CHAPTER- VII

Conclusion

The topic of my thesis is “The Monastic life and Organization in Theravāda Buddhism”. Buddhism is one the religions which have an organized monastic Order. Buddhist monasticism begins with the ordination of the five ascetics who listened to the first sermon on the Buddha. The religious scriptures in Buddhism devote a considerable section to activities of the monks and their organization.

Monasticism had always been a favourite adjunct of the Brahmanical system and respect for monastic life had taken deep root among the people. Buddhist monastic Order, popularly known as the “Ariya Bhikkhu Samgha” became a uniquely planned system of monastic organization under the guidance of Gotama the Buddha. At the early stage of the dispensation, the disciples were led by the traditional disciplinary standards that were in vogue among the various ascetic circles in India. In addition, Buddhist training guided them in Buddhist discipline developing morality, concentration and wisdom which culminates in the realization of Nibbāna.

The Vinaya, the rules of regulating the outward conduct of the Samgha or the Buddhist monastic discipline, is very essential for the community as well as the life of the Sāsanā. The place of social norms in Buddhist monasticism could be seen in the Vinaya Piṭaka so the Vinaya rules play an important and significant role in the day to day life of the Bhikkhus both internally and externally.
Chapter (1) The Origin of the Buddhist *Samgha*

In the first chapter, I have mentioned the Triple-Gems appeared, the *Buddha*, the *Dhamma* and the *Samgha* and the two distinct lines of religious thought in ancient India. At the time of the Buddha, there were two distinct lines of religious thought in ancient India; these were the *Brahmanas* and the non-*Brahmanas*. The *Brahmanas* were considered from very ancient times as the only custodians of learning and religious rites. Those who directly opposed the term *Paribbājaka*. These *Paribbājakas* or wandering recluses were of very early origin. The Buddhist *Samgha* in its origin was no different from the many other sects forming the heterogeneous religious groups of ancient India.

After that I have tried to show the early Buddhist ideal of the monastic life and the origin of the Buddhist *Samgha*. In ancient India the ideal of the monastic life which was common to all recluses was the attainment of purity of final release from the recurrent cycle of the existence. The Buddhist *Samgha* 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 Samāṇa*, literally meaning, the sons or disciplines of the *Sakya* Sage. The term differentiated them from other recluses of the time. To the masses they were known as *Samāṇa*. The disciples considered the Buddha as their teacher, preceptor and leader who dispelled their doubts and showed them the path of release. And then I have discussed about the establishment of the Buddhist Order, i.e. both monk and nun.
Chapter (2) The Foundation of Monastic life

The second chapter deals with threefold Sikkhās: Sīla (morality) Samādhi (concentration) and Paññā (wisdom) referring the Eightfold Noble Path. Morality consists of Right Speech (Sammā Vācā), Right Action (Sammā Kammanta) and Right livelihood (Sammā Ājīva). Concentration consists of Right Effort (Sammā Vāyama), Right mindfulness (Sammā Sati) and Right Concentration (Sammā Samādhi). Wisdom consists of Right Vies (Sammā Diṭṭhi) and Right Thinking (Sammā Sāṅkappa). The threefold training is the foundation of the monastic life.

In the second chapter, I have mentioned the meanings of Sīla, concept of Sīla-sikkhā, elaboration of Sīla sikkhā, types of Sīla sikkhā, benefits of Sīla sikkhā, meaning of Samādhi sikkhā, concept of Samādhi sikkhā, development of Samādhi sikkhā, meaning of Paññā sikkhā, concept of Paññā sikkhā, development of Paññā sikkhā, purification, three levels of defilements and Sikkhās and Defilements.

With regard to threefold sikkhās I have discussed about it in detail. The three sikkhā is the most important foundation of the monastic life. When we practice moral discipline with constant care and mindfulness, we conquer the rough form of defilements: such as killing, stealing, adultery, cheating, telling lies, gossiping, using harsh, abusive words, indulgence in vain, frivolous talks, wrong of harmful livelihood.

