

Theravādin Buddhist Nuns: Their Lost *Vinaya* and Living *Pātimokkha*

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Summary

The extant *Vinaya-vibhaṅga* for nuns in the Theravādin canon covers rules exclusive to nuns, not those shared with monks, even though the shared rules can be found in the *Pātimokkha* for nuns, and are also identified by Buddhaghosa. This has led scholars like Horner to wonder whether the extant *Vinaya-vibhaṅga* for nuns is an abridged version of a more complete *Vinaya-vibhaṅga* for nuns. Regarding this issue, I interpret a particular piece of Buddhaghosa's writing as evidence indicating that Theravādin monks and nuns preserved different versions of the *Vinaya* for nuns, i.e., a concise version with the former, which is the extant version, but a complete one with the latter, which has disappeared together with the latter. Then, I construct a hypothesis, using the Fourth and Eighth Revered rules, to explain how these two versions came to exist: I argue that by using monks as a bridge to let nuns know about new rules, or the updates to old rules, the Buddha ensured that monks be well-informed on the rules for nuns; this in turn has led monks and nuns to preserve the *Vinaya* of the latter in their own respective ways, hence two versions, one concise whereas the other complete. I also

argue that the complete Pāli *Pātimokkha* for nuns is probably a remnant from the complete *Vinaya* of nuns preserved by them while their Order existed, and that it has survived until now as part of the monks' legal curriculum. Finally, I look at other schools whether they might have similar issues. argue that the complete Pāli *Pātimokkha* for nuns is probably a remnant from the complete

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I. Introduction

The extant *Vinaya* for nuns in the Theravādin canon has two parts: (1) *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga* (rules exclusive to nuns each embedded in a corresponding canonical commentary), and (2) *Bhikkhunīkhandhaka* (the account of how the Order of nuns was founded, and other legal information for nuns). Of them, the former does not cover the rules shared with monks. On the other hand, the complete *Pātimokkha* for nuns, which has survived outside the domain of *Vinaya* canon *per se*, shows both rules exclusive to nuns as well as those *shared with monks*. Those shared rules have also been identified by Buddhaghosa (Horner 1938-66, vol. 3, xxxi). These circumstances have led Horner to conclude: “We may therefore regard the Nuns’ Vibhaṅga in its present form as an abridged version of some more complete Vibhaṅga for nuns.” (1938-66, vol. 3, xxxi). In support of her hypothesis on the possible existence of a complete *Vinaya* of nuns, distinct from the extant *Vinaya* canon, Horner also offers, as evidence, a fragment of the Tibetan *Bhikṣunī Prātimokṣa* discovered by Finot (1938-66, vol. 3, xxxi).

However, Horner was not able to explain how, when, or why the abridged version we have now (i.e., the *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga* and the *Bhikkhunī-Khandhaka*) came into being; subsequently, some scholars have been tempted even to doubt whether a

separate code of conduct for nuns did exist during the Buddha's time (e.g., Juo-Hsüeh 2000, 160).

As regards this issue, I have found an obscure piece of text from the *Vinaya* commentary indicating, if my interpretation is correct, that Theravādin nuns had their own complete *Vinaya*, which survived until they disappeared, and that it seemingly co-existed with the extant version, which monks should have preserved on their own. Based on this finding, I attempt to explain why these two versions came to exist in the same tradition, and also to answer an open question: how the complete *Pātimokkha* of nuns has survived outside the domain of the whole *Vinaya-piṭaka*. Finally, I examine whether similar issues existed in other schools.

II. The *Vinaya* of Nuns as Cited in the *Parivāra* Commentary

The definite date when nuns disappeared from Ceylon is not known (Perera 1999, 46),¹⁾ but they still should have been there during Buddhaghosa's time, for the latter does not say anything to the contrary. In fact, Buddhaghosa has seemingly indicated that not only nuns, but also their complete *Vinaya* still survives during his time.

The following text (translated and enumerated from *Sp*, VII 1302-1303) is his explanation of the term "common prescription" (*sādhāraṇapaññatti*), which the *Parivāra* uses (*Vin*, V 2; Horner 1938-66, vol. 6, 3) to describe a certain aspect of the First Defeat rule for monks:

1) Cf.: "It is well known that the Bhikkhuni (nuns) order was introduced to Sri Lanka during the reign of King Devanampiyatissa. (BC 250 - 210) Since then this order flourished at Anuradhapura for about 1200 years. With the fall of Anuradhapura to the Cholian invaders in AD 1017 and the annexation of the Anuradhapura Kingdom to the Cholian empire the Bhikkhuni order disappeared and became defunct. The Order of Monks (Bhikkhus) also met the same fate. But was later revived after King Vijayabahu drove away the Cholian invaders. For this revival the King had to get down monks from Burma. But there were no nuns in Burma, Siam, Cambodia or Laos the other four Theravada countries. Hence the monks maintained that the Bhikkhuni order should be considered defunct and not restorable." (Weeraratne 1998)

(1) *Sādhāraṇapaññatti* means a prescription common to both monks and nuns. But a precept prescribed purely for monks or purely for nuns is called *asādhāraṇapaññatti*.²⁾

(2) When an occasion [for the First Defeat initial rule or its emendations] arises on account of a monk [i.e., when Venerable Sudinna had sex with his former wife, when a certain monk had sex with a female monkey, etc.], this rule is also prescribed for nuns: “Whatever bhikkhunī should willingly engage in sexual intercourse with a male animal, she becomes defeated, not in communion” (*Pāt*, 117).³⁾

