddhist Samgha. Along with Sanjaya's two hundred and fifty disciples they approached the Buddha, who was staying then at Bamboo Grove Veluvana, and became his disciples.\textsuperscript{10}

Shortly after the conversion of Śāriputta, Moggallāna and others the Buddha while staying at Bahuputtaka Chetiya, between Rājugaha and Nālandā, a very wealthy householder called Kassapa of Rājugaha came to him, to have his doubts regarding the identity and non-identity of the soul and the body, cleared. The Buddha cleared his doubts by giving a discourse. Being highly impressed with his discourse Kassapa became his disciple. He was subsequently known as Mahākassapa, the foremost in ascetic practices (Dhutāṅgas). The Buddha loved him so much that one day he exchanged his coarse robe (Civara) with Mahākassapa's soft robe.\textsuperscript{11}

The king Sudhodana heard that his son having practised austerities for six years and attained supreme

\textsuperscript{10} Vinaya Mahāvagga – Śāriputtamoggallāna

\textsuperscript{11} Banerji, A.C. – Buddhism in India and Abroad, p. 36.
Enlightenment and started the excellent wheel of the law, was staying in the Veluvana at Rājagaha, he sent one of his courtiers along with a large following to bring Buddha to Kapilavatthu. The courtier and his followers reached the Bomboo Grove at Rājagaha when Buddha was giving his discourse to his disciples. They highly appreciated his discourse and became his disciples. Being thus averse to worldly matters they failed to communicate the wishes of the king to Buddha. Suddhodana sent other envoys several times but the same thing occurred every time."¹²

"At last he sent Kāludāyi who was the son of the Chief priest and was born on the same day as Goutama, to invite the Buddha to pay a visit to his parental home, Kapilavatthu. The Buddha accepted the invitation."¹³

"Then the Blessed One left Rājagaha and journeyed onward a league a day, going slowly so as to reach Kapilavatthu, sixty leagues distance from Rājagaha, within two months."¹⁴

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12. Ibid., p. 37.
13. Ibid., p. 38.

* Travelling one league—about 9 miles a day.
"Accompanied by a large number of monks he came to Kapilavatthu and stayed among the Sākyas at Kapilavatthu in the Nigrodha ārāma. Then before noon the Blessed One went to where the dwelling of Suddhodana was, and having arrived he sat down on the seat indicated. Then the mother of Rāhula spoke thus to Rāhula, "This Rāhula is thy father; go and ask for an inheritance". Then the young Rāhula went to the Blessed One and stood in front of him and said, "Blissful is thy shadow, O devotee". The Buddha rising from his seat departed. Rahula followed him asking an inheritance. The Buddha then instructed venerable Sāriputta to confer on the young Rāhula renunciation ordination."

Thus the Buddha wishing to give Rāhula the inheritance of holy-life, a treasure that never perishes, ordered Sāriputta to confer the Sāmanera Pabbajjā (novice-initiation) on the boy which made him a probationer for monkhood. It now became easy for the Buddha to carry on his missionary work at Kapilavatthu.

"The king's homage to his son as also his kingship with the Sākyas made it possible for the Buddha to convert the people to his new faith. Following the example of Rāhula many other Sākyan youths of distinguished families joined the Samgha. Prominent among

15. Vinaya Mahāvagga Khandaka I, p. 86.
them were Ānanda, Anuruddha, Upāli, Bhaddiya, Bhagu, Nanda and Devadatta. A few Sākyan ladies also joined the order of the nuns. The Bhikkhuni Samgha founded through the intercession of Ānanda with Mahāpajāpati Gotami, the step-mother of the Buddha at the head, with the imposition of the eight important rules (Gurudhammas) on the nuns."  

The Lord having stayed in Kapilavatthu far as long as he found suiting, set out on a tour of Sāvatthi. In due course he arrived at Sāvatthi. The Lord stayed there in Sāvatthi in the Jeta Grove in Anāthapindika's monastery."  