The practice of Samādhi can purity beings’ mind, can overcome sorrow and lamentation, can disappear pain and grief, and can reach the Noble Path.
Pañña sikkhā is the only way to uproot all kinds of defilement from their root. Pañña sikkhā (wisdom) is essentially important for one’s life because only the Pañña sikkhā well founded on Sila sikkhā and Samādhi sikkhā can give the final goal of one’s life, which is the highest and lasting peace of Nibbāna.

Chapter (3) Early Buddhist Monasticism and the Promulgation of the Vinaya

In the third chapter, I have mentioned early Buddhist Monasticism. The early followers of the Buddha went forth into the country, being full of enthusiasm and determination, to spread the new teaching to the masses. The Buddha instructed them to go to different directions to preach the Dhamma expounded by him as they were highly qualified to do so. Before the promulgation of Vinaya rules or Sikkhāpadas, the monks who voluntarily embarked upon the life of brahmacariya for the spiritual development trod the path of the Dhamma shown by the Buddha.

After that I have discussed about the promulgation of the Vinaya, Dhamma and Vinaya, Vinaya Piṭaka and reasons for promulgation of the Vinaya. Vinaya means discipline laid down for regulating the conduct of the Buddha’s disciplines who have been admitted as Bhikkhus and Bhikkunīs into the Order. These rules embody authoritative injunctions of the Buddha on modes of conduct and restraints on both physical and verbal actions.

The Buddha was not in a hurry to promulgate rules to govern the Saṅgha. He waited till the necessity arose, and thereafter promulgated the sikkhāpadas. The Buddha promulgated the rules for his disciples in many reasons. They are
tradition and customs, popular opinion, suggestions of Bhikkhus and requirements of the State.

Chapter (4) Recital of Pātimokkha and its Objectives

In the fourth chapter, I have mentioned the definition of Pātimokkha, the history of recital of Pātimokkha. The term Pātimokkha is available to us in several recitations. Some are in India languages and others in Tibetan and Chinese translation. However, of them only one the Pāli is still a living tradition, recited fortnightly and put into practice by Theravāda bhikkhus through the world. The background of the fortnightly recitation of the Pātimokkha is found in the second section of the Mahāvagga of the Vinaya Piṭaka. King Bimbisāra suggested to the Buddha that his Bhikkhus should meet on the eighth day and the fourteenth or fifteenth day of the fortnight. The Buddha then told the Bhikkhus they could recite the Pātimokkha at those times.

After that I have discussed about meaning of Uposatha and its kinds, the salient features of the recital of the Pātimokkha. Uposatha is translated as ‘entering to stay”, equivalent to our observance of the precepts. It was tradition before the Buddha time, fixed for the observance upon the full moon day and upon the dark of the moon, as well as the quarter moon days, respectively Uposatha by ancient laypeople in India. There are some features of the recital of the Pātimokkha. They are:

(1) The announcement of the purity of the monks.
(2) When the Pātimokkha or Sikkhāpadas are recited those who are assembled should listen carefully.
(3) If a monk has committed an offence it should be revealed.
(4) If he has not violated any Sikkhāpadas, then such a monk should remain silent.
(5) The question whether the monks are purified is asked thrice, and
(6) If a monk who has fallen into an offence does not reveal if when questioned even for the third time, he is regarded as a monk who is lying deliberately.

Moreover, I have discussed about the Pātimokkha and Pavāraṇā and the Objectives of Vinaya rules. The procedure laid down in the Mahāvagga with regard to the Pavāraṇā (provision) ritual is very similar to that of the recital of the Pātimokkha. In the case of a monk who is ill and not in a position to attend the Pavāraṇā he should inform the Samgha through another monk and request them for the judgment of his conduct.

When people live together as a group it becomes necessary to have a common understanding or rules defining the obligation to the members towards one another. It is thus that societies, associations and instructions have rule, regulations, statutes or constitutions, sometimes laying down penalties also for the infringement of them.

