CHAPTER SIX

BUDDHIST FESTIVALS AND CEREMONIES

IN

CEYLON OR SRI LANKA

In the past Buddhism has played a great role in the life of the people of Sri Lanka and at present it exercises a great influence upon them. Buddhist ceremonies and festivals were important no doubt in the life of Sri Lankan people. When Buddhism became well-known in Sri Lanka as a state religion, these Buddhist ceremonies and festivals took their growth gradually there. They helped to develop the teachings of the Buddha among the people of the island. Walpola Rahula¹ says that "Although rituals, ceremonies and festivals were not in keeping with the spirit of Buddhism, they were natural and inevitable developments, bound to come when the teaching of the Buddha became a popular state religion." Religious persons as well as common people used to enjoy these festivals very much. Because they were colourful and at the same time they used to attract people very much. Music, dancing and singing were important parts of these festivals and ceremonies. It is known from religious texts that kings

¹. Walpola Rahula, History of Buddhism in Ceylon, p. 266.
of Sri Lanka used to appoint dancers and musicians to take active part in them. From the commentaries we learn that people from different parts of the island used to come to see those festivals because they were very lively and at the same time used to draw the attention of the people. Thus they had a great role in their lives. These religious festivals and ceremonies not only brought entertainment but also were able to satisfy the religious sentiments of the people of the island. They were many and they were celebrated by the people throughout the year. Here is given a brief account of several Buddhist ceremonies and festivals in Sri Lanka.

It is interesting to note here that although preaching was taken as an exposition of the Dhamma for the edification of the listeners, but in later times it took the form of a festival.

The Preaching Ceremony.

People sometimes used to construct a great pavilion or Hall (mahā-maṇḍapa) in a village and they used to arrange whole-night sermons (Sabbarattim dhammasavanam).

References:
1. Dipavamsa, XXI, 26, 27; XXII, 3; Mahāvaṃsa, XXXIV, 60.
2. Dīgha-nikāyatṭhakathā (Sumeṅgalavilāsinī), p.128; Majjhima-nikāyatṭhakathā (Papanaṭcasudani), p.220; Vibhangaṭṭhakathā (Sammaḥavincan- 
dani), p. 244.
these occasions men, women and children from different places used to come there to hear these sermons and they used to spend the whole-night there and throughout the night the sermons were delivered. The pavilion was ornamented with golden festoons. Preaching began at all monasteries after sunset and the monks used to announce it by beating a gong. (The preacher always had a fan (vijani). In a preaching ceremony three monks acted as preachers at different stages and this ceremony continued for day and night. The three preachers became known as the Diva-Kathika, 'the day-preacher'; He was the first preacher. He did his duty during the day time. He used to recite the text. The second one became known as the Pada-bhanaka, the "word-reciter". His duty was to paraphrase the sutta word for word in Sinhalese without giving any explanation. The third one used to preach the sermon in details.

5. Ibid, p. 267; Anguttara-nikayatthakatha (Manorathapurani), pp. 23, 386.
and expositions during the greater part of the night.\(^1\) It is to be noted here that Anurādhapura had preaching halls at the junction of the four principal streets and sermons were given there four times a month.\(^2\)

From several Pāli commentaries and early inscriptions we learn that in ancient Sri Lanka a great festival took place to celebrate the preaching of the Ariyavamsa-Sutta.\(^3\) The Mahāvamsa describes that the king Vohāra-Tissa (269 - 291 A.D.) gave order to give alms at every place where the preaching of the Ariyavamsa was held.\(^4\) The Tūṇigala Inscription of the 4th century A.D. says that Deva(ya), the son of Siva(ya), a member of the council of ministers, made a grant in paddy, undu and beans with the stipulation that the capital should not be utilised and the interest should be spent for giving meals to the monks at the Yahisapavata monastery for the purpose of holding the preaching of the Ariyavamsa.\(^5\)

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2. Ibid., p. 268.
3. Ibid., p. 268.
inscriptions of Labuṭabāndīgala of the fifth century A.D. in North Central Province mention that Sirinaka gave 100 Kahavanas and Nāṭalavīṭṭiya Siva offered 20 kahavanas to a monastery named Devagiri in order to hold the preaching of the Ariyavamsa-sutta. From the Aṅguttara Nikāya Commentary it is known that a woman walked five yojanas for the purpose of going to a place where Dīghabhāṇaka Mahā-Abhaya Thera conducted the Ariyavamsa. The commentary mentioned above states that about thirty monks who spent the rainy season at Gavaravāḷa-angana gave the preaching of the Ariyavamsa fortnightly on Poya days. The Rasavāhinī says that a thera went to the Mahāvāpi-vihāra in Mahāgāma from the Kudda-rajja Province to hear the preaching of the Ariyavamsa. It is said that at this time this place used to hold this ceremony annually. From the Rasavāhinī we learn that the Ariyavamsa was preached once every six months at the Udambaramahāvihāra (Dimbulagala). On this occasion people used to come from several places which were situated within four yojanas and

2. Ibid, p. 269; Aṅguttara Nikāya Commentary, p. 286.
3. Ibid, p. 269; ibid, p. 385.
5. Ibid, p. 270.
this festival was celebrated in a nice way. The Rasavēhinī also mentions that Ariyākara-vihāra near Kumbala-Tissapabotata used to hold the preaching of the Ariyavamsa as a festival.¹

The Ariyavamsa sutta is no doubt an important sutta and it occupies an important place in the life of the monks. Here is given an account of the four sections of the sutta: i. A bhikkhu is satisfied with whatever robes he gets, praises the value of contentment in whatever robes he obtains, does not commit any impropriety in order to secure robes, nor does he exalt himself or look down upon others on account of his possession of this quality of contentment. So, is he with regard to: i. whatever food he gets,

iii. whatever lodging he is provided with,²

iv. The bhikkhu takes delight in meditation and abandonment (bhāvanārāma, hoti bhāvanārato, pahānārāmo, hoti pahānarato). But on account of this quality he does not exalt himself, nor does he look down

¹UJalpola Rahula, History of Buddhism in Ceylon, p. 270.
²Ibid, p. 271.
The Ariyavamsa deals with the essence of the life of a monk. We can say that the Sangha and the laity held it in high esteem. It is to be mentioned here that even today Sri Lanka celebrates the Ariyavamsa festival. During the vassa season (rainy season) the Ariyavamsa sutta was pleased and discussed at Dimbulagala. It was also preached several days during the festival at a cave-temple near Gurulabadda in Pasdun Korale in Sri Lanka.

In order to celebrate the birth of Buddha, the Buddhists celebrate the Vesak (Pali Vesākha) festival in the month of Vesak (May). It was regarded as one of the most ancient Buddhist festivals and it was celebrated in India from very early days. Fa-hien, the Chinese traveller mentions that "every year on the eighth day of the second month, they celebrate a procession of images. They make a four-wheeled car and on it erect..."

2. Ibid, p. 271.
a structure of five stories by means of bamboos tied together....

They make figures of devas with gold, silver and......... On the four sides are niches, with a Buddha seated in each, and a Bodhi-sattva standing in attendance on him. There may be twenty cars all grand and imposing, but each one different from the other.1 Fa-hien describes that in the "second month" this procession was held. From the Indian calendar it is known that this month was Vesākha. From Asoka's Rock Edict IV, we learn that about seven centuries earlier Asoka, the Maurya ruler, celebrated this festival. He on this occasion made arrangement for shows and processions in which images of gods in their celestial cars were exhibited.2 Fa-hien saw a Vesak festival but he did not say it by name.3

Rev. Mahinda, Asoka's son, introduced the Vesak festival to Sri Lanka.4 The Mahāvaṃsa refers to this festival in Sri Lanka in the reign of Duṭṭha-Gāmaṇī (1001 - 77 B.C.). It is said that he celebrated

twenty four Vesak festivals during his reign. Most probably, this was an ancient festival in Sri Lanka and existed there from a very early time and king Dutttha-Gamani celebrated it in a bigger way. After him many kings tried their best to celebrate it regularly. Bhātiya (38 - 67 A.D.) celebrated twenty-eight Vesak festivals. Vasabha (127 - 171 A.D.) organised forty-four festivals. Voharathissa (269 - 291 A.D.), Gotabhaya (309 - 322 A.D.), Jettha-Tissa (323 - 333 A.D.), Dalla-Moggallana (611 - 617 A.D.), and Sena II (851 - 885 A.D.) celebrated this festival with pomp and grandeur. It is known that Sena II used to celebrate the Vesak festival with the poor people and he used to give them food and drinks and clothes.

1. Mahāvamsa, XXXII, 35.
2. Ibid., XXXIV, 59.
3. Ibid., XXXV, 100.
4. Ibid., XXXVI, 40.
5. Ibid., XXXVI, 109; Dīpavamsa, XXII, 59.
6. Ibid., XXXVI, 130.
7. Ibid., XLIV, 45.
8. Ibid., LI, 64.
Vesak has a great significance upon the minds of the Buddhist. The Buddha's birth, enlightenment and parinirvāna or decease fell on a Vesak day. "Vesak therefore commemorates, not only a physical birth, but also a spiritual birth, and a spiritual attainment, which every Buddhist must aspire to."¹

Upto this day the Buddhists in Sri Lanka celebrate the Vesak festival in a nice way. In free refreshment halls which were constructed by Buddhist Societies and individuals food and drinks were given to the pilgrims who on that day come to the sacred places.² On this occasion the Buddhists erect pandals and illuminate it in a very nice way and they arrange paintings depicting scenes from the life of the Buddha in the pandals.³

In the reign of Mahādāṭhika Mahānēgā (67 - 79 A.D.) the Giribhaṇḍa Pūjā was originated.⁴ When the king completed the construction of the Mahāṭhūpa at Mihintale, then this festival was celebrated under royal patronage. To organise it in a nice way, the

whole place of Mihintale was decorated beatifully and a new road was
built near the mountain and four gateways were constructed. Dance,
music and song were held to celebrate this festival. It is said that
an unbroken chain of lamps was lighted over the whole island.\textsuperscript{1} Alms
were given at the four gates of the city. It is to be noted here that
many monks attended the conservation ceremony of the thūpa and alms
and gifts were given to them at eight places with the beating of
eight golden drums.\textsuperscript{2} The Mahāvamsa refers to barbers who were
employed to do their duties continually at the
four gates.\textsuperscript{3}

The Giribhanda
Puja.