"Sāvatthi (Sahet-Mahet), the capital of Kosala which is reckoned as one of the sixteen Mahājanaadās (Great countries). It was ruled by Pasenadi. It was at Sāvatthi where the teacher spent a great part of his missionary life. Here were given large number of discourses as also formed most of the rules of the Patimokkha, which forms the nucleus of the Vinaya Pitaka and was recited at every Uposatha Ceremony, later on for the guidance as also for the well-being of the members of the Samgha (Order). Here were also worked out the


details of the Pabbajjā, Upasampadā, Pavāranā and the Kathina ceremonies."^{18}

In the history of the propagation and expansion of the religion, Kosala occupies a place next in importance to Magadha. Sudatta, known as Anāthapindika or Anāthapindada 'giver of alms to the Unprotected' was a wealthy merchant of Sāvatthi. Once he came to Rājagaha on some business and heard from his friend in whose house he was staying that Buddha was living there with his disciples. He then visited the Buddha and requested him to pay a visit to Sāvatthi with his followers. The Buddha accepted his invitation and came over to Sāvatthi with his followers. Anāthapindika purchased from prince Jeta a large garden with as many gold as would cover the entire ground. He erected a monastery there and presented it to the Buddha for the residence of his monks. It is known as the famous 'Jetavana Vihāra' (monastery) which became a favourite place of the Buddha, who used to stay there with his disciples."^{19}

An event in connection with the conversion of Anāthapindika, as a Upāsaka to the Dhamma has been described in Pali Text thus, "At that time Anāthapindika the householder was married to the sister of the great

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19. Ibid., p. 40.
merchant (Setthi) of Rājagaha. And Anāthapindika went to Rājagaha on some business. Then the great merchant said to him, 'A great offering is being prepared by me, the Samgha headed by the Buddha is invited by me tomorrow. Then Anāthapindika approached the Sitavana where the Buddha was walking to and fro in the open air. The Buddha gave graduated discourse. Then Anāthapindika seen, and attained and understood and immersed in the Dhamma said, let the Blessed One receive me as a disciple taking refuge from today while life lasts. He departed for Sāvatthi. On his journey he caused men to be assembled and said, 'Make gardens (ārāma), establish rest houses, institute (your own) donations. A Buddha has arisen in the world and that Blessed One has been invited by me, he will come by this road.'

Then he came to Sāvatthi and surveyed every side of Sāvatthi, observing the park of Jeta suitable for donation to the Samgha he purchased the same and presented to the Samgha as we have already noted in the above paragraph.

"It was through the influence and munificence of Anāthapindika that Buddhism could make a great headway in Kosala. Next to Anāthapindika in munificence was Visākhā, who was the wife of Runnavaddhana, son of Migāra, 

a wealthy merchant, who was a follower of the naked ascetics (Jains). It was through Visākhā, his daughter-in-law, Mīgāra became a disciple of the Buddha. Visākhā built the Pubbārāma Vihāra (eastern monastery) for the residence of the monks. It was also called Migāramatupāsāda. It was here also the Buddha used to spend his Vassāvāsa (rain-retreat) with his disciples.”

The king Pasenadi (of Kosala) having heard that Buddha was living in the Jetavana monastery with his monks, came to the monastery to pay his respectful homage to him. He felt great joy and considered that it was good fortune that such a great teacher had come to this city. Although the king had regard for Brahmanic and other teachers he became a lay-devotee of the Buddha through the influence of his queen Mallikā and his two sisters, Somā and Sakulā, who had already become lay-devotees of the Buddha. Many new householders were converted to the new faith. Notable among them were Gonaka, Moggallāna, Pancakanga, Isidatta, Purana, Rohana and others. There were also some rich and influential Brahmins who took to the new faith. Mention may be made of Jānussoni, Aggika, Bhāradvāja, Dhananjāni, Pokkhara-sāti, Lohicca and Canki.”

22. Ibid., p. 41.
An important event took place during Buddha's stay at Sāvatthi. Angulimāla was a notorious robber. He was so ferocious that even the king could not subdue him. He was a terror to the country. But the Buddha converted him to his religion. He became a monk and attained Arahathood. The whole story of his conversion has been given in Angulimāla Sutta of Majjhimanikāya.\(^{23}\) His conversion had a great effect upon the minds of the people of Kosala and greatly helped the spread of Buddhism there.

It is interesting to note that a young lady called Kisa-Gotami whose only son died when he was able to walk about, came to the Buddha with her dead son on her lap and requested him for medicine so that the child could regain his life. The Buddha asked her to get a mustard-seed from a house where none had died. She went out in search of it but returned without finding a single house where none had died. The Buddha gave her a discourse on the inevitableness of death. As a consequence she became a nun and joined the Bhikkhuni Samgha.\(^{24}\)

Once there was a great famine and Pestilence in Vesāli the capital of Licchavi. The inhabitants of the


\(^{24}\) Therigāthā - Kisa-gotami Theri, p. 78.
the place approached all the heretical teachers to remove their sufferings. But they failed. They, then approached the Buddha for relief. As soon as he entered the city the famine and pestilence ceased. All the people of Vesāli became happy and released. Mahāli, Mahānāma, Uggahapati, Nandaka, the minister, Singiyāni a Brahmin and few others, were converted to Buddha's new faith. 25

