

The Early Vinaya Stand on Monastic Sexual Behaviour: A Study of the First Paaraajika of the Theravada Vinaya

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Introduction

Celibacy has been a key aspect of the Buddhist monastic life from the beginning. In fact it has been prescribed for both householders and monks though at two different levels. For the former, celibacy has been prescribed as a part of their more intensive religious behaviour associated with the observance of uposathaEndnotes

Uposatha (Sanskrit: upavashatha) observance pre-dates Buddhism. It seems that the practice was already there as a part of Indian religious life and the Buddhists in fact adopted it partly on popular demand [See *Vinaya* II: Uposatha-khandhaka for details] . With the gradual development of

monasticism in Buddhism it seems that specific modes of religious observance were evolved for the laity, an important aspect of which was for them to spend a day in a monastery undertaking to observe eight (attanga-sila) or ten precepts (dasa-sila), day during which householders are expected to undertake to observe several more precepts than their regular five precepts. In the regular five precepts what comes as refraining from sexual misconduct (kaamesu micchaacaaraa veramani) becomes, under this special observance, equal to what is observed by the monks and nuns, namely, refraining from non-noble behaviour (abrahma-cariyaa veramani). Whereas total abstinence from sex is only optional for householders for the monks and nuns it has been mandatory from the beginning of the Sangha organization.

This paper focuses basically on the practice of celibacy within the monastic community for it is in the context of monastic life that the full import of the practice becomes clearly evident. In the monastic discipline, Vinaya, rules and traditions related to sexual behaviour become very important and hence one aspect of the paper will be to study the mechanism of the Vinaya rules associated with monastic sexual behaviour. Since Vinaya receives its justification in the broader context of the Buddhist religious practice aimed at attaining the purification/liberation (visuddhi/vimutti) it is crucial for us to understand the doctrinal justification of celibacy within the broader context.

The paper will be organized in the following manner: the first part will discuss the Vinaya or the disciplinary rules related to monastic celibacy. The second part will discuss the doctrinal foundations of this practice. For the first section my main sources will be the Theravada Pali Vinaya

literature, namely, the Vinaya-pitaka and its commentary by Buddhaghosa. More recent secondary literature will be cited for further clarification. For the second the main sources will be in addition to the Vinaya-pitaka, the Sutta-pitaka or the discourses in the Pali canon. Although the title of the paper highlights the first parajika relevant to the bhikkhu (male) sangha, the similar rules relevant to the bhikkhuni (female) sangha and the other subsidiary rules associated with the sexual relations between bhikkhu and bhikkhuni sangha will also be discussed.

I. The Theravada Vinaya Stand on Celibacy

It is important to note at the beginning that the Vinaya rule connected with celibacy is the very first of the rules counting among the most severe in the degree of violation, and it is common for both bhikkhu and bhikkhuni sangha. The four rules included in the first category, namely, parajika, are so called for the particular violations amount to the 'defeat' of the offending member. What this term exactly means is given in the Vinaya: Like a person, whose head is cut off, is unable to live with that mutilated body, a bhikkhu having associated with sex becomes a non-samana and non-sakyan-son *Paaraajiko hotiiti seyyathaapi naama puriso siisacchinno ababbho tena sariirabandhanena jivitum, evam eva bhikkhu methunam dhammamam patisevitvaa asamano hoti askyaputtiyo , tena vuccati paaraajiko hotiiti.* (Vinaya III p.28.) (i.e. loses his monkhood and the membership among the Buddha's sangha). This shows that the sense of 'defeat', amounting to losing one's monkhood, has much stronger connotation than it would usually be believed to contain. By

violating this rule one becomes ‘un-associable’ (asamvaasa) by the Sangha, which technically means that the Sangha cannot execute vinaya acts having him/her as a member, cannot recite the Vinaya together and does not share the same mode of training with the particular person any more Asamvaasoti samvaaso naama ekakammam ekuddeso samasikkhaa, eso samvaaso naama, so tena saddhim natthi, tena vuccati asamvaasoti. (*Vinaya* III p.28.).

