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The Pāli Canon

Sacred Buddhist Scriptures

EASTERN TREASURES

The Sacred Buddhist Scriptures of

THE PALI CANON

(c. 5th century BC)

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Eastern Treasures Series

THE PALI CANON

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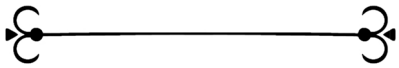
The Pali Canon - Sacred Buddhist Scriptures



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Vinaya Piṭaka (Discipline Basket)

Lumbinī, a Buddhist pilgrimage site in the Rupandehi District of Lumbini Province, Nepal. According to the sacred texts of the Buddhist Commentaries, Maya Devi gave birth to Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, in Lumbini in c. 624 BC.

Ancient ruins at Lumbinī

Vinaya Texts

Translated by T. W. Rhys Davids and Hermann Oldenberg, 1881

Siddhartha Gautama, most commonly known as the Buddha (the awakened one), was a wandering ascetic and religious teacher, who flourished in the eastern Indo-Gangetic Plains during the sixth or fifth century BC. He founded Buddhism, which ranks today as the fourth largest religion, with an estimated 400 million followers globally, representing roughly 6% of the world's population. According to Buddhist legends, Gautama was born in Lumbini, in what is now Nepal, to royal parents of the Shakya clan, but renounced his home life to live as a wandering ascetic. After leading a life of mendicancy, asceticism and meditation, he attained nirvana at Bodh Gaya in what is now Bihar, India. The Buddha then wandered through the lower Indo-Gangetic Plain, teaching and building a monastic order. Tradition holds that he died in Kushinagar (modern day Uttar Pradesh, India), where he reached *parinibbana* (final release from conditioned existence).

The *Pali Canon* (also known as the Buddhist Theravada Canon) is believed to represent the words of the Buddha and were transmitted orally and first written down in Pali, an ancient Middle Indo-Aryan language, within the Theravadan communities of Sri Lanka, probably during the first century BC. The text was recorded on palm-leaf manuscripts. The leaves were kept together by thin sticks, and the scripture was covered in cloth and kept in a box or 'basket'. These Pali texts constitute the entire surviving body of literature in the Pali language.

According to Buddhist tradition, during the First Buddhist Council, three months after the *parinibbana* of Gautama, the Buddha's primary disciple Ananda recited the *Sutta Pitaka*, while Upali, another of the ten chief disciples, recited the *Vinaya Pitaka*. The Arhats present accepted the recitations and so the teachings were preserved orally by the *Sangha* (the monastic community). The *Tipitaka* that was transmitted to Sri Lanka during the reign of King Asoka was initially preserved orally and later written down on palm leaves during the Fourth Buddhist Council in 29 BC, approximately 454 years after the death of Gautama Buddha.

The *Pali Canon* falls into three general categories, called *pitaka* (Pali for "basket", referring to the receptacles in which the palm-leaf manuscripts were kept). Thus, the canon is traditionally known as the *Tipiṭaka* (three baskets). The three *pitakas* are as follows:

- *Vinaya Piṭaka* (Discipline Basket), dealing with rules or discipline of the *sangha*
- *Sutta Piṭaka* (Sayings Basket), discourses and sermons of Buddha, some religious poetry — this is the largest basket
- *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* (Basket of Higher Doctrine), comprising philosophical treatises on Buddhist doctrines, particularly about mind

Major examples from all three baskets are presented in this collection. The *Vinaya Pitaka* and the *Sutta Pitaka* are similar to the works of the early Buddhist schools, often termed Early Buddhist Texts. The *Abhidhamma Pitaka*, however, is a strictly Theravada collection and has little in common with the *Abhidhamma* works recognised by other Buddhist schools. The traditional Theravādin interpretation of the

Pali Canon is given in a series of commentaries covering nearly the whole Canon, compiled by Buddhaghosa (fl. fifth century AD) and later monks, mainly on the basis of earlier materials now lost. Sub-commentaries were written later, commenting further on the Canon and its commentaries. The traditional Theravādin interpretation is summarised in Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga*.

The relation of the scriptures to Buddhism as it actually exists among ordinary monks and lay people is, as with other major religious traditions, problematic: the evidence suggests that only parts of the Canon ever enjoyed wide currency and that non-canonical works were sometimes much more widely used, as the details varied from place to place. Recent scholars have suggested that the whole of Buddhist history may be regarded as a working out of the implications of the early scriptures.

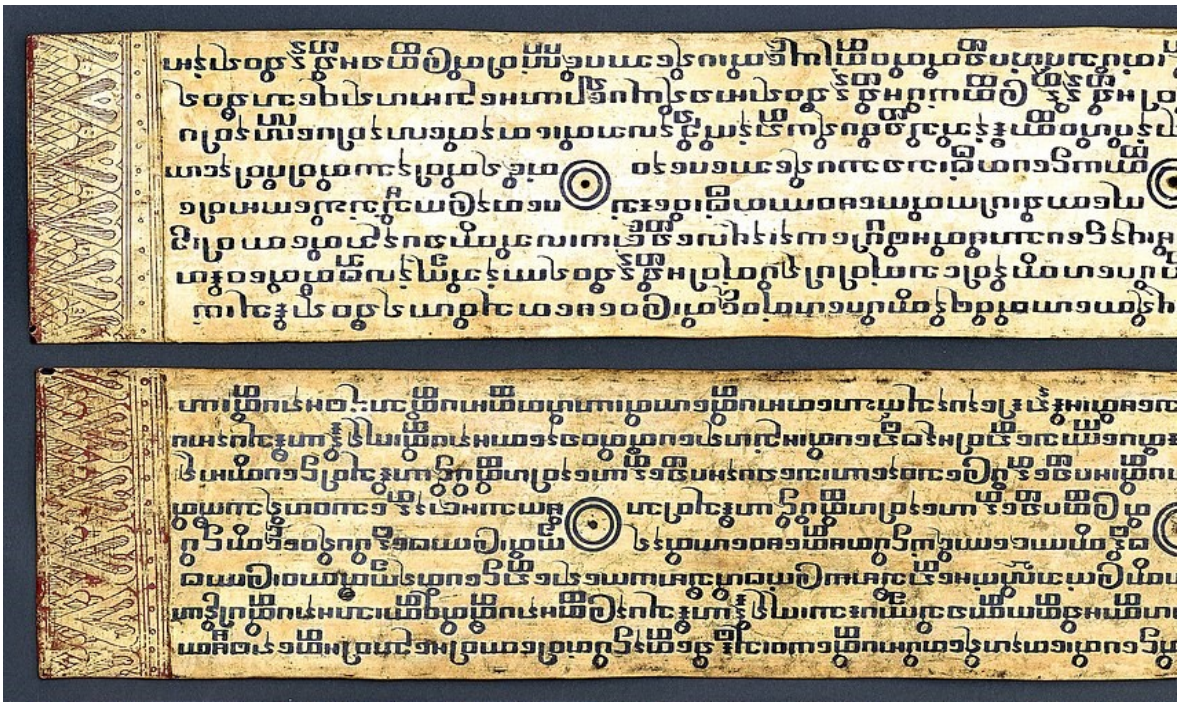
The first text of the *Vinaya Pitaka* (Discipline Basket) is the *Pāṭimokkha* — a basic code of monastic discipline, consisting of 227 rules for fully ordained monks (*bhikkhus*) and 311 for nuns (*bhikkhuṇīs*). According to the sutras, in the first years of the Buddha's teaching the *sangha* lived together in harmony with no established rules, as there was no need, since the early disciples were highly realised, if not fully enlightened. However, as the *sangha* expanded, situations arose that the Buddha and the lay community felt were inappropriate for mendicants. This led to the formulating of the *Pāṭimokkha*, a basic code of monastic discipline, which underlines four *pārājikas* (defeats) — rules entailing expulsion from the *sangha* for life.