There was at Vesāli, a famous courtesan named Ambapāli, she invited the Buddha to take his meal with his disciples in her house. The Buddha accordingly came to her house with his disciples. When the meal was over the Buddha gave her a discourse. As a result Ambapāli became a lay-devotee of the Buddha and made a gift of Ambavana (Mango-Grove) to the Samgha. 26

A few Vinaya rules were also framed here for the welfare of the monks. It is pertinent to note that an event of outstanding importance occurred at Vesāli in the history of Buddhism. As already observed the Buddha consented to the formation of the Order of the Nuns (Bhikkhuni Samgha) which was unique of its kind and marked the beginning of the Order of Nuns in India. Women

had no right to spiritual perfection through the renunciation of the world until then.  

While the Buddha was staying in the Kutāgārasālā in Mahāvana of Vesali, there arose a dispute over a trifling matter between the two neighbouring tribes, the Sākyas and the Koliyas. The Sākyas lived in Kapilavatthu while the Koliyas at Devadaha at the foot of the Himalayas, close to the settlement of the Sākyas. The territories of the Sākyas and the Koliyas were separated by the river Rohini, which used to irrigate the fields on both the sides. But owing to an unusual drought it failed to supply water properly. A quarrel thus arose between the two tribes over the right to take water from the river for irrigation. The quarrel would have turned into bloody feud, had not the Buddha come to the place where the armies of the two clans were ready to fight. Through Buddha's intervention they laid down their arms and the feud was thus averted. On this occasion the Buddha gave a discourse pointing out that unity was the root cause of strength and prosperity of the nation. It had a great effect on many members of both the clans who became his disciples. Prominent among them were the two ascetics Punna-Govatika and

27. Banerji, A.C. - Buddhism in India and Abroad, p.42.
Seniya - Kukkuravatika, Kukuddha - Koliyaputta, Suppavāsā - Koliyadhitā and others. 28

There lived in the city of Supparaka the capital of Sunāparānta a wealthy merchant named Bhava. His son Punna, who was also a merchant heard the name of the Buddha from the merchants of Śāvatthi who came to Supparaka on their business. He had a strong desire to see the Buddha. Therefore, he came to Śāvatthi and met his friend, a great businessman, Anāthapindika there and requested him to come with him to see the Buddha. Then, Anāthapindika took Punna to Jetavana where the Buddha was staying. The Buddha gave a discourse. He was so inspired that he requested the Enlightened One to ordain him as a Bhikkhu. The Buddha himself ordained Punna as a Bhikkhu.

After some time, with the permission of the Buddha he came to Sunāparanta to propagate the Dhamma among the people there. Thus he converted five hundred Upāsakas and five hundred Upāsikas. The Upāsakas of venerable Punna made Chandanamāla palace and Gandhakuti for the Buddha and invited him to stay there. So the Buddha visited Supparaka. According to Divyāvadāna the distance

of Suppāraka from Sāvatthi is 100 yojanas. The Buddha on his return journey to Sāvatthi came to Musalaka mountain. 29

There lived at Campā, the capital of Anga, Sona Kolivisa, a son of the wealthy merchant named Kusava Setthi. Having heard the name of the Buddha he came to him to hear his noble teaching. The Buddha gave him a discourse dealing with the essentials of his doctrines. He was so much moved by his teaching that he retired from this world and became a monk. Sona Kolivisa was the only distinguished monk of Campa. 30

King Udena of Vamsa or Vatsa country was not at first in favour of this new religion. His queen Sāmāvati was the daughter of Ghosaka. Both of them were great devotees of the Buddha. It was through Sāmāvati’s efforts that the king became the lay-devotee of the Buddha. According to Bharadvāja Sutta of Samyuttani-kaya 31, Pindola Bhāradvāja was a son of the Royal Chaplain. He converted the king to Buddhism.

The capital city of Vamsa or Vatsa country was Kosambi which was according to Mahāparinibbāna Sutta and Mahāsudassana Sutta of Dīghanikāya 32, among the six

great cities of India. Kosambi was an important centre of Buddhism in the time of Buddha and after his Mahāparinībbaṇa it was on the highway from Sāvatthī to Patitthāna in Maharashtra as we have already seen in first Chapter.

