CHAPTER- I
The Origin of the Buddhist Saṅgha

1.1. Appearance of the Triple-Gem

The Buddha is one who has become the model of perfection in every aspect, physically, morally, intellectually. He was born as a prince named Siddhattha in 6th Century B.C. He trained himself by fulfilling noble qualifications pre-requisite for Buddha-hood such as selfless service, peerless generosity, perfect purity, loving-kindness, intense intelligence and unparalleled forbearance. The aspirant for Buddha-hood sets himself to arduous task of fulfilling these virtues of perfections with strong will for the sole purpose of discovering the way to get out of the cycle of existence.

He attained supreme- Enlightenment by eradicating all mental impurities and became a Buddha. He himself proclaimed that the Buddha appeared in the world for the welfare and happiness of many, out of compassion for the world, for good, welfare and happiness of gods and human beings and He served the world for 45-years during his lifetime sharing knowledge of the truth, helping men and devas from the sufferings of life and leading them along the Path of liberation.

Two months after His discovery of the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path called Majjhimaṭṭhipadā, i.e. Middle Way, the Buddha started preaching the Dhamma, he had discovered at Deer Park, in Saranath near Varanasi, to a group of five ascetics who had once attained upon him. He gave his first sermon called Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, the discourse
on setting in motion the wheel of the Law. With this turning of the Wheel of Dhamma, he began his long career of Selfless Service for the welfare of all the beings. The path has opened up a life of purity and loving-kindness to all walks of life which led them to the perfect peace, the end of suffering.

A group of five ascetics was the first of the many of hundreds, of thousands of beings who heard the teaching on the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Paths. After hearing the first sermon, the ascetics have seen the truths. Having understood the truth, the five ascetics requested the Buddha for permission to lead the holy life under him and to be admitted into the Order of the Samgha.¹ From that time onwards the community of the Bhikkhus appeared in the world and still exist its original form in Theravada countries such as Myanmar, Sri-Lanka, Thailand etc as the oldest monastic Order in the history.

1.2. Two Distinct Lines of Religious Thought in Ancient India

The early Buddhist scriptures gave us details of the religious conditions and philosophical views of various teachers in ancient India. Basically, there were two distinct lines of religious thought in ancient India during the time of the Buddha. These were the Brahmaṇas who perpetuated the age-old sacrificial systems, and the non-Brahmaṇas who opposed them. The Brahmins were considered from very ancient times as the only custodians of learning and religious rites. They were especially esteemed in society and also enjoying certain privileges, such as grants of land and other gifts. There were certain Brahmins of Aṅga, Magadha and Kosala, generally referred to

¹ Vin. III. P.19. (Mahāvagga Pāli)
as the ‘Brahmanamahāsālas’ who had large tracts of land granted to them by royal charter to be held in perpetuity.²

In their teachings the Brahmins maintained that purity in his life and the next depended solely on the efficacy of the sacrificial element and on correct performance of oblations of the gods.³ The non-Brahmanas maintained that purity came from philosophical views, tradition and virtuous works, and not from sacrifices.⁴

Those who directly opposed the Brahmana and their way of life came to be referred to by the general term Paribbājaka. These Paribbājakas or wandering recluses were of very early origin. They represented a movement which was peculiar to India and its exact origin is obscure.⁵ Dutt traces their origin to a class of partly Aryans people in the North East of India, who were opposing the Brahmanas and were later the forerunners of the philosophical and intellectual seers of Magadha and the area round about.⁶ Whatever was their origin, they were a powerful set of religious mendicants, who wandered from place to place holding discussions on philosophy, ethics and mysticism.

These recluses were widely dispersed throughout India and generally arrived in large cities in the company of traders. Most of cities of the time had provided halls for these recluses and here they gathered and spent most of

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² Sn. P. 115. (Suttanipāta Pālī)
³ Ks. I. Pp. 81-82.
⁴ Sn. Verse. 1078. (Suttanipāta Pālī)
⁵ Bl. P. 10.
⁶ EBM. P. 35.
their time in religious discussion. These men were welcomed in most cities by the masses, since the mendicants provided them with interesting topics of religion and philosophy. Among them were recluses highly esteemed in society for their learning and age. It was a custom in ancient India that any recluses who came to a city had to be provided with the choicest food and appropriate lodgings. This attitude is well brought out in the Mahāsakuludāyi Sutta of Majjhima Nikāya which states:

"Indeed it is profitable for people of Āṅga and Magadha, well gotten that these leaders in religious life, heads of companies, teachers of groups, well known, famous founders of sects, esteemed by many folk, come to Rājagaha for rains residence".

These recluses were provided with the best of food by the masses, kings, ministers, bankers and other wealthy folk, besides providing them with the amenities of life, went to them for religious instruction, spiritual advice and friendly discussion. It was also considered part of royal duty to protect, maintain and honour any person no matter to what social rank he belonged, once he become a recluse.

The most frequent term denoting particular ascetics was Samana-Brahmaṇa, a vague term denoting all recluses in a general sense. It is clear that by the time of the Buddha the term 'Brahmaṇa' had undergone much evolution and did not necessarily denote a Vedic sacrificial priest.

7. DN. II. P.2. (Mahāvagga Pāli)
8. DN. I. P. 117. (Silakkhandhavagga Pāli)
9. MN. II. P. 193. (Majjhimaponnāsa Pāli)
10. DN. I. P. 55. (Silakkhandhavagga Pāli)
11. Ibid.
In its idealistic sense 'Brahmaṇa' meant any person of virtue and noble conduct. The attributes necessary for a person to become a Brahmaṇa are referred to in the Buddhist suttas as 'Brahmaṇa karaṇa dhamma' \(^{12}\) and were on the same footing as the Samāna karaṇa dhamma, the qualities making a good recluse. \(^{13}\) In the Dhammapada, we find a virtuous person identified as Brahmaṇa, Samāna and Bhikkhu. \(^{14}\) The term Brahmaṇa was used by the Buddha to designate the ideal one, the Arahat (khiṇasavaṁ arahantain tamaham brumi brahmaṇa). \(^{15}\) The Jātakas refer to the Arahat as the Pure Brahmaṇa (visuddhabrahmaṇa). A recluse unworthy of the Buddhist Samgha was termed as a person in whom there are no qualities of Samāna or Brahmaṇa.

In a practical sense the Brahmaṇa of this period was quite different from the Brahmaṇa of the Vedic Age. As a result of the evolution of the Four Varnasrama Dharms in the Post-Vedic period, the Brahmaṇa adopted a less severe attitude to sacrifice. In the third stage of the Asramadharmas the practice of the asceticism and in the fourth stage the life of a hermit were enjoined on the Brahmaṇas. The Gautama Sutra, while elaborating the Asramadharmas, specify that the Brahmaṇa should tend the sacrificial fire, worship gods and men. Other forms of conduct prescribed in these sutras regarding food, clothing and shelter resembled those of the Paribbājakas of age. This idea is manifested in certain Buddhist works where the contemporary Brahmaṇas are differentiated from the Vedic Brahmaṇas.

\(^{12}\) MN. I. P. 212. (Mūlapāṇīsa Pāli)
\(^{13}\) Ibid.
\(^{14}\) Dh. Verse. 392. (Dhammapada Pāli)
\(^{15}\) Dh. Verse. 420.
In ancient India, there were two distinct lines of religious thought. They are *Brahmaṇa* and *non-brahmaṇa*. The Buddhist *Sāṅgha* in its origin was no different from the many other sects forming the heterogeneous religious group of ancient India. Those who joined the Order gave up their former name and caste and came to be known as the *Sakyaputta Samāna*, disciples of the *Sakya* Sage.