If a monk breaks any one of the rules he is automatically "defeated" in the holy life and falls from monkhood immediately. He is not allowed to become a monk again in his lifetime. Intention is necessary in all these four cases to constitute an offence. The four *parajikas* are:

- Sexual intercourse.
- Stealing: the robbery of anything worth more than 1/24 troy ounce of gold (as determined by local law).
- Killing: whether by killing the person, arranging for an assassin to kill the person, inciting the person to die, or describing the advantages of death.
- Lying to another person that one has attained a superior human state, such as claiming to be an *arahant* when one knows one is not, or claiming to have attained one of the *jhānas* when one knows one has not.

Khandhaka, offering 22 chapters on various topics, is the second book of the *Vinaya Pitaka* and includes the following two volumes:

- Mahāvagga: accounts of Gautama Buddha's and the ten principal disciples' awakenings, as well as rules for *uposatha* days and monastic ordination.
- Cullavagga: includes accounts of the First and Second Buddhist councils and the establishment of the community of *bhikkhunis*, as well as rules for addressing offenses within the *sangha*.



Manuscript of 'Vinaya Pitaka', lacquered and gilded wood, gilded palm leaves, Myanmar, 1856.

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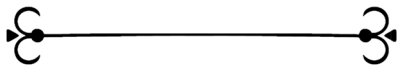
Sculpture of the Buddha preaching his first sermon from Sarnath, 5th century AD

Burmese Kammavaca manuscript written in Pali using the Burmese script

INTRODUCTION TO THE VINAYA TEXTS FROM THE PÂLI.



IN THE PRESENT MSS. the Vinaya Pi*ṭ*aka is divided into the following books:

1. Pârâ*g*ika, } called collectively the Sutta-vibhanga.
2. Pâ*k*ittiya,
3. Mahâvagga, } called collectively the Khandhakas.
4. *K*ullavagga,
5. Parivâra-pâ*th*a.

These books constitute that part of the sacred literature of the Buddhists which contains the regulations for the outward life of the members of the Buddhist Sa*m*gha — nearly the oldest, and probably the most influential, of all Fraternities of monks.

It is impossible to frame any narrower definition of the Vinaya than this, since the gradual change of circumstances in the Fraternity resulted in a gradual change also in the Vinaya itself. To give any more detailed account of what the Vinaya is, it will be necessary to trace what can be at present ascertained of its history; to show that is, so far as it is yet possible to do so — the causes which led to the establishment of the oldest Rules and Ceremonies of the Order, and to follow step by step the accretions of new literary work around this older nucleus.

For this purpose we propose to consider first the Rules of the work called the Pâtimokkha; for the later texts presuppose its existence. It is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, of all Buddhist text-books; and it has been inserted in its entirety into the first part of the Vinaya, the Vibhanga.

The Pâtimokkha — the meaning of the name will be discussed later on — seems to have owed its existence to the ancient Indian custom of holding sacred two periods in each month, the times of the Full Moon and of the New Moon.

The Vedic ceremonies of the Dar*s*apûr*n*amâsa sacrifice, and of the feast or sacred day (Upavasatha) connected with it, are known to have been very old, and the custom of celebrating these days would naturally be handed on from the Brâhmans to the different Sama*n*as, and be modified and simplified (though, as it seems, sometimes increased in number) by them, in accordance with their creeds and their views of religious duty. According to Buddhist tradition — and we see no sufficient reason for doubting the correctness of the account — the monks of other, that is, of non-Buddhistic sects, used to meet together at the middle and at the close of every half-month, and were accustomed then to proclaim their new teaching in public. At such times the people would crowd together; and the different sects found an opportunity of increasing their numbers and their influence.

The Buddhists also adopted the custom of these periodical meetings, but confined themselves to meeting twice in each month. And the peculiarity which gave to these meetings among the Buddhists their distinguishing character seems to have been borrowed by them neither from the Brâhmans nor from other dissenters, but to have been an original invention of the Buddhists themselves. The Brethren and Sisters made use of these half-monthly gatherings to confess to the assembled Order the sins and faults which each of them had committed; and to take upon himself, or herself,

the penance which the transgressor had thereby incurred. It would be unnecessary to dwell here upon the details of these penitential meetings, as we can refer the reader to the second book of the Mahâvagga, where he will find them fully set out.

It was for use at such penitential gatherings that the text, now known as the Pâtimokkha, was composed. A list was drawn up — which of course it would be necessary from time to time to complete, and rectify — of those offences which ought to be confessed and atoned for; this list was read out in the half-monthly meetings of the Order; and the Brethren and Sisters who were present were asked if they were innocent of each one of the offences therein mentioned.

The use of such a list must have already begun in very early times. Tradition even ascribes the first laying down of each clause to the Buddha himself. This tradition is of course very far from being conclusive; but neither should we hold it impossible that the Pâtimokkha, either in its present shape, or at least in its most essential parts, can reach back to the Buddha's own time, or to that of his personal disciples.

It is no doubt natural, through the influence of the history of early Christianity, or perhaps of the school of Socrates, to imagine that early Buddhism was far removed from all fixed and absolute forms, either of creed or of liturgy; and to represent the intercourse of Gotama and his disciples as purely and simply an interchange of spiritual edification, where the spirit was all in all, and the letter was nothing. But it should be remembered that Gotama continued to live for many years, almost for two generations, after he had formulated the essential points of his system, and after he had founded the brotherhood of his Order. And at that time the stream of scholastic and legal ideas which emanated from the earlier Brâhmanism was flowing in full force through the religious circles of India. A rich phraseology of sacred and ecclesiastical expressions, an armoury of technical terms in philosophy and in theology (still preserved in the Brâhma*n*as and Upanishads), had been developed and made ready for the use of the Buddhists, and *G*ainas, and other reforming schools. And earlier speculation had raised a whole series of problems, and long-continued custom had elaborated a multifarious system of ecclesiastical observances, which the newly risen sects, orthodox or heretical, could grapple with, or could adopt. It seems to us that Gotama's disciples, from the very beginning, were much more than a free and unformal union of men held together merely through their common reverence for their Master, and through a common spiritual aim. They formed rather, and from the first, an organised Brotherhood.