We do not know clearly the meaning of the Giribhanda Pūjā.
Because giri means 'mountain', bhaṅga means 'goods' and pūjā means
'offering' or 'ceremony'.\textsuperscript{4} It is not quite clear about the indication
of the words together. It can be interpreted in this way "offering
of goods on the mountain" or "offering of a mountain of goods".\textsuperscript{5}

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{1} Walpola Rahula, History of Buddhism in Ceylon, p. 275.
\item\textsuperscript{2} Ibid, p. 276.
\item\textsuperscript{3} Mahāvamsa, XXXIV, 68-64.
\item\textsuperscript{4} Walpola Rahula, History of Buddhism in Ceylon, p. 276; Foot Note
\textsuperscript{no. 2}.
\item\textsuperscript{5} Ibid, p. 276, Foot Note no. 2.
\end{itemize}
Sometimes this festival is known as Giribhanda-vahana puja "the ceremony of taking goods on the mountain."¹ and also Giribhandavahana puja "the ceremony of bearing goods on the mountain".² The Rasavahini refers to this term Girimanda-mahapuja "the great mountain offering".³ Several Pali commentaries mention this festival in connection with Tissa Thera of Lopagiri who at this ceremony received a pair of cloths.⁴ Although we do not know the correct meaning of the term, yet it is quite clear that on this occasion great offerings were organised. It was a great festival no doubt, but even then, we do not know the names of the kings who celebrated it. Udaya II (885 - 896 A.D.) tried to restore a vihāra which was known as Giribhanda.⁵ But it is not clear about the geographical location of this vihāra. We do not know that this vihāra was constructed at Mihintale.

3. Ibid, p. 276, foot note no. 2.
5. Mahāvamsa, XLIX, 29.
In the early fifth century A.D. Upatissa I, a son of Buddhadasa introduced the Gāṅgārohaṇa festival. During this period there were famine and disease in the island. In order to make his kingdom free from them, the king took instruction and advice from the Buddhist Saṅgha and the monks told him that the Buddha delivered the Ratana-sutta when he faced such situation in Vesāli. Then the king made a golden image of the Buddha and kept in its hands the Buddha's stone alms-bowl filled with water and kept it on a chariot. Then he arranged a great alms-giving


When Vesāli was afflicted by famine and pestilence, the Buddha visited the city on the invitation of Līḍchavis, and recited the Ratana-sutta. (It is included in the Khuddakapāṭha as well as in the sutta-nipāta). The Buddha first taught this sutta to Ānanda and requested him to go round the city accompanied by Līḍchavi princes, reciting the sutta and sprinkling water from the Buddha's alms-bowl. The city was saved from the calamity. A great festival was held in honour of the Buddha's visit. Two boats on the river were joined together and pavilion was built thereon. After this successful mission to Vesāli, the Buddha returned to Rājagaha along the Ganges. This journey is called Gāṅgārohaṇa and the name was given to the festival itself." - Ibid, p. 277, foot note 2; Suttaniṭṭhathakathā (Paramatthajotika) commentary on the Sutta-nipāta, pp 204-205; Catubhānavatṭhakathā (Sāratthasamuccaya), Commentary on the Catubhanāvāra, p. 97 ff.

and told his subjects to observe the moral precepts (sīla) and he himself followed it properly. On this occasion the city was nicely decorated and many monks followed the chariot which carried the golden Buddha image and they recited the Ratana-sutta. The king also took a walk with the monks and then rains appeared and gradually famine and disease began to disappear. For this reason Upatissa I felt the necessity of observing this ceremony and he told that this ceremony should be introduced whenever there were famine and disease in Sri Lanka. "It is to be noted here that Sena II (851 - 885 A.D.) also performed this type of ceremony when there was an epidemic in the island. He did not take the image of the Buddha, but he took the image of Ananda in procession and he recited the Pirit and sprinkled the paritta-water (pirit-pān). He wrote the Ratana-sutta on gold plates. Kassapa V (913 - 923 A.D.) in order to make his kingdom free from famine and pestilence asked the monks of the three

3. Ibid, p. 277; Mahāvamsa, XXXVII, 189-198.
5. Ibid, p. 277; Ibid, i, 80-81.
fraternities to recite the Pirit in his capital. Aggabodhi IV (658 - 674 A.D.) also asked the Buddhist monks to hold the pirit ceremonies.

The Pabbajjā and the Upasampadā Ceremonies are very important in the Buddhist Saṅgha. The right of giving the Pabbajjā or admission of persons to the Saṅgha as novice and the Upasampadā or admission of novices to the Saṅgha as monks (bhikkhus) or full membership of the saṅgha on novices was vested in individual monks who were upajjhāyas, i.e., teachers. But the denial of the Pabbajjā and the Upasampadā to a certain brahmin who thereupon grew pale and emaciated served as the proper time for introducing into the Saṅgha the rules of the "hatticatuttha kamma" or "settlement of affairs by a proclamation repeated four times." According to this rules, the business of the Saṅgha such as the conferring of the upasampadā etc. was to be conducted by the entire assembly at a formal sitting and not by the monks individually. The minimum number of monks to form

1. Walpola Rahula, History of Buddhism in Ceylon, p. 278; Mahāvamsa, TII, 80.
2. Ibid, p. 278; ibid, XLVI, 5.
such an assembly varied from four to twenty according to the
importance of the matter under discussion, while the upasampada
ordination was to be conferred under the Paticatuttaka kamma by an
assembly of not less than ten monks. Owing to several cases of
misapplication, the Pabbajja and the Upasampada were differentiated
from each other and not given simultaneously. Several monks who
received their Pabbajja and Upasampada did not behave in a proper
way and when they were told to behave in a proper way, they told
that they wanted only the Pabbajja and not the Upasampada which as
regarded as the higher ordination. Thus the rule was introduced to
the effect that the Upasampada should not be given along with the
Pabbajja. The Sangha should give Upasampada only at the special
prayer of the candidate who requested the Sangha in the following
words - 'I pray for the Upasampada from the Sangha. Let the venerable
Sangha raise me up in its mercy'. This he should say thrice after
approaching the Sangha properly. The system of discipline which was
introduced for the novices was somewhat different from that of the
monks. The Buddha allowed ten rules or precepts called "Dasa sikkhapadani" for training for novices. The four interdictions or prohibitions were also to be brought to the notice of the pupil who was now a full-fledged monk, i.e., who had received the upasampadā ordination or higher ordination. Besides these interdictions, the rules further required that when he will go on his begging round, he should not go singly but he will go with another monk. The mention of the 'Four great Resources' (Cattāri Nissayā) at the time of the Pabbajjā was, however, forbidden because it produced a very baneful effect on the development of the Saṅgha itself, and it was allowed only at the time of the upasampadā ordination ceremony.

In the beginning there was not only difference in respect of the conferment of the Pabbajjā and the upasampadā between adults and boys below the age of twenty. Attracted by the comfortable life of the monks in the Saṅgha, some of the guardians of boys wanted that if their children joined the saṅgha, they would be happier and feel more comfortable in life. They, therefore, allowed their
boys to join the saṅgha and to receive the Pabbajjā and the upasam-
pada. But these boys did not behave in a proper way. It was for
these reasons a rule was introduced in the saṅgha that no person
below the age of twenty should be ordained and at the same time it
should be mentioned that a person who was below the age of fifteen
should not be given the Pabbajjā. From the age of fifteen up to
twenty the boys should remain in the saṅgha as sāmaṇeras attached
to the upajjhāyas who have them the Pabbajjā. Boys of tender ages
were also admitted to the saṅgha through a special kind of the
Pabbajja which became known as kākujjhapaka sāmaṇeras or Scare crow
novices.

At the time of proclamation at the upasampadā ceremony it
was necessary to announce the name of the teacher (upajjhāya) but
it was not possible for Ānanda to utter the name of Mahākassapa. For
this reason a rule was introduced in the saṅgha that the family name
of the upajjhāya might be substituted for his own at the proclamation
of the upasampadā ceremony. When the number of novices was more than
one the rule was introduced to the effect that more novices than
one might be ordained under the same proclamation.

These were the rules relating to the upasampada ceremony:—

(a) The candidate must select a competent monk with an idea to
instruct him and how he will answer properly:—

1. Whether the pupil monk was free from leprosy, boils,
eczema, consumption, epilepsy etc.

2. What type of person he was? Was he a free man? Was he
without debts? Was he not in the royal service?

3. Had he received permission from his parents?

4. What was his age? Was he twenty years old?

5. Was he with his robes and alms bowl?

6. What was his name? And

7. What was the name of his teacher?

(b) The instructor should instruct the candidate in all the above
points not in the assembly but outside. It is the duty of the
instructors to come to the assembly before the candidate and he should
inform it to the assembly and if the assembly allowed him, then he
pupil will come there.

(c) The pupil then took refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha and then he would request the assembly for his upasampadā.

(d) A competent monk then asked the pupil above mentioned seven points.

(e) If the pupil was able to satisfy them, then a declaration (natti) was made by competent monk to the effect that so and so under so and so as upajjhāya was requesting for upasampadā from the saṅgha.

(f) If the saṅgha remained silent after the proclamation was made by a competent monk for three time, then the pupil under so and so as upajjhāya was able to receive the upasampadā ordination. Because the saṅgha allowed him to receive it. Thus, the conferment of the upasampadā was sanctioned.

The upasampadā ordination was then registered by the Saṅgha as-

(1) In order to find exact time it was the duty of the assembly to measure the shadow of the candidate.
(2) The Sangha should note the date of the month and the season of the year.

(3) It was the duty of the Sangha to note the part of the day.

(4) It was the duty of the sangha to note the entire procedure in the ceremony.

In order to keep the high moral standard of the Sangha further rules were introduced in the sangha for restriction on admission to the Sangha and following persons were not allowed to obtain the upasampada but were allowed to retain their Pabbajjā in the Sangha.

(1) One who had no preceptor (upajjhāya).

(2) One who had sangha as upajjhāya.

(3) One who had a group as upajjhāya.

(4) One who had sūnuch as upajjhāya.