### 1.3. The Early Buddhist Ideal of the Monastic Life

In ancient India, the ideal of the monastic life which was common to all recluses was the attainment of purity or final release from the recurrent cycle of existence. The *Brahmaṇas* believed that this release could be achieved by sacrifice. It is further believed that purity, *Suddhi*, and emancipation, *Vimutti* depended on both sacrifice and self-mortification. The *Niganthas*, on the other hand, believed the effects of Karma, action which determined existence was overcome by self-mortification and practicing penances in the severe form.

The Buddha himself, in his early stage of recluse life, followed a path of extreme self-mortification by undertaking severe penances but subsequently realized their inefficiency since they did not aid his overcoming suffering or the cycle of existence.\(^{16}\) The goal of the Buddhist ideal of monastic life is the accent falls on the release from suffering, *dukkha* and the attainment of *Nibbāna*, an end of suffering. This is clear from the recurring statement in text ascribed to the Buddha as follow:

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\(^{16}\) MN. I. Pp. 77,78. *(Mulapanṇasa Pāli)*
"Come, O monk, live the life of 'Brahmacariya' in order that you may make an end of suffering, Ehi bhikkhu bhagavā avoca dhammo cara brahmacariyam sammā dukkhassa antakiriyāyati".¹⁷

The term 'Brahmacariya' is used in various discourses of the Pāli Literature. It, in fact, refers to the early Buddhist ideal of the monastic life and it is the main aspect of the Buddha's teaching called 'Sāsana'. The Buddha, who discovered the path to enlightenment after a successful process of trial and elimination, immediately proclaimed a new way of religious life which he recommends of his followers under the name of this 'Brahmacariya'¹⁸ as mentioned above.

It is further claimed that the every Arahat, who possesses the perfect 'Brahmacariya', he would not be reborn again and that he has perfected the life of 'Brahmacariya', khīnā jāti vusitam brahmacariyam, while declaring the fact of his enlightenment. It is repeatedly recorded in early canonical texts and it also shows the essential connection between the practice of 'Brahmacariya' and the attainment of the Buddhist goal of terminating empirical existence. He is also aware of the termination of his existence in birth circle which he has accomplished, naparam iṭṭhayati pajānāti.¹⁹

The life of 'Brahmacariya' admits of no compromises and it is, therefore, described as a mode of life that is perfect and wholly pure,

¹⁷ Vī. III. P. 17. (Mohāvagga Pāli)
¹⁸ DN. I. P. 80. (Silakkhandhavagga Pāli). MN. I. P. 27. (Mūlapannāsa Pāli)
¹⁹ DN. I. P. 80.
Ekantaparipunnam Ekantaparisuddham.\textsuperscript{20} Thus the commentary said, in this regard, that there should be no erring even for a single day.\textsuperscript{21}

‘Brahmacariya’ or higher religious life which is often identified with the life of ‘Pabbajja’ held out in the early Buddhism as the one certain way for the effective elimination of these ill existences. In this context, \textit{Samyutta Nikāya} stated that the disciples of the Buddha, once being asked by the followers of other religious schools as to purpose of Buddhist monastic life, answered that it aims at the termination of suffering, \textit{dukkha}.\textsuperscript{22} This reply of the disciples is heartily endorsed by the Master who maintains that it is the correct interpretation of his teaching. He is himself seen stating the same. The following items are also added as motives for the practice of ‘Brahmacariya’:

1. Elimination of lust, \textit{rāgavirāgattam},
2. Removal of fetters of existence, \textit{samyojanapahānattam},
3. Destruction of predispositions, \textit{anusayasamugghatattam},
4. Extinction of defilements, \textit{āsavanam khayattam},
5. Realization of the fruits of release through wisdom, \textit{vijjavimuttiphalasacchikiriyattam},
6. Realization of knowledge and insight, \textit{ñānadassanattam} and
7. complete liberation from the whirl of existence, \textit{anupada parinibbānattam}.

\textsuperscript{20} MN. I. P. 237. (\textit{Mūlapaṇṇāsa Pāli})
\textsuperscript{21} MN.A. II. P. 110. (\textit{Mūlapaṇṇāsa Aṭṭhakathā})
\textsuperscript{22} SN. I. P. 136. (\textit{Sagāthāvagga Pāli})
‘Brahmacariya’ is therefore the Buddhist way to perfection which is referred to as the attainment of Nibbāna. The Mahākassapa Sutta of Samyutta Nikāya stated that the one concern of ‘Brahmacariya’ is the attainment of that poise and freedom of the mind which is Nibbāna. The Cūḷavedalla Sutta of Majjhima Nikāya explains the purpose of ‘Brahmacariya’ as the attainment of Nibbāna. The Samyutta Nikāya mentions further how the life of ‘Brahmacariya’ leads to the cessation of dukkha. Though the practice of ‘Brahmacariya’, it says, rebirth is ended and thereby one is freed of all consequent ills. The above passage in the Samyutta Nikāya strives hard to establish, in no uncertain term, the essential connection between the practice of ‘Brahmacariya’ and the attainment of Buddhist goal of terminating existence. Here one interesting thing is that both Buddhism and Brahmanism accept the live of ‘Brahmacariya’.

The Bodhisatta, the Buddha-to-be, himself refers to the religious life he opted to live under the guidance of teachers, Ālāra Kālāma and Udaka Rāmaputta as ‘Brahmacariya’ in the Majjhima Nikāya. In the Suttanipāta of Khuddaka Nikāya it is recorded that the Orthodox Brahmins of old practice practiced the life of ‘Brahmacariya’ for forty eight years stating the following quotation.

“Āṭṭhacattarisaṁ vassāni komārabrahmacariyāṁ carimsu te vijjacaraṇapariyettham acarum brahmaṇa pure”.
The *Anguttara Nikāya* too expresses a similar idea. This distinction between the ‘Brahmacariya’ life of the Buddhist disciple and that of the Brahmin is clearly maintained by an independent observer in the person of King Pasenadi Kosala in the *Dhammacetiya Sutta* of *Majjhima Nikāya*.

The *Mahāvagga* of *Vinaya Pitaka* refers to the religious life of Jatila, hermits, who were contemporaries of the Buddha as ‘Brahmacariya’. It is said in the discourse that after the Buddha converted the Jatila chief, Uruvela Kassapa, people were still in doubt as to who really was converted, the Buddha or Uluvela Kassapa. So they questioned, “Has Sāmaṇa Gotama taken Brahmacariya up the life of under Kassapa or vice versa?” Besides, it is also said that Sāriputta and Maggallāna, prior to their conversion to Buddhism, lived the life of Brahmacariya of the Paribbājakas under the Paribbājaka chief Sañjaya.