The first parajika rule has the main prohibition with two specifications. The main rule goes as: whoever bhikkhu engages in sexual act becomes defeated and un-associable [*yo pana bhikkhu methunam dhammam patiseveyya paarajiko hoti asamvaaso*]. This original rule was enacted due to sexual intercourse by the monk named Sudinna with his former wife. It is known that the Buddha did not enact vinaya rules until the conditions that necessitated doing were there and a tradition going back to the early period has that during the first twenty years of the Sangha there were no any regulated vinaya rules, but, instead the disciples were guided by the Dhamma itself. The Sudinna’s case is considered to be first serious matter that arose within the Sangha.

The conditions under which Sudinna had to have sex with his former wife are quite clear; he was the only son of a rich family not wanting to lose their son and also not wanting see their vast property perished in the absence of heir, they first tried their best to avert him from his decision to join the Sangha, once it failed and when he visited his parents at their house for the first time again they tried to lure him back and having failed in both efforts the mother made a plea that at least he should produce a heir to their family to which Sudinna had to agree. Consequently he had

sex with his wife with the intention of impregnating her [an act which actually caused pregnancy].

By this time there was no rule prohibiting the act of this nature. The Vinaya says that he did so not seeing the disadvantages of the act *Apannatte vinaye anaadiinavadasso...* (Vinaya III, p.18). But his subsequent behaviour characterized by remorse shows that he was not 'innocent' in his mind. I will come to this point later. When the Buddha came to know the incident he enacted the rule prohibiting sexual intercourse.

Two clauses, 'at least with a female animal' (*antamaso tiracchaanagata-ayapi*) and "having made commitment to the training of bhikkhus, without giving up the training and without admitting the weakness" [*bhikkhuunam sikkhaasaajiiva-samaapanno sikkham apaccakkhaaya dubbalyam anaavikatvaal*] were added due to subsequent developments. The first had to be when a monk had sex with a female monkey thinking that what is prohibited is only sex with humans, and the next was added when some monks who got deprived by having sex wanted to return to the Sangha confessing their subsequent admittance of wrong-doing. The second specification allows that if a monk who had sex did so having distanced himself from the training and having admitted his inability to conform to the rule, he could return later to the Sangha. The case is clear for in fact by doing as indicated in the specification a monk gives back his monkhood to the Sangha and thereby becomes an ordinary householder, who is beyond the jurisdiction of the Vinaya and whose behaviour consequently would not amount to violating the rule. Such a person may return to the Sangha provided that he or she were to display the proper

attitude toward the Vinaya. One who did not fulfill this requirement should not be accepted if he or she were to return. The Buddha clearly says that a person fulfilled the requirement should be accepted and granted upasampadaa on return and one who did not conform to it must not be given upasampadaa (*Vinaya* III, p.23).

The Pali word used here is “na upasampaadetabbo” meaning, ‘should not be given upasampadaa [full membership], and not “na pabbajetabbo” meaning “should not be given pabbajjaa” [initial leaving of household life], which seems to imply that such a person still may be accepted as a samanera [novice]. (*Vinaya* III, p.23). With the addition of two specifications the complete rule on the first parajika reads as: *whoever monk, without giving up the training, and without revealing his weakness, were to have sex even with a female animal becomes defeated and un-associable Yo pana bhikkhu bhikkhuunam sikkhaasaajiiva-samaapanno sikkham apaccakkhaaya dubbalyam anaavikatvaa methunam dhammam patiseveyya anatamaso tiracchaanagataayapi paaraajiko hoti aamvaso.*

In the specific context of the rule what is meant by the sexual activity [methuna-dhamma] is sex between man and woman. However, the rule was meant to be understood more broadly and more precisely. The phrase “engages in sex” [methunam dhammam patisevati] has been described defining what sex means and what engaging in sex means. Sex is defined as “that which is improper phenomenon, uncultured phenomenon, lowly phenomenon, lewd, requiring cleansing by water, covert, requiring the engagement between two [people] *Methunadhammo naama: yo so asaddhammo gaamadhammo vasaladhammo dutthullam odakantikam rahassam dvayamdvaya samaapatti, eso methunadhammo*