(5) One who had schismatic as upajjhāya.

(6) One who had shedder of blood as upajjhāya.

(7) One who had a hermaphrodite as upajjhāya.
(8) One who had stealthily attached himself to the sangha as upajjhāya.
(9) One who had gone over to the heretical sect as upajjhāya.
(10) One who had an animal as upajjhāya.
(11) One who had a matricide as upajjhāya.
(12) One who had a patricide as upajjhāya.
(13) One who had no alms bowl.
(14) One who had no robes and walking naked.
(15) One who had neither bowl nor robes.
(16) One who had borrowed alms bowl and robes.

It is to be noted here that certain Pabbajitas who did not live under upajjhāya were given permission to live in the saṅgha but they were not allowed to take part in the affairs of the saṅgha. The saṅgha accepted them as strangers but they took the saṅgha's food at meal times.

The word Upasatha is usually taken to mean a ceremony in which religious discourses are held in certain days of a month for the welfare of the saṅgha. Such a practice was very popular among
other sects of ascetics and among other religious before the Buddha. We learn from the religious texts that several religious teachers who belonged to non-Buddhistic sects used to come and to give religious discourses on the eighth or fourteenth or fifteenth days of each half month and king Bimbisāra noticed it and then requested the Buddha to introduce such assemblies for the Uposatha Ceremony. Buddhist monks also. This type of custom was prevalent in other schools such as the Jainas and the Paribbajakas, and they used to discuss their religious matters on particular occasion before lay people and in this way they used to popularise their doctrines among the laymen. By meeting with these people, these religious people established their contact with the lay people, king Bimbisāra took keen interest in their affairs and wanted to introduce it into the Buddhist Saṅgha and that is why, he requested the Buddha to introduce it into the Saṅgha. Following the practice of the non-Buddhistic sects, the Buddha at the instance of king Bimbisāra introduced the ceremony of Uposatha. But it is to be noted here that

the Buddha's injunction to his disciples relating to the observance of the ceremony of Upasatha was that, instead of giving religious talks, they should discuss on this particular day the "Sikkhāpadas" or the code of rules which became known as the "Pātimokkha".¹ According to the existing custom, the observance of Upasatha fell on the eighth, fourteenth or fifteenth day of a bright or a dark fortnight, but in the Buddhist saṅgha this ceremony was introduced once in a fortnight either on the fourteenth or fifteenth and it was not held on the eighth.² In this ceremony the Pātimokkha was recited and it required the presence of all members of the Buddhist saṅgha to declare that sins of omission and commission committed, if any, during the preceding fortnight, because the Buddhist saṅgha by introducing the rules wanted to make the offenders as well as the Buddhist assembly pure. Before the recitation of the Pātimokkha, certain rules were to be followed: sweeping of the Upasatha hall, arrangement of seats, lamps and drinking water, formal announcement of the day, declaration of parisuddhi of all members, and selection

¹. Gokuldas De, Democracy in Early Buddhist Sangha, p. 61.
². Ibid, pp. 61-62.
of monks to put and answer questions regarding Dhamma and Vinaya.
In one district it was the duty of the Buddhist sangha to fix one
upasatha hall in either a vihāra or an Addhayaga or a storied
building or a house or a cave. The Upasatha must not be held by an
incomplete congregation. In order to hold the upasatha ceremony,
there was the necessity to fix a boundary or Simā. These were
regarded as boundaries — a landmark consisting in a mountain, in a
rock, in a wood, in a tree, in a path, in an anthill, in a river,
in a piece of water. When no boundary was fixed, the village
boundary of that village or the market town boundary of that market
town near which village or market town the Buddhist monks lived,
was taken as boundary for the performance of the upasatha ceremony.
Soon the upasatha ceremony needed the presence of not only all the
existing members of an āvāsa (residence) but also of those who
belonged to another āvāsa but on the upasatha day they were present
within the Simā of that āvāsa. There were occasions when the
members of an āvāsa organised an assembly without knowing the
presence of members who belonged to another Āvāsa but on the upasatha day they lived within the Āvāsa. It is to be noted here that if the members of another Āvāsa were large in number, then there was the necessity for holding the assembly again. When an assembly deliberately tried to avoid or to exclude the members of another Āvāsa, the members who joined the assembly became guilty of either major or minor offence. The minimum number of members who recited the Patimokkha was four and for declaration of Parisuddhi only, the minimum number of monks required was two and in both cases there was absolute necessary for the attendance of the members. They used to declare that they had not committed any breach of the Patimokkha rules and who had committed any breach, they used to confess their offences.

The recital of the Patimokkha was held in the upasatha assembly in which the members confessed their Parisuddhi and in which there were no nuns, sāmaṇeras, sāmaṇeris or any monk undergoing punishment on persons who were not allowed to join the Buddhist saṅgha, i.e., eunuch, hermaphrodite etc. According to the cases of
emergency, the recital of the Patimakkha should be made in several abridged forms.

The recital of the Patimakkha which was the only item of business at the Upasatha ceremony was to be directed in this way:

A competent monk addressed the saṅgha which was assembled for the upasatha ceremony: "Let the respectable assembly hear me. Today is the 15th day of the lunar fortnight set apart for holding the upasatha. If the saṅgha deems it fit let it observe the upasatha and recite the Patimakkha. In the first place let the saṅgha make sure that the purity of its individual members is well maintained and guarded.

I am going to recite the Patimakkha 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 Nibbāna. Therefore, Bhikkhus with an eye to keep yourselves pure you must be frank in regard to your omission and commission."

A competent monk thus spoke the above mentioned facts to the members of the assembly. Then the recital of the Pātimokkha took place. At that time it had only five parts¹: (1) The introduction (Nīdāna), (2) the four Pārājikas, (3) the thirteen Samgha-disesa rules, (4) the two Aniyata Dhammas, and (5) the commentary on the text. The rule was then introduced that all the above mentioned five parts must be recited in full and it should be recited in such a way that every body was able to hear. But the recital of the Pātimokkha was made in its several abridged forms according to the degree of intensity of dangers arising from kings, robbers, fire, water, human beings, non-human beings, beasts of prey, reptiles, ruffians threatening the lives of the monks and apprehension of

¹. Gokuldas De, Democracy in Early Buddhist Samgha, pp. 68-69.
violation of their chastity. When a great danger occurred, the introduction alone was recital and as to the rest it was then accepted as read and known to the assembly. In case a lesser danger was expected, the introduction and the four Parajikas were recited and the rest was taken as read and heard. In times of ordinary dangers the introduction, the four Parajikas and the thirteen Samghadisesa rules were recited, and other rules were taken as read and heard. When there was a chance of a danger, the introduction, the four Parajikas, the thirteen Samghadisesa rules and the two Aniyata Dhammas were recited from the full text. When the recital of the Patimakkha was over, the purity of the individual member was ascertained and then meeting came to an end. If any member committed any offence, then it was his duty to atone it by confessing and if he had not committed any offence, then there was no need to confess it.

The Patimakkha ceremony is regarded as one of the most important ceremonies of the Sangha. The Buddhists consider this

1. Gokuldas De, Democracy in Early Buddhist Samgha, p. 70.
2. Ibid, p. 70.
3. Ibid, p. 70.
4. Ibid, p. 70.
5. Ibid, p. 70.
ceremony as the most sacred ceremony of the Buddhist saṅgha. "It is a confessional ceremony held on Uposatha Days - a Brahmin term retained by the Buddha - which were at first two in each month, the days of the full-moon and the new-moon. Later the intermediate days of quarter moon were added. On these days the monks assembled in their regular chapters to listen to the reading of the body of rules, the Pātimokkha, for the government of the Order. The ceremony begins with the enumeration of the "Four Forbidden Acts." Each monk was expected to confess failure in the observance of any of the rules. Silence was taken to mean guiltlessness. If any one had committed any of the major offences he was immediately and irrevocably expelled from the Sangha. In case of minor offences, penances, more or less severe, were imposed. No monk was allowed to absent himself from this ceremony, unless he was too ill to be moved. If possible, he was to be carried on his sick bed to the assembly. If this was not possible he had to assure the chapter, through some member present that he was guiltless of any infraction of the rules."¹

The meaning of the word Pātimokkha is "Pātimokkhān ti adim etam mukham etam pāmukham etam kusalānam tama vuccati pātimokkhan ti." ........ The Pātimokkha means "This is the beginning this is the head or face, this is the foremost of states that are good; therefore it is called Pātimokkha."

"Yo tam pāṭirakkhati tam mokkheti moceti apāyikādidukkhāhi tasmi pātimokkhan ti vuccati." "Who ever observes the rules of Pātimokkha it releases him, delivers him from sufferings such as of the inferior states and so it is called Pātimokkha."

"Pātimokkhan ti atumokkham patippāmokkham atiseththam ati-uttamanā." "The Pātimokkha is that of which is the highest, the extraordinary high, the very best and very highest." From the Pāli Canon we get the above mentioned meaning of the Patimokkha.

The Chinese and the Tibetan translations interpret the term Pātimokkha as deliverance, liberation or emancipation for each and every one and at all occasions, that is "Prati" signifies for "each", 
"every" and "mokṣa" means "deliverance". The Tibetan "Sa-sor-thar-pa" literally means "Disburdenment of each individual's sins". In Chinese translation we learn that the Vinaya text for deliverance is "Chieh-to-Chieh-pan-ching". From other translations we learn that the meaning of the Pratimokṣa is that by observing this Śīla one will keep or take care of his sense organs and hence his meritorious qualities (saddhāraṇa) will be increased no doubt. It is regarded as the first entrance to all the good qualities or dharma. It is for this reason it is known as the Pratimokṣa. The Vinayā-mātrikā-Sāstra states that "Prātimokṣa means that one remains in the practice of Śīla and Vinaya. It is therefore called Prātimokṣa." A Bhikṣu who tries to observe this Śīla, adorns or decorates himself with the ornament of Pratimokṣa, the Śīla-deliverance.

The Parivāsa or the Probation ceremony was held before ordination into the saṅgha took place. This ceremony was for members of other sects and also for the unconcealed, apāticchanna-parivāsa and it was given to naked wanderers, naked ascetics, ājīvikaś and
to unclothed ascetics, acela, but not to any one who had a blanket made of the skin of wild animals.