(3) Indeed, in theirs (i.e., the nuns’ *Vinaya*), only the discourse of the cases judged by the Buddha is missing.⁴⁾

(4) On the other hand, because the precept (for nuns) is there, it is called *sādhāraṇapaññatti* (“a common rule”).⁵⁾

In the cited text above, (1) is clear enough, but (2) is problematic by itself, because the extant *Vinaya* canon does not give even the First Defeat rule for nuns separately, and accordingly cannot provide any evidence to prove that the Buddha did explicitly prescribe the version for nuns. Therefore, Buddhaghosa attempts to validate (2) by stating (3). To understand (3), we should firstly consider the general structure of the *Suttavibhaṅga*, the canonical commentary for a given *Pātimokkha* rule.⁶⁾

2) “*sādhāraṇapaññattī ti bhikkhūnañ c’eva bhikkhunīnañ ca sādāhāraṇapaññatti. suddhabhikkhūnam eva hi suddhabhikkhūnaṃ vā paññattaṃ sikkhāpadaṃ asādāhāraṇapaññatti nāma hoti.*”

3) “*idaṃ pana bhikkhuṃ ārabha uppanne vatthusmiṃ yā pana bhikkhunī chandaso methunaṃ dhammaṃ paṭiseveyya antamaso tiracchānagatena pi pārājikā hoti asaṃvāsā ti bhikkhunīnaṃ pi paññattaṃ.*”

4) “*vinītakathāmatam eva hi tāsāṃ n’ atthi.*” One may be tempted to interpret this sentence as meaning that the extant canonical commentary of this rule has no cases of nuns being judged by the Buddha. However, this will not do, given that we can find therein several cases involving nuns, including the story of the famous nun Uppalavaṇṇā being raped (*Vin*, III 35; Horner 1938-66, vol. 1, 53-54).

5) “*sikkhāpadaṃ pana atthi. tena vuttaṃ sādāhāraṇapaññattī ti.*”

6) According to Horner (1938-66, vol. 1, xi), the story leading to an initial rule is... (1), the initial rule is... (2), the word-for-word commentary is... (3), but all other stories are rolled up into... (4). This scheme works for rules without emendations, but appears to break with emended rules. Why? For an emended rule, even though its one or more emendations and their corresponding stories come before (3), those would be counted as part of (4). Furthermore, if still other stories come after (3), they would also be

- (a) *Vatthu*: A story leading up to a rule in its initial form, and other stories leading up to its emendations, if any;
- (b) *Sikkhāpada*: A *Pātimokkha* rule in its final form, with all emendations incorporated, if any (the penalty incurred for breaking it is also always stated, except for the *sekhiya* rules);
- (c) *Padabhājanīya*: The word-for-word commentary (*Padabhājanīya*) together with other relevant explanations including non-guilty clauses;
- (d) *Vinītavatthu*: (For major rules) the cases supposedly judged by the Buddha himself, showing in each case whether a given activity is innocent or guilty per the rule, or entails a penalty lighter than what ensues from the rule.

Now, Buddhaghosa practically says with (3) that, as far as the First Defeat rule is concerned, the nuns' *Vinaya* is only without the *vinītakathā* ("the discourse of the cases judged by the Buddha"),⁷⁾ i.e., the last category. This means that they have the first three categories: (1) *vatthu*: the background narrative (including emendations and their stories), (2) *sikkhāpada*: the final rule, and (3) *padabhājanīya*: the word-for-word commentary. Of them, the background narrative of the rule must have been the same in the separate *Vinayas* of monks and nuns; this should be why Buddhaghosa claims that when the Buddha prescribed the rule for monks, he also made the same rule for nuns. If we remember that the extant *Vinaya* canon does not

counted as part of (4). This would mean that the group (4) is broken into two smaller groups separated by (3). This appears unnecessarily complicated.

However, if we notice that the word-for-word commentary always follows the final form of a rule, we can draw up a much clearer structural scheme for the *Suttavibhaṅga*. How? All the stories leading to an initial rule or its emendations would be (1), i.e., the background narrative; the final rule would be (2); the word-for-word commentary would be (3); and all other stories, if any, subsequent to (3) would be (4). This scheme holds for any given rule; therefore, I use it in this paper.

7) The Pāli term used here is *vinītakathā*, which can be literally interpreted as "the discourse on those (cases) judged (by the Buddha)." This interpretation is corroborated by Buddhaghosa's usage of this term in another context: *makkaṭṭivattuādi vinītakathā* (Sp, VII 1413 "the discourse on those (cases) judged (by the Buddha), (that is), the case of the female monkey, etc."). Note: the case of the female monkey, as part of *vinītakathā*, is at (Vin, III 34; Horner 1938-66, vol. 1, 52).

give the nun's version of the First Defeat rule (shared with monks) at all, let alone its canonical commentary, it becomes clear that when Buddhaghosa writes (3), he is citing from the complete *Vinaya* for nuns, existing apart from the version he is commenting upon.

However, we do not need to know the whole nuns' version of the *Vinaya* to decide whether a given rule for monks is shared with nuns; rather, is it enough to know whether or not its counterpart precept exists for nuns. This is what Buddhaghosa means by (4): we can know that monks share the First Defeat rule with nuns because the latter have essentially the same rule in their *Vinaya*.