Ujjeni, the capital of Avanti, was one of the important places in the west where Buddhism attained prominence during the life time of Buddha. Mahākaccāyana who was the son of the royal priest of king Canda-Pajjota, came to Banaras to pay a visit to the Buddha with his companion. He invited the Buddha to visit Avanti. But the teacher refused to go to Avanti saying that Mahākaccāyana would be able to propagate his noble teaching there. They then came to their native place and established monasteries there at Kuraraghara Pabbata and Makkharakata.

Sona Katikanna was the son of a very wealthy householder named Valasena there. Shortly after the death of his parents he gave away all his riches to the poor and expressed his intention to join the Saṅgha. Having renounced the world he approached venerable Mahākaccāyana and asked for Pabbajjā. Venerable Mahākaccāyana conferred the same on him. Although he wished to confer Upasampadā (ordination) on him immediately but he had to delay it because it was often difficult to get
together the necessary number of monks for the purpose there. This was because there were few monks in Avanti and also in the border country. So Sona had to wait till the number was complete. Shortly after his Upasampa\-dā Sona expressed his desire to venerable Mahākaccā\-yana to visit the Buddha. 33

But the venerable Mahākaccā\-yana agreed to it saying that he should seek permission of the Buddha for the following five practices.

1. To perform Upasampa\-dā by a chapter of five monks only in frontier districts as there were but few monks.

2. To use foot-wears in countries like Avanti and others, the soils of which were full of gravels.

3. To bathe constantly as people of Avanti and Southern countries attached great importance to bathing.

4. To use different kinds of rugs.

5. To keep an extra robe even after the lapse of ten days. 34

34. Vinaya Mahāvagga, pp. 197-198.
To each of these practices Sona obtained Buddha’s permission and since then these privileges were enjoyed by the monks of the frontier districts. Certain Vinaya rules were thus changed and a few special privileges granted to the monks of Avanti and other border countries to suit their convenience. A few other eminent persons were converted to the new faith. Prominent among them were Punna, Isidatta of Velugama, Kandarayana and Lihicca Brahmanas.\(^{35}\)

Many people used to approach Mahākaccayana to get their doubts removed in regard to Dhamma. As a result many of them were converted to the new religion. They indeed helped much in propagation of Buddhism. It was largely due to Mahākaccayana’s efforts that Ujjeni became an important centre of Buddhism.

Buddhism also made its headway among the republican tribes of the Mallas. A large number of Mallas were converted to Buddhism. Malla Roja was not at first very friendly to Buddhism. The assembly of the Mallas of Kusināra issued an order that any one not paying reverence to Buddha would have to pay a penalty of 500 Kahāpanas. At this Malla Roja came to the Buddha to pay his respectful homage to him. After listening to

\(^{35}\) Anguttara nikāya-I, p. 68.
Samyutta-nikāya-III, pp. 177-288.
Buddha's discourse he was very much impressed by his teaching and became a great devotee of the Buddha. Among the Mallas two have become immortal in the Buddhist literature - one of them was Dabba Mallaputta, who used to distribute food and all of accommodation to the monks and other was Cunda Kammāraputta who served his last meal to the Buddha.\textsuperscript{36}

The years thus rolled on. The Buddha used to move about with his large number of disciples to propagate the Dhamma and organise the Samgha, the monastic order. Due to his noble teaching the number of lay-devotees (Upāsaka and Upāsikā) and monks (Bhikkhus) began to swell more and more. The number of nuns (Bhikkhunis) also increased day by day. The kings, ministers, merchants, wealthy householders, poor men, parībījakas (wandering teachers) also joined the Samgha in large numbers. Thus thousands belonging to both upper and lower classes of the society became disciples of the Buddha.

It was the force of Karunā (compassion) which laid on him the mission to preach the Dhamma which stood for transcendent as well as empirical truth, and for moral and religious life appropriate to its realization.

Thus after propagating his noble Dhamma for forty-five years, the Enlightened One attained his Mahāparinibbāna between the two Sāla trees in Sāla grove adjoining

\textsuperscript{36} Vinaya Mahāvagga, pp. 247-248.
Kusinārā at the age of eighty. His last words to the Bhikkhus, who were present there to have a last glance of the Great Teacher were, "Veyadhammā Sankhārā appamādena Sampādetha" 37 'subject to decay are compound things, strive with earnestness'.