But if we look upon the Sakyaputtiya Sama*n*as — for that is the name which the people in the earliest times gave to the community — as from the first an organised body, it is highly probable that the earliest formularies, both of their creeds and of their liturgies, arose in a time, if not during the life of Gotama, yet at most not long after his decease. Now among the oldest expressions of belief we may with certainty rank the four sentences known as the Four Noble Truths and the summary of the so-called Noble Eightfold Path: and the oldest liturgical formularies preserved to us are, without any doubt, the Pâtimokkha and the various Kammavâ*k*as. It is true that these liturgical formularies, being so much more extensive, may possibly have been modified or added to before they reached the form in which we now possess them; but there is not the slightest trace of any other liturgies having ever been in use in the Buddhist fraternity.

It is of course impossible to attempt to draw a line between the part which Gotama himself may have had in the settlement of the list of offences contained in the Pâtimokkha, and the part that may have been taken by his disciples. Nor indeed, considering the limited character of our knowledge, is that a point of much

importance. But it should perhaps be noticed in this connection that Buddhist tradition does ascribe to one among Gotama's disciples — to Upâli — an especial connection with the Vinaya. This tradition reaches back at least as far as the time when the existing recession of the Pâli Pi*t*akas was made, for we find it both in the Sutta- and in the Vinaya-Pi*t*akas.

Thus in the *K*ullavagga (VI, 13, 1) we find the passage— 'At that time the Blessed One proclaimed the Vinaya in many a way to the Bhikkhus, exalted the Vinaya, exalted the learning of the Vinaya, exalted again and again the venerable Upâli. Then thought the Bhikkhus, "The Blessed One hath proclaimed the Vinaya in many a way, hath exalted the Vinaya, hath exalted the learning of the Vinaya, bath exalted again and again the venerable Upâli. Come now let us learn the Vinaya from the venerable Upâli." And so many Bhikkhus, old and middle-aged and young, learnt the Vinaya from the venerable Upâli.'

And again in a Sutta of the Anguttara Nikâya, where those Bhikkhus are enumerated who, in any particular respect, are the first and foremost in the Brotherhood, Upâli is mentioned as the first among the custodians of the Vinaya (the Vinaya-dharâ). And further, as is well known, it is Upâli who, according to the tradition, plays, at the First Council, the same part of propounder with regard to the Vinaya Texts which Ânanda does with regard to the Dhamma Texts. There may well be some truth in this very ancient tradition that Upâli was specially conversant with the Rules of the Order; but it would be hazardous on that account to ascribe to Upâli a share, not only in the banding down of existing Rules, but in the composition of the Pâtimokkha itself.

As regards the order in which the various offences are arranged in the Pâtimokkha, the principal division corresponds to the division of the Order into Brethren and Sisters: there is a Bhikkhu-pâtimokkha and a Bhikkbunî-pâtimokkha. In each of these two chief divisions the offences are divided into various classes, beginning with the heaviest — with those, that is, that result in the exclusion of the offender from the Order. Inside each class the sequence of the clauses follows no invariable rule. Sometimes offences of a related character are placed together in groups, but sometimes those which would naturally come together are round scattered in quite different parts of the same class. It is perhaps worthy of notice that there sometimes seems, as in the two cases first mentioned in the last note, to be an effort to arrange the offences in groups (vagga) of ten: and in three cases we find regulations formulated with the utmost brevity (the offences being merely expressed by a locative case dependent upon pâkittiya*m*) at the commencement of such a vagga. It seems to us, at least in the present state of our knowledge, quite impossible to draw any conclusions from such peculiarities as to the comparative age of any different parts of the Pâtimokkha. The irregularities in arrangement may very well be due to want of literary clearness in the compilers of the present Form of Confession, and it would be hazardous to attempt to trace in it any historical argument.

The various points in regard to the Pâtimokkha dealt with in the foregoing paragraphs do not of themselves show that it was at all older than the rest of the Vinaya Pi*t*aka; and indeed the work, as a separate work, is not considered among Buddhists to belong to the Pi*t*akas at all, and is therefore not included in the list of works of which the Pi*t*akas consist. But every single Rule or Clause in the Pâtimokkha is in fact round word for word in the Sutta-vibhanga, the quotations being so complete that the Pâtimokkha might be entirely put together again by piecing together extracts from the Vinaya Pi*t*aka. And it is not possible that the Pâtimokkha originated merely by such a process of dovetailing; for the quotations in the Vinaya

Pi*ṭ*aka, though not actually called quotations, bear the unmistakable stamp of being taken from some pre-existing work. The cause which led to the Pâtimokkha, and the Upasampadâ-kammavâ*k*a, being separately preserved at all, is the same as the cause which led to their exclusion from the lists of the Pi*ṭ*aka texts — the fact, that is, of their being liturgical compositions.

We turn now to the consideration of the question how a series of further literary productions were gradually developed out of, or added to the Pâtimokkha.

Whoever reads through the Mahâvagga will at once be struck by one section of it which differs completely both in contents and in form from the rest of the work. This is the section in the Second Book, Chapter III, paragraphs 4-8.

This passage is preceded by the opening words of the Pâtimokkha; and in the passage itself those words are separately paraphrased or explained. But the explanation does not appear to be put into the mouth of the Buddha; it bears rather, without any historical or conversational form, the impersonal shape of a simple commentary: and it only differs from the later commentaries by peculiar solemn diffuseness and rhetorical tautology.

If we were to consider the Mahâvagga only, the sudden and unexplained appearance in this connection, and in this connection only, of an isolated passage of this kind, would have to remain an insoluble puzzle. But when we look further into the other parts of the Vinaya Pi*ṭ*aka, an answer immediately suggests itself. In the portion of that Pi*ṭ*aka which is better called the Sutta-vibhanga, but is divided in the MSS. into two divisions, under the somewhat misleading titles of Pârâ*g*ika and Pâ*k*ittiya, we find, at regularly recurring intervals, passages of an exactly similar character, and without any doubt of the same origin, as the isolated passage in the Mahâvagga.