naama (Vinaya III, p.28). The engagement in such act has been described as “inserting of the mark with the mark or sex organ with the sex organ at least to the amount of mustard seed” *Patisevatinaama: yo nimittena nimittam angajaatena angajaatam antamaso tilaphalamattampi paveseti, eso patisevati naama* (Vinaya III, p.28). In the definition of sex, the fact that association of two people has been given as a requirement is important for us to understand the nature of sex referred to here. In the subsequent description of engaging in sex, although involvement of two sexual organs and penetration are mentioned, giving thereby an impression of heterosexual sex, in its technical analysis what the rule specifies is not mere vaginal sex but sex in any one of the three modes, namely, vaginal, anal and oral, the three modes being referred to as “three paths” [tayo magga]. This broadens the definition of the partner of sex, not confining to heterosexual act but sexual act between any two partners, whether or not belonging to the same sex. What really matters is whether or not sex act involves any of the ‘three paths’ and not sex of those who are engaged in. In the technical analysis, following this convention, three females are identified as human, non-human and animal females and three males are identified as human, non-human and animal males. [Although the category of non-human may be taken as including all non human members including animals, in the Pali usage ‘a-manussa’ is usually taken to mean only non-human counterparts in sub-divine, demon or hungry-ghost spheres, and not even those who belong to the divine sphere.] Although the involvement of two people has been mentioned in the definition of the sex act [as we above], an incident, mentioned in the ‘case studies’ [viniita-vatthul], of a monk who took his

own member by his own mouth and who inserted his own member in his own anus have been judged to have violated the rule and guilty of parajika offence *Vinaya* III, p.35. Series of incidents involving dead bodies show that the rule applies equally even if the ‘partner’ is not alive.

The next category of offences, which is called ‘sanghaadisesa’ for the recovery process from the violation requires the participation of the Sangha at the beginning and at the end [i.e. ‘formal meeting of the Sangha’], begins with sex that does not involve ‘the three paths’ mentioned above. It is important to note that this act is not described as methuna-dhamma or sexual act, and consequently the violators are not considered as “defeated”. The relevant rule goes as: intentionalemission of semen, unless in a dream, involves the sanghaadisesa offence *Sancetanika sukka-visatthi annatra supinanta sanghaadiseso* (*Vinaya* III, p.112).’ This rule covers any sexual act not involving any of the paths, executed within oneself or between two people. The origin of the rule is a group of monks who engaged in masturbation. The case studies, however, refer to incidents between two monks but not involving paths. The two conditions, having intention and emission of semen both have to be fulfilled in order one to be considered guilty. This means that if emission happens even in a sexually provocative act or in an act motivated by sexual desire but emission is not intended or in an act meant for emission but emission does not happen, the monk concerned has been considered not guilty technically.

In addition to this rule involving ‘second degree’ sex, there are four other rules belonging to the same category related sexual desire, namely, touching a woman’s body with a perverted mind (sanghaadisesa rule # 2),

speaking lewd words to a woman with a perverted mind (rule # 3), speaking with a perverted mind, in the presence of woman, in praise of administering to one's sexual needs (rule # 4) and functioning as a go-between carrying man's sexual intentions to a woman or vice versa (rule # 5). Although these rules do not involve any direct sexual act in themselves such behaviour has been considered serious violations due to their obvious unhealthy impact on celibate life.

It is interesting to note that the parajika field for the bhikkhunis is much broader than that of bhikkhus. In addition to their being bound by the almost identical first rule related to having sex with a male partner *Yaa pana bhikkhunii chandaso methunam dhammam patiseveyya antamaso tiracchaanagatenaapi paaraajikaa hoti asamvaasaa*. The rule is not completely identical for it does not have the clause concerning giving up the training and revealing weakness, which is a concession for those former bhikkhus wished to come back. [human, non-human or animal], they have two additional parajika offences not involving direct sexual intercourse but physical touch with a man, which are as follows:

whatever bhikkhuni overflowing with desire, should consent to the rubbing or rubbing up against or taking hold of or touching or pressing against, below the collarbone, above the circle of the knees, of a male person who is overflowing with desire, she too becomes defeated, not in communion (rule # 5);

whatever bhikkhuni overflowing with desire for the sake of following what is verily not the rule, should consent to the holding of the hand by a

male person who is overflowing with desire or should consent to the holding of the edge of [her] outer cloak or should stand or should talk or should go to a rendezvous or should consent to a man's approaching [her] or should enter into a covered place or should dispose the body for such a purpose, she too becomes defeated, not in communion (rule # 8 Translation from K.R. Norman in *The Patimokkha*, ed. by William Pruitt, PTS, 2001, pp. 119 & 121.).