In short, I argue, Buddhaghosa's passing mention of the complete *Vinaya* of nuns, as cited and discussed above, proves that Theravādin nuns retained their own complete *Vinaya* at least up to Buddhaghosa's time, and by extrapolation, until their disappearance. However, the evidence provided by Buddhaghosa also raises some further questions:

- (1) If nuns retained their own *Vinaya* version until they disappeared, what do we make of the version that we have now? How and why did it come into existence?
- (2) As Buddhaghosa attests, nuns have not kept records of the *vinītavatthus* ("precedent cases judged by the Buddha") for the First Defeat rule shared with monks, a situation that can probably be extrapolated to all other shared rules. Why?
- (3) Can we find similar double sets of rules for nuns in the *Vinayas* of other schools?

I will attempt to answer these questions in the following sections.

III. How Two Sets of Vinayas for Nuns Came into Being

To deal with this issue, we should remember that even though monks do not need to observe the rules for nuns, they still need to be informed about those rules. According to the Fourth Revered Rule (*garudhamma*), every nun should approach both Orders of monks and nuns, at the end of a rainy retreat, to invite them to point out the former's faults (Vin, II 255; Horner 1938-66, vol. 5, 354). At other times also, monks have the right to admonish nuns but not vice versa, according to the Eighth Revered Rule (Vin, II 255; Horner 1938-66, vol. 5, 355).⁸⁾ On such occasions, monks cannot do their part of the business if they do not know the *Vinaya* for nuns. This gives rise to another question: how did the Buddha ensure that monks be well-informed on the rules that they do not need to observe? By using different procedures to prescribe the rules for monks and nuns, respectively:

- *For monks*: Some monks report an event (i.e., a fellow monk's misbehavior) to the Buddha; then, the Buddha convenes monks and prescribed a rule for them in their presence, which explains why the canonical statement leading to a given precept of monks carries a second-person verb: "O monks, you should recite a rule as follows."⁹⁾
- *For nuns*: "The nuns report the event to the monks; the monks report it to the Buddha; then the Buddha convenes the monks and lays down a rule for nuns in the presence of the monks" (Juo-Hsüeh 2000, 15), which explains why the canonical statement leading to a given precept of nuns carries a third-person verb: "O monks, let nuns recite a rule as follows."¹⁰⁾ It would be from those monks that nuns had to learn about the new rule.

8) Bhikkhu Anālayo notes: "The suggestion that nuns should not criticize misbehaviour of monks is not easily reconciled with reports elsewhere in the *Vinayas* that the Buddha promulgated rules to restrain monks from behaviour for which they had been criticized by nuns" (2016, 109), and suggests: "some of the *garudharmas* that stand in contrast to other *Vinaya* passages could have come into existence later" (110). However, since this prohibition comes up in nearly all *Vinaya* versions (107-108), I suspect there should be some way to reconcile those texts that appear now as mutually contradictory.

9) "*evañ ca pana bhikkhave sikkhāpadam uddiseyyātha*" (Vin, III 21, etc.).

10) "*evañ ca pana bhikkhave bhikkhuniyo sikkhāpadam uddisanti*" (Vin, IV 213, etc.).

I argue that by using monks as a bridge to let nuns know about new rules, or updates to old rules, the Buddha ensured that monks would be well-informed on the rules for nuns.

This argument immediately leads to the question: if nuns had to rely upon a mere third party for the vital information on their *Vinaya* while the Buddha, the law-maker himself, was living and accessible, how could this arrangement be fair to nuns? Or was this arrangement supposed to place nuns “in an extremely subordinate position,” as Juo-Hsüeh Shih observes (2000, 17)? My answer is: nuns seemingly had their own way of checking facts with the Buddha himself, so they did not really need to rely solely on monks.

To elaborate, I should draw the readers’ attention to an obscure piece of *Vinaya* text, which describes a short dialogue between the Buddha and Gotamī, the senior-most nun and his foster mother:

(The) Gotamid Pajāpati the Great spoke thus to the Lord: “Lord, those rules of training for nuns which are in common with those for monks, which line of conduct should we, Lord, follow in regard to these rules of training?¹¹⁾

Those rules of training for nuns, Gotamid, which are in common with those for monks, as the monks train themselves, so should you train yourselves in these rules of training.¹²⁾

Those rules of training for nuns, Lord, which are not in common with those for monks, which line of conduct should we, Lord, follow in regard to these rules of training?¹³⁾

11) *atha kho . . . omission . . . Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī bhagavantaṃ etad avoca: yāni tāni bhante bhikkhunīnaṃ sikkhāpadāni bhikkhūhi sādharmaṇāni kathaṃ mayaṃ bhante tesu sikkhāpadesu paṭipajjāma ’ti?* (Vin, II 258)

12) *yāni tāni Gotamī bhikkhunīnaṃ sikkhāpadāni bhikkhūhi sādharmaṇāni yathā bhikkhū sikkhanti tathā tesu sikkhāpadesu sikkhathā ’ti.* (Vin, II 258)

13) *yāni pana tāni bhante bhikkhunīnaṃ sikkhāpadāni bhikkhūhi asādharmaṇāni kathaṃ mayaṃ bhante tesu sikkhāpadesu paṭipajjāma ’ti?* (Vin, II 258)

Those rules of training for nuns, Gotamid, which are not in common with those for monks, train yourselves in the rules of training according as they are laid down.¹⁴⁾ (Horner 1938-66, vol. 5, 358-359).