The Sutta-vibhanga is occupied with laying down and explaining all the Rules which are contained in the Pâtimokkha. Now, immediately after the text of each of these Rules, there is found a word for word commentary upon them — precisely as a word for word commentary follows, in the passage above cited in the Mahâvagga, upon the quoted words of the Introductory Formular of the Pâtimokkha service. Here then lies the explanation. This Introductory Formular is the only passage contained in the Pâtimokkha which is not found also in the Sutta-vibhanga. And with the explanation of the curiously isolated passage in the Mahâvagga we have also a new fact of very great importance. Not only does the Vinaya Pi*ṭ*aka contain, word for word, the whole of the Pâtimokkha, but it contains also, and again word for word, the whole of an ancient Commentary on the Pâtimokkha.

This commentary no longer exists as a separate work, and it would indeed be strange if it did. It was not required in the simple liturgical services of Ordination and Confession in use in the Order: and if any one wished to refer to it, in order to refresh his memory as to the explanation of any passage in the Pâtimokkha, he had only to repeat, or to get repeated over to him, the corresponding passage from the Sutta-vibhanga. There he would find the Old Commentary (as we shall hereafter call it) word for word, together with the additional commentary by which it had been supplemented in later times.

A question may then possibly occur to the reader whether we can be really sure that the Old Commentary has been preserved complete, or whether what we have is a fragment only. We think there can be but little doubt as to the right answer. The Pâtimokkha, which the Old Commentary deals with word by word, has been separately preserved to us, and we know that no one phrase of it remains uncommented upon. And further it is clear from several passages that the words of the

old commentator were considered so sacred or authoritative that they have been kept intact even in cases where they are in contradiction to the later parts of the Vinaya Pi*t*aka. It should however be noted that this Old Commentary is philological and exegetical throughout, containing nothing of a legendary or quasi-historical nature. It is just possible to suggest that it may have originally contained not only such an explanation of the meaning of each Rule, but an account also of the occasion on which the Rule was laid down. But it is difficult to see why greater sacredness should have been attached to one part of the work than to another; or to explain how it was that, if any part was changed, the contradictory passages above referred to were not also altered. Every probability therefore points to the conclusion that we have the complete work still before us, and not fragments of it only.

It seems to us to have been precisely the absence of any such historical account in the older Commentary which probably led to the formation of what was practically the new edition of the Pâtimokkha which now lies before us in the first part of the Vinaya Pi*t*aka.

In the earliest books of the Sutta Pi*t*aka, which contains the statement of Buddhist belief, we find — just as in the Gospels and in the Socratic dialogues — that that belief is not stated directly. The books profess to give, not simply the belief itself, but the belief as the Buddha uttered it, with an account of the time when, and the place at which, he uttered it. The Buddha's new method of salvation, his new doctrine of what salvation was, did not present itself to the consciousness of the early Buddhist community as an idea, a doctrine, standing alone, and merely on its own merits. In their minds it was indissolubly bound up with the memory of the revered and striking personality of him who had proclaimed it. So in the Sutta Pi*t*aka the actor and speaker is almost throughout the Buddha himself: (occasionally, but very seldom, one of his disciples.) Introductions — often indeed short and tending in later times to disappear — give a full account of where, and when, he spoke; what was the occasion which led to his uttering that particular speech; and to whom he uttered it. But, throughout, the principal thing is what the Buddha said.

It is only natural that this distinguishing mark of the literature of the Buddhist Dhamma — much of which was no doubt in existence at a very early date — should have reacted upon the literature of the Buddhist Vinaya. The members of the Order were no longer contented to learn, and to understand the meaning of, the various Rules of the Pâtimokkha. A desire sprang up to have, for each one of them also, a kind of historical basis; to know the story of how the Buddha himself came to lay down the Rule to his disciples. And it was only the Brother who was properly acquainted with all this who was accounted a real 'Doctor of the Law.'

So it is said in the *K*ullavagga (IX, 5, 1):— 'If a Brother, Upâli, has not received gladly both the Pâtimokkhas in their full extent, has not well divided them, well established them, well investigated them, both sutta by sutta, and in every detail; if when asked, "Where was this spoken by the Blessed One?" he fail to solve the question: then there will be some who will say to him, "But then, let the venerable one still devote himself to learning the Vinaya!" thus will they say.'

It is evident from this passage that, at the time when it was written, such a tradition regarding each Rule was in existence; and that the knowledge of these traditions was held in high esteem. It is therefore a reasonable conjecture that steps were taken to amalgamate these traditions with the Text and the Old Commentary in a complete work, which should also contain what we may call Notes on the Rules — that is, decisions on points of Law involved, though not expressed in so many words, in the

Rules; discussions on what cases were really included and what were not, in particular regulations; enumeration of exceptions to the Rules; and so on.

Whether this conjecture be right or not, it is precisely such a work that we have now before us in that part of the Vinaya Pi*ṭ*aka called the Sutta-vibhanga, and divided in the present MSS. as above pointed out, into two books called respectively — after the class of Rules with which they begin — Pârâgika and Pâ*k*ittiya. And it is possible throughout, without the possibility of mistake, to distinguish between the three portions of which the present work is built up. The historical basis comes first, leading up to the extract from the Pâtimokkha, which is always placed in the Buddha's own mouth; then comes the Old commentary, with its verbal explanations; and then, finally, the Notes giving the exceptions to, and the extensions of, the Rule in the Pâtimokkha.

The foregoing paragraphs show the way in which the Sutta-vibhanga grew up on the basis of the Pâtimokkha. The following books — the Khandhakas — give a detailed and connected account of the admission into the Sa*m*gha; of the ceremony of the Uposatha; of the annually recurring observances connected with the beginning and the end of the rainy season; of the principal disciplinary proceedings; and of miscellaneous details regarding the medicine, food, dwelling-places, and daily life of the members of the Order (Bhikkhus). As in the Sutta-vibhanga, so here also, the outward form is arranged in such a way that in the case of every regulation a history was given of the occasion upon which the Buddha was supposed to have made it. These histories again lead up, in most cases, to a liturgical formulary by which the regulation was to be carried out.

While, however, in the case of the Sutta-vibhanga the liturgy on which it has been founded has been preserved in a separate shape, the formularies in the Khandhakas have not as yet, except in some instances, been found in existence apart from the Khandhakas. The principal exception is the Upasampadâ-kammavâ*k*a (The Words of the Act of Ordination), which recurs in its entirety in the First Khandhaka of the Mahâvagga (I, 76, 3 to I, 78, 5). It is impossible therefore as yet to trace the history of the gradual formation of the Khandhakas as we think it already possible to do in the case of the Sutta-vibhanga.