In the *Assalayana Sutta*, it is associated with the seven Brahmin Sages of yore. The *Sandaka Sutta* mentioned eight such courses, which when judged by the criteria of the Buddhists, fall below standard. Hence they are termed abrahmacariyāvāsa, no real abode of Brahmacariya or anassasikabrahmacariya, rewardless life of Brahmacariya. They seem to include the Materialists under the doctrine associated with Ajita Kesakambala and the Ājivaka under the doctrines of Purāṇa Kassapa,
Makkhali Gosāla and Pakudha Kaccayana. None of these teachers, however, are referred to by name in the Sutta.33

In the Mahāsihanāda Sutta of Dīgha Nikāya the Buddha tells the Venerable Sāriputta of another form of Brahmacariya which he himself is said to have practiced. It also, no doubt, stands outside the pale of Buddhism. It was a form of serve asceticism characterized by fourfold austeritie such as abstemious partaking of food, seeking the solitude of forest retreats, etc.34

The Buddha is, in the Samyutta Nikāya, giving a new interpretation which accords with his teaching to the Brahmanic concept of Brahma-reaching. He tells the Brahmins that it is essentially based on moral achievements like honesty, saccam, self-restraint, samyamo and holy life, Brahmacariyam.35

In Buddhism these concepts of becoming Brahma, Brahmabhūta and attaining Brahma, Brahmapatti had no associations of a higher power. As far as the Buddha was concerned these terms implied only the attainment of the goal, the perfection of the religious life which he propounded. It is the enlightenment which leads to perfect liberation from the circle of samsāra getting rid of all defilements of human life, which hence to be called asavānam khaya.

The Buddha while he was once resting in a forest glade was asked by Bhāradvājagotta Brahmaṇa whether he was three practicing austerities,
tapas in order to reach Brahma, *Brahmapattiya* and to gain companionship with him, *lokadipatisahavyatam akankhamano*.\(^{36}\)

The Buddha in his reply to the Brahmin not only points out that as Buddha he is supremely enlightened and possesses a clarified vision into the nature of all things but also indicates the way whereby he attained to that state. This shows that the talk of *Brahmaṇa*-reaching in the way in which the Brahmans understood it had no relevance to the Buddha or to the religious life he advocated. What the Buddha valued most was his victory in the battle against craving and desire which are rooted in ignorance. Freed from craving and desire, and seeing things in their true perspective, the Buddha is wise and enlightened. He is happy and for him there are no further attainments beyond this.\(^{37}\)

The term *Brahmaṇa*, however, does appear in the Buddhism in such contexts as *Brahmacariya*, *Brahmabhūta* and *Brahmapatti*. Here the term connotes only the idea of noble, worthy and supreme. It is seen this same phenomenon of adapting terms with already established connotations that we find in the use of the word ‘*Brahmaṇa*’ with reference to the worthy Buddhist disciple.

During the days of the Buddha the Brahmans as a group had attained an unassailable position in society and the Buddha too seems to have conceded this up to a point. He ascribed to them as follow:

\(^{36}\) MN. II. P. 168. (Majjhimanana Pāli)

\(^{37}\) SN. I. P. 182. (Sagāthāvagga Pāli)
“They considered the life of Brahmacariya, morality, honesty, austerity, benevolence, compassion and tolerance as great virtues, Brahmacariyañca sīlañca ajjāvaṁ maddavaṁ tapaṁ soraccam avihiṁsañca khantiñcapi avaṇṇayum.”38

The Buddha accepted the concept of the ideal Brahmin and redefined the qualifications for the title of Brahmano with the stress on ethics and morality. He challenged the accepted value attached to birth as the exclusive qualification for Brahminship, Na jaccā brahmano hoti na jaccā hoti brahmano, kammunā brahmano hoti kammunā hoti brahmano.39

According to Buddhist text, it is to this great Brahma that the Brahmins of the day addressed their prayers and sacrifices, dūre ito Brahmano brahmañaloka yassahetum pagganhasi niccam.40 It is a very ritualistic Brahmanism that is portrayed here and it is centered on the cult of a personal Brahma. The Brahmins themselves are seen profession it to do so.41

A passage from the Dhanañjanī Sutta marks it further clear that this was the manner in which the Buddhist explained the position of the Brahmins of the day who aspired to reach the world of Brahma, Brahmalokadimutta.42 Here the Buddha questioned the venerable Sāriputta why he aided Dhanañjanī to be born in the Brahma-world which according to the religious considerations of the Buddhists was an inferior goal. But in Tevijja Sutta, the Buddha himself being questioned by the Brahmin pupils of Pokkharasāti, is seen

38 Sn. Verse. 292. (Suttanipāta Pāli)
39 Ibid. Verse. 650.
40 SN. I. P. 142. (Sagāthāvagga Pāli)
41 DN. I. P. 236. (Silakkhandhavagga Pāli)
42 SN. I. P. 83. (Sagāthāvagga Pāli)
redefining the path to the world of the Brahma and the way to Brahma-union.43 Both these instances show that the birth in the world of Brahma as a reward for practice of the religious life is conceded. However, it is no recognized as the final end.

On the other hand, the Buddha asks Sāriputta why he set Dhanañjani in the world of Brahma when something further could have been achieved, Sati uttaram karaniye.44 Brahma himself is declared to be subject to change, mahā brahmaṇo pi atteva aṇṇatattam atthi viparīṇāmo.45 Consequently a high premium is never set on life in the Brahma-world for the Buddhists always regard it as a relatively inferior position in relation to Nibbāna, hīne brahmaloke.46

The life of Brahmacariya is undertaken in Buddhism will be shown below for the purpose of eliminating lust (rāga), hatred (dosa) and delusion (moha) by a general process of development. Their elimination is given as the goal of 'Brahmacariya'. The Buddhists are thus guided through 'Brahmacariya' towards this end.

Buddhaghosa, the commentator of Buddhist scriptures, tries to indicate the connotation of the term 'Brahmacariya' in different circle at different times. In his work, the commentary on Dīgha Nikāya, he says this term 'Brahmacariya' is here used in the following sense:

(1) Charity = Dāna,

43 DN. I. P. 249. (Silakkhandhavagga Pāli)
44 MN. II. P. 405. (Majjhimaṇṇaśa Pāli)
45 AN. V. P. 59. (Anguttara Nikāya)
46 MN. II. P. 405. (Majjhimaṇṇaśa Pāli)
(2) Rendering service = *Veyyāvacca,*
(3) Observance of the five precepts = *Pañcasikkhāpadasīla,*
(4) Practice of *Brahmavihāras* = *Appamañña,*
(5) Celibacy = *Methunavirati,*
(6) Chastity = *Sadarasantosa,*
(7) Striving = *Viriya,*
(8) Observance of the day of the fast = *Uposathaṅga,*
(9) The noble path = *Ariyamagga* and
(10) The complete Buddhist way of life = *Sāsana.*

There is evidence to show that at least a few of these forms of 'Brahmacariya' were not at all Buddhist in outlook. Illustrating the use of the term 'Brahmacariya' in the sense of striving (viriya), Buddhaghosa refers to the *Lomahamsana Sutta* of Ādīgha Nikāya which is the same as the *Mahāsihanāda Sutta.* There the Buddha describes the fourfold austerity which he had practiced.

The term is always defined by *Buddhaghosa,* in this context, giving the word Brahma the meaning of the highest and perfect. Buddhism too seems to use the term 'Brahma' to mean the highest and perfect but apparently with none of the theological and metaphysical association. The Buddha, however, was aware of the earlier connotation of the term. This becomes quite evident in the new explanations which the Buddha offers to the exponents of these ideas.

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47. DN.A. I. P. 161. (Silakkhandhavagga Atthakathā)
The idea of birth in the Brahma-world is closely bound up with the practice and development of the four virtues: loving-kindness (metta), compassion (karuṇā), joyfulness (muditā) and equanimity (upekkhā) which in Buddhism has come to be known as the four Brahmavihāra. In the Saṅgiti Sutta refers to them as Catasso appamaññāyo, the fourfold boundlessness. In the Danañjani Sutta the venerable Sāriputta recommended to the Brahmin Danañjani as the way to reach to Brahma-world.