Due to the small number of Bhikkhus at the beginning of Sāsanā rules and regulation for the control of the Samgha were not much needed. All the disciples of the Buddha practiced and followed the teacher’s way of conduct, knowing full well the teaching of the Buddha. When Bhikkhus increased in numbers and were scattered here and there, then the rules for their control became more necessary. The Objectives of the Vinaya are ten in number. We
have no doubt the formulation of Vinaya is solely for the purpose of wellbeing of Samgha, to prevent misbehavior of bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs, to elevate the faith of laity, to make harmonious life of Bhikkhu Samgha as well as Bhikkhunī Samgha, and ultimately to attain final liberation (Nibbāna).

Chapter (5) Penalties and Punishments

In the fifth chapter, I have discussed meaning of 7 Āpatti, Vinaya rules both majors and minors, 277 Vinaya rules. The action of transgressing the rules of training and the falling of the penalty upon guilty Bhikkhu is called Āpatti, which means ‘reaching, attaining, committing’. The Āpatti consist of three grades of penalties; the heavy offence (garukāpatti) which causes one committing it to fall from the state of Bhikkhu hood; the middle offence (majjhimāpatti) causing the offender not to live on probation, that is to practice in a certain way making it difficult foe oneself; and the light offence (lahukāpatti) which causes the offender to confess in front of a Bhikkhu or bhikkhunīs so that having carried out the prescribed discipline, he will be free from the offence.

The total number of Vinaya rules in Theravāda Buddhism sometime becomes a sort problematic to make final conclusion among the scholars. Regarding to the total number of Vinaya rules (for the Bhikkhu) the discussion should be kept in mind for the sake of safest finalizing. To our understanding, basically the Vinaya rules are not only to be recited in Uposatha day but it should be practiced by all Bhikkhus.
After that I have mentioned the remedy for the specified penalties and punishment. The \textit{Pārājika}, being the gravest of the monastic offence, admits of no remedies or atonements. The penalty for \textit{Pārājika} offences is completed ex-communciation and loss of monastic status. A \textit{Samghādisesa} offence is one which requires the formal meeting of the Order dealing with the offender. There are two \textit{Aniyatas} mentioned in the \textit{Vinaya Piṭaka}. The two \textit{Aniyata} are so called, because they fall into the category or “undetermined sikkhāpadas”. In this offence no penalty can be imposed till the offender voluntary admit his guilt. Each of the thirty \textit{Nissaggiya} rules for monks has as the penalty for braking it, explanation of the offence \textit{Pācittiya}, involving forfeiture, \textit{Nissaggiya}. The other offences such as \textit{Pācittiya}, \textit{Thullaccaya}, \textit{Dukkata} and \textit{Dubbhāsita} are imposing to the penalty of concession according to \textit{Vinaya Text}.

Further more, I have explained the \textit{Adhikaraṇa} (dispute) \textit{Pañcaκamma} (five \textit{kamma}s) and \textit{Adhikaraṇa Samatha} (dispute settlement). The disputes known as “\textit{Adhikaraṇa}” are four in number. Apart from the aforementioned offences and disputes, there are five different \textit{kamma}s or acts of punishment for certain lapses and blameworthy conduct and behavior on the part of \textit{bhikkhus}. \textit{Adhikaraṇa samathas} (dispute settlement) are even in number. The \textit{Adhikaraṇa samatha} lay down adjective law or the law of procedure, while the rest of \textit{Pātimokkha} contains substantive law.

\textbf{Chapter (6) Duties of Bhikkhus and the Higher Ordination of Monkhood}

In the sixth chapter, I have discussed about the duties of \textit{Bhikkhus}. Those who joined the Order gave up everything so that they could walk spiritual path as shown by the Buddha. It was incumbent on each \textit{Bhidkkhus} to undertake one
of the two duties once he had given up the household life. They are \textit{Ganthadhura}, the duty of learning and teaching and \textit{Vipassanādhura}, the duty of practice meditation for the attainment of the Path and Fruition.