In the Khandhakas too, no doubt, the introductory histories are the latest part. But while some of the formularies and regulations to which they lead up may well be very old, others are probably additions to, or modifications of, those older ones; and it is difficult to attempt to show, even with regard to the exceptions above mentioned, which are the older and which are the later. The misfortune that these forms are not all now separately extant is probably simply due to the fact that the formularies separately preserved (including the Pâtimokkha) are the only ones which continued to be used in actual services among the members of the Order.

Such being the nature and contents, and such — so far as it can be traced — being the origin of the Sutta-vibhanga and of the Khandhakas respectively, it follows that in all probability they were composed, or put into their present shape, at about the same period in the development of early Buddhism — it is even possible that both works arose in immediate connection.

The kind of narrative setting with which, in both cases, the older material has been surrounded is alike in both. Here and there in both works are included real fragments of ancient legend or tradition — as, for instance, the account of the events from the attainment of Buddhahood down to the conversion of Sâriputta and Moggallâna (Mahâvagga I, 1-24), the story of Devadatta (*K*ullavagga VII), the story of the conversion and the sin of Sudinna (Vibhanga, First Pârâgika). But the greater number

of these narratives are of the most meagre description, and have altogether the appearance of being mere inventions.

There is little doubt that this is what they, in fact, were. Actual remembrance of the Buddha, and of his time, could have sufficed only in the rarest instances to give a correct historical basis for the Rules or Ceremonies, which had to be explained. We find a precisely similar state of things leading, in the Introductions to the *G*âtaka Stories, to what were unquestionably inventions: and it must be acknowledged that the compilers have not taken the slightest trouble to conceal the evidently unsubstantial character of most of these summary introductions. But it does not follow that they were invented at the time when the Sutta-vibhanga and the Khandhakas were compiled. They may possibly have formed part of the traditional explanatory teaching of the schools.

As to the time when the Sutta-vibhanga and the Khandhakas were compiled, we have important evidence in their silence regarding the well-known Ten Points.

The long-continued struggle on that question — as important for the history of Buddhism as the Arian controversy for that of Christianity — agitated the whole Buddhist world to its very centre; and the attempted settlement of it, at the Council of Vesâlî, led to a most serious schism in the Buddhist Church. Now the ten expressions in which the question was summarised or catalogued are (as was pointed out in the Introduction to the Pâli Text of the Mahâvagga) conspicuous by their absence from the, Vibhanga, and from all, except the last, of the Khandhakas. The first mention of most of them, and the first use of any one of them as a distinctive war-cry, is found in those last books, which are evidently an appendix to the rest of the Khandhakas, and of an entirely different nature from the earlier ones; for they contain a regular historical account of the two Councils, that of Râgagaha, and that of Vesâlî.

But the Ten Points in dispute were all matters of ecclesiastical law, they all related to observances of the brotherhood, they were in fact questions as to whether or not the ancient Rules should be relaxed or not in these ten respects. Is it possible that in a collection of works like the Vibhanga and the Khandhakas, which seek to set forth, down to the minutest detail, and even with hair-splitting diffuseness, all that has any relation to the daily life of the Brethren, and the regulations of the Buddhist Order — is it possible that in such a collection, if, when it was compiled, the struggle on the Ten Points had already burst into flame, there should be no reference at all, even in interpolations, to any one of these ten disputes? That the difference of opinion on the Ten Points remains altogether unnoticed in those parts of the collection where, in the natural order of things, it would be obviously referred to, and that it is only mentioned in an appendix where the Council held on its account is described, shows clearly, in our opinion, that the Vibhanga and the Khandhakas (save the two last) are older than the Council of Vesâlî — and, of course, a fortiori that the Pâtimokkha and the Kammavâ*k*âs are so too.

The Council of Vesâlî is said in the XIIth Khandhaka of the *K*ullavagga to have taken place a hundred years after the Buddha's death. This is no doubt a round number; and the exact year of the date of the Buddha's death is open to question. If it be placed, according to the Ceylon chronicles, at exactly 218 years before Asoka's coronation, it will fall in or about 483 B.C.

But the expression '218 years' can in no case be regarded as an absolutely reliable statement of actual fact, and the date of 483 B.C. must therefore be taken subject to a marginal allowance of some decades. And it appears to one of us, for various reasons which he has elsewhere stated at length, that the balance of probability leads to the conclusion that the date of the Buddha's Parinibbâna must be brought down to the

period from 420-400 B.C. We do not enter upon that question here, as the details are intricate, and the result uncertain; and it is sufficient for our present purpose to be able to fix the Council of Vesâlî, even after making allowance for all possibilities, at within thirty years of 350 B.C.

We would only point out that there is really no ground for discontent with a result which can be fixed, after all, within a few decades. For what difference does that make in this case? If we had to deal with Grecian history, such a result might well be deemed unsatisfactory. There are differences, both personal and political, between Greece in 480, in 440, and in 400 — differences well known to us. But whether we fix the date of an event in India in 480, or in 440, what does it, at present, matter? Who would be bold enough to say that the mention of India in 480 B.C. calls up to his mind a condition of things different from that suggested by the mention of India in 440 B.C. or even in 400 B.C.? We need not therefore take too much to heart the uncertainty of this chronological result; though we may regret that our comfort is drawn from no better source than our want of knowledge.

The Vibhanga and the Twenty Khandhakas were at that time (circa 350 B.C.) already held in such high repute that no one ventured to alter them; a sanctity of this kind is not acquired without the lapse of a considerable time: and we think it is not going too far to say, Firstly, that these books must have been in existence, as we now have them, within thirty years, earlier or later, of, at least, 360 or 370 B.C.; Secondly, that the Old Commentary they have preserved must be considerably, perhaps fifty years, older; and Thirdly, that the Kammavâ*k*âs and the Pâtimokkha must be older still.

The reader will notice that in the foregoing discussion no mention has been made of the Fifth Book in the present division of the Vinaya Pi*t*aka — the Parivâra-pâ*th*a. The reason is that this work, an abstract of the other parts of the Vinaya, is in fact a very much later compilation, and probably the work of a Ceylonese Thera. In some stanzas, which are found at the end of the Parivâra-pâ*th*a, it is stated to have been composed by 'the highly wise, learned, and skilful Dîpa, after he had inquired here and there into the methods (literally, the way) followed by former teachers.'

We have every hope that the foregoing argument will commend itself to our fellow workers as being, in the main, well founded. We now propose to test it by applying it in explanation of several difficult terms and phrases found in the Vinaya Pi*t*aka, which seem to have been hitherto incorrectly interpreted.