The exchange cited above seemingly makes no sense at first sight. For, if a certain rule is common to both monks and nuns, it goes without saying that it should be observed by both Orders, whereas if a given rule is only for nuns, it should be, of course, observed by nuns only. Therefore, these questions and answers appear to us as if they state the obvious unnecessarily.¹⁵⁾

However, if we try to read individual rules in place of the generic phrases (i.e., in place of “rules in common with both orders” and “rules exclusive to nuns”) in the dialogue, we can see a completely different picture, which I try to sketch with the hypothesis given below:

- (1) There must have originally been a number of such dialogues that happened between the Master and his foster-mother, describable by one or the other of the two following formats:
 - (a) *Gotamī*: Lord Buddha, you have prescribed the rule so-and-so for monks; should we nuns also observe it?
Buddha: Yes, you should.
 - (b) *Gotamī*: Lord Buddha, you have prescribed the rule so-and-so exclusively

14) *yāni tāni Gotamī bhikkhunīnaṃ sikkhāpadāni bhikkhūhi asādhāraṇāni yathāpaññattesu sikkhāpadesu sikkhathā 'ti.* (Vin, II 258)

15) Cf.: Ṭhānissaro’s interpretation of the text: “This passage implies that already in the time of the Buddha the bhikkhus had begun working out a way to interpret the rules that in some cases was not exactly in line with the way the Buddha had originally formulated them . . . the Buddha in this passage is simply saying that, to avoid unnecessary controversy, the way the bhikkhus had worked out the implications of the rules was to be accepted as is.” (2018, vol. 1, 21).

I fail to understand him here, for the principle of the *Vinaya* is to observe the rules laid down by the Buddha as they are (*Vin*, III 231; Horner 1938-66, vol. 2, 85). Furthermore, the *vinītavatthus*, which are recorded cases that the Buddha himself judged as the supreme justice, show that he strictly controlled how his rules were interpreted.

On the other hand, Bhikkhu Sujato maintains that “It is concerned with a quite different matter, that is, the relationship between the *bhikkhu and bhikkhuni Vinaya*” (2012, 39). Of course, he is right, but this still cannot explain why the nun Gotamī asked, and the Buddha answered, about something obvious.

for nuns; should we nuns observe it (whereas monks do not)?

Buddha: (presumably after giving a proper explanation) You should observe it as it is prescribed.

- (2) The rules nuns share with monks are covered by dialogues of the format (a), but those exclusive to nuns, by those of the format (b). That is, each format represents a group of dialogues covering a different list of rules in the *Vinaya* of nuns.
- (3) Later, when the Buddha passed away, the respective lists of rules for monks and nuns, i.e., the dual *Pātimokkha*, were no longer liable to change. Given that a comparison between these two lists can tell us which rules are common to both genders, and which are for nuns only, it was no longer necessary to retain the aforesaid groups of dialogues for the sake of legal knowledge. It must have been at the time that individual rules in the dialogues of each format were condensed into the generic concepts, resulting in the seemingly absurd dialogue that we possess now.

If this hypothesis is correct, this must have been how the Order of nuns used Gotamī, the senior-most nun, as a bridge to check facts with the Buddha, whenever he made a new rule, or updated an old rule, for nuns. Moreover, if the aforesaid arrangement per the Theravādin records is a fact, it can explain how two sets of *Vinaya* for nuns came into existence:

- (1) Nuns built up their own complete *Vinaya* from the pieces of legal information conveyed from time to time by monks and checked with the Buddha by Gotamī. When it was finalized at the time of the Buddha's death, it should have already been a self-contained unit—consisting of the rules shared with monks, those exclusive to nuns, and other necessary legal information (like what can be found in the present-day *Khandhakas*), shared with monks or exclusive—and thereby be self-sufficient, enabling nuns to deal with their legal issues without a need to refer to the *Vinaya* for monks. Given the greater

number of rules for nuns, their *Vinaya-piṭaka* should be as voluminous as, if not more than, the extant *Vinaya-piṭaka* version.

- (2) On the other hand, monks like Venerable Upāli and others preserved the legal information for nuns that they directly received from the Buddha. It is from this version, I argue, that the extant *Vinaya* for nuns in the Theravādin canon has descended to us.

Given that the *Vinaya* for nuns is outside the area of practice for monks, it is not surprising that monks have made it as concise as possible so as to reduce their memory workload. In the whole extant *Vinaya-piṭaka* occupying 1285 pages (PTS edition), only 172 pages cover the materials dedicated to nuns, of which there are two parts:

- (2)(a) *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga*: Rules exclusive to nuns each embedded in a corresponding canonical commentary.
- (2)(b) *Bhikkhunīkkhandhaka*: The account of how the Order of nuns was founded, and other legal information for nuns.

Which *Vinaya* then was recited at the First Buddhist Council (if it was an actual event)? Given that nuns did not participate therein, it is probably the version of monks that was recited there. But it does not mean that the nuns' version is any less valid nor less “official,” as we have already seen by Buddhaghosa citing, at a much later time, the nuns' version as an authority to make a judgment concerning the monks' version.

Now we need to consider another issue. As mentioned above, Buddhaghosa attests that in the complete *Vinaya* version of nuns, the rules shared by both monks and nuns each probably had complete canonical commentaries except the *vinītavatthus*, the cases judged by the Buddha himself. However, why did this exception exist? Probably because the monks did not inform the nuns about such cases when these involved only monks, a condition true for most cases. Why, then, did the monks not convey such information to nuns? Probably because, as mentioned before, although

monks are obliged to judge the behavior of nuns as required by the latter's Revered Rules, nuns do not harbor such an obligation to monks. However, there are some cases involving nuns as protagonists:

- (1) The rape of the Nun Uppalavaṇṇā (First Defeat *Vin*, III 35; Horner 1938-66, vol. 1, 53-54);
- (2) The miraculous change of sex that happened to some monks and nuns (First Defeat *Vin*, III 35; Horner 1938-66, vol. 1, 54);
- (3) Some young men of Licchavī catching a monk and forcing him to have sex with a nun (First Defeat *Vin*, III 39; Horner 1938-66, vol. 1, 61-62);
- (4) A nun's false claim of having stolen another nun's robe (Second Defeat *Vin*, III 57; Horner 1938-66, vol. 1, 96);
- (5) A nun using her master nun's name to cheat the latter's devotees (Second Defeat *Vin*, III 66; Horner 1938-66, vol. 1, 110-111);
- (6) A nun helping to end the life of a man who had lost arms and legs (Third Defeat *Vin*, III 86; Horner 1938-66, vol. 1, 149-150).