Once a monk who belonged to a heretical sect after his admission into the saṅgha did not behave properly and when his preceptor or upajjhāya criticised him for his improper conduct, he then left the saṅgha and joined his former sect.\(^1\) He then returned and again requested the saṅgha and his Prebation Ceremony \(^2\) for the new-comers. for upajjhāya for the uposampadā or the higher ordination.\(^3\) Then a rule was introduced to the saṅgha that this particular monk should not be allowed to join the saṅgha, but if another monk who had no quarrel with his upajjhāya or a new-comer, he should be allowed to join the saṅgha under the conditions of the Parivāsa restraint.\(^4\) According to it,\(^5\) he should remain on probation for a period of four months and he had to fulfill the following conditions: (1) It was his duty to enter a village late

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\(^1\) Gokuldas De, Democracy in Early Buddhist Saṅgha, p. 35.
\(^2\) Ibid, pp. 35-36.
\(^3\) Ibid, p. 35.
\(^4\) Ibid, pp. 35-36.
\(^5\) Ibid, p. 36.
and to come back early. (2) It was his duty not to mix with the
society of harlots, widows, adult girls, eunuchs and nuns frequently.
(3) It was his duty to show himself skilfully in various works
relating to the monastic life. (4) It was his duty to behave and to
act like an energetic person, was able to act efficiently and was
able to act efficiently and was able to direct others properly.
(5) It was his duty to show his zeal and enthusiasm when the Doctrine
was delivered to him and it was his duty to express his energetic
behaviour when questions relating to morality, contemplation and
wisdom were asked. And (6) he became glad when anything against his
former sect was said and became angry when anything against the
Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha was mentioned. If he observed the
above mentioned conditions properly, then he was able to succeed.

If any candidate like the ājiviṇas came there as a naked
person, then it was the duty of upajjhāya to give him a set of
robes. ¹ If he like the Paribbājakas and the Jātīlas came there

¹. Gokuldas De, Democracy in Early Buddhist Saṃgha, p. 36.
without shaving his head, then it was his duty to receive permission from the Saṅgha to share his head.\textsuperscript{1} There was no need to apply the Parivāsa restraint upon the fire-worshipper Jatilas and the Sakkyas or Sākyas. Because the Jatilas knew the Doctrine of Karma very well and they became famous for their social activities and the Sakkyas had a system of government which was “much in common with that obtaining in the Saṅgha.”\textsuperscript{2}

The word Pirit, Pali Paritta signifies “protection.”\textsuperscript{3} It was no doubt an important ceremony. In order to dispel disease or to drive away evil spirits this ceremony was held.\textsuperscript{4} Also for an auspicious occasion this ceremony was held. The Catubhāṇavāra is the Book of Parittas (Pirit-mæta).\textsuperscript{5} The Milinda pañha mentions that the Ratana-sutta, Khandha-paritta, Mera-paritta, Dhashagga-paritta, Āṭānātiya paritta and Angulimāla-paritta are the most important parittas.\textsuperscript{6} According to Dīghanikāya

\begin{enumerate}
\item Gekuldas De, Democracy in Early Buddhist Samgha, p. 36.
\item Ibid, p. 36.
\item Walpole Rahula, History of Buddhism in Ceylon, p. 278.
\item Ibid, p. 278.
\item Ibid, p. 278.
\item Ibid, p. 278; Milinda pañha, p. 119.
\end{enumerate}
From the Dīghanikāya commentary we learn about the recital of the Ātānātiya-sutta. When anybody wanted to drive away and to expel an evil spirit, then in the first instance the Metta-sutta, the Dījagga-sutta and the Ratana-sutta were recited for seven days. When he saw that the evil spirit had gone, then it was good. But when he saw that the spirit was still there, then it was his duty to recite the Ātānātiya-sutta. The Buddhist monk, who recited this sutta, did not take meat and any food of flour. He did not live in a cemetery and the spirits had no chance to disturb him. When he went to the sick man's house from the monastery, he was guided by men with


weapons and shields. It was not good to recite the sutta in the open air. It was the duty of the monks to stay in a room with doors and windows closed and recite the sutta in a very pure and clean mind and at this time they were guarded by men with weapons. When the monk saw that the spirit did not leave him, then the patient or the sick person was taken to the monastery and was placed him on the courtyard of the cetiya. After sweeping the courtyard flowers were offered and lamps were kept there. Then the Maṅgala-gāthā or the verses of blessing were recited. Then the prayers were offered to the deities. If there was an ancient tree within the boundary of the vihāra, then a message in the name of the Sangha was sent to the deity to come there on this occasion. The merits of alms-giving and offering flowers and lamps were transferred to the spirit and the verses of blessing were recited as a gift to him and it was his duty to leave the patient or the sick person out of respect for the Sangha. When the spirit refused to leave him, then the devatas or the gods were invited and told them about his obstinacy and the Āṭānātiya was
recited, after announcing that "this spirit (amanusso) does not do our word, and we shall obey the Order of the Buddha."

When a monk was possessed by a spirit, then the altars were cleaned and flowers were offered, the merits of offerings were transferred and after addressing a great assembly of devatās, the paritta was recited.¹

It is to be noted here that the celebration of the Posen festival generally takes place after a month of the celebration of the Vesāk festival.² In order to commemorate the event of the introduction of Buddhism in Sri Lanka by Mahinda, people came to Anurādhapura and Mihintale. Mahinda and other theras from India came to Mihintale in Sri Lanka on the fullmoon day of Posen. Devānampiyatissa on that very day came to Mihintale for hunting. There he met Mahinda and the latter addressed to the king and his people "Oh king, disciples of the Buddha are we, in

¹ U. Walpole Rahula, History of Buddhism in Ceylon, p. 280.
compassion for thee from Jambudwipa came." Then the theravā Mahinda gave discourses and delivered the Dhamma to the king and his followers. He preached the Cūlahatthipadopama Sutta (The parable of the elephants foot-print) to the king on the first day. Then when he entered Anurādhapura, he gave discourses on the Petavatthu, the Vimānavatthu and the Saccasamīyutta to five hundred women and their leader was queen Anula. Then he delivered the Devadūta sutta and the Bālapandita Sutta. The king of Sri Lanka gave the Mahāmeghagrove to Mahinda on the third day after his arrival in Sri Lanka and the theravā delivered the Aggikhandhopama Sutta. On the same day he also gave discourses on the Āsivisopama Sutta (smile of the serpent). He also delivered the Anamatagga Sutta on the fourth day and on the fifth day, the king Khajjānīya Sutta was preached by him. The Dhammacakkacavattana Sutta was preached by him on the seventh day.

2. Ibid, p. 162.
3. Ibid, p. 162.
5. Ibid, p. 162.
7. Ibid, p. 163.
8. Ibid, p. 163.
The people of Sri Lanka in order to commemorate these events celebrate the Poson festival. These events have great historical and religious significance to Buddhists and they try to celebrate these events in a very nice way.

The Kataragama festival occupies an important place in the religious world of Sri Lanka. The temple of the god Kataragama is situated in the south-eastern region of Sri Lanka. Many Hindus and Buddhists come to this temple to offer their prayers to the god Kataragama. It is sacred to both Hindus and Buddhists. "It is during the festival season that people of all classes, races and creeds flock in their thousands to worship this god who may very well be called the national god of Ceylon." The Hindus regard the god Kataragama as the incarnation of the god Skanda and the main temple is dedicated to him. There are also temples of Ganesa, Pattini and Kāli within the boundaries of the Skanda temple. People worship a small metal box at the

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Skanda temple and sometimes it takes out in a procession. "Whenever this sacred box is taken out, the officiating priest first covers himself with a cloth, leaving only his legs exposed, whilst others holding another cloth over him as a covering, conduct him to the sacred elephant which is to carry this sacred object in procession. As soon as the priest places the sacred box on the elephants back it trumpets loudly. During the festivities, the procession visits the goddess Valli, the second spouse of the God Shanda, in her own temple." In order to make vows or to offer thanks for favours already granted or to find peace and happiness for a disturbed mind, or to obtain favours, people come to the temple of the god Kataragama.²

The Buddhists believe that the Buddha when he visited Sri Lanka for the third time, came to meet the god Kataragama and this was the place where is situated the Kiri Vehera.³ The Buddhists say that the Hair Relic of the Buddha is kept in this vihāra and this

2. Ibid, pp. 155-156.
3. Ibid, p. 156.
relic was obtained by the god Mahāsena. The latter constructed this vihāra. According to another tradition, Kataragama had a close connection with the function of planting the Bodhi-tree. On this occasion a Chieftain from the Principality of Kataragama was invited. From this tradition we learn that at the time when the tree was planted, eight shoots came out from it, and the invitee from Kataragama received one of them. He brought the Bo-Sapling to Kataragama with him and this was planted in the heart of Kataragama by him. Today people see the Bo-tree in the precincts of the Kataragama temple and they believe that this tree was planted by the Chieftain from the Principality of Kataragama. People offer their prayers at the Kiri Vehera and the Buddhist monks perform the Pirit ceremony there.

The Kataragama temple is very famous for the Fire-walking Ceremony. Many Hindus and Buddhists move bare-footed on red hot...
coals of fire before the conclusion of this festival. The fire-
walkers after ritual bath in the Menik Ganga take a walk on the live
coals in the early morning. ¹ Many people come there to participate
in this ceremony. This festival comes to an end with the Water-
Cutting Ceremony. ² This sacred relic is placed in the temple of the
goddess Valli throughout the night of the last day and in the last
hours of the morning this relic is brought back to the Devales. ³ Here
it is kept for a short time in the shrine room. "It is made somewhat
like a palanquin which can be carried on a pole. When everything is
ready after a couple of hours, the priest (Kapuwa) having performed
the various rites and rituals, takes the relic and seats himself in
the basket palanquin when the temple bell strikes the sign of
departure. The palanquin is then borne on the shoulders of two men
and taken to the Menik Ganga, while the sacred elephant, bereft of
its traditional regalia and trappings lumbers along the stream and
stands sentry outside a tent-like construction placed in the river

¹ L.A. de Silva, Buddhism,Beliefs, and Practices in Sri Lanka,
p. 157.
in a chosen place. The priest alone enters this enclosure, covered with leaves and branches and remains there for two or three hours awaiting the auspicious moment. Meanwhile great crowds gather around the river on either side, sitting on the banks or standing in the shallow water. The priest fixes the auspicious moment in this way. He keeps a small metal table in the water and when the water rises and washes the level of the Table, then the priest thinks the arrival of the auspicious moment. There is also another theory. The priest puts water in a hollow image of the god and when the image is full then he thinks that the arrival of the auspicious moment. According to another theory also, there is an appearance of a blue light and this sign indicates the appearance of the god at the auspicious moment. When the water is cut, the chief elephant carries the golden pot with water and the relic is kept in it. Then the pot with the water is brought to the Devale and it will be kept there throughout the succeeding year. The water from this pot is

5. Ibid, p. 158.
6. Ibid, p. 158.
brought to other temples "where the god Kataragama is venerated." ¹
After the performance of the ceremony by the priest people generally
drink water and they also take sacred ash which is obtained from
nearby Kataragama mountain. ² Then comes the end of the Kataragama
festival.