What is covered by these additional two parajika rules [NB, bhikkhunis have altogether eight parajika rules.] seems to have been included within the category of the sanghaadisesa in the case of bhikkhus. What is interesting to note is that there is no sanghaadisesa rule for the bhikkhunis corresponding to the first of that category of rules for the bhikkhus involving sex other than three paths. For the bhikkhunis sexual intercourse has been conceived solely as heterosexual act involving a male partner. Although there is no evidence in the Vinaya to suggest that it was aware of lesbianism involving two women, precaution has been taken against bhikkhunis engaging in activities generating self-stimulation.

In addition to the rules concerning sexual acts or sexually oriented behaviour there are good number of rules for both bhikkhus and bhikkhunis that make sense only in the context of sexual behaviour. For instance, in the case of bhikkhus, in addition to the parajika and sanghaadisesa offences discussed above, there are following rules of varying degrees of gravity:

i. Indefinite [aniyata]: two offences, one involving sitting with a woman privately in a screened seat convenient enough for sexual intercourse, and

the other sitting in a place convenient enough not for having sex but for addressing her with lewd words. These two are called indefinite because the wrong-doing has to be determined on the word of a female follower [lupaasikaal] who is trustworthy and who brings forth the charge and the admittance by the person involved; accordingly the person may be charged either with parajika or with sanghaadisesa.

ii. Offence entailing expiation with forfeiture [nissaggiya paacittiya]: the fifth rule in this category prohibits a monk from accepting a robe from bhikkhuni who is not related. He may do so only when it is an exchange of robe.

Offences involving expiation [paacittiya]: the following offences involving expiation seem to be relevant for the present discussion: sharing the same bed together with a woman [rule # 6]; teaching Dhamma to a woman exceeding five or six sentences in the absence of a knowledgeable man [rule # 7]; exhorting bhikkhunis without approval of the Sangha [rule # 21]; even approved by the Sangha, exhorting after he Sun has set [rule # 22]; exhorting a bhikkhuni having gone to her quarters except when a bhikkhuni is not well [rule # 23]; giving robe material to a non-related bhikkhuni, except exchange [rule # 25]; sewing a robe for or have a robe sewn by a bhikkhuni who is not related [rule # 26]; setting out on the same journey, by arrangement, with a bhikkhuni even to the next village except at the proper time [rule # 27]; embark with a bhikkhuni, by arrangement, on a boat journey other than crossing over [rule # 28]; eating knowingly food prepared by a bhikkhuni, other than by a prior

arrangement with the householder [rule # 29]; taking a seat with a bhikkhuni privately, one man with one woman [rule # 30]; taking a seat with a woman on a screened seat [rule # 44]; taking a seat with a woman privately, one man with one woman [rule # 45]; setting out on the same journey, by arrangement, with a woman, even to the next village [rule # 67]. The purpose of the rules seems to prevent any situation that could be conducive for any mutual intimacy causing damage to one's celibate life.

In the case of bhikkhunis, in addition to the parajika rules, there are subsidiary rules of varying degree of gravity that can be made sense only in the context of celibate life. They are as follows:

i. Offences entailing the formal meeting of the Sangha [sanghaadisesa]: herself overflowing with desire, accepting with her own hand food from the hands of a man overflowing with desire and partaking of it [rule # 5] and instructing a bhikkhuni to ignore whether or not the man offering food is overflowing with desire, but accept with her own hands such food and partake of it since she herself is not overflowing with desire [rule # 6]; acting as a go-between conveying man's sexual desire to woman or vice versa [rule # 7].