Missionary life of the Samgha :

"The institution of monastic life within Buddhism developed early and has survived until the present day, frequently in almost the same form in which it originated. The historical development of the Buddhist movement indicates that the ideal of the monastic life lies at the core of the Buddhist religion. It stands as a witness to the Buddhist realization that the higher life cannot be achieved in any ordinary social arrangement. The world of family life and 'Business as usual' are not conducive in the Buddhist view, to the quest for spiritual freedom and insight. Hence, even during the Buddha's life a community of mendicant monks was formed and following his death, it grew in importance and power as the focus of religious interest. This community of monks and hermits was called the Samgha." 38

38. Frazier Allie (Ed.) Buddhism, Vol. II, p. 44.
"While it formed only a small proportion of faithful Buddhist, as representative of the highest aspirations of Buddhism, it has always constituted a central part of the Buddhist religion. In this quest for spiritual enlightenment the Buddha found that excessive self-mortification and self-denial were not adequate to produce a state of spiritual perfection. Thus, as a result of Buddha's teaching the discipline of the homeless monks shifted away from the severity of self-mortification towards the cultivation of a loving-heart and a peaceful countenance. The regulations governing the congregation of monks were designed to foaster those conditions conducive to the emancipation of heart and mind, and also to the cultivation of benevolence, knowledge and tranquility." 39

Frazier Allie further adds and says, "The begging bowl could be considered to be the highest symbol of Buddhist monastic existence. From the earliest times, Buddhist monks have relied (in varying degrees) upon begging for those essentials required for their sustenance. It is commonly said by the Buddhist that the begging bowl is the breeding ground of many virtues; including independence, control of desire and pride, noninvolvement, withdrawal from the incessant demands

39. Ibid., p. 45.
of personal desire and social duty and cultivation of benevolence. 40

Functions of Samgha:

The functions of the Samgha according to Christmas Humphreys are as follows.

The function of the Buddhist Samgha is two-fold, to provide the best possible conditions for the individual development, and to teach the Dhamma to mankind. As to the former, it is an example of collective life arranged for the benefit of the individuals composing it. As to the later the Buddha’s Samgha was an innovation for whereas Indian teachers from time to time immemorial would organise to some extent the body of followers who were attempting to apply the teaching given, the function of such a body was usually negative and introvert to receive and apply. The Buddha’s Samgha, however, was dynamically conceived. His first converts were his first missionaries, and he at once infused into his followers his own devotion to the service of all living things. The Samgha, indeed, was the necessary means whereby he could make known his teaching; where books were unknown, the Bhikkhus became his walking library, and by them, alone when he had passed away.

40. Ibid., p. 46.
could the message be accurately and widely spread.\textsuperscript{41}

The second purpose of the Samgha was to spread the Dhamma. The Buddha said, 'There are two sorts of gifts, Brethren, the gift of material things and the gift of the Dhamma, of these two gifts the gift of Dhamma is pre-eminence'.\textsuperscript{42} But the gift as offered by the travelling Bhikkhus is the offering of something to be shared. Therefore he regards the Dhamma as an expression of Truth, and as a message of universal application.

\textit{Reasons for propagation of the Dhamma :}

It is very important to see why the Buddha formed the Samgha and ordered them to propagate the Dhamma for the welfare and wellbeing of the people. Trevor Ling has given the reasons for the formation of Samgha. He states thus, "The reason for the Buddhist community life is inherent in the nature of the Buddha's teaching consists of diagnosis and prescription; diagnosis of the human malaise as consisting essentially of the disease of individualism and prescription for its cure as consisting primarily of the undermining or erosion of the

\textsuperscript{41} Humphreys Christmas - Buddhism, p. 133.
\textsuperscript{42} Dhammapada - Gāthā 354, p. 51.
notion that individuality is something permanent and of great importance. It is in the life of the Samgha that the prescription can most effectively be applied. There is the community of being which comes into existence, when the walls of individuality are completely and permanently broken down. And here too, are found the optimum conditions for those who are seeking to achieve that state of life and consciousness where individuality is no more, but who have not yet arrived at that state." 43

It will thus be seen that Buddhism struck out a path, of which easiness and simplicity were the main characteristic features. And for these reasons the Dhamma spread all over the Madhya Mandala within the short span of time. Nalinaksha Dutt has explained this point very clearly in the following words, "These two features depended upon the fact that the undue importance attached by the Hindus to rites and practices that were difficult to undertake on account of their elaborateness or expenses and the orduousness involved in them, was absent in Buddhism. There were other reasons also for which Buddhism could attract the people so far as its tenets and practices were concerned." 44

43. Trevor Ling - The Buddha, p. 124.
44. Dutta N. - The spread of Buddhism and the Buddhist Schools, p. 12.
He further adds, "The avoidance of Metaphysical questions rendered it easily intelligible to the masses. The greater play of reason instead of belief, the doctrines of Ahimsa and Metta feeling advocating the exercise of mercy to all creatures and the brotherhood of all human beings appealed very much to the hearts of all men. Buddhism did not rely so much upon appeals to the supernatural as Brahmanism did." 45