The Sinhalese, the Tamils, and the Christians of Sri Lanka
celebrate the New Year festival which takes place in the month of
Bak (March - April). ³ This festival can be mentioned as a national
festival. We can not say that it is Buddhist festival. But the
Buddhists regard it as a part and parcel of their lives and it is

closely associated with them. The New Year is known
as a Solar festival which gives an indication of the
passing of the sun from the Zodiac of Pisces (Mina Rāsi) to the
Zodiac of Aries (Mesha Rāsi). ⁴ It is the time of the arrival of
spring. The New Year is known as a solar festival and that is why it
is associated with the worship of the Sun God. ⁵ It is the festival

¹ L.A. de Silva, Buddhism: Beliefs and Practices in Sri Lanka,
p. 158.
2. Ibid, p. 158.
3. Ibid, p. 163.
4. Ibid, p. 163.
which brings the harvest to their home by the people who are associated with agriculture and for this reason it becomes known as a harvest festival. "Since the New Year is associated with the worship of the Sun God, all activities, such as lighting of the fire, partaking of the first meal, exchanging of gifts, commencing work, money transactions, the side one must face when setting out on a journey, are all performed according to the auspicious time calculated and based on the movement of the sun. In ancient times the village astrologer visited every home and gave a copy of the New Year Programme (avurudu vattoruva) indicating the auspicious and inauspicious times written on an Ola leaf. Today this information is given through the newspapers and radio. The time immediately preceding the entry of the sun into Aries is considered to be inauspicious, when people refrain from normal activities. It is known as the time of non-activity (nenagathe). The only possible activity is for people to repair to their place of worship, and during this time people visit the temple and perform their religious

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rites. When this inauspicious time is over and the new cycle begins, all burst out into activity, festivity and jubilation. One hears the deafening noise of crackers, the sound of the Raddāna (drum) and the shouts of men, women and children indulging most assiduously in a variety of indoor and outdoor games. The first ritual act is the ceremonial lighting of the hearth at the auspicious hour. Amidst the sound of temple bells, crackers and songs the housewife lights the hearth, facing the right direction. Over this new fire a pot of milk is boiled until it overflows. This is an act that is believed to bring prosperity. Thereafter the meal of milk-rice (kiribath) is prepared and partaken. All in the home sit on mats and the father serves milk-rice to each on plantain leaves instead of plates. After the meal he gives each of his children a coin to wish them good luck in the New Year.

The New Year meal is an age-old custom which is observed with much care and joy. The ceremonial curry consists of seven ingredients (hath māluwa), jak, vattakka (pumpkin), kaju mada(cadju)
bringal, ash plantain, sweet potatoes and pumpkin. When the auspicious time draws near, all the members of the family, wearing garments of the lucky colour gather round the table. The head of the family feeds each of them with a morsel of food with his own hand. All eat facing the auspicious direction. This is followed by the presentation of gifts and money to the family members and servants, if any.

Immediately following this guest, reputed to being good luck, is invited and served with New Year sweets and delicacies. After enjoying the hospitality he leaves, pronouncing a blessing on the household. After him, visitors - both friends and relations - come in and partake of the food at the ceremonial table and give a small gift of money, the idea being that a gift from a person with a reputation for good luck brings prosperity. The greet each other saying: "May this be an auspicious New Year to you."¹

The New Year day is regarded as an occasion for forgiveness, reconciliation and reunion. The Sinhala New Year is now a National

festivals. It is also known as a day of great rejoicing and merry-making. This New Year festival is closely associated with the celebration of the ceremonial oil bath (Telgana Avurudda).  

From Dr. C. E. Godakumbura we learn that the early Sinhalese festivals were closely associated with rain-making and the increase of water and the Gods of Rain, Indra and Parjanya. They occupied a prominent place in the ceremonies.

From very early times the ceremony of Pāvarāṇā in the Samgha was closely associated with vassa vāsa. With the announcement of Vassa vāsa the ceremony of Pāvarāṇā appeared in the Samgha from very early times. From the Suttanta literature we learn that "in ancient days and also in the days which were still more ancient, on the full moon day of Uposatha when Pāvarāṇā 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 bhanta divasāni purimatarāni, tadahu
'posathe paṇṇarase Pāvanāya rattiya Kevalakappā ca devā Tāvatiṃsā
suddhammāyāṃ sabhāyāṃ sanni sinnā honti sannipatitā etc."² Sometimes
in the same day the Uposatha Ceremony was held in the morning and the
Ceremony of Pāvarana was arranged in the evening and then it was
possible for laymen to come there for its celebration. Because the
laymen were not allowed to attend the Uposatha ceremony. From the
above facts it is clear that Pāvarana was a very ancient ceremony
and it was introduced into the Sāṅgha along with Vassa vāsa.³

It is to be noted here that like the Vedic 'Parva' or
'Pārvaṇa' or more commonly 'Parana', Pāvarana is also the same
word.⁴ It means the breaking off of an observance or a vow with
merriments and feasts.⁵ "The literal meaning of Pāvaṇa as derived
from the Uvar, to choose, used in the causative sense, meaning to
make, to choose, with the prefix pa- and the suffix -aṇa, reducing
it to pāvaṇa in feminine meaning 'being caused to be chosen' was

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1. Gokuldas De, Democracy in Early Buddhist Sāṅgha, p. 102.
2. Ibid, p. 102.
5. Ibid, p. 103.
just applicable to the ceremony in which each Bhikkhu, whether senior or junior, had to entreat the Sangha to choose and reinstate him as a monk free from any sin likely to accrue from his private residence during the vassa vasa."

When the Buddha was staying at 'Kalandaka Nāvāpa' (feeding ground of squirrels) in the Veluvane grama of Rājagaha, vassa vāsa was introduced into the Sangha at that time. Vassa Vāsa was an important monastic ceremony. "The observance of Vas (vassa) or 'Rains', when the Monks went into retreat for three months during the monsoons, has a significance both for the Sangha and the laity. During this period the monks are expected to dwell permanently in Vihāras or dwellings specially prepared for this purpose by the lay devotees and suspend all itineration. This rule was enacted by the Buddha particularly because complaints had been made to him that the Bhikkhus who travelled about during this time when the earth was teeming with vegetation and full of insects and germs, could

1. Gokuldas De, Democracy in Early Buddhist Sangha, p. 103.
not avoid crushing them under their feet, thus destroying much life and thereby violating the precept against killing. The Buddha therefore, enjoined that the Bhikkhus should remain at a fixed abode during this rainy reason and entrusted the laity to see to the needs of the Saṅgha.

There is no prescribed way of spending this period of enforced retreat, nor were any special duties laid down. However, monks were expected to live in harmony, observe the disciplinary rules and pay more attention of giving instruction to the laity.

The ceremonials observed when a monk is invited to spend the Ves season are similar to those connected with the invitation of monks for a dana. If a monk is invited to a village, the villagers send a deputation of the principal hosts to present the invitation to the monk. On acceptance of the invitation the villagers prepare a suitable lodging for the monks, with a refectory, a room for the image of the Buddha and the relic casket. The villagers would then go with music and dancers to the place where the monk resides and
conduct him in procession to the abode prepared for the retreat. The hosts will be responsible to provide the monk with all his needs, thus accumulating merit for themselves.¹

The Buddhist monks used to tour the country in all the seasons and during the rains, they used to injure and to destroy newly grown vegetation, insect life and many small creatures under their feet. For this reason people used to criticise the Buddhist monks for their behaviour. Various allegations were made at these monks by the followers of Nīganṭha Nāṭaputta or Nāṭaputta. The lay people not only began to criticise but also made a comparison between the disciples of the Buddha and those of the Jain leader, Nīganṭha Nāṭaputta. They told that the Buddhist monks were shameless people and they even committed the act of

killing without any hesitation which was contrary to the teachings of the Buddha. After hearing their criticisms the Buddha allowed the Buddhist monks to enter upon the rains.¹ There were two occasions for vassa vāsa. One was earlier and the other was later. "The earlier may be entered upon the day after (the full moon of) Asāḷhī, the later may be entered upon a month after (the full moon of) Asāḷhī."² This vassa vāsa lasted for three months. The vassa (Sinhalese Vas) season started from the month of July and it continued up to October.³ During this period the Buddhist monks observed the Vassa retreat and remained in one place. During this period the monks for livelihood had to depend for alms from laity who used to live near the Avasa (Residence). Generally during the Vassa vāsa period the monks stayed in their own vihāras, but high personages had the right to invite other monks to spend the Vassa vāsa in their company in an

². Ibid, p. 184.
abode which was specially prepared for this purpose. Ordinarily, the monks were not allowed to leave their āvāsa (residence) unless on special circumstance and in times of urgent needs. In that case too, he was not allowed even to stay outside his āvāsa more than seven days under any circumstance. It is to be noted here that the monks observed the Vassa for three months while stayed in their respective āvāsas which they did not transgress during the period of its observance. The monks were allowed to spend their vassa vāsa in a Cattle-pan (vaja), in a caravan (Sattha) and in a ship.  

The following places were forbidden for the purpose of vassa vāsa:

1. The hollow of a Tree,
2. A forest,
3. Open air,
4. A place not meant for rest,
5. A house where dead bodies were kept,
6. An umbrella and
7. A big earthenware vessel.