Under the Brahmavihāras, the virtues developed are in no way incompatible with the spiritual progress of a Buddhist. They are in fact associated with the Buddha too. In the Jīvaka Sutta, Jīvaka tells the Buddha about these four virtues which are believed to be characteristics of Brahma and adds that he feels that the Buddha also possesses them. The Buddha admits that he possesses them but not as the result of a direct process of practice.

The practice of these four virtues is also called 'appamaṇa cetovimutti' and this is esteemed high in so far as it is stable and has led in that state of mental perfection to the elimination of rāga, dosa and moha. The Atthakanāgarā Sutta points out that a disciple, realizing the limitations of the mental purge resulting from the practice of these virtues under the Brahmavihāras, would be propelled thereby to strive for further attainment.

Thus it becomes abundantly clear that in spite of the allusions to their transcendent character the Brahmavihāras have only a limited significant in
Buddhism in relation to the early Buddhist ideal of monastic life of *Brahmacariya*.

1.4. The Origin of the Buddhist *Samgha*

In early Buddhist scriptures it is mentioned that Magadha was the center of religious life and speculation in ancient India and it was an area less favored by Orthodox Brahmins than North West of India. Those who directly opposed the Brahmins and their way of life came to be referred to by the general term *Paribbājaka*, wandering recluses. The *Paribbājakas*, wandering recluses were of the very early origin in the study of the origin of the Buddhist *Samgha*. They represented a movement which was peculiar to India and its exact origin is obscure.\(^{51}\)

The terminology used in ancient texts to designate these wandering recluses is varied and often conflicting. As there were many common traits in the lives of these recluses such as begging, renunciation, celibacy and wandering, titles used to designate these features in recluse life came to be used when referring to individual recluses and wanderings.\(^{52}\)

Thus the term *Bhikkhu, Pabbajita, Paribbājaka* and *Brahmacāri* were used indiscriminately when referring to the recluses of this age. the most frequent term denoting particular ascetics was *Samaṇabrahmaṇa*. In fact it is a vague to differentiate between them and no particular group by connotation fell

\(^{51}\) BI. P. 10
\(^{52}\) PWB. P. 98
into one category since the *Brahmanas*, Jains and Buddhists alike used either of these terms to identify their followers.\(^5^3\)

In early period there were some recluses who practiced asceticism in its rigorous form and others who were less strict. Some had adopted old customs and manners regarding both dress and food. One characteristic feature of all the recluses was their nomadic life and celibacy. They were men who had forsaken all wealth and wandered from place to place simply clad and bagging their food. As time went on, except during the rain, they roamed about the country seeking the conversation with others of similar views and living a life of aloofness. The only bond that knit them together was a common allegiance to a particular leader and his teaching. Many students from various part of the country approached these teachers to study their religious tenets and practice the religious life under them.\(^5^4\)

In the general sense the religious sects are referred to in Buddhist works as *Gaṇas*, groups and their leader as *Gaṇācariyas*. There was no particular system in joining these groups and it was customary, whenever one was unsatisfied with the teachings of the leaders, to leave that Order and join another group. It is found that the Buddha himself at first studies under two prominent sages of the time, Āḷāra Kālāma and Udaka Rāmaputta, then leaving them as he was not convinced by their teachings. Sāriputta and Moggallāna, two prominent disciples of the Buddha, were first students under Saṁjaya, and only later joined the Buddha's group. In certain cases where disciples became proficient in the teachings of the leader, they offered

\(^5^3\) PWB. P. 98
\(^5^4\) Ibid. P. 100
the opportunity of instructing the younger students or sharing with the leader the duty of instructing of the followers.\textsuperscript{55}

The \textit{Vinaya Mahāvagga} gives us a fair indication of how recluses went in search of religious truths. It relates the episode of Sāriputta's first meeting with a disciple of \textit{Gotama}. Sāriputta asks, “On account of whom, your reverence, have you gone forth, who is your teacher, and whose \textit{Dhamma} do you profess?” \textit{Kimsi tvam āvuso uddissa pabbajjito, ko vā te satthā, kassa vā tvam dhammam rocesi.}\textsuperscript{56} Most of religious leaders of the age, including \textit{Gotama}, were highly esteemed by the masses, great leaders of groups, well advised in age, experienced long ordained and considered excellent by the masses.\textsuperscript{57}

\textit{Gotama}, the Buddha, is referred to with the same esteem in comparison with these leaders but as young in age and possessing mighty power. He has more amenable to the masses, unlike other recluses who did not tolerate them and were not accessible.\textsuperscript{58} The prestige and popularity of these leaders depended largely on their ability to defend their own faiths and refute the charges of the opposing factions both in debate and in argument. Thus, most of the recluses were clever and hair splitters in argument who went about breaking into piece by their wisdom the speculation of their adversaries.\textsuperscript{59}

With the increase in the numbers of his followers the Buddha's group gradually evolved into one of the prominent sects of the time. The Buddhist

\textsuperscript{55} MN. I. P. 167. (\textit{Mūlapannāsa Pāli})
\textsuperscript{56} Vin. III. P. 51. (\textit{Mahāvagga Pāli})
\textsuperscript{57} Sn. Verse. 91. (\textit{Suttaṅgītā Pāli})
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid. Verse. 94.
\textsuperscript{59} DN. II. P. 162. (\textit{Mahāvagga Pāli})
Samgha, in its origin, was no different from the many other sects forming the heterogeneous religious groups of ancient India. This sect had Gotama of Sakya clan as its leader. Those who joined his group gave up their former name and caste and came to be known as the Sakyaputta Samana, literally meaning the sons of or disciples of the Sakya Sage. This term differentiated them from other recluses of the time. To the masses they were known as Samana, Samana samanoti vo jana sañjanati. The disciples are considered the Buddha as their teacher, preceptor and leader who dispelled their doubts and showed them the path of release, tvam no sattā anuttaro chideva no vicikicca. They lived in complete dependence on the Buddha as their guide and protector and as the profounder of the religious system they followed.

It was the duty of the Buddha as the leader of the sect to travel far and wide and instruct his disciples on the teaching and ethics, Rattharatthatān vicarissam sāvake vinayam puthu. He was also keen to see that his disciples were well acquainted with his Dhamma to enable them to counteract the views of opposing religious recluses, his effort to give his disciples a good grounding in the principles of his system is related in Mahārinibbā Sutta where he speaks of his followers as follows:

“All well acquainted with his teachings and as having become accomplished in the Dhamma, bahussutā visāradā dhammānudhammā patipānanā”.

60 MN. I. P. 271. (Mūlapaṇḍa Pāli)
61 Sn. Verse. 346. (Suttaniṇī Pāli)
63 DN. II. P. 87. (Mahāvagga Pāli)
The general habits and means of livelihood of the early wandering recluses are brought out in certain sections of the *Suttanipāta* and the *Theragāthā* of *Khuddaka Nikāya*. Pursuing an ideal in life leading to the emancipation of mind through wisdom, the outward appearance or habits did not matter as much as the inner developments of the heart. The common terms used to designate a recluse in the early stage are *araṇāka*, resort to the forest, *pindapātika*, lives on begging food and *tīcīvarika*, wears the triple robes.

According to *araṇāka*, the forest dwelling and its advantages are stressed throughout the scriptures. Renunciation in Buddhism was for the sake of achieving mental release. It could best be realized by living aloof, *ekovīpakāṭho*, from the society and finding peace in solitude. The forest of India provided this solitude for mental release. The life of solitude in the forests enable a recluse to practice his virtues and thereby, through acquiring concentration to achieve wisdom. All new recluses are requested to take heed of the forest wilderness, the outland bed and seat, to enter into and be steadfast in seclusion.