The first duty of \textit{Bhikkhus} is the duty of learning and teaching the teaching of the Buddha. By doing their duties, the \textit{Bhikkhus} would administer to the social and spiritual needs of their followers imparting them the knowledge of the \textit{Dhamma}. The teachings of the Buddha spread in this way far and wide into the people.

\textit{Bhikkhus} must practice meditation for attainment of final goal, \textit{Nibbāna}, Meditation is of kinds: Tranquility Meditation (\textit{Samathabhāvanā}) and Insight Meditation (\textit{Vipassanābhāvanā}), \textit{Samatha} means tranquility or concentration (\textit{Samādhi}) that calms down that heat of defilements such as greed (\textit{lobha}). There are forty objects of for Tranquility of Meditation. They are ten Meditation devices (\textit{kasīna}), ten impurities or loathsome things (\textit{asubha}), ten reflections (\textit{anussati}), four sublime states (\textit{brahma vihāra}), four non-material (\textit{arūpa}) realms, one perception (\textit{saññā}) and one analysis \textit{vavatthāna}).

The knowledge which can discern significantly the characteristic of impermanence (\textit{anicca}), suffering (\textit{dukkha}) and insubstantiality (\textit{anatta}) is called Insight (\textit{Vipassanā}). Those who lack of Insight knowledge miscomprehend beings and things to be permanent (\textit{nicca}), happiness (\textit{sukha}), substantial (\textit{atta}) and pleasant (\textit{subha}). A virtuous person who has practiced Insight Meditation generatively knows that all beings and things are impermanent, suffering, insubstantial and loathsome (\textit{asubha}). Such
knowledge is called *Vipassanā*. In the practice on *Vipassanā-bhāvanā* (Insight Meditation) one should have the knowledge of the following:

1. Sevenfold *Visudhi* = seven stages of purity.
2. *Ti-lakkhana* = three characteristic marks,
3. Threefold *Anupassanā* = three method of contemplation,
4. Ten *Vipassanā Nāna* = ten insight knowledge,
5. Threefold *Vimokkha* = three ways of emancipations,
6. Threefold *Vimokkha mukha* = three doors of emancipation and
7. Ten *Upekkilesas* = ten impurities of *Vipassanā*.

Further more; I have mentioned procedures for initiation into monkhood, the higher ordination of monkhood according to Buddhism, qualification for initiation into Buddhist monkhood, how to perform the initiation into monkhood, *ñatti* (declaration), *kammavācā* ordination, four dependable requisites (*nissaya*) and four major offences (*akaraṇīya*). A candidate who wants to become a monk must have qualifications for initiations into monkhood and must follow the procedures for initiation into monkhood. After complete the higher ordination, a new monk must practice four dependable requisites- food, dress, accommodation and medicine now and forever for the entire course of life. In the Buddha’s dispensation, there are four grave offences which should not be done by the monks. If any monk commits one of these four, he loses his monkhood. This offence cannot be remedied. He also cannot be re-ordained as a monk again.

In this chapter, I have mentioned the survey of present *Samgha* in *Theravāda* Buddhist Countries. There are five *Theravāda* Buddhist countries in the world now. They are Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos.
In this study, I have tried to show the monastic life and organization according to *Theravāda* Buddhism. This research is to shed light on how the origin of the social institution called the Monastic Order appear in the world and how they lead the norms for society and carry out the social and spiritual activities for the welfare of the people.

This research is giving a fully developed *Bhikkhus*’ style of life and custom during the time of the Buddha with detailed minute rules governing the entire life and activities of individuals and of the community as reflected in the *Vinaya Pitaka*. It is to make known the people the origin and development of the *Samgha* from the time of the Buddha till the present time in *Theravāda* Buddhist tradition. It is to shed light on the foundation of the monastic life which is the threefold training referring the Eightfold Noble Path and the purpose of monastic life becoming noble person and attaining *Nibbāna* and to point out the place of social norms in Buddhist monasticism.