During the vassa vāsa the monks used to spend their time in complete harmony, tried their best to observe the disciplinary rule and instructed the laity who attended them in large numbers. The ceremony of Pavāranā signified the termination of Vassa vāsa, and in order to acquire merit lay

2. Ibid, p. 100.
people offered food and clothings to the Buddhist monks on this occasion. Thus Pavāraṇā introduced a new era of life for the Buddhist monks who after their vassa vāsa period took their appearance in the world with vigour and energy and they got encouragement and support from the laity during their period of confinement.¹

The first full-moon day of the month of Kattika or the day previous to it was regarded as the day of Pavāraṇā.² In order to maintain the monks during the period of Vassa vāsa special arrangements were made by the laity.

Under ordinary circumstances when the acts of merrimaking were over and when the assembly of the monks had gathered and seated in a proper order, then the Pavāraṇā ceremony began. A competent monk addressed the assembly with these words: "Let the venerable Samgha hear me, to-night is our Pavāraṇā, if the Samgha deems fit let it hold the Pavāraṇā ceremony."³ Thereafter every senior monk placed his upper robe on one side of his shoulder and squatted on

¹. Gokuldas De, Democracy in Early Buddhist Samgha, p. 103.
². Ibid, p. 104.
³. Ibid, p. 106.
the ground with folded hands and then addressed the Samgha three times: "Brethren, I beseech the Samgha 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." Without the permission of the Samgha, the turn passed on to the next senior monk and in this way when every one was able to finish his say, then the meeting or the Pavarana ceremony automatically came to an end. All the members of the assembly remained kneeling down while the Pavarana declarations continued except in the case of old and feeble monk. In his case he remained kneeling down so long as his turn was not over and when he did his talk, he then took his seat. The purpose of holding this ceremony was to make the monks free from the acts of omission and commission done during Vassa vassa period and if they did wrong

acts, then they confessed them and made themselves pure by confessing them before the assembly of the monks. It is to be noted here that the formalities observed were almost identical to those introduced for the Uposatha ceremony. For this reason the Pavarana ceremony can be mentioned as a duplicate of the Uposatha Ceremony.

"The avowed objects of the Pavarana as is said to have been expressed by the Buddha, were (1) mutual cooperation, (2) purification from sin and (3) holding fast the ideals of the Vinaya all of which might with equal emphasis."¹ The Pavarana like the Uposatha was imperative on all the members of the Sangha. Like the Uposatha the procedure has the same as in the case of the sick monk or any other member detained outside,² Only in place of sending in 'Parisuddhi,' he sent in 'Pavarana' with the help of a competent monk.³ The recital of the Patimokkha was the main item of business, but in the Pavarana ceremony this was total absent.⁴

¹ Gokuldas De, Democracy in Early Buddhist Samgha, p. 104.
⁴ Ibid, p. 105.
After the vasa period we see the arrival of the Pavarana which means 'conclusion'. In this ceremony all the monks gathered together. Each asked the other to mention any fault if he noticed in him while they stayed together during that period. Then everybody conferred if he had any fault, in this way he was able to clear himself from his fault. It is to be noted here that on the closing day of the Pavarana ceremony, monks were offered the special robe.

Then came the Kathina Ceremony which was an important Buddhist ceremony. It marked the end of the whole vassa season. After the end of the three months the Kathina robe or a special robe was given to the monks of every monastery who had the "retreat" or who observed the Vassa vasa.¹ The Mahāvagga² says, "Kathina-cloth comes to be made when it is unsoiled; Kathina-cloth comes to be made when what is allowable is unsoiled; Kathina-cloth comes to be made when it is (made) out of pieces of cloth; Kathina-cloth comes to be made when it is (made) out of rag-robcs; Kathina-cloth comes to be

¹ Gokulaś De, Democracy in Early Buddhist Sangha, p. 285.
made when it is (made) out of (bits picked up near) a shop; Kathina-cloth comes to be made if there is no insinuation; Kathina-cloth comes to be made if there is no round about talking; Kathina-cloth comes to be made if it is not temporary; Kathina-cloth comes to be made if there is no postponement; Kathina-cloth comes to be made if it has not to be abandoned; Kathina-cloth comes to be made if it is made allowable; Kathina-cloth comes to be made if there is the outer cloak; Kathina-cloth comes to be made if there is the upper robe; Kathina-cloth comes to be made if five parts or more than five parts are cut out, are hemmed together on that same day; Kathina-cloth comes to be made if the making is by an individual. And if Kathina-cloth comes to be quite properly made, and if one gives thanks for it standing on the boundary, Kathina-cloth thus comes to be made."

The lay-devotees showed their respect and gratitude towards the Buddhist monks who had gone into the retreat and they invited them and offered to them the gift of cloth for robes which was Kathina-cavara. In Sri Lanka this ceremony became known as 'Kathina Pinkema' or 'Kathina ceremony'. The Saṅgha played a great role in it.
It decided whether the Kathina ceremony was desirable or not. When it decided in its favour, it then met and a monk then moved a resolution to the effect that it was the time for a Kathina. Every body in the assembly gave their opinion for it. Then by a formal announcement a monk was selected to receive the gift of cloth in order to make robes.

The gift of pure white cloth was brought to the residence (āvāsa) early in the morning of the day of the Kathina ceremony. When certain formalities were over the Saṃgha took charge of the cloth and then it was given to the monk who was selected to do the stitching of the robes. There were other monks who also gave their help for stitching. They took part in it and they received knives with handles, needles, thimbles, thread, measuring sticks and other apparatus for this work. The cloth was then cut according to the measurement and lengths and was stitched in conformity with the Vinaya rules. When the robes were ready, then those were washed, dyed and dried in the sun. It is to be noted here that on one day they did all these things and the robes were ready in one day.
The Samgha arranged the distribution of the robes. The senior resident monk got a share of it. A monk, who went somewhere and who did not like to come back, did not get a share of the robes. A monk, who wanted to come back, but could not come on the day of the Kathina, had no right to receive the share of the robes. In the evening the resident monk or one of his deputies or assistants wore the Kathina robe. After wearing his robe he took the prepared seat and gave a religious talk on the importance of the Kathina ceremony and then gave thanks to the lay-devotees.

According to the Buddhists, the offering of the Kathina robe to a Buddhist monk was a meritorious act. From the Mahāvaṃsa we learn that Dalla-Moggallāna or Moggallāna III offered the Kathina robe to the Buddhist monks of all the monasteries in Sri Lanka.

Even today the Kathina ceremony occupies an important place not only in the religious world but also in the lives of the Buddhist people of Sri Lanka.

During the Kathina ceremony the Buddhist monks received the special robe from the lay people. "On this day the laity offered unsewn cloth to the monks. It was laid down that when the Saṅgha received such offerings, the monks should meet together and formally announce that they were going to celebrate the Kathina ceremony to entrust certain monks with the cutting, sewing and dying the Kathina robe, to be finished in one day. When the robe is ready, it is offered to the visitor monk who has been invited. With this the ceremony is brought to a close."

The reign of Siri-Meghañavanna (371 A.C.), the son of Mahāsena, was an important period in the history of Buddhism of Sri Lanka. The ninth year of his reign witnessed the arrival of the left eye-tooth of the Buddha (Vāmadāthadhātu) in the island. The Dāṭhavamsa says that before its arrival there the rulers of India wanted to take possession of it and for this reason they fought among themselves. From the Dhātu Vamsa we learn that the Prince Danta and the Princess Hemālatha (Hemalatā)

1. Dāṭhavamsa, 114, 119, 340; Mahāvamsa, XXXVII, 92. The Dhātuavamsa, p. 6 mentions that Sri Lanka had two tooth-relics of the Buddha.
brought the relic to Sri Lanka from Kalinga in India in the ninth year of the reign of Sri Meghavanâ. Because during a time of war they came to Sri Lanka with the relic for its safety and concealed it in coils of the Princess' hair. The king received it with great honour and he kept it in a building known as the Dhammacakka near the royal palace in Anurâdhapura. The prince and princess, who brought the Tooth Relic from India to Sri Lanka, first established their contact with the monks of the Abhayagiri-vihâra. For this reason this vihâra became the custodian of the Tooth Relic. It held its exposition and its annual festival from very early times. This relic had its separate building. "By the side of the king's palace is the vihâra of the Buddha's Tooth, several hundred feet high, brilliant with jewel's and ornamented with rare gems. Above the vihâra is placed an upright pole on which is fixed a great padmarâga (ruby) jewel."
The temple of the Tooth in Kandy (the Dalada Māligāwa) was erected to keep the relic and at present it is keeping on a golden lotus "enshrined within seven caskets inset with precious jewels." 1

"A specially toughed glass-door 7 feet by 4 feet and 1 inch thick was recently installed, replacing the iron-railing door of the enclosure in the Inner Shrine Room. This was gifted by Japanese and is valued at Rs. 512,000 or 21,504,000 yen. Before it was brought to Sri Lanka this priceless relic had received the utmost respect and reverence for nearly eight centuries in India and for fifteen centuries it was in the custody of pious Buddhist Monarchs in Sri Lanka." 2

Fa Hien gives an account of the Tooth Relic festival. He says 3 that "the Tooth of the Buddha was always brought forth in the middle of the third month. Ten days beforehand the king grandly caparisoned a large elephant on which he mounted a man dressed in royal robes, who could speak distinctly, and the mass went round

2. Ibid, p. 15.
beating a large drum, describing the life and the virtues of the Buddha, and announcing to the public: "Behold! ten days after this, Buddha's Tooth will be brought forth, and taken to the Abhayagiri-vihāra. Let all and each, whether monks or laics, who wish to amass merit for themselves, make the road smooth and in good condition, grandly adorn the lanes and by-ways, and provide abundant store of flowers and incense to be used as offerings to it."

When this announcement was over, the king then for exhibition from the Jātaka stories arranged on both sides of the road, the five hundred different bodily forms in which the Buddha took his appearance in his previous births. They were made of bright colours.