Such cases would probably be preserved by nuns too. However, if those cases are collected at a different place in the *Vinaya* of nuns, the canonical commentary itself would do without the section of *vinītavatthus*.

Moreover, Buddhaghosa also claims that when the Buddha prescribed the First Defeat rule for monks, he also did the same for nuns; Buddhaghosa is probably inferring this from the fact that the rule, either for monks or for nuns, has the same background narrative. If this is correct, this procedure can be extrapolated to other shared rules, given that there are no separate canonical commentaries, let alone background narratives, of such shared rules for nuns. In such a case, the shared rules for nuns should have come into existence in two ways:

- (1) If the Buddha made a shared rule for monks while the female Order was not yet extant, later he must have explicitly declared it as applicable to nuns when they came into existence.

(2) However, if he prescribed a shared rule for monks when nuns were already present, he must have prescribed the same for nuns, as Buddhaghosa claims.

Furthermore, it would also seem natural to infer that when the Buddha emended a shared rule for monks, he also did the same, if necessary, to the same rule for nuns.

IV. The *Pātimokkha* That Lives

I have claimed above that “Theravādin nuns retained their own complete *Vinaya* at least up to Buddhaghosa’s time, and by extrapolation, until their disappearance.” There is an issue with this claim, though: the case of the complete *Pātimokkha* for nuns (i.e., *Bhikkhunī-Pātimokkha*). The extant *Vinaya-piṭaka*, which has supposedly been preserved by monks, covers only the rules exclusive to nuns, so the complete *Pātimokkha* of nuns seems outside the domain of the *Vinaya-piṭaka*. Then, is the extant complete *Pātimokkha* of nuns a remnant somehow preserved out of the nuns’ own complete *Vinaya*? Or is it just a compilation of later commentators? The short answer is that the extant *Bhikkhunī-Pātimokkha* is probably a remnant, preserved as part of the legal curriculum for monks, of the nuns’ own complete *Vinaya*. The long answer is as follows.

Firstly, we should look at and compare the extant sets of the respective *Pātimokkhas* for monks and nuns. As a result, we come to the following gist:

§4. For bhikkhus, there are 227 rules: 4 *pārājika*, 13 *saṅghādisesa*, 2 *aniyata*, 30 *nissaggiya pācittiya*, 92 *suddhapācittiya*, 4 *pāṭidesaniya*, 75 *sekhiya*, 7 *adhikaraṇasamatha*.

§5. For bhikkhunīs, there are 311 rules: 8 *pārājika* (4 in common), 17 *saṅghādisesa* (7 in common), no *aniyata*, 30 *nissaggiya pācittiya* (18 in common), 166 *suddhapācittiya* (70 in common), 8 *pāṭidesaniya* (none in common), 75 *sekhiya* (identical), 7 *adhikaraṇasamatha* (identical). (Pāt, xxxviii-xxxix)

From this summary, we can deduce that monks shared with nuns 181 of the overall 227 rules.

Now the question is: from where does this identification of the shared rules come? “From the *Vinaya* itself it is neither clear which of the *bhikkhus*’ rules are shared and which unshared (*asādharaṇa*)” (Kieffer-Pülz 2016, 57), but the *Parivāra*, the last volume of the *Vinaya-piṭaka*, does identify a few rules as shared or not shared with nuns. Therefore, it is in that text that we should look closely. First of all, we should scrutinize the context where such identifications occur:

In the first chapter of the *Parivāra* (*Mahāvibhaṅga*), every rule in the *Mahāvibhaṅga* section of the *Suttavibhaṅga* is examined in the exact order in which it was laid down there . . . It is a kind of catechism, containing bare or condensed outlines of *questions to be asked and answered* [emphasis added], in the study of the *sikkhāpadas*. It makes a clear contribution to the task of learning and mastering the *Vinaya*, and by extracting material from the vast mass of the *Vinaya* it reduces it to manageable proportions. (Norman 1983, 27-28)

Among those “questions to be asked and answered,” two are of interest to us: “A rule common to both Orders [or] not common to both Orders?”¹⁶⁾ and “A rule for one Order only [or] for both Orders?”¹⁷⁾ The presence of these questions—actually only a single question phrased in alternative ways—tells us that knowing whether a given rule is shared with nuns or not is part of a monk’s legal repertoire.