[NB. There are no indefinite [aniyata] offences for bhikkhunis, and none of the thirty offences of expiation involving forfeiture [nisaggiya-pacittiya] seem to be relevant for the present discussion.]

ii. Offences entailing expiation [paacittiya]: Slapping [genital] with the palms of the hand [rule # 3]; using a wax-stick [for stimulation] (rule # 4);

washing [genital] inserting the fingers more than two finger-joints (rule # 5); standing together or talking together, one woman with one man, in the dark of the night when there is no light [rule # 11]; standing together or talking with a man, one woman with one man, in a screened place [rule # 12]; standing together or talking with a man, one woman with one man, in an open place [rule # 13]; standing together with or talking with a man, one woman with one man, in a carriage or in a cul-de-sac or at crossroads or should whisper in his ear or should dismiss the bhikkhuni who is her companion [rule # 14]; not giving up keeping company with a householder or a householder son even when she is advised against it by the other bhikkhunis [rule # 36]; entering into park with bhikkhus knowingly and without permission [rule # 51]; without having obtained permission from the Sangha or from the group should sit together with a man, one woman with one man, make a boil or a scab that has formed on the lower part of her body burst or break or have it be washed or smeared or bound up or unbound [rule # 60]; ordaining a trainee who keeps company with men, youths, who is a dwelling place for grief [rule # 79]; making one's bed with a man [rule # 102]; teaching Dhamma to man more than five or six sentences [rule # 103]; taking a seat with a man privately on a screened seat [rule # 125]; and taking seat with a man privately, one woman with one man [rule # 126].

This study of the rules involving peripheral offences other than parajika or sanghaadisesa directly involving sexual intercourse or behaviour show how the tradition has strived to keep its monastic members right on its focus. The discussion of this section may be summarized by highlighting

the emphasis put on limiting the heterosexual relations of bhikkhus and bhikkhunis into non-sexual spheres.

II. Celibacy as an essential aspect of the practice/ Sotereological significance of celibacy

We need to understand the rationale behind the first parajikaa: why having sex by bhikkhus and bhikkhunis has been considered to be so grave that it was made the first of the most serious of offences. In a way, this is not hard to explain viewing the phenomenon from the point of view of the crux of the Buddha's realization, namely, the four noble truths. The first two aspects of the teaching say that the people in the world are suffering and that they undergo various forms of suffering due to the 'thirst' [tanhaa] they have for the pleasurable *Anguttara-nikaya*, pp.1-2, objects [kaama-tanhaa], for becoming [bhava-tanhaa] and for non-becoming [vibhava-tanhaa]. The last two say that cessation of this thirst is the end of suffering and the path to be followed is the noble eightfold path. The root of the problem according to this diagnosis being the thirst for pleasurable things, the other two aspects of thirst being dependent on the first, the need to get rid of the thirst for pleasures is obvious.

The pleasures in question are the ones associated with the five faculties, forms, sounds, smells, tastes and contacts associated respectively with eye, ear, nose, tongue and body. The mental phenomena associated with mind too are included in this category. It is believed that all the basic five forms of pleasures are obtained in sexual relations. This is emphatically stated by the Buddha when he said that he cannot see any other form,

sound, smell, taste or touch more attractive to a man than those belonging to a woman and vice versa. [This, of course, assumes a universe where homosexuality or lesbianism was not fully identified.]

The gratification of senses, *kaama-sukhallika-anuyoga* as the very first discourse of the Buddha puts it, has been described as ‘low, vulgar and belonging to the ordinary’ *hiino, gammo, pothujaniko: Samyutta-nikaya* V. p.421. The discourses are plentiful with calamities and the multifarious sufferings associated with search for pleasures. For example, the *Mahadukkhakkhandha-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikaya* details so many forms of suffering people undergo due to pleasures. The Buddha says:

With sensual pleasures as the cause, sensual pleasures as the source, sensual pleasures as the basis, the cause being simply sensual pleasures, kings quarrel with kings, nobles with nobles, Brahmins with Brahmins, householders with householders, mother quarrels with the son, son with mother, father with son, son with father, brother quarrels with brother, brother with sister, sister with brother, friend with friend. And here in their quarrels, brawls, and disputes they attack each other with fists, clods, sticks, or knives, whereby they incur death or deadly suffering [Translation from Bhikkhu Nanamoli & Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1995/2001. p.181].

Rathapala, one among many young householders who left life full of pleasures for monkhood, explains to King Koravya the reasons behind his renunciation in the following words:

Sensual pleasures, varied, sweet, delightful
 In many different ways disturb the mind
 Seeing the danger in these sensual ties

I chose to lead the homeless life, O KingRatthapala-sutta, Majjhima-nikaya 82. [translation from Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi 1995/2001, p.691].