The Tooth of the Buddha took out in procession in the middle of the road. Everybody offered his presentation to it when it was on the road and then the monks of the Abhayagiri-vihāra received it and they kept it at the hall of the Buddha. The monks and the laity offered their prayers and worshipped it with incense and lighted

2. Ibid, p. 281.
lamps and this type of worship continued for ninety days and there they worshipped it day and night.\(^1\) After this the Tooth Relic was brought to the building of its vihāra. In order to offer prayers to it the doors of the vihāra were opened on Paya days.\(^2\) Huien Tsiang states that "The king, three times a day washes the Tooth of the Buddha with perfumed water, sometimes with powdered perfumes. Whether washing or burning, the whole ceremony is attended with a service of the most precious jewels."\(^3\)

The Daladasirita (History of the Tooth Relic) which was written by king Parakramabāhu IV (1303 - 1333) of Kurunegala describes the annual festival which was celebrated on the occasion of the public exhibition of the relic. Dr. S. Paranavitana mentions this account.\(^4\) He says, "The festival started at a time declared auspicious by the astrologers. The shrine of the Tooth Relic was beautifully decorated and the king along with the ladies of the harem, the courtiers and townsfolk made offerings to the relic for

\(^1\) Walpola Rahula, History of Buddhism in Ceylon, p. 281.
\(^2\) Ibid, p. 281.
seven days. On the afternoon of the seventh day in the presence of the high dignitaries of the Uttaramula fraternity the casked containing the relic was removed from the sanctum by representatives of the noble families of Ganavasi and Kaliṅga, and was placed in a decorated car. Two members of above mentioned families mounted the car and carried the casket in their hands. The chariot drawn by a richly caparisoned elephant was taken through the streets which were especially decorated for the occasion. In front of the chariot marched the members of the Saṅgha who chanted Pirit (Paritta) holding in their hands a string (in Sinhalese Piritnula "thread of protection") tied to the car. Water charmed by the utterance of the sacred texts (paritta) was sprinkled from a silver pitcher over the city as the procession wandered its way through the streets. This duty was performed by a member of the aristocratic family of Doranāvasi. On both sides of the chariot stood persons holding white umbrellas and chaṇḍras. Immediately following the car marched the musicians attached to the Temple of the Tooth followed by those of the Royal
palace. Next followed the officers of the state and army. Having circumambulated the city in the manner aforesaid the procession returned to the temple where in the presence of the chief monks of the Uttaramula fraternity, the temple officials and representatives of the two families of Ganavasi and Kalinga, the casket was opened and the sacred relic exhibited. It was first shown to the assembled monks and then to the king who received it in his hands with marks of the greatest respect and placed it on a dias specially prepared so that it may be seen by the assembled multitude. The ordinary folk had to be satisfied with a glance at the relic from a distance. When the assembled populace had paid their respects to the relic it was once more deposited in the casket which was sealed with three seals including that of the king. To those worshippers who had made any kind of offering; prasada in the shape of sandal paste was given by the priests. While all these rites were gone through paritta was chanted incessantly by five or seven monks."

Hsiuen Tsiang also describes the worship of the Tooth Relic. He states that the king three times a day washed the Tooth of the
Buddha with perfumed water and powdered perfumes.  

The Portuguese attacked Kandy, the capital city, during the Kandyan period and the king and his people took away the sacred relic to a place called Delgamuwa and kept it in a grinding stone. Because they feared that the Portuguese might capture the relic. King Vimala Dharma Sūriya after driving away the Portuguese brought the relic from Delgamuwa and placed it to the New Dalada Māligāwa. 

Even today the festival of the Tooth Relic with the Kandy Perahera takes place annually in Sri Lanka. From the Dalada Māligāwa or the Temple of the Tooth Relic in Kandy the Esala Perahera which is one of the world's most dramatic religious festivals, starts. This Perahera or procession continues for ten nights in July - August and it comes to an end on the day following the night of the full moon. This procession is associated with five temples and they have their own groups of drummers, dancers, torch bearers and elephants. They take part in this procession. In the last night

about eighty or more elephants decorated with velvet, satin, silk, and silver trappings go out in procession. Among them the Maligawa tusker is regarded as the chief and it carries a replica of the casket. In it is kept the Sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha. The Dalada Maligawa Perahara is the procession of the Temple of the Tooth.¹ When the temple chiefs take part in it, they use their traditional white Kandyan court dress and join the procession. In this procession many elephants also take part. The Randali Perahara appears after five such nights. These nights are the four deva Peraharas and the Maligawa Perahara.² The meaning of Randoli is "Queen's Palanquin".³ The people of Sri Lanka believe that the gilded palanquins represent the presence of the consorts of the deities, but another tradition suggests that the queen of the reigning ruler went in them.⁴ It is to be noted here that when king Kirti Sri Rāja Simha (Kitti Siri Rājasimha) ascended the throne, he issued an order that the palanquins should be moved at the end of

2. Ibid, p. 149.
3. Ibid, p. 149.
4. Ibid, p. 149.
the Perahāra. Because he thought that it was not good for women to go along with the Sacred Tooth Relic. The Sinhalese ruler himself took part in the Randoli Perahāra. He with his retinue of the two Adigars (Judicial officers), Dissawas (Chiefs of the districts) and other officials of the court used to walk in the Randoli Perahāra.

This Randoli Perahāra continues for five nights and "the splendour and pagentry of which is witnessed by milling crowds." Here is given an account of the order of the procession: 1. whip-crackers, 2. Flag-bearers, 3. The Peremuna Rāla (the herald) carrying the king's mandate to hold the procession, 4. The Drummer playing Hevisi (marital music), 5. The Gajanāyaka Nilame (Head of the king's elephant stables in olden days) riding on an elephant, 6. the Kāriya Korāle (master of ceremonies), 7. The gorgeously bedecked Māligāwa Tusker carrying the golden casket of the Sacred Tooth Relic (without the Relic), followed at intervals by other elephants in colourful trapping walking in majestic stateliness, 8. Two rows of dancers with drummers in the centre and at the rear comes the Diyawadana

2. Ibid, p. 149.
3. Ibid, p. 149.
Nilame (chief laymen of the temple) attended by lance bearers, parasol bearers and bearers of other heraldic insignia. Finally the Randeli of the Golden Palanquins of the kings of Kandy. After arrival in the Daladā Māligāwa on the last night, the Perahāra joined by the Devāla Perahāras again moves out and reaches the Adāhanamalūwa vihāra (Cremation Temple). Here temporarily the golden casket is kept and the Basnayake Nilames (chief lay Incumbents) of the four devālas guard it. The Cremation Temple is the place where the Queen mother was cremated. In order to pay respect to her they visit to this place. The Devāla Perahāras then come back to their respective devālas and in order to take part in the water-cutting ceremony (Diyakapana Mangalaya) move out again very early in the following morning.

Robert Knox gave an account of the Kandy Perahāra in the seventeenth century. But he did not say anything about the Daladā Perahāra. He referred to the Devāla Perahāras. King Kirthi Sri

2. Ibid, p. 150.
3. Ibid, p. 150.
4. Ibid, p. 150.
Rājasinīgha (Kitti Siri Rājasimha) in his reign in A.D. 1775 played a great role to revive the Dalāda Perahāra. When several Buddhist monks from Thailand came to Sri Lanka at the request of king Kirthi Sri Rājasinīgha (Kitti Siri Rājasimha) to restore the Upasampadā Ordination, they were not happy to see the Devāla Perahāras. Because it was conducted in Hindu fashion and it was held in Kandy which was a place of Buddhism. The king then had a talk with the Buddhist monks and showed his great respect to the Sacred Tooth Relic and he introduced a Perahera of the Dalāda Māligāwa.¹

There are other Perahāras. The Wesak Perahera commemorates the Birth, Enlightenment and Death of the Buddha and it starts in April or May Full Moon or 'Poya'. The Poson Perahera signifies the arrival of Buddhism in Sri Lanka on the Full Moon day in June. The Karthika Perahera commemorates the victory of the god Mahā-Vishnu and his general Kataragama Skanda Kumara over a king of India. It is known as a festival of lights and it takes place between November and December.

In the early morning the Devala Peraharas go to the Katugastola ferry. The Kapuralas and the functionaries of the Devalas then move in decorated boats. After reaching a certain spot they make a magic circle on the waters. Every body then throws out the water of the previous "water-cutting" ceremony. The Kapurala then cuts the water with the sword of the Kataragama God and takes fresh water with the golden Kendiya (Pitcher). The four Kapuralas take the fresh water in procession and they in the four Devalas keep them till the next year. In order to commemorate a victory in battle in which the demons were killed by the Kataragama God with his swords, this ceremony was held.

According to the other theory, "it is symbolic of the parting of the waters of the Palk Straits with the mystic weapon of the king Gajabahu when he crossed over to South India."

2. Ibid, p. 150.
3. Ibid, p. 150.
4. Ibid, p. 150.
5. Ibid, p. 150.
After the performance of the water-cutting ceremony, the Devlila Peraharas then come to the Ganadevi Kovila (Elephant-God Temple or the Temple of God of Wisdom). Here they perform several ceremonies. Then in afternoon the Māligāwa procession join them and they all take round the Dalada Maluwa (Temple Square) three times. Then the Kandy Perahāra comes to an end and the Devāla processions come to their respective Devālas.

After the arrival of the Perahāras to the Devālas, then the chanting of the Pirit takes place and alms are given. Apart from this ceremony, there are also another ceremony which is known as the Walli Yakum ceremony and this ceremony is held at the Mahā-Vishṇu Devāla. They do this in order to drive away evil effects of the evil-eye (āswaha). In this ceremony there is a performance of a dance before the head and trunk coverings of the elephant which carry the golden sword of the deity in the Mahā Vishṇu Devāla Perahāra. Then this ceremony comes to a close.

2. Ibid, p. 151.
5. Ibid, p. 151.
Asala was the lunar month between July and August. It is to be noted here that originally the festivals were closely connected with the devalas in various places of Sri Lanka and Kandy festivals and the Kataragama devala festival were the prominent festivals. Then came the Tooth Relic festival which had a close connection with the devala festival in Kandy and after sometimes all these festivals became known as the Kandy Perahera.