Yet, the *Parivāra* explicitly answers this question only for a very few rules: the First Defeat (*Vin*, V 2; Horner 1938-66, vol. 6, 3), the First *Saṅghādisesa* (*Vin*, V 4; Horner 1938-66, vol. 6, 8), and two Indefinite (*aniyata*) rules (*Vin*, V 7, 8).¹⁸⁾ The

16) “*sādhāraṇapaññatti, asādhāraṇapaññatti*” (*Vin*, V 1)

17) “*ekatopaññatti, ubhatopaññatti*” (*V* 1)

18) Horner omits the answers relevant to the sharing of two Indefinite rules in her translation (See 1938-66, vol. 6, 13-14).

answers to those questions for other rules, together with the answers to many other questions for those rules, have been buried in *peyyāla* (i.e., ellipses). However, we should remember that this text has come down from the oral tradition. In the oral form, there would be no ellipses; rather, such questions and answers must be completely explicit. Therefore, we can conclude that it is the *Parivāra* that has preserved the identification of rules as shared or not shared with nuns.

However, when this text, along with others, is written down, it becomes necessary to bury a lot of text in ellipses, to save time and effort, and to reduce expenses. In such circumstances, the scribe would tend to bury a given piece of text when he is sure the information it embodies is available elsewhere. This is why the omitted answers to many other questions can be found in the foregoing parts if one knows where to look. For instance, the answer to the question “Where is (the rule) prescribed?”¹⁹⁾ for any precept can be found in its background narrative. This is understandable, given that as the last volume in the *Vinaya-piṭaka*, the *Parivāra* has every right to presuppose the preceding parts. Then, in this case, why is the information on sharing rules with nuns buried even though it is not available in the preceding parts of the *Vinaya*? Owing to a development in legal pedagogy, I answer.

Let me elaborate. It is compulsory for every monk to be mindful of, and observe, the *Vinaya* rules in their daily activities. Yet, some time after the Buddha’s demise, it must have become clear to monks that not everyone would have either the inclination, ability, or both to master this voluminous legal text. Accordingly, they must find a way to teach the *Vinaya* to the weaker members of the Order.

The approach that the Theravādin school adopted for this matter seems to bypass the *Vinaya* canon itself and focus on the *Pātimokkha* rules, complementing those with concise, practical explanations; this is the methodology embodied in the *Kaṅkhaṅvitarāṇī* (*Kkh*), the commentary on the dual *Pātimokkha*. However, we cannot say that this method begins only with the *Kkh*. On the contrary, it must have started much earlier in

19) “*kattha paññattam.*”

the oral tradition, for it is in those times that monks would be in even direr need of a way to learn the *Vinaya* without having to memorize the whole *Vinaya* canon. This methodology might have initially targeted the select groups of monks who could not or would not attempt to study the whole *Vinaya* canon, but probably became the standard approach for all new students of the *Vinaya* when its effectiveness was proven.

With this new approach, how monks studied the *Vinaya* of nuns also probably changed. In the canon itself, as we have seen, the *Pātimokkha* rules unique to nuns are given in the *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga*, but those shared with monks are named 366 pages (PTS version) later, i.e., in the *Parivāra*—a somewhat scattered format. However, with the new *Pātimokkha*-oriented approach, monks probably started to learn the complete *Pātimokkha* of nuns, which embodies all those rules in one solid piece of orally transmitted text.

If this theory is correct:

- (1) It explains why the compilers of the extant *Parivāra* chose to put most of the information on rule-sharing with nuns in ellipses; they simply presuppose the complete *Pātimokkha* of nuns as the source where this information can be found.
- (2) It also indicates the possibility that the extant *Bhikkhunī-Pātimokkha* is a remnant surviving from the lost *Vinaya* of nuns. For, if the nuns' *Pātimokkha* became part of the legal curriculum for monks with the newer approach, they must have continued to learn and preserve it even though nuns disappeared.²⁰⁾

20) Cf. Kieffer-Pülz's opinion: "Given that the *bhikkhunīsāṅgha* in the *Theravāda* tradition became extinct most likely in the beginning of the eleventh century CE, 26 and in light of the fact that the bhikkhus' ordination lineage of present day Sri Lanka was revived only in 1753 CE by importing an ordination lineage from Siam, it is highly likely that the complete BhnīPāt [i.e., *Bhikkhunīpātimokkha*] editions, as we have them today, are a product of the nineteenth century CE." (2016, 62).

I have to disagree with her. Why? If my argument is correct in that the *Bhikkhunīpātimokkha* was included in the legal curriculum of monks in accord with the newer *Pātimokkha*-oriented approach for learning the *Vinaya*, this inclusion must have happened much earlier than the extinction of nuns in Sri Lanka. Then, it follows that this text would still have continued to survive with international Buddhist monks when there were no longer nuns in Sri Lanka, until the time it was imported back there together

However, (2) above does not mean that monks have preserved the *Bhikkhuni-Pātimokkha* “as is.” On the contrary, they have probably modified it for their own convenience, the evidence of which I will explore in a forthcoming paper.

V. Other Schools

I have argued above that since the Buddha’s time, the lineages of monks and nuns preserved their own sets of the *Vinaya* for nuns, and that this was a tradition preserved in the Theravādin school until the disappearance of nuns therein. Then, are there any clues about this tradition in other schools?

At least, we can be sure that there are certain conditions shared by most of those schools. First of all, almost all different Buddhist traditions accept that “. . . nuns are not permitted to criticize monks. Monks are permitted to criticize nuns” (Anālayo 2016, 107-108), which would force monks to be knowledgeable about the nuns’ disciplinary rules. Secondly, given that all schools probably went through, in the earlier parts of their history, the phase of orally transmitting texts, it is highly probable that their monks, irrespective of their affiliations, would keep a concise version of the *Vinaya* for nuns, whereas their nuns would preserve a complete version. By keeping two versions in the same school, monks could afford to memorize the concise version only and thereby lighten their memory load, whereas nuns could preserve their complete version. Instead, once a given school moves to the written medium for preserving the scriptures, it would be best to keep only one complete version, which both monks and nuns can consult. Yet, if a school chooses to keep two versions even in written form, there should be other reasons.