The language spoken and understood by the people, is also an important factor in spreading the Dhamma. Dutt says, "The language in which, it was preached and its ceremonies conducted was the dialect of the people concern and therefore their reason could obtain greater scope for exercise in the intelligent following of the discourse or the rituals to which they attended. The great stress laid by Buddhism upon right conduct, so much so that it became one of its most prominent features, was also an attractive factor." 46

In the foregoing pages, we have considered the external causes and circumstances that helped the wide spread and propagation of Buddhism during the period from the first preaching of the Dhamma by its founder. Now, we have to consider the internal factors which

45. Ibid., p. 12.
46. Ibid., p. 13.
helped Buddhism to spread over a very large portion of the continent of India and even over many parts of countries laying outside India.

Dutta has enumerated such causes in these words, "The commanding personality of Buddha, his self-sacrifice, the strength of his character, his spiritual attainment, his supersensual vision, and the occasional manifestation of miraculous power served in a great degree to convince the people of his spiritual greatness and made them attach importance to his words." 

The character and personality of Buddha's immediate disciples such as Sāriputta, Moggallāna, Mahākassapa, Mahākaccāyana, Punna Matangiputta, Anand were also a powerful factor in the propagation of Buddhism. Punna Matangiputta was an appealing preacher. "The monks were all at one in their zeal for the propagation of the religion, in the strength of which they had unswerving belief, and to the founder of which they all bore the highest reverence." 

"The rapid spread of Buddhism within a few centuries after its foundation is due to the fact that conversion of non-Buddhist to Buddhism was regarded as

47. Ibid., p. 15.
48. Ibid., p. 16.
a part of the duty of the monks at the highest stage of
their spiritual development. The attainment of Nirvāṇa
(Pali Nibbāna) by a Buddhist may be the goal of a monk,
but to attain it without at the same time, giving others
the opportunity of realizing its importance and taking
to the right course for reaching it has about it a taint
of selfishness however slight."49

"The means by which the highest can be known and
tested ought not to be the secret of the select few or
of an individual. It should be given a wide publicity
in order that all men from the highest to the meanest
may have the opportunity of exercising his judgement and
take to the way that leads to the goal of manhood."50

"The miseries of this world are countless, and
they weigh down the hearts of men constantly with their
heavy weights. If the truth found by Buddha, the means
discovered by him can lessen them even temporarily, it
is certainly a blessing, and the truths in fact profess
to bring within reach of mortals permanent blessing.
Those who have realized this truth in their lives cannot
sit idle and look upon their fellow human beings with an
unconcern while the remedy is within their reach. It
was this feeling of love and compassion that animated

49. Ibid., pp. 21-22.
50. Ibid., p. 22.
the Buddha and Buddhist to preach, broadcast the truths of their religion in order that the grouping humanity may know that there are saving truths which can be attained by particular ways of regulating life and thought. "51

Taking into consideration the above references we can say, "The success of the methods employed by the Buddhists for spreading their religion depended upon the following factors.

a) The easiness with which the religion could be followed.

b) The tolerant-spirit shown to converts.

c) The tenacity of the preachers in persuasion.

d) Power of disputation and

e) Appealing way of preaching.

The above mentioned points have been elaborated by N. Dutt in a very befitting way.

A. "The tenets and practices of Buddhism are simple and can be made perfectly clear to a layman without much difficulty if only its exoteric side be put before him.

51. Ibid., p. 22.
B. Buddhism had in it a large element of catholic spirit which appealed to even the members of other religions.

C. The followers of other persuasion were eager to embrace Buddhism and therefore presented little difficulty to the Buddhist missionaries in their conversion.52

In this connection, an example of venerable Bhikkhu Punna who came to Sunaparanta the land now in Maharashtra, is sufficient to explain this devotion in preaching the Dhamma in the land to which he belonged. Punna after his ordination as a Bhikkhu resolved to carry on his missionary work among the ruffians of Sunaparanta even at the risk of his life.

This important event has been described in detail in Punnovādasutta of Majjhimanikāya. "At that time the Lord was staying near Sāvatthi in the Jatavana Grove in Anāthapindika's monastery. The venerable Punna spoke thus to the Lord: it would be good, revered Sir, if the Lord would exhort me with an exhortation in brief. And in what district will you stay, Punna, now that you have been exorted by me with this exhortation in brief? asked the Lord.