It has been pointed out that, in the Pâtimokkha, the offences are arranged in certain classes, called, with reference to the heinousness of the act committed, Pârâ*g*ika, Sa*m*ghâdisesa, Pâ*k*ittiya, Pâ*t*idesaniya, and Sekhiya. In other parts of the Vinaya, other offences are called Thulla*kk*aya and Dukka*t*a. On this nomenclature the Rev. S. Coles has founded a trenchant attack upon Buddhist morality. He says:

'Beside the Pârâjikas there are lesser faults, the nature of which is determined by various causes, as will subsequently appear. These are Sanghâdisesa, Thullaccaya, and Dukka*t*a faults, and can all be easily remedied, the two latter especially; as, after a fault of this kind has been committed, the culprit has only to confess to his Upajjhâya (ordaining priest) without much delay, and is then exempted from all evil consequences; but the Sanghâdisesa being more serious (about half a Pârâjikâ), a course of penance has to be submitted to, and confession without delay made to twenty-five superior Bhikkhus. The nature and extent of these penances are not defined in the first book of the Vinaya Pi*t*aka, but in others, to which reference will be made when these books are brought under consideration. Suffice it to say, that they can possibly have no deterring effect on crime, but rather form loop-holes through

which most enormous and disgusting misdeeds may be committed, and yet the perpetrator may remain not only as a Buddhist, but as a Bhikkhu.'

Mr. Coles then applies this argument to show that many offences against morality, being only called Dukka*t*a and not Pârâ*g*ika, must have been looked upon very leniently, not only by the Buddhists, but by Gotama himself; and that therefore his system of morality was not of the lofty kind it has usually been supposed to be, but was, in fact, a mere cloak and encouragement to wickedness and crime!

If Mr. Coles had looked at the Pi*t*aka he was discussing from a historical, instead of from a controversial, point of view, he would scarcely have advanced this argument. The use of the term Dukka*t*a does not arise from, nor is it evidence of, a weakness in moral feeling; but merely of a difference in point of time: It occurs only in what we have ventured above to call the Notes: that is to say, in the latest portion of the Pi*t*aka. When the author or authors of the final recession of the Vinaya had to speak of an offence not actually mentioned, though implied, in the text before them, they did not presume to call it by any of the names applied in the Pâtimokkha itself to the classification of offences. They no more dared to add to the number of Pârâ*g*ikâs, for instance, than a clergyman would now venture seriously to propose an addition to the Ten Commandments. They made use of two technical terms (both entirely new ones), namely, Thulla*kk*aya and Dukka*t*a (literally, Serious Transgression and Bad-deed), using the former more sparingly, and for graver misdemeanours. No argument based on passages where the word Dukka*t*a occurs can therefore have any force as to the teaching of Gotama himself; and the Bhikkhus, who did use the word, were restrained from using the older term Pârâ*g*ika by a feeling of reverence towards their sacred books — a feeling surely deserving, not of censure, but of sympathy.

Again, there are certain terms applied to various parts of the Vinaya itself on which the above historical analysis may throw some light. When Asoka, in the Edict of Bhabra, addressed to the Buddhist Order, exhorted them to take as their authority, among other works, the Vinaya-Samukase, or Abstract of the Vinaya, he may fairly be supposed to have referred to the Pâtimokkha, which that epithet would very appropriately describe, If it be asked why he did not then call it the Pâtimokkha, the explanation may be either that that word is more especially a term for the act to be performed, than for the liturgy which shows the way to perform it (though, it was also undoubtedly used as a name of the liturgy), or else that the work was known under both designations.

We would just add, in passing, that, in the passage in question, the reading samukase (samutkarsha), instead of the formerly accepted samâkase, is quite clear in General Cunningham's lithograph; and the generally accepted view that the Edict was addressed to a council, and is therefore an authoritative confirmation of the Ceylon traditions regarding the Council of Patna, ought to be reconsidered, The Edict merely says: 'King Devânampiya of Mâgadha salutes the Sa*m*gha' (that is, the Order, or the Community, of Bhikkhus). Without desiring to throw any doubt upon the reality of the Council of Patna, we are driven to the conclusion that such an expression as 'the Sa*m*gha' could not have been meant to describe a formal council. Surely, if the Edict had been addressed to such a council, the fact would have been plainly intimated.

It is just possible that Vinaya-Samukase may refer to the Old Commentary as well as to the Pâtimokkha; but this is not probable, for there is no reason to believe that in Asoka's time the Old Commentary any longer existed apart from its set ting in the Vibhanga. And Vinaya-Samukase cannot for the reasons above stated mean, as has been supposed, the Parivâra-pâ*th*a.

As regards the meaning of the word Pâtimokkha we have the explanation of the Old Commentator in that single passage of his work found, as above pointed out, in the Khandhakas. He there describes it as 'the origin, the front (mukha), the chief of the good Dhammas;' where the word Dhammâ means 'qualities, ' and where the evident inference is that the commentator derived Pâtimokkha from mukha. But, on the other hand, the tradition of the Northern Buddhists, in whose Sanskrit works the word is replaced by Prâtimoksha, points to a derivation from the root mu*k*.

It seems scarcely open to doubt that we must, in accordance with this last interpretation, connect the word with mu*k*, and not with mukha. 'Pratimukha' means in Sanskrit 'over against, standing close in front.' How is it possible to derive from that any meaning appropriate as a title for the liturgy of confession called Pâtimokkha? On the other hand, the derivation from mu*k* is straightforward and simple. Prati-mu*k* (âtmanep.) means 'to free oneself, to get rid of;' and it is precisely through the recitation of this formular, and the answering of the questions contained in it, that the conscience of the member of the Brotherhood was set free from the sense or the offence he had incurred. Pâtimokkha or Prâtimoksha means therefore 'Disburdening, Getting free.' The lengthening or the first vowel in the Pâli word is not without analogies which have been already adduced by Childers. It is certain that the word is older than the present shape of the Formulary now so called; for it is used several times in the Formulary itself, as well as in many or the oldest Suttas.

The Old Commentator makes the Pâtimokkha 'the head of the good Dhammas.' There is a curious passage in the Pâtimokkha where the Dhammas are said to be included in the Suttas:

'If a Bhikkhu at the half-monthly recitation of the Pâtimokkha should say, "Now for the first time do I notice that this Dhamma, as one handed down in the Suttas, embraced in the Suttas, gets recited every half-month!" then' &c.

It is plain here that neither Dhamma nor Sutta is used in the sense to which we are accustomed from the later books. The Dhammas recited half-monthly are those contained in the scheme of offences given in the Pâtimokkha, and the Suttas must therefore mean the separate clauses of that Formulary.

The fact is that the use of the word Sutta is by no means confined in the oldest Pâli to the texts of what was afterwards the Sutta Pi*t*aka, nor is it exclusively used either in earlier or later times in opposition to Vinaya. Thus we find it used again, as we think, of the Rules of the Pâtimokkha; and in contrast, as in the rule above quoted, to Dhamma, in *K*ullavagga IV, 14, 22, 23:

'This Bhikkhu, of such and such a name, is a preacher of the Dhamma; but the Suttas have not been handed down to him, nor the Sutta-Vibhanga.'