It is clear that, from the evidence, the life of the Buddhist Order in the primitive stage of recluseship was regulated mainly by simplicity in dress, food and shelter. As the sect advanced, from a wandering group to a fully established Order, through most of these forms of life were retained, some came to be ignored and further regulations came to be added to these basic

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64. MN. I. P. 198. (*Mūlapaṭṭhāna Pāli*)
65. Ibid. P. 102.
66. AN. IV. P. 142. (*Anīkkuttara Nikāya*)
67. AN. III. P. 135.
68. Ibid. P. 137.
necessities of life. The above mentioned are the origin and positions of the early Buddhist *Samgha*.

1.4.1. The establishment of the Buddhist order

Buddhism first arose as a movement of renouncers. In common with a number of other such movements at the time, it was opposed to Brahmanism, which placed highest value on lay life and its rituals; and so the core of this new movement consisted of monks and nuns. But it was not long before lay people, both men and women, gather around them as their supporters and followers. One can therefore distinguish two kinds of disciples of the Buddha: monks and nuns, and lay people.\(^69\)

The word *samgha*, which literally means a crowd or gathering, came to refer specifically to the Community of monks and nuns in the terminology of *Theravāda* monasticism. In *Pāli* texts the term *samgha* does not include lay-followers; these are included in the expression *Cattāro Parisa*, the fourfold assembly: *Bhikkhu* (monks), *Bhikkhuni* (nuns) *Upasaka* and *Upāsika* means male and female lay-followers. The Monastic Community is made up of two groups: *Bhikkhusamgha*, the Order of monks and *Bhikkhunisaṃgha*, the Order of nuns; together they are called *Ubhatosamgha*, the twofold community.\(^70\)

\(^69\) BML. P. 1
\(^70\) MN. III. P. 255. (*Uparipaṇṇāsa Pāli*)
1.4.1.1 The establishment of the Order of monks

According to the Pāli canon, the monastic community was first established in the Deer Park near Varanasi, after the first discourse of the Buddha to five ascetics, Kondanna, Vappa, Bhaddiya, Mahanama and Assaji. They were listening to what the Buddha taught and at first discourse Kondañña became the stream-enterer after the sermon. Then they penetrated the Dhamma one by one and finally they altogether entered the noble path by getting the spiritually fulfillment. In fact at the end of the Buddha's first discourse Kondañña was ordained as Ehi bhikkhu, come O monk. He is the first Buddhist monk in the history of Buddhism. Few days later, after the five ascetics had become monks, a wealthy young man named Yasa, some of his friends and other groups of young men became disciples of the Buddha. By this way, the Buddha established the order of monks (Bhikkhusamgha).

1.4.1.2 The establishment of the Order of nuns

Apart from the Order of monks, according to the evidence of the Pāli texts, the admission of women into the life of Pabbajja in Buddhism does not seen to have been effected with as much ease as one would expect.

Five years, after he attained enlightenment the Buddha is said to have received a deputation in the Nigyodha Park from a large company of women, who arrived led by the Mahāpajapati Gotami, his aunt and foster-mother,

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71. Vin. III. Pp. 17-18. (Mahāvagga Pāli)
72. Ibid. P. 29.
73. Vin. IV. Pp. 442-443. (Cūlavagga Pāli)
now widowed. All of them dressed in the yellow robes, travel-stained, their feet swollen.

They two from one cause or another desired to test the fruits of an ascetic's life and for this end they wished to leave the world and came to plead for the granting of this privilege. Three times they asked for admission into the Order and always met the same reply as follow;

"Enough O Gotami, let it please thee that women should be allowed to do so." 74

This refusal saddened Mahāpajapati Gotami and she went away weeping. The Buddha then went to Vesāli and Mahāpajapati Gotami and her followers depressed but not yet daunted. They cut off their hair, adopting thereby the symbol of the life of renunciation and put on the saffron colored robes and followed her, arriving bitterly and pitifully travel-stained.

They were met by the gentle Ānanda who is attendant of the Buddha. He also asked the Buddha three times, saying; "It was well, Lord, if women were to have permission granted to them to do as she desires." But it was of no avail and the Buddha remained adamant. Ānanda lighted on a fresh argument; appealing to the Buddha's sense of justice and truth, he got him to admit that women were as capable as men as leading a contemplative life 75 and of treading on the paths of Arahtaship. It was the tremendous admission but the Buddha never hinted that woman had not the same chance as man or

74 Vin. IV. P. 443.  (Cūlavagga Pāli)
75 Ibid.
was in any way unfitted by her nature to attain Nibbāna. The way was
salvation not close to women.

The Samyutta Nikāya and Majjhima Nikāya altogether stated as follows:

“And be it woman, be it man for whom such chariot doth wait, by that
same car into Nibbāna’s presence shall they come.”

The Buddha concedes to Ānanda that women, having taken to the life of
Pabbajja in Buddhism are capable of attaining the higher fruits of the
religious life as far as Arahatship, bhābbha Ānanda mātugāmo
tathagatapavedite dhammavinaye āgārasmā anāgāriyam pabbajitvā
sotāpattiphalam pi sakādāgāmiphalam pi anāgāmiphalam pi
arahattaphalam pi sacchikātuṇti.

The Buddha therefore acceded to Ānanda’s proposition and opened the order
to women, on condition that Mahāpajapati Gotami should taken upon
herself the eight chief rules, atthagarudhamma, to be reckoned as her
initiation. She was the first nun in the history of Buddhism and five
hundred women were also permitted as nuns. By this way, the Buddha
established the Order of nuns (Bhikkhuṇī).

1.4.1.3. Various reasons of joining the Buddhist Order

A few days later, after five ascetics had become monks, a wealthy young
man named Yasa and some of his friends joined the new religious

76 SN. I. Pp. 5-6. (Sagāthāvagga Pāli). MN. I. P. 169. (Mūlakaṭṭṭha Pāli)
77 Vin. IV. Pp. 443-444. (Cūḷavagga Pāli)
78 Ibid. P. 444.
movement; they were soon followed by another group of young men, equally eager to become disciples of the Buddha. Thus by the end of the first year, the Community numbered several hundred members. Many of them, like the five ascetics, had previously been members of another religious group, but left it in order to become disciples of the Buddha. Great ascetic leaders such as Uruvela Kassapa, Gaya Kassapa, and Nādi Kasspa, along with their disciples, abandoned their practice of fire sacrifice to join the young movement. Sāriputta and Moggallāna, who were known as Upatissa and Kolita practiced under the guidance of Sañjaya; later they became the two greatest disciples of the Buddha.

All these people were renouncers, members of one or another sect or religious group; so they had already renounced lay life before becoming disciples of the Buddha. This means that Buddhism had no influence on their original renunciation. The majority of the Buddha’s disciples of in these early days, however, abandoned lay life in order to enter the Community. Of the sixty disciples gather around the Buddha in the first six months, fifty five were young laymen who moved directly to religious life in the Community. The Buddha’s teaching had therefore directly motivated their renunciation.

At first, many of those who renounced lay life to join the Community were young. Indeed, Buddhist monasticism encouraged people to renounce family life as early as possible. In this new religion called Buddhism, the first stage of the monastic life was regarded as a period of training. This is why young

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81. Ibid. P. 54.
people were always more welcome than older ones: when someone was old and feeble, he or she did not have the same strength to devote to renunciation and to the practice of the virtues. A passage from the Canon comments, “It is difficult to find these five important qualities in people who have renounced lay life in old age; they are not good at speaking, learning, understanding, preaching and remembering.  