The Asala Festival

In order to celebrate the victory of the Suras (gods) over the asuras (demons), the festival of Kataragama took place. Because this god took a prominent part in it. In order to celebrate it on the identical day of victory in July every year an Asala tree (cassia Fistula) which was in full bloom in Sri Lanka at this time was cut and a ceremony was performed which became known as the Kap ceremony. According to several people, this ceremony took its origin from the Indian festival known as the Asalhi games. Vijaya and his followers introduced this

2. Ibid, p. 147.
3. Ibid, p. 147.
festival into Sri Lanka in the fifth century B.C.¹ This ceremony had close connection with the Asala tree or the Āsalhi gānes and from it became known as the Āsala Perahara.²

It is known from a historical work, king Vankauasika Tissa (A.D. 109 - 112) was the ruler of Anurādhapura. At that time the king of Cola in South India attacked Sri Lanka. The next king of the island was Gajabāhu I (A.D. 112-134). In order to avenge this defeat came with his warriors at Palk Strait at the northern-most sea-board. There he with his sword (probably it was the sword of the god Kataragama) was able to cut the waters which "miraculously parted"³. The king then came to the Cola kingdom with Neela, the giant. They met the king of Cola and the latter was frightened to see the miracles.⁴ The Rajawaliya, a Sinhalese work says, "Taking the giant Neela with him Gajabāhu went and struck the sea with a mace, divided the waters in twain, and going quietly on arrival at the Soli capital struck terror into the king of Soli and seated himself on

² Ibid, p. 147.
³ Ibid, p. 147.
⁴ Ibid, p. 147.
the throne like king Sak, whilst the giant Neela seized the elephants in the city and killed them by striking one against another."  

The king of Cola then returned the 1200 GD Sinhalese captives and he also gave 12000 able bodied colians as prisoners of war.  

Gajabahu also received the sacred bowl relic of the Buddha. The Cola king in the reign of Vattagami Abhaya in 80 B.C. stole it. He also capture the golden anklets of the golden Pattini, sacred to the Hindus.

King Gajabahu then returned to Anuradhapura and he wanted to celebrate his victory "as a thanks giving to the deity who helped him." It was celebrated on a date of the birthday of the Hindu God Vishnu and it coincided with the new moon day of the month of Asala. This festival was held annually in Anuradhapura during the time of Gajabahu. When the seat of power changed with the times the venue of this festival also changed, with other festivals added on, until finally Kandy became the centre of the asala festivals and remains

so up to this day. This happened in the reign of Kīnārā Kīrti Śīri Rājasingha in A.D. 1775 when the festival of the Tooth Relic also came to be associated with the devāla festivals.

The annual Kandy Asala Perahāra (the inclusive name for the Devāla and Tooth Relic Festivals) was inaugurated with what became known as the Kap ceremony. On the day after the new moon in July an Asala tree (Āhala or Indian Laburnam - Cassia Fistula) was cut and a shaft or Kapa was taken out of it. It was then planted within the boundaries of each of the four Devālas as a vow that the celebration of the Perahara would take place. The meaning of Kap was a vow. When any body made a vow, then nobody was able to prevent it. Although the Perahara took its name from the Asala tree, but in the present day a Jak tree (Atocarpur Integrifolia) or the Rukkattana tree (Alstonia scholaris) take its place. When cut a milky sap come out from both these trees and this indicates a sign of prosperity.

The Vishnu devāla was the foremost of the four devālas and the Kapurāla of this devāla took an important role in this ceremony. He sent the devāla tree-cutter to select a tree for this purpose. After selecting a tree he cleaned the place properly, burnt incense and sprinkled water. Then he placed a lamp with nine wicks at the foot of the tree and offered nine varieties of flowers and nine betel leaves to the tree. After this ceremony, he wore a clean white garment and then divided the tree into four parts after cutting it. A drum tattoo from the Natha Devāla announces the ceremonial conveyance of the Kap shafts or stumps to each of the devālas where they are ceremoniously planted at an auspicious time at the allotted place in the devāla premises facing East. For five nights successively, processions are conducted round the consecrated Kapa in each of the four devālas. In this procession flags and flaming torches are carried with the beating of drums, and the Kapurālas - the officiating priest of each devāla - walk in these processions carrying a golden weapon called the "Ran Āyudhaya" said to belong to the presiding deity of the devāla and supposedly used by him in battle.

On the sixth night what is known as the Kumoal Perahara commences and continues for five nights. It is called by that name because the asala tree is placed in a clay structure resembling an ant-hill or humbala, from which comes the word Kumbal. There are two processions each day. One conducted inside the devila and one outside.¹

Siri-Meghavanna, who was the son of Mahasena, introduced a festival in Sri Lanka in honour of Mahinda.² He with the help of his craftsmen made a life-size image of Mahinda of gold and he then brought it to Ambatthala at Mihintale on the seventh day of the month of Vap (Pubbakattika, October-November).³ Because here Mahinda had his first meeting with king Devanampiya-Tissa and he converted him to Buddhism there. In order to celebrate this occasion he organised a great alms-giving. The road was decorated very nicely and on the ninth day of the month there was a procession of monks and laymen and the king himself was its leader. The image of Mahinda was brought in this procession to Setthiyakara which was situated

near the eastern gate of Anurādhapura. This Sotthiyakara vihāra was erected by king Siri-Meghavanna. The image was kept there for three days. On the twelfth day of the month the image was brought in a procession to the Mahāvihāra and it was kept in the courtyard of the Mahā-Bodhi for three months. Then the king near the royal palace built a house for this image and he kept it there permanently. He also made the images of Itthiya and other companions of Mahinda and he placed them in the house of Mahinda. In order to maintain the place and to hold festival annually the king made endowments. He also issued an order that all succeeding kings should hold this festival annually. Dhammakitti, who was the author of the second part of the Mahāvamsa, refers to it. He states that even in his time he saw this festival. In the time of Dhatusena (460-478 A.D.) the Mahinda festival was held and the Dīpavamsa was recited in this festival.

At present this festival is held annually in Sri Lanka.

Fa Hien gives a description of how a king in ancient Sri Lanka offered a monastery to the Samgha. On this occasion the king held a great assembly. "After giving the monks a meal of rice, and presenting his offerings (on the occasion), he selected a pair of first-rate oxen, the horns of which were grandly decorated with gold, silver and the precious substances. A golden plough had been provided, and the king himself turned up a furrow on the four sides of the ground within which the building was to be. He then endowed the community of the monks with the population, fields and houses, writing the grant on plates of metal (to the effect) that from that time onwards, from generation to generation, no one should venture to annul or alter it."

In Sri Lanka there was a ceremony of Buddha-images. It became known as abhiseka or anointing of Buddha-images. Kassapa I did not allow his General Migāra to hold the anointing ceremony of Abhiseka-Buddha(image). He wanted to perform it with pomp and grandeur and tried to do it in a better

way than that of the Sila-Sambuddha(-image). But the General Migara
did it nicely when Moggallāna occupied the throne. It is to be
noted here that in Sri Lanka different Bo-trees had different names,
and different Buddha-images became known by different names. They
were Upāsambha, Abhiseka etc.

**Lamp Offering**

In Sri Lanka there was a festival which was known as Dīpa
pūjā or the offering of lamps. The devotees in order to obtain
merit lighted lamps in regular rows on the grounds of a monastery.

**Āsana-pūjā**

In Sri Lanka there was also a ceremony which was Āsana-pūjā.
On this occasion the altars and the terraces of the Cetiya were
covered with flowers.

A Buddhist visited a monastery and worshipped there. He at
first offered his prayer to the dagaba or Cetiya and worshipped there.

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2. Ibid, p. XXXViii, 66.
4. *Majjhima-nikayatthakatha* (Papancasudani), p. 888; Anguttara-nikaya-
thakatha (Manorathapurani), p. 256; Welpola Rahula, History of
Buddhism in Ceylon, p. 284.
Because the dagaba had the bodily relics of the Buddha. He circumambulated the dagaba three times and always tried to keep the object of worship to his right.\textsuperscript{1} If the dagaba was large in size, he then stopped and worshipped at four places.\textsuperscript{2} If it was small in size, then it was his duty to stop and to worship at eight places.\textsuperscript{3} In ancient days the devotees used to ascend the Vedikā-bhūmi (terraces) and used to offer flowers and worship when they circumambulated the Cetiya or the dagaba.\textsuperscript{4} After doing this, they worshipped the Bodhi.\textsuperscript{5} Then they worshipped the images of the Buddha. They treated a dagaba as a living Buddha.\textsuperscript{6} A monk within sight of a dagaba neither covered both shoulders, nor used sandals, nor held an umbrella nor bathed nor answered calls of nature.\textsuperscript{7}

\begin{itemize}
\item[1.] Walpola Rahula, History of Buddhism in Ceylon, p. 284.
\item[2.] Ibid, p. 284.
\item[3.] Ibid, p. 284.
\item[4.] Ibid, p. 284.
\item[5.] Dīgha-nikāyatthakathā (Sumangalavilāsinī), p. 129; Majjhima-nikāyatthakathā (Paṭanāsudanī), p. 207; Vibhangatthakathā (Sammohavinodanī), p. 245.
\item[6.] Walpola Rahula, History of Buddhism in Ceylon, p. 284.
\item[7.] Dīgha-nikāyatthakathā (Sumangalavilāsinī), p. 757; Vibhangatthakathā (Sammohavinodanī), p. 360.
\end{itemize}
From Fa Hien's account we get an idea about the funeral rites of a monk in the fifth century A.D.¹

"Four or five li east of the vihāra there was reared a great pile of firewood, which might be more than thirty cubits square, and the same in height. Near the top were laid sandal, ... and other kinds of fragrant wood.

Funeral

"On the four sides (of the pile) they made steps by which to ascend it. With clean white-hair cloth, almost like silk, they wrapped (the body) round and round. They made a large carriage frame, in form like our funeral car, but without the dragons and fishes.

"At the time of the cremation, the king and the people, in multitudes from all quarters, collected together, and presented offerings of flowers and incense. When this was finished, the car was lifted on the pile, all over which oil of sweet basil was poured,

and then a light was applied. While the fire was blazing, every one, with reverent heart, pulled off his upper garment, and threw it, with his feather-fan and umbrella, from a distance into the midst of the flames, to assist the burning. When the cremation was over, they collected and preserved the bones, and proceeded to erect a tope. Fa Hien had not arrived in time (to see the distinguished Sramana) alive, and only saw his burial."