Now let us see what happened in Sri Lanka, the last bastion of the Theravādin school. When Buddhism came to Sri Lanka in the 3rd century AC, it was brought by

with other parts of the Canon and commentarial literature.

foreign monks and nuns, of whom Venerable Mahinda and Saṅghamittā Therī were the leaders, respectively (Mudiyanse 1996, 554-555). Therefore, if my argument in this paper is correct, we can say that Venerable Mahinda brought with him the concise version of the *Vinaya* for monks, whereas Saṅghamittā Therī brought the complete version. Both versions should have been in oral form and handed down separately by monks and nuns, respectively. It was only about three centuries later that the whole canon was put into writing (Witanachchi 2003, 725-726). When the written medium became the major means of preservation and transmission, the complete version of monks would be good enough for both monks and nuns—but who would dare to discard the version brought by Venerable Mahinda, the arahant and founder of Buddhism in the land? Accordingly, both versions should have been written down by monks and nuns respectively, and this is probably how both versions continued to survive until the disappearance of nuns.

In contrast, China is a very different story:

Around the first century AD, Buddhist monks and lay followers started to enter China along the merchant land routes from India to China, and small Buddhist communities arose. The first monks all were foreigners. They most probably transmitted the disciplinary text orally . . . omission . . . [But] nuns never crossed the mountains from India to China, no foreign community of nuns existed in China in the first centuries AD. (Heirman 2007, 172-173)

The first *vinaya* texts entered China via the northern land routes. These texts all belong to the so-called northern tradition, in opposition to the southern, that is, the Pāli Theravāda tradition. (175).

If Heirman, as cited above, is right and nuns did not cross from India to China in the first centuries AD, we can conclude that the complete *Vinaya* they preserved, whichever their affiliation was, failed to reach China at the time. However, as I have

argued above, it is still probable that monks who did cross over to China brought with them, as part of their legal knowledge, a concise version of the Vinaya for nuns. Interestingly, “the first *vinaya* text for nuns translated into Chinese” happened to be “a *prātimokṣa* text translated by Dharmarakṣa in the second half of the third century AD,” but this text unfortunately did not survive (173). Moreover, “. . . omission . . . in the middle of the fourth century Zhu Jingjian and four other women were ordained before the *bhikṣusamṅha* (‘community of monks’) on the basis of a *karmavācanā* and of a *prātimokṣa* of the Mahāsāṃghika school” (173). Where, though, did those “*prātimokṣa*” texts come from? Most probably, they were orally brought from India and preserved by the monks of respective schools. Therefore, these records indicate that the Theravādin school was not the only one with the custom of monks memorizing the *Pātimokkha* of nuns as part of the former’s legal repertoire.

A complete *Vinaya* for nuns became available only “when in the beginning of the fifth century, four *vinayas* [were] translated into Chinese” (174). Those translations were in written form:

His [i.e., Faxian’s] travel account tells us that his main purpose was to obtain an original version of the *vinaya*. This was not an easy task, since, according to Faxian, in the countries of “Northern Indian” [sic], *vinaya* texts were transmitted only orally. Consequently, Faxian had to go further south to what he calls “Central India”, where, in Pāṭaliputra (modern Patna), he succeeded in copying the *vinaya* of the Mahāsāṃghika school. He was also able to obtain extracts of the *Sarvāstivādivinaya*. . . . omission On his journey further to the south, he received a copy of the *Mahīśāsakavinaya* in Sri Lanka. (174)

According to the Gaoseng zhuan, the Kashmirian monk Punyatrāta recited the Indian text [i.e., *Sarvāstivādivinaya*], while Kumārajīva translated it into Chinese. . . . omission [Later, Vimalākṣa] revised Kumārajīva’s translation. (176)

Buddhayaśas recited the text [i.e., *Dharmaguptakavinaya*] by memory, Zhu Fonian . . . omission . . . translated it into Chinese, and the Chinese Daohan . . . omission . . . wrote down the translation. (Heirman 2007, 176)

Buddhabhadra was born in Kapilavastu. After his ordination, he went to Kashmir and then to China, where he visited several cities. In Jiankang, he translated the *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya* together with Faxian. (177)

Buddhajīva held the text [i.e., the *Mahīśāsakavinaya*], the Khotanese monk Zhisheng translated it into Chinese, while Daosheng and Huiyan wrote down the translation and revised it. . . . omission . . . This is in all probability the text that Faxian had obtained in Sri Lanka. (177)

As seen above, all four *vinayas* translated into Chinese in the early fifth century are in written form. It is also the same case when “in the beginning of the eighth century, the monk Yijing translate[d] large parts of the *Mūlasarvāstivādivinaya* into Chinese, as well as other *vinaya* texts belonging to the same school” (177-178).

Now, let us stop and think. It was already in the fifth century AD that several complete sets of various *Vinayas* were translated into Chinese from their original sources, which came from India and Sri Lanka. If those original schools had already adopted the written medium as the major means of preservation and transmission of their scriptures, they may have already dealt with the two versions of the *Vinaya* for nuns in each school in various ways deemed proper—by discarding one version and keeping the other, by merging two versions, or by continuing to keep two versions separate, each preserved by monks and nuns respectively. Moreover, even if a given school happened to have two oral or textual versions, the Chinese translators could still have chosen to copy and translate the version they preferred, or the one that they managed to obtain. In short, different things could have happened in different

schools.