Many of the Buddha’s disciples were young people. To join him, most of them had abandoned wealth, a life of luxury and even a young wife. Young men needed their parent’s permission to renounce lay life, even if they were married; but parents were not always happy to let them go. When Raṭṭhapāla asked his parents for permission to join the Community, they refused, saying “why do you want to become a monk? Your hair is still black and you are still young”. Raṭṭhapāla went without food and drink until he obtained permission. Once it was given, he renounced his home and received from the Community both the minor, Pabbajja and the major, Upasampada ordinations. One day his father saw him walking in the street and said sadly to his wife.

“Look, our only son, our beloved son! He has given up every thing and taken on the practice of these shaven headed priest lings.” Such words reflect the sadness and disapproval of parents who had lost their son and daughter to the new religion.

Among the Buddha’s disciples there were many who had renounced lay life because they were attracted to his doctrine. After they heard him preach,
they wanted to lead the religious life that the Master had showed them, and so renounced family life. The *Mahāvagga* tells the story of some rich young men who were used to the good life. One day these young men, about thirty in all, had gone for a picnic in the forest with their wives. One of them, who had no wife, had brought along a courtesan. When everyone was merry, she took some valuables, jewels and other things, and stole away. The young men went to look for her and chanced upon the Buddha sitting at the foot of a tree. He said “Tell me, young men, what is better for you, to look for this woman or to look for yourselves?” the result of this brief discussion was that the young men were persuaded to renounce lay life and enter the Community. These people were persuaded that the Buddha’s doctrine was the only path to deliverance or salvations, and simply reoriented their lives accordingly and renounced everything else.

The canonical texts tell us that many people renounced lay life because of the Buddha’s personality. We might describe this as a form of hero worship; that is, admiration for an inspiring character. In all religions and in all societies there are people who follow the example of an influential leader. According to the canonical texts, the Buddha had a very powerful personality. He was graceful, gentle, always in good spirits, full of energy and ever smiling. He was “the blessed one, he was who brings and spreads the joy, whose senses are tranquil and whose mind is at peace, the supreme self-conqueror, he who lives in peace, the hero who has tamed himself, who keeps watch over himself and keeps a tight rein on his senses.”

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56. DN. I. P. 44. (*Cūḍāmāṇīvagga Pāli*)
disciples of Uruvela Kassapa said, “Truly he is handsome, this Great Ascetic”, an opinion shared by the people of Rājagaha.

Vakkali, learned Brahmin, was so moved by the Buddha’s charm that he followed him in the street for a long time, and finally renounced lay life to become a disciple of this attractive Buddha. Even after he becomes a monk, he could not stop looking at the Buddha, who advised him on the contrary to concentrate on his doctrine rather than on his body. It is perhaps for this very reason that some non-Buddhist ascetics did not want their followers to visit the Buddha.

When the Buddha stayed in Kapilavatthu, a great many young men from the Skyan families wanted to become monks because they were attracted by his personality. Prince Nanda, Gotama’s cousin, renounced his home, not because he was attracted by the religious life or by the doctrine, but because of the respect which the Buddha inspired in him. The anecdote of Pukkusāti shows that some people renounced lay life in the Buddha’s name even without ever having seen or heard him, but on the strength of what they had heard about him, of his reputation.

While some people were directly influenced by the personality of the Buddha, others were influence by the example of friends or parents. Imitation is a powerful factor, in any society and in regard to all social contexts, particularly in the field of religion. In Buddhist monasticism, some

87. Vin. III. P. 47. (Mahāvagga Pāli)
88. Ibid. P. 195
89. Tha.A. II. P. 58. (Theri Aṭṭhakathā). Dh.A. II. P. 380. (Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā)
90. Dh.A. I. P. 75. Apd.A. I. P. 105 (Apādāna Aṭṭhakathā)
91. MN.A. II. P. 392. (Majjhima-pāṇñāsa Aṭṭhakathā)


cases of renunciation were motivated solely by a desire to imitate. Let us take some examples. After Yasa’s renunciation, several of his friends decided to follow his example, thinking “this can be no ordinary Doctrine and Discipline, if Yasa, the son of a good family has shaven hair and beard, put on the yellow robe and left home for homelessness.”

According to the Dhammapada Atthakathā, Upāli joined the community in imitation of his friends, Ānanda, Anuruddha, and others. If the leader of a religious group accepted the Buddha’s teaching, his devotees followed suit. For example, when the great ascetic Uruvela Kassapa decided to become a disciple of the Buddha, not only his disciples but also his two brothers Gaya Kassapa and Nadi Kassapa, along with their disciples, took the same decision.

As we have seen, some people renounced lay life under the influence of the Buddha. Many of them did not do so because of the problems in their lives, but simply felt the need for an ideal, for more profound and pure way of life. On the other hand, some people embraced the new Doctrine and joined the Community because of their personal difficulties. They sought to avoid or resolve problems due to distressing physical or mental experiences, painful or disgusting, and difficult to forget. Thus Yasa, a young man from a very wealthy family in Varanasi, came to see the Buddha and told him of his aversion to worldly life. This might seem surprising, as he was rich and lived in luxury; gold adorned his sandals, he was married, and his father and

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92. Vin. III. P. 21. (Mahāvagga Pāli)
93. Dh.A.I. P. 87. (Dhammapada Atthakathā)
94. Vin. III. P. 32.
mother loved him. What was his problem? His story shows that a life of luxury can also bring painful and unpleasant experiences.

According to the canonical texts, one night after an evening of drinking and pleasure-seeking he had seen women lying around in his house in shameful positions, and the sight had upset him very much. He had realized the dangers arising from sensual pleasures and had felt a profound disgust for them. One might perhaps interpret his inner development in this way; Yasa was a sensitive young man; at the beginning of the night, sensual pleasure and the pleasant atmosphere created by those around him had awakened his sensibility. But as the night progressed, he had not been able to bear the offensive spectacle, and had left. This story might only be a symbolic legend; but it expresses how some people might have renounced lay life because of unpleasant experience occurring suddenly in an otherwise happy life. Yasa only regained his composure after meeting the Buddha; soon afterward, he entered the Community.

Other types of experience could lie at the origin of renunciation. It was, for example; the unbearable grief of Kisāgotami, a young mother from Sāvathi, at the death of her only child, which led her to renounce lay life. Uppalavannā, the daughter of a businessman from Sāvathi, was a rare beauty, and several young men wanted to marry her. This became a problem and a source of danger for her, and so she decided to renounce lay life. These stories show that some people renounced the world because of problems in their lives. But one cannot deduce that they did not understand

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95 Vin. III. P. 21-22. (Mahāvagga Pāli)
96 Thi.A. P. 107. (Therigāthā Atīthakathā). Dh.A. I. P. 443. (Dhammapada Atīthakathā)
97 Thi..A. P. 189.
the value of the Doctrine and of detachment from the fact that they seemed motivated only by the desire to escape from their troubles. According to Buddhist monasticism, renunciation was not an escape, but the first of a series of actions aimed at eliminating the real causes of the problems of life and of the round of rebirth, Samsāra.

It might seem as if anyone could join the Community for whatever reason. Many anecdotes from the Vinaya texts show this was not the case. Let us take only three examples. During a war on the border of the Magadha country several generals who did not want to enter the field of battle joined the Community. At the behest of king Bimbisāra, the Buddha forbade monks to admit soldiers in the Community. Another time, a thief who had escaped from prison joined the Community. There was a popular outcry, and the Buddha forbade monks to admit escaped convicts. Lastly, a man who was heavily in debt entered the Community; this provoked sharp criticism from people. The Buddha then forbade monks to admit debtors.