One could go on and on quoting texts to support this position. But how the early Buddhist tradition identifies the cause of the problem is beyond doubt.

It is only rational for those who perceived the problem in this manner to adopt a life distanced from sensual pleasures, and naturally the monastic life was considered ideal for the purpose. Putting it in the words of very Ratthapala referred to above:

Venerable sir, as I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, it is not easy while living in a home to lead the holy life, utterly perfect and pure as a polished shell. Venerable sir, I wish to shave off my hair and beard, put on the yellow robe, and go forth from the home life into homelessness. I would receive the going forth under the Blessed One, I would receive the full admission [*Ibid.*, p.678].

When the monastic life is defined in this manner vis-à-vis the household life characterized by gratification of senses it is natural to understand the monkhood as defined by celibacy.

It is in this context that the Vinaya remark about Sudinna that he did not know the repercussions of his action when he did that becomes unacceptable, as Dhirasekera, a distinguished scholar of Theravada Vinaya, has pointed out “It is difficult to maintain here that *anadinavacasso* means that Sudinna did not know that his act was an offence against the

spirit of Buddhist monasticism. Two things preclude us from accepting this position. Some time after the commission of the act Sudinna is stricken with remorse that he had not been able to live to perfection his monastic life. "He knows and feels that he has erred and brought ruin upon himself. For he says that he has committed a sinful deed. . . . Perhaps it would also have occurred to him that his act was in violation of the item of sila which refers to the practice of celibacy Therefore we cannot take *anadinavadasso* to mean that Sudinna did not know that *methunadhamma* was an offence against monastic life. Nor does he claim such ignorance anywhere during the inquiries held by his fellow celibates or the Buddha. Secondly, even in the absence of any restrictive regulations it seems to have been very clear to all members of the Buddhist Sangha that according to what the Buddha had declared in his Dhamma, the offence of *methunadhamma* contradicts the spirit of true renunciation . . ." [Dhirasekera, 1981 pp.46-7.]. The admission of Sudinna to the Sangha, as described in the Vinaya, is quite similar to that of Ratthapala, both being young and wealthy householders who had to strive to persuade their households to get permission for admission. It is difficult to believe that Sudinna did not know about this received view. This point becomes further clear when we examine the remarks by his fellow celibates on hearing the act committed by Sudinna:

Isn't it the case that the Buddha has taught the Dhamma in many ways for detachment and not for attachment; for disengagement and not for engagement; for non-grasp and not for grasp? . . . Isn't it the case that the Buddha has taught the Dhamma in many ways for detachment of

attachment, for non-intoxication of intoxication, for the control of thirst, for the destruction of longing, for the cutting of circle, for the extinction of craving, for detachment, for cessation, for Nibbana [Vinaya III, pp. 19-20.]

These remarks testify to the fact that celibacy was understood in the tradition as an essential aspect of monastic life which follows from the very logic of renunciation, i.e., ending suffering by eradicating the thirst for pleasures.

This intimate connection between monastic life and practice of celibacy makes clear why a person found guilty of violation of the rule had to be removed forthwith from the Sangha. The term used to indicate removal from the Sangha is “should be killed” [naasetabba]. The origin of the metaphorical usage can be seen in the Buddha’s discussion with the horse-trainer who classifies his methods of training horses as mild and rough and failing in both, killing. The Buddha responds to him by saying that he would follow the identical methods in training his disciples. To the bewildered Horse-trainer as to how the kind-hearted Buddha could kill any disciple the Buddha explains that killing in his training is totally giving up and letting him/her go from the Sangha. Thus ‘killing’ in the context of training is a metaphor for removing a person from the Sangha. The strong language, however, indicates how the tradition viewed the situation. It also strongly suggests that the guilty person, who did not conform to the condition stipulated by: *sikkham apaccakkhaya, dubbalyam anavikatva* cannot be reinstated. Once removed from the Sangha how many people wanted to reenter and how many succeeded are more historical questions. Unless the particular group of the Sangha

knew about the person there does not seem to have had any other method of knowing the situation of such a person as a new candidate. It is interesting to note that among the questions that are asked from a prospective candidates to judge his/her eligibility this particular question [whether he/she was guilty of committing parajika offence as a former member of the Sangha] is not included.