52. Ibid., pp. 25, 26, 27.
"There is a district called Sunāparanta, I will stay there, revered Sir."

"Punna, the people of Sunāparanta are fierce, the people of Sunāparanta are rough! If the people of Sunāparanta curse and abuse you, Punna, how will it be for you there, Punna?

"If the people of Sunāparanta curse and abuse me, revered Sir, it will be thus for me there, I will say. Good indeed are these people of Sunāparanta that they do not strike me a blow with their hands."

"But if the people of Sunāparanta do strike you a blow with their hands, Punna, how will it be for you there, Punna? 'If the people of Sunāparanta strike me a blow with their hands, revered Sir, it will be thus for me there: I will say, "Good indeed are these people of Sunāparanta, that they do not strike me a blow with clods of earth."

"But if the people of Sunāparanta do strike you a blow with clods of earth Punna, how will it be for you there, Punna."

"If the people of Sunāparanta do strike me......I will say, Good indeed are the people of Sunāparanta that they do not strike me a blow with stick".
If the people of Sunāparanta do strike you a blow with stick .....?

If the people of Sunāparanta ..... they do not strike me a blow with a knife.

If the people of Sunāparanta strike me a blow of knife, they do not deprive me of life with a sharp knife.

"If the people of Sunāparanta do deprive you of life with a sharp knife?

"If the people of Sunāparanta do deprive me of life with a sharp knife revered Sir, I will say, there are disciples of the Lord, who, disgusted by the body and the life-principle and ashamed of them, look about for a knife (with which to kill themselves). I have come upon this very knife without having looked about for it.

"It is good Ānna, it is good. You will be able to live in this district among the people of Sunāparanta possessed as you are of this taming and calm.

Then the venerable Ānna, having rejoiced in what the Lord had said and having given thanks for it ..... set out on a tour of the Sunāparanta district. And during the same rainy season the venerable Ānna
established as many as five hundred lay-devotees, as many as five hundred female lay-devotees."  

The reason to cite the Punnovada Sutta 'in detail, is to show that, venerable Bhikkhu Punna propagated the Dhamma in Maharashtra and because of his missionary efforts Buddhism flourished in Maharashtra during the life time of the Buddha. There were one thousand followers of Buddhism in Maharashtra at that time.

Thus, the Samgha or the Brotherhood of the Buddhist monks was formed with two-fold functions. "In the first place, it provided the best environment for spiritual development, and secondly it was through the Samgha, that the Dhamma of the Buddha was propagated to mankind. Samgha is an inseparable part of Buddhism and it played a most important role in the spread of this great religion to the various parts of the world."

The basic principle of Buddhism is to serve others. Therefore, the Buddha exhorted his Bhikkhus not to settle permanently in one place, but to wander from village to village preaching to the people for their good and for their well-being. Accordingly, the Buddha and his Bhikkhus travelled throughout the year except during the three or four rainy months.

M. William says, "He was the first to establish universal brotherhood (Samgha) of caenobite monks, open to all persons of all ranks. In other words, he was the first founder of what may be called a kind of universal monastic communism, and first to affirm that true Enlightenment - the knowledge of the highest path leading to saintship, was not confined to the Brahmanas, but open to all the members of all the castes." 54

"The most remarkable feature of the Buddhist missionary activity, however, was that it was never fanatical, bigoted, or abstrusive and Buddhist missionaries never served the interest of a militant political power. In the true spirit of its faith, Buddhism prevailed peacefully through force of conviction, like Hinduism it did not lay claim to exclusiveness and remained exceptionally tolerant to other beliefs. Its intrinsic quality of being able to accommodate alien doctrines and adopt local cultural traditions without surrendering its fundamental concepts, was principally responsible for its remarkable success in district lands of divergent cultures. Buddhism acted as a catalyst in different societies, helping them to bring out their dormant strength and to release their creative energies.

54. William M. - Buddhism, p. 10.
Its capacity to absorb, to impact, and to fertilize remains unmatched in the history of cultural expansion.  

For these reasons we can say, "In the history of religions a very few prophets of new faiths had such a long span of time for developing and elaborating their teaching and for their ministry. Buddha attained Enlightenment as early as his thirty-fifth year and began his ministry immediately. He lived up to the age, ripe-age of eighty years. Thus, he had a period of forty-five years in which to give full shape to his gospel and preach it to the people. His middle path struck people as more practical and rational. It was easier to follow as it did not prescribe severe austerities. Added to all this was his saintly character and his accult powers; attractive personality and his personal history which was one of renunciation, of continued Sadhanā and of blameless behaviour. He preached in the simple homely Magadhi language of the people and in parables which went home constant touch with daily life of the people, and conversation and group discussions with them gave him the necessary opportunity to evolve an all-sided body of teaching, which became very popular and come to be universal in its appeal."  