If Buddhist monasticism does not consider the motive for renunciation, if it concentrates only on the practices followed in the Community, why then did it forbid entry to such individuals? There are three possible explanations. First, the Community was not a place for people to hide, to evade punishment or lead an easy life. Second, if people act in such way, they are not being honest to themselves. But without honesty it is not possible to practice the life of purity; honesty is one of the main principles of Buddhist

98. Vin. III. Pp. 103-104. (Mahāvagga Pāli)
99. Ibid. P. 105.
100. Ibid. P. 106.
monasticism. Finally, to admit deserters, escaped convicts or debtors presented a problem for lay supporters of the Community.

Canonical texts often praise the qualities of the Buddha’s disciples:

“The Community of disciples of the Blessed one behaves rightly, behaves correctly, and behaves properly. It is worthy of offerings, worthy of hospitality, worthy of gifts, worthy of respect and the greatest field of merit for the world.”

This passage clearly refers to those disciples who have attained the higher degrees of inner progress. But many monks and nuns were still quite on prime level of monkhood. One did not automatically become an Arahat simply because one had renounced the world or entered the Community; there was only the first step on the path of renunciation. The need for detachment was continuous throughout the religious life, until the attainment of the goal: the state of Arahatship. There are various reasons of joining in the Buddhist Order for many people who want to attain the state of Arahatship. The Buddha, therefore, founded his order especially the Order of Buddhist monks as soon as after he realized the enlightenment.

1.4.2. History of Theravāda Buddhism

People in some countries, especially, where the Theravāda Buddhism is accepted, try to learn the teachings of Theravāda, but they do not understand much. Therefore, to enlighten such people, this information is described.

101 MN. I. P. 37. (Mūlapaṇṇāsa Pāli)
The word *Theravāda* is a compound of two members; *Thera* and *Vāda*; *Thera* means "elder", especially "an elderly Buddhist monk"; here it stands for the inflected form *Therānam*, "of the Elders"; the second member *Vāda* coming from the root *vad*, "to speak" signifies "speech", "talk", "word", "doctrine" or even "ism". The word *Theravāda* is frequently translated into English as "the Doctrine of the Elders".

The word ‘*thera*’ indicates something that is foremost, that is stable or firm. What is foremost or stable, according to the commentary of *Theragāthā*, are morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*pañña*). Those who are endowed with these foremost or firm qualities are called *Thera*. (*Thire sāsane thirabhavapatte, thiredi sīlehi dhammehi sampannagate attho*)¹⁰²

According to the definition "*Therānam vādo theravādo*", Theravada means the teaching of the *Theras*. *Theravāda* is believed to be the doctrine of Lord Buddha. The Buddha had established the foundation of the Theravāda in *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*,¹⁰³ the Buddha preaches as follows;

1. *Apāñhatam na pañhapenti*: Bhikkhus should not preach the *Dhamma* which Buddha has never preached.

2. *Pañhatam na samucchindanti*: Bhikkhus should not dismiss the *Dhamma* which the Buddha preached.

3. *Yathapañhatte porāne vajjidhamme samādāya vattanti*: As Buddha preached it, they will be practiced.

¹⁰² Thi..A. P. 6. (*Therīgāthā Atthakathā*)
¹⁰³ DN. II. P. 62. (*Mahāvagga Pāli*).
The lord of Buddha gave this Sutta one year before his parinibbāna at the assembly of all in Rājagaha. Mahākassapa thera prescribed the principle of aparihāniya laid down by the Buddha as mention above as their policy at Rājagaha in division of Magada country. The Buddha said in Mahāparinibbāna Sutta as follows:

"Ākaṅkhāmāno Ānanda saṅgho mamaccayena khuddānukhuddakāni sikkhapadāni samūhanatu" meaning Ānanda, if the Saṅgha so desired, It may remove, after my passing away (parinibbāna), the minor and less minor rules.\(^{104}\)

This statement of the Buddha was a subject for discussion at the First Buddhist Council. When the Mahākassapa thera asked what minor rules were and what the less minor rules, the Arahats at the council gave different answers, thus confusing the issue. It apparently gave Mahākassapa thera a ground for his momentous decision which was as follows:

"Sunātu me āvuso saṅgho... Yassa nakkhamati so bhāseya".\(^{105}\)

This Pāli can be translated into English thus: "Friends, let Saṅgha listen to me. There are some rules with regard to people. Even lay people know that it is allowable for Bhikkhus who are the disciples of the son the Buddha, and it is not allowable for Bhikkhus who are the disciples of the Buddha. If we remove the minor and less minor rules, there will be people say, "The monk, Gotama has laid down the rules for his disciples that last for only the time for the smoke to clear. So long as their Teacher lived they abide by the rules. From the time their Teacher passed away they no longer abide by rules".

\(^{104}\) DN. II. P. 126. (Mahāvagga Pāli)
\(^{105}\) Vin. IV. P. 485. (Cūlavagga Pāli)
Therefore *Samgha* does not lay down the rules that were laid down by the Buddha, nor does not remove the rules that were laid down by the Buddha. The *Samgha* takes (will take) upon itself the rules as they were laid down by the Buddha. If the not laying down of what have not been laid down and not removing of what have been laid down are agreeable to venerable, let him keep silence. The venerable to down whom they are not agreeable, should keep out.

*Saṅgiti* or *Saṅghayana* literally means “to recite together”. But it implies more than that. It implies the *Samgha* assembly, the *Samgha* Council, the *Samgha* parliament. After the consideration, the members of the *Samgha* in the assembly unanimously conformed to the principle prescribed by *Mahākassapa* thera. Before His *mahāparinibbāna*, the Buddha said, “I, Ānanda, have preached the *Dhamma* and prescribed the *Vinaya*. They will be your teacher when I am no more”, (*Yo vo Ānanda mayā dhammo ca vinayo ca desito paññato so vo mamaccayena sattha*).\(^\text{106}\)

The *Samgha* in this assembly agreed to this point that the Buddha's speech showed that if *Vinaya* and *Dhamma* were abolished, the master would be removed. They were pleased that the *Dhamma* was not small but great and splendid. Thus the duty to present or *Vinaya* teaching was assigned to Venerable Upāli, and all *Dhamma* teachings to Venerable Ānanda. The 500 *Arahat* theras who took part in this council unanimously confirmed the *Vinaya* and *Dhamma* teachings presented by Venerable Upāli and Venerable Ānanda respectively.