“As soon as the King had gone, the Lord said: The King is done for, his fate is sealed, monks! But if the King had not deprived his father, that good man and just king, of his life, then as he sat here the pure and spotless Dhamma-eye would have arisen in him.” [Translation from Maurice Walshe, 1987, p.109.]

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Looking from a broader ethical point of view adopted in the Dhamma one could argue that violation of parajika offence is not strictly a evil action [papa-kamma], and hence what one loses is only themembership of the Sangha, which does not mean that he cannot attain magga-phala. In that sense it is quite different from aanantariya-paapa [an evil action producing effect in the next birth itself without fail], which, for example, is believed to have committed by King Ajatasatthu by killing his father. In the *Sammannaphala-sutta* the Buddha refers to this action and says that if it was not for this reason, the King would have generated ‘the eye of Dhamma’ then and there at his encounter with the Buddha, but it did not happen for this grave action committed by him.

Furthermore, nowhere has it been said that one will be born in an unpleasant birth owing to this offence. It could happen if the offender pretends to be a real bhikkhu/bhikkhuni and continues as one, which involves lying and hypocrisy. But such a question would not arise for one who forthwith leaves voluntarily or is removed by the Sangha. Unlike in the case of an aanantariya-kamma, with violation of parajika offence one is technically not barred from attaining the goal as taught in the

Dhamma. The parajika offence has to be understood more in the organizational sense and the punishment for the offence being loss of the membership of the Sangha.

This, however, leads to some other questions, for example, on the significance of being a member [bhikkhu/bhikkhuni] among the sangha. If it does not make any difference then one must easily be able to continue as a samanera or householder and still pursue the path. Although it is not technically impossible for a non-member of the Sangha to attain the final goal such a possibility is not borne by the evidence we discussed above. While householder with his spouse and children is bound by the worldly requirements, a samanera is not taken as a member of the Sangha for it is only a preparatory stage for monkhood. Since being a member of the sangha is regarded as the form of life most conducive for the path of liberation, looking from this point of view, losing monkhood cannot be regarded as a simple matter of losing the membership of organization for having membership makes such a big difference in the pursuit of the ultimate goal.

Finally, there is somewhat a general question to be addressed: does the account of gratification of senses, articulated in the context of the monastic vinaya and represented by the first parajika offence, represent the overall Buddhist attitude to it? If it does then every time an ordinary non-monastic person engages in sex, or gratification of senses, s/he must be engaged in something “lowly, uncivilized and out-castely” [hiina-dhammo, gaama-dhammo vasala-dhammo]. I need not produce all the wealth of material contained in such discourses of the Buddha as Sigalovada, Vyagghapajja, Vasala, Mangala, Paraabhava, and many other discourses in order to

prove that the Buddha accepted the validity of the life of householder with its householder-happiness [gihi-sukha] derived by matrimony, children, wealth, property; working, doing business, investing, earning and spending. What needs to be highlighted, however, is the often not clearly articulated distinction between goals and purposes of monastic and householder modes of living. As I mentioned at the very outset of this discussion one is characterized by total abstinence of kaama [brahmachariya] whereas the other is characterized by proper kaama [i.e. refraining from wrong behaviour of kaama= kaamesu-micchacaara]. We need to understand that there are two goals for the two groups, sagga or heaven for the householders and nibbana for those who have renounced household life, and there are two paths for the realization of these goals. This does not mean that one has necessarily to become a member of the Sangha to attain nibbana, and there are examples to the contrary recorded in the early literature. But what it shows is that those who attained higher states of the path as householders had done their renunciation while being in the context of household although then they cannot be considered as full fledged householders, which again proves the point that there are two paths for the two modes of life.

Conclusion

The first part of the paper tried to understand the 'legal' mechanism of the process of celibacy whereas the second part examined the philosophy behind it. In a conceptual universe which identifies the physical sexual attraction of men and women to be the hardest binding factor it is quite

natural and rational for it to uphold celibacy as an essential aspect of its religious practice meant to unbind it. In that sense it is internally coherent and consistent. Whether kaama really is the problem or whether one should avoid kaama it even if it is the problem are interesting matters to be debated but lying beyond the limits of the project I have undertaken in this paper. ■