"After Enlightenment, Buddha did not allow much time to pass before he started his preaching. He believed in converting as many people as possible and ordaining monks in large numbers. He was liberal and tolerant, and even in prescribing a code of discipline for the monks, he saw to it that it was far more easy than in the case, for instance, of the Jainas. Being convinced that too hard a life and physical rigour were not congenial for promoting equilibrium of mind, his discipline even for ordained monks naturally lacked the mortifying and suppressive harshness which was obvious in the other schools of thought usually followed by the Shramanas."

"The procedure for renunciation by the monks and their ordaining was in the beginning quite simple, though later the rules became stricter, and none were ordained except by the approval of a meeting of elderly monks of at least ten years standing. When the number of converts swelled and became larger and larger and somewhat unmanageable, the question of a better and a more elaborate organisation naturally arose. Buddha was familiar with the democratic system and the political administration of the republic of those days. He himself came from the Sākyā clan which was one of the
republican clans. This religious organisation therefore was modelled on the republican pattern which he admired. Rules of assembly, rules for conduct of meetings, protocol, voting by ballots and such elaborate rules and procedure were systematically observed in the holding of meeting of deliberations and in the running of the monasteries.  

"By keeping monks and their organisation a bit apart but not cut off from the laity and by charging them with the duty of maintaining the faith, Buddha could gradually enhance the prestige of the monks beyond description."  

While discussing the spread of Dhamma in India and abroad R.R.Diwakar gives more credit to the great personality and the noble character of the Buddha. He says, "Apart from the teaching of Buddha, his picturesque life story lingered in the memories of people and they talked about it with increasing interest after his death. That story spread far and wide and travelled to other parts of India and then to other countries. More important, however, than the story of his life, was the reputation he left behind him about his noble character. It is reflected in the discourses and almost in every-thing

57. Ibid., p. 103.
58. Ibid., p. 105.
that he said and did. He was extremely human and compassionate for suffering was his ruling passion. At the same time he was a good judge of men and had a deep insight into human nature. He was extremely courteous in his discussions, patient in opposition and ever active and alert in his mission. His relations with his close followers were of an intimate nature and they were all very much attached to him. He was looked upon as an ideal man—full of human sympathy and kindness.”

Again one important point has been put forth by Walpola Rahula as a reason for the rapid spread of the Dhamma throughout India. "It is interesting to examine those ideas the wandering Indian Bhikkhus preached. Generally, the villagers were poor, illiterate not very clean and not healthy. They needed simple moral ideas conducive to their material well-being and happiness rather than deep and sublime discourses on philosophy, metaphysics or Psychology as taught in the Abhidhamma. Ideas preached to such lay people are to be found in many places in the Buddhist scriptures (Tipitaka)."

Thus, we can conclude, in the words of N. Dutt, "Though the whole of western India was placed outside

59. Ibid., p. 133.
60. Walpola Rahula — Heritage of the Bhikkhu, p. 2.
the Majjhimadesa of the Vinaya, Buddhism made a fair progress there during the life-time of the Buddha and played an important role in the later history of Buddhism, and that although Buddha wandered generally within the Pracya-desa, the religion however was not confined to the region as supposed by Dr. Oldenberg, but spread over many regions of western India, counting among its adherent people from the western countries, such as Roruka, Bharukaccha, Suppāraka, Avanti, Ujjeni, Aparanta, having their monastic establishments, at some of these places.\textsuperscript{61}

Thus, the fifth and the sixth centuries B.C. witnessed a remarkable event in the history of India. Buddhism came to be widely propagated all over the country though the noble mission of Buddha and his Samgha, and the message of the Enlightened One echoed in thousands of hearts in the distant Dakkan, the southern part of Maharashtra. The Andhras, the most powerful and enterprising tribe of contemporary Dakkan were the earliest people in the south to embrace the new faith and their missionaries, the disciples of Bāvari propagated the Dhamma in Sāvatthi and other places. The people of Sunāparanta, the western part of Maharashtra, embraced the Dhamma in the life-time of Buddha and

\textsuperscript{61} Dutt N. \textemdash The Spread of Buddhism and the Buddhist Schools, p. 100.
propagated the same in their land. Well-known among them were Bāhiya Dāruciriya, Punna and Isidinna. Their brief life sketches have been given in the appendix I for reference.