\(^{106}\) DN.A. I. P. 3. (*Silakkhandhavagga Aṭṭhakathā*)
1.4.2.1. The First Great Council

Three months after the demise of the Buddha the First Great Council was held in Sattapâni Cave Pavilion at Mount Vebbhāra near the city of Rājagaha. Subhadda, who became a Bhikkhu in his old age, disparaged the Buddha's teaching on the seventh day after the Buddha has passed away. On hearing those insulting words, Venerable Mahākassapa decided to hold the First Great Council and King Ajātasatthu sponsored that council. Five hundred arahats, including Venerable Upāli and Venerable Ānanda, took part in that council. It took the monks seven months to recite the whole of the Vinaya and the Dhamma and those monks sufficiently endowed with good memories retained all that had been recited. This first Samgha council is accepted by all monks. There was not a schism at that time. 107

1.4.2.2. The Second Great Council

The Second Great Council was held at Vālukārama monastery, near the city of Vesali in 443 B.C (100 B. E). It was held because the Bhikkhus of the Vaijī clan from Vesali preached and practiced ten unlawful modifications in the rules of the Order. The seven hundred arahats led by Venerable Yassa, Venerable Sabbakāmi and Venerable Revata took part in that council while King Kālāsoka of Vesali and the people gave necessary supports to that council. It lasted eight months. Finally, a group of monks left the Council and formed the Mahāsamghika – the Great Community. Even though it was called the Mahāsamghika, it was not known as Mahayana. And in the

107. TBBL. P.221
Second Great Council, only matters pertaining to the *Vinaya* were discussed and no controversy about the *Dhamma* is reported.\(^{108}\)

1.4.2.3. The Third Great Council

The Third Great Council was held at *Asokârâma* monastery in the city of *Pataliputta* in 308 B.C (235 B. E). Sixty thousand ascetics infiltrated into the *Sâṅgha* Order gave the necessary support to the council. It lasted nine months. At the end of this council, the president of the council, Venerable *Mañâmoggaliputta Tissa*, compiled a book called the *Kathâvatthu* refuting the heretical, false views and theories held by some sects. The teaching approved and accepted by this council was known as *Theravāda*. The *Abhidhamma Pitaka* was included at this council. After the Third Council, nine missions were sent to nine different places to propagate the *Sâsana*.\(^{109}\) The commentary on *Pârâjika Pâli* of *Vinaya Piṭaka* mentioned about the missionaries to the nine directions.\(^{110}\)

1.4.2.3.1. Sending Nine Missions to Nine Countries

After the Third Great Council, Venerable *Moggaliputta Tissa* foresaw with his supernormal power that the teachings of the Buddha would flourish well in the countries outside *Majjhima desa*. Therefore he selected the arahats who were able to perform missionary work, and consulted with King Asoka to send them to nine countries as follows.

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\(^{108}\) TBBL. P. 222
\(^{109}\) Ibid.
\(^{110}\) Vin.A. I. P. 47. (*Pârâjikanda Atthakathā*)
1. A mission led by Venerable Majjhantika was sent to Kasmira Gandhara Province,

2. A mission led by Venerable Mahārevata was sent to Mahimsakamandala District (Mysore Province),

3. A mission led by Venerable Rakkhita was sent to Vanavasi (Malaba) of South Dakkhinapatha,

4. A mission led by Venerable Yonakadhammarakkhita was sent to Aparanta (Koja of west India),

5. A mission led by Venerable Mahādhhammarakkhita was sent to Mahāraṭṭhha District (Bombay),

6. A mission led by Venerable Mahārakkhita was sent to Yonaka Province (Persia of Greek Empire),

7. A mission led by Venerable Majjhima was sent to Himavanta region (Himalaya region),

8. A mission led by Venerable Sona and Venerable Uttara was sent to Suvannabhūmi (Rāmaṇa Province) and

9. A mission led by Venerable Maninda was sent to Tambapannī (Ceylon).

111. Vin.A. I. P. 47. (Pārājikavāda Aṭṭhakathā)
Each mission comprised five Bhikkhus in order to enable them to attend to Samgha affairs. The missions went to their respective places during the Third Great Council in the year 235 B.E. But Venerable Mahinda left for Sri Lanka only in the year 236 B.E.\textsuperscript{112}

1.4.2.4. The Fourth Great Council

The Fourth Great Council was held at Cave Āloka in Malaya district, Sri Lanka, in 94 B.C. (450 B.E). The people of Sri Lanka were hard hit by rebels, hunger and starvation of twelve years. So the Bhikkhus had to make strong efforts to maintain the Buddha's teachings. The elder Bhikkhus foresaw that if there would appear such danger in future, the Bhikkhus would not be able to memorize the discourses and the disciplines by heart because of the declination of their power of mindfulness, concentration and wisdom. Therefore, they held the Fourth Great Council.

It was during the reign of King Vattagāmani that five hundred Bhikkhus, led by Venerable Mahādhāmmarakkhita, inscribed the entire words of the Buddha's teaching on palm leaves. The heads and elders as well as the people of Malaya district gave all round support to the council. The fourth Great Council continued for one year.\textsuperscript{113}

\textsuperscript{112} TBHL. Vol. 2. Pp. 269-270.
\textsuperscript{113} TBBL. P.223
1.4.2.5. The Fifth Great Council

The Fifth Great Council was convened at Mandalay, Myanmar (Burma) in A. D. 1871 (2415 B. E). The scriptures inscribed on palm leaves could not last for long time. Besides, there might be many variations in rewriting the scriptures from copy to copy. Therefore, the scriptures were inscribed marble slabs in order to dispel these disadvantages.

Two thousand and four hundred Bhikkhus led by Venerable Jāgarābhivamsa therā of Dakkhinārāma Monastery, Mandalay, convened to recite and approve the scriptures. King Mindon initiated and supported the Fifth Great Council to the end. The scriptures were inscribed on seven hundred and twenty nine marble slabs in the precinct of Lokamārajina Pagoda at the foot of Mandalay hill. It took seven years, six months and fourteen days to finish this work. Then the Bhikkhus recited to approve the inscriptions for five months and three days.\textsuperscript{114}

After the Fifth Great Council, the Pāli Texts were translated into Myanmar language, and the Doctrinal Order was promulgated to the whole country for purpose of purification and propagation of the Buddha's teachings.

1.4.2.6. The Sixth Great Council

The Sixth Great Council was held at Kaba-Aye Mahāpāsāna Cave in Yangon, Myanmar in A. D. 1954 (2498 B. E). The country of Myanmar had been one of the British Colonies for one hundred years and during this

\textsuperscript{114} . TBBL. P.224
period the Buddha Sāsana had deteriorated to some extent. So the Sixth Great Council was held aiming at the purification and promotion of the Buddha Sāsana. Two thousand and five hundred Bhikhus from the five countries of Theravāda Buddhism participated in that council. Nyaung Yan Sayadaw, Venerable Revata presided over it; the Mahāsi Sayadaw, Venerable Sobhana and the Mingun Sayadaw, Venerable Vicittasārābhivamsa took the leading roles in that council.

The doctrinal questions asked by the people of five Theravāda Buddhist countries: Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia, were solved. Twenty five other countries also gave much help to that council. At the council, not only the canonical Pāli Texts of the Buddha but also the commentaries and sub-commentaries were re-examined.\(^\text{115}\)

In this way, Venerable Mahākassapa and the custodians of the Dhamma held the great councils up to six times and approved the words of the Buddha without any change and modification. The teaching of the Buddha thus approved is called Theravāda Buddhism.

The present chapter has introduced the two distinct lines of religious thought in ancient India: Brahma, who perpetuated the age-old sacrificial system and on the other hand the non-Brahmana, who opposed them. The Buddhist Sanīgha in its origin was no different from the many other sects forming the heterogeneous religious groups of ancient India. Those who joined the Order gave their former name and caste and came to be known as the Sakyaputta Samāna, disciples of the Sakya Sage.

\(^{115}\) TBBL. P.225
Brahmacariya, in fact, refers to the early Buddhist ideal of the monastic life and it is the main aspect of the Buddha's teaching called 'Sāsana'. In this present chapter, we find that the origin of the Buddhist Samgha, the establishment of the Buddhist Order: the Order of monks and the Order of nuns, various reasons of joining the Buddhist Order, history of Theravāda Buddhism and the Great Buddhist Councils.