'This Bhikkhu, of such and such a name, is a preacher of the Dhamma, and the Suttas have been handed down to him, but not the Sutta-Vibhanga.'

So again in the constantly repeated phrase above referred to —

'If the two Pâtimokkhas are (or are not, as the connection requires) thoroughly known to a Bhikkhu in their entirety with all their divisions and explanations, if he have (or have not) thoroughly mastered them Sutta by Sutta, and Detail by Detail; then' &c.

— the word Sutta evidently refers to the clauses of the two Pâtimokkhas; and we find also in the immediate context the mention of Dhamma or of Vinaya, or of both.

It is no doubt true that in one passage of the Mahâ-parinibbâna Sutta (IV, 8-11 p, 40), Sutta is opposed to Vinaya in much the same way as Sutta Pi*t*aka was afterwards opposed to Vinaya Pi*t*aka; yet the contrast between these two ideas is usually expressed by the apposition of Dhamma to Vinaya, and the passage in the Mahâ-

parinibbâna Sutta stands, so far as we yet know, quite alone. Indeed in the oldest tradition the discourses or conversations now called Suttas seem not to have been called by that name, but are referred to as Suttantas.

So in the Mahâvagga III, 5, 9, 12 mention is made of devout men, or of devout women, who may have been accustomed to recite some well-known Suttanta; and in the next Khandhaka (IV, 15, 4) we find Suttanta, Dhamma, and Vinaya all occurring in one context:

'It may happen, Brethren, that in some district on the day of Pavâra*n*â the night may have become far spent while the Brethren are in confusion — some reciting the Dhamma, those versed in the Suttantas intoning some Suttanta together, the custodians of the Vinaya discussing the Vinaya, and the preachers of the Dhamma discoursing about the Dhamma.'

The whole of these expressions recur in *K*ullavagga IV, 4, 4; and are found again, with others of a similar character, in *K*ullavagga VI, 6, 2. This last passage is in the Introduction to a fable which of course recurs, as a *G*âtaka, in the *G*âtaka collection, and with an introduction in almost the same words. We should therefore expect to find there also the epithet suttantika ('versed in the Suttantas'), if that expression had remained in use as late as the fifth century A.D.; but it is omitted, the Suttantikas having been then long since replaced by those entrusted, not with the whole, but with special portions only, of the Dhamma literature. The word Suttanta was however still in common use at the time when the presumably later books now contained in the Pi*t*akas were composed; for it occurs in the Anguttara Nikâya, and in a constantly recurring verse in the Buddhava*m*sa in which it is opposed to Vinaya, and the word is still used in the MSS. as the title of the more important Suttas.

In the passage quoted above from the *K*ullavagga IV, 14, 22, 23 there is a term Sutta-vibhanga used as the name of some part of the Vinaya literature apparently distinct from the Suttas of the Pâtimokkha. 'The Suttas have been handed down to him, but not the Suttavibhanga.'

The word recurs only in one other passage, and that is in the appended Khandhakas of the *K*ullavagga, in the account of the Council of Vesâlî. Seven passages are there quoted from the Pâtimokkha in condemnation of seven out of the Ten Points raised by the heretics; and in answer to the question, ' Where was it condemned?' and before the passages are quoted, the place where the passage was uttered is mentioned, and condemnation is stated to be 'in the Suttavibhanga.' Thus Revata says, 'Is it right, Lord, to drink *g*alogi?'

Sabbakâmi replies, ' What, Friend, is this *g*alogi?'

Revata: 'Is it right, Lord, to drink strong drink which not being fermented, is not yet intoxicating?'

Sabbakâmi: 'No, my friend, it is not right.'

Revata: 'Where has it been condemned?'

Sabbakâmi: 'At Kosambi in the Suttavibhanga.'

Revata: 'What does he (who drinks *g*alogi) commit?'

Sabbakâmî: 'He commits the Pâ*k*ittiya offence of drinking strong drink and of drinking intoxicating liquors.'

This is a quotation, of the Pâ*k*ittiya Rule, No. 51; but the words quoted do not in fact condemn the drinking of toddy, and neither the Pâtimokkha nor the Old Commentary contains any reference to the place, Kosambî, where the words are here said to have been uttered.

It is only in the introduction afterwards appended (in what is now called the Vibhanga) to the two older works, that Kosambi is mentioned; and in the appendix

following the Rule 51 in the Vibhanga there are no exceptions which would include *g*alogi. But Kosambî is mentioned in the Introductory History. It is therefore most probable that the term Sutta-vibhanga refers to what is now called the Vibhanga; or, if not, at least to that body of traditional teaching (including the Pâtimokkha and the Old Commentary) out of which the present Vibhanga was composed.

It may be convenient to make some reference here to the question whether the literature above discussed was handed down by memory only, or by writing. We are justified in expecting to find, in texts dealing in such minute detail with the daily life of the members of the Buddhist Order, some distinct evidence — and it will be equally distinct whether it consists in actual statement, or in silence — as to writing, and the use of written books. And this expectation is not disappointed.

In the first place, there are several passages which confirm in an indisputable manner the existence of the art of writing at the time when the Vinaya texts were put into their present shape.

'A certain man, who had committed a theft, ran away, and got ordained among the Bhikkhus. Now he was written up in the king's palace with an injunction that he should be slain wheresoever he should be found.' —

'But there occurred to the parents of Upâli this consideration: "If Upâli should learn writing, Upâli might thus after our decease live at ease, and not be troubled."'

And in the Vibhanga we find an interesting explanation of the Third Pârâgika Rule, which lays down that whosoever wilfully kills a man, or brings about his death, must be expelled from the Order.

In the Notes on this Rule the Sutta-vibhanga discusses the case of some one causing the death of another by persuading him that suicide is glorious, or that it results in salvation. And in this connection the possibility is considered of these representations being made to the proposed victim, not by word of mouth, and not by a messenger, but by writing.

'He engraves a writing to this effect: "Who so dies, he acquires wealth, or acquires fame, or goes to heaven." By that writing he is guilty of a Dukka*t*a offence. The other sees the writing, and, determining to die, is filled with painful feelings. (The writer is) guilty of a Thulla*kk*aya offence. He does die. (The writer is) guilty of a Pârâgika offence.'

And again, with respect to the injunction addressed to the Sisters of the Order not to devote themselves to worldly wisdom (tira*kkh*âna-vigg*â*), the Vibhanga makes an exception in favour of learning to write.