The hypothetical reasoning above may prove useful for specialists to deal with several issues surrounding the nuns' *Vinaya* in other schools. For instance, the following issues should be considered:

Moreover, in some *Vinayas* the frame stories for rules applicable to both monks and nuns are abbreviated in the nuns' *vibhaṅga*. In narratively rich traditions such as the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, even for the shared rules, there are separate frame stories and other categories of analysis for nuns' rules. (Clarke 2015, 61)

[In the case of the *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya*] There are inconsistencies between this *prātimokṣa* [i.e., *Mohesengqi biqiuni jieben*] and the *bhikṣuṇīvibhaṅga* of the *Mohesengqilü*, particularly in the number of *śaikṣa* rules: 77 in this *prātimokṣa*, with only 64 in the *vibhaṅga* . . . (64)

[In the case of the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*] Although we have no Sanskrit manuscripts, *bhikṣuṇīvibhaṅgas* and *bhikṣuṇīprātimokṣas* are preserved in Tibetan and Chinese translations. Curiously, the order and wording of rules in the *bhikṣuṇīvibhaṅga* preserved in Tibetan do not match that of the Tibetan *bhikṣuṇīprātimokṣa*. . . . omission . . . / In contrast, Yijing's corpus of *bhikṣuṇī* texts is unproblematic. . . . omission . . . it [i.e., the Tibetan *bhikṣuṇīvibhaṅga*] matches closely enough with Yijing's Chinese translation to conclude that the former is in fact *Mūlasarvāstivādin*, although clearly not identical to the *Mūlasarvāstivādin* tradition known to Yijing. (73)

VI. Conclusion

As a conclusion, I would like to sum up my argument in this paper.

First of all, I interpret a particular piece of Buddhaghosa's writing as evidence

indicating that Theravādin monks and nuns preserved different versions of the *Vinaya* for nuns; at least, this is what Buddhaghosa saw. This interpretation is the keystone of my argument; everything else depends on it.

Afterwards, I construct a hypothesis, using the Fourth and Eighth Revered Rules, to explain how these two versions came to exist. If some readers would like to maintain that the Revered Rules are “a later interpolation,” and subsequently disagree with my hypothesis, they are welcome to construct theories of their own to explain: (a) why two versions of the *Vinaya* for nuns have come to exist in the same tradition, and (b) why monks should bother to preserve a set of *Vinaya* rules that they do not need to observe.

Next, I use my theory—that Theravādin monks and nuns preserved different versions of the *Vinaya* for nuns—to offer a solution to an open problem: the existence of the complete *Pātimokkha* for nuns outside the domain of the *Vinaya-piṭaka*. My conclusion is that the complete *Pātimokkha* for nuns survived the disappearance of nuns by being part of the legal curriculum for monks. If my solution is correct, it would serve as evidence reinforcing my theory argued for in this paper.

Lastly, I explore the situation of other schools. In fact, we must await further research to know whether other schools had a development similar to that of the Theravādin school, but I offer some pointers in the hope that these might be helpful to relevant specialists.

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테라와다 비구니 승단의 소실된 위나야와 남아 있는 빠띠목카

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테라와다 성전(Theravādin canon) 가운데 현존하는 비구니의 위나야 위방가(Vinaya-vibhaṅga)는 비구와 비구니에게 공통적으로 적용되는 것이 아닌, 오직 비구니에게만 적용되는 규칙들을 다루고 있다. 그런데 비구니의 빠띠목카(Pāṭimokkha)에는 이 둘 모두에게 공통되는 규칙들이 보이고, 붓다고사(Buddhaghosa) 역시도 이것을 인정하고 있다. 이러한 점에 근거하여 Horner와 같은 학자들은 현존하는 비구니의 위나야 위방가가 보다 완전한 형태를 갖추고 있던 것의 축약된 형태일지도 모른다는 의문을 제기하였다.

이 문제와 관련하여 필자는 붓다고사의 저작 가운데 특정 부분을 테라와다 비구와 비구니들이 비구니에 대한 위나야의 다른 형태들, 즉 비구들이 지녀 온 축약된 형태의 현존하는 위나야와 지금은 사라져 버렸지만 비구니들이 지니고 있었던 완전한 형태의 위나야를 보존했음을 보여주는 증거로 해석하였다. 이어서 팔경법(八敬法) 가운데 네 번째와 여덟 번째 항목을 통해 어떻게 이 두 가지 형태가 존재하게 되었는지를 설명하는 가설을 세웠다. 붓다는 비구니들에게 새로운 규칙이나 오래된 규칙의 개정 사항을 알려주는 역할을 비구들에게 맡김으로써, 비구들이 비구니들의 규칙에 대해 숙지하도록 하였다. 이로 인해 비구와 비구니들은 그들 각자의 방식으로 비구니의 위나야를 보존하게 되었고, 그 결과 축약된 형태와 완전한 형태의 두 가지 위나야가 있게 된 것이다.

한편, 완전한 형태로 남아있는 비구니의 빨리(Pāli) 빠띠목카는 아마도 그들의 승단이 존재하는 동안 비구니들이 보존한 완전한 위나야의 잔재일 것이다. 그리고 그것이 지금까지 비구들의 법적 교육과정의 일부로 존속해온 것이다. 끝으로 다른 부파들도 유사한 문제를 가지고 있는지에 대해 살펴보았다.

주제어

테라와다 불교, 불교의 역사, 승가 생활, 불교의 규율, 승가의 규율, 비구, 비구니.

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