It is evident therefore that writing was in vogue in the time when the Notes on the Rules were put into their present form, that it was made use of for the publication of official announcements, and for the drawing up of written communications in private life; and that while the knowledge of the art was a possible source of livelihood, it was not confined to 'clerks, ' but was acquired by ordinary persons, and even by women.

But it is a long step from the use of writing for such public or private notifications to the adoption of it for the purpose of recording an extensive and sacred literature: and our texts show — and show, as it seems to us, in an equally indisputable manner — that for this latter purpose writing, however well known, had not yet come into use.

Had the sacred texts been written down and read, books, manuscripts, and the whole activity therewith connected, must have necessarily played a very important part in the daily life of the members of the Buddhist Order. Now the texts of the Vinaya place clearly enough before our eyes the whole of the 'personal property, ' so to speak, of the Buddhist Ârâmas and Vihâras. Every movable thing, down to the

smallest and least important domestic utensils, is in some way or other referred to, and its use pointed out; while the use of other articles, not usually found in the Vihâras, is mentioned, and condemned. But nowhere do we find the least trace of any reference to manuscripts; much less of inks, or pens, or styles, or leaves, or other writing materials.

And we do find, on the contrary, passages which show the difficulties which arose every time that the memorial tradition by word of mouth of any of the sacred texts was interrupted, or threatened to be interrupted.

So, for instance, we find the case discussed of no one Bhikkhu, among all the Brethren dwelling in some particular place, knowing the Pâtimokkha. There was no other way out of the difficulty, save that of one of the Bhikkhus being sent out to some neighbouring fraternity, with the commission there to learn the Pâtimokkha by heart, either in its full extent (that is, as we take it, all the rules being learnt in full) or at least in abstract.

And again, in a passage already quoted, we hear of the case of an Upâsaka, who knows some important Suttanta, and is afraid that the knowledge of it will fade away. So he sends to a fraternity of Bhikkhus, and invites the Brethren to come over to him; and in that case an exception is made to the Rule forbidding the Brethren to travel in the rainy season, provided only that they do not stay away from home longer than seven days.

We may quote in this connection a passage of the same tendency from the Anguttara Nikâya, in which, among the circumstances hurtful to the security and the propagation of the Buddhist faith, the possibility is mentioned of the well-instructed Bhikkhus neglecting to take pains to hand on to others the Suttantas which they know. Then, when they have passed away, 'the root of that Suttanta is cut off, and it finds no place of refuge.'

It is very plain from these last passages that the Buddhist community in its earliest days did not think of the possibility of using writing as a means of guarding against such painful accidents. Can this have arisen from any belief that writing the books would have been an irreverent treatment of them? We cannot think that among such a community as that of the Buddhists — who were so advanced in their views that they deliberately adopted the language of the people, and even took no thought, within the ranks of their community, of caste — any such consideration would have prevailed. It seems much more probable that, at the date referred to, the art of writing had not been taken advantage of for the purposes of any kind of literature; but that its use was wholly confined to recording short messages or notes, or private letters, or advertisements of a public character — a result which may well have been due to the want of any practical material on which to engrave the letters that were nevertheless evidently known.

On the texts above quoted, and the inferences which may fairly be drawn from them, we would base two remarks. Firstly, that there can be no reasonable ground for doubting the correctness of the ancient tradition preserved in the well-known verse of the Ceylon Chroniclers, when, speaking of the time of Va*tt*a Gâma*n*i, who began to reign 88 B.C. they say,

> 'The text of the Three Pitakas, and the Commentary too thereon,
> The wise Bhikkhus of former time had handed down by word of mouth:
> The then Bhikkhus, perceiving how all beings do decay,
> Meeting together, wrote them in books, that the Dhamma might last long.'

But, secondly, though we must therefore believe that the Vinaya, before it was reduced to writing, was handed down for about three hundred years solely by memory, and that it lived only in the minds of the Vinayadharâ, the Bhikkhus 'who were versed in the Vinaya, ' we do not think it is at all necessary, or even possible, to impugn the substantial accuracy of the texts handed down in a manner that seems, to moderns, so unsafe. The Text, as it lies before us, stands so well against all proofs, whether we compare its different parts one with another, or with the little that is yet known of its northern counterparts, that we are justified in regarding these Pâli books as in fact the authentic mirror of the old Mâgadhî text as fixed in the central schools of the most ancient Buddhist Church. That text, in the dialect of Magadha, may have been lost to us, once for all; and we can scarcely hope, unless some isolated sentences may hereafter be found preserved here and there in Inscriptions, that this loss will ever be, even partially, made good. But we may well be thankful that the faithful zeal and industry of these old monks has preserved for us a translation, in a dialect so nearly allied to the original, and in so perfect and trustworthy a state as the Pâli version of the Vinaya still undoubtedly presents.

We trust that the choice we have made from the literature of the Vinaya Pi*t*aka for insertion in this Collection of Translations from the Sacred Books of the East will be considered to need little justification. As the oldest and in many respects most important material of the Vinaya literature we have included a version of the Pâtimokkha; though confining ourselves to the Bhikkhu-Pâtimokkha, as our predecessors, Mr. Dickson and Professor Minayeff, have done before us. We could not consider, even after their labours, that a new translation of this difficult text would be superfluous. And of the younger literature we have confined ourselves to the Khandhakas, both because these books, in their variety, and in the fulness of their contents, are better calculated to afford a correct view of the conditions, and the life, of that oldest and most influential of the many monkish orders, the Buddhist Sa*m*gha; and also because the Sutta-vibhanga is little more than an expansion of the Pâtimokkha, which we have already, for the reasons just stated, determined to include.

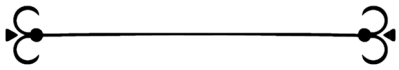
T. W. RHYS DAVIDS.
H. OLDENBERG.
November, 1880.

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON MAHÂVAGGA III, 2, 2 (vassupanâyikâ).

As entering upon Vassa is called vassa*m* upaga*kkh*ati or vassa*m* upeti, we believe that upanâyikâ, the final member of the compound vassupanâyikâ (entrance upon Vassa), must not be derived from upa-nî, but from upa-i (upan-i). Comp. *S*atapatha-Brâhma*n*a II, 3, 2, 2: ahar-ahar vai Na*d*o Naishidho Yama*m* râgâna*m* daksh*i*nata upanayati (Sâya*n*a: upaga*kkh*ati). The preposition upan contained in upan-ayati will be treated ofby Professor JOH. SCHMIDT. in the 26th volume of Kuhn's Zeitschrift.

PART I. The Pâtimokkha

THE PÂTIMOKKHA.



THE WORDS OF DISBURDENMENT.

REVERENCE TO THE BLESSED ONE, THE HOLY ONE, THE FULLY ENLIGHTENED ONE.

NIDANA.

End of Sample