

Buddhaghosa and the Tradition of the First Council

THE traditional accounts regarding the First Buddhist Council preserved to us in Pali literature are by no means homogeneous. Chapter XI of the Cullavagga in the Vinaya-piṭaka is the oldest record we possess of the events of the First Council and is the only one in Pali literature which is of canonical antiquity. Nevertheless, it may safely be inferred that this account, closely associated with the account of the Second Council (CV. XII), is at least a hundred years later than the event of which it purports to record. Centuries have passed between this account in the Cullavagga and the next most valuable information we come across in the chronicles of Ceylon—the Dīpavamsa and the Mahāvamsa. The accounts of the Dīpavamsa and the Mahāvamsa are in themselves only the finalised statements of traditional accounts which are very much older than the time of their compilation. There was probably also a great deal more which was not recorded. The great commentator Buddhaghosa, whom the literary records of Ceylon present to us as having worked under the guidance of the monks of the Mahāvihāra, seems to make good some of these omissions.

On a careful analysis of these various accounts concerning the First Council, it is possible to discern a whole host of accretions around the bare and simple version of the Cullavagga. The additions to this historical kernel, in the course of nearly eight centuries, seem to proceed on very definite lines prompted by subsequent developments connected with the major event. In describing the First Council the Cullavagga simply states that on hearing the irreverent words of Subhadda, the elder Mahākassapa thought it fit to determine the contents of what he called dhamma and vinaya by a concensus of opinion before any corruptions or perversions set in. The conduct of Subhadda being the immediate cause for the summoning of the council, the elder Mahākassapa very naturally begins with the Vinaya* and the Cullavagga does not attempt to explain this precedence of the Vinaya over the Sutta.

* It is also probably for this reason that the compiler of Cullavagga XI calls this whole council a *vinayasangīti* in spite of the recital of Dhamma by Ānanda. Vide note 14.

Here Buddhaghosa finds room to expand on the old tradition of the Cullavagga.¹ And he uses this opportunity, no doubt, to give the authority and sanctity of antiquity to an idea which was gaining ground. The very significant part played by the Vinaya at the Second Council and in the circumstances which led to it must have been very clear to Buddhaghosa and to many of his predecessors who were acquainted with the events of all the early Buddhist Councils. The *dasavatthūni* or the ten disputed points which are given in the Cullavagga² as the subject of controversy at the Second Council and the disagreement on which led to the breaking away of the Mahāsaṅghikas from the orthodox body which was later designated as the Theriyavāda, are essentially matters of Buddhist Vinaya. Thus it is very natural to infer that there must have been a section of the fraternity, who in the light of the experience of the past, looked upon any disputes on monastic discipline as detrimental to the stability of the sāsana. Thus, in the introductory verses to the historical portion of the *Samantapāsādikā*, Buddhaghosa gives a descriptive definition of the Vinaya³ which speaks of it as being the backbone of the Buddha-sāsana. On a comparison of the Pali *Samantapāsādikā* with its Chinese translation—*Shan chien lu pi po sha*—of Sanghabhadra, translated into Chinese in A.D. 489, within the same century of the compilation of the original in Pali, we note that while verses 6-16 of the Pali version in which Buddhaghosa acknowledges his indebtedness to the old *aṭṭhakathās* of Ceylon and the distinguished scholars of the Mahāvihāra are omitted in the Chinese translation, Sanghabhadra somehow manages to include the tribute which Buddhaghosa pays to the Vinaya-piṭaka : *Chih yen pi ni i Ling cheng fa chiu chu*—Let me expound the meaning of the Vinaya in order that the true dharma may last long.

Perhaps it would have been difficult to ignore this allusion as Buddhaghosa, while describing the proceedings at the First Council, has cleverly woven into the text of both the *Sumaṅgalavilāsini*⁴ and the *Samantapāsādikā*⁵ this idea almost in identical words. This too, is faithfully reproduced

1. *Sumaṅgalavilāsini* I. 11. *Samantapāsādikā* I. 13.

2. *Vinaya* II. 294.

3. SP. I. 1. verse 5.
 Yasmiṃ ṭhite sāsanaṃ aṭṭhitassa
 patiṭṭhitaṃ hoti susaṅghitassa
 taṃ vaṇṇayissaṃ vinayaṃ amissaṃ
 nissāya pubbācariyānubhāvaṃ

4. SV. I. 11. *Bhikkhū āhamsu* : *Bhante māhakassapa vinayo nāma Buddhasāsanaassa āyu vinaye ṭhite sāsanaṃ ṭhitaṃ hoti. Tasmiṃ paṭhamaṃ vinayaṃ sangāyāma ti.*

5. SP. I. 13.

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in the Chinese translation of the *Samantapāsādikā*.⁶ The Chinese also did show a keen interest in the study of the Vinaya from early times.⁷ FaHsien undertook the hazardous journey to the land of the Buddha in A.D. 399 for the sole purpose of finding out correct texts of Vinaya rules. Almost three hundred years later, I Ching followed him on a similar mission. This tradition is also preserved in later Pali works like the *Mahābodhi-vamsa*⁸—eleventh century, and the *Saddhammasangaha*⁹—fourteenth century. At the commencement of the *sangīti*, according to the above tradition, the elder Mahākassapa is made to ask the members of the congregation whether they are to recite the Dhamma or the Vinaya first. This in turn enables the monks to point out the significance of the Vinaya for the stability and well-being of the *sāsana*. This partiality for the Vinaya, it may be argued, owes its origin to the followers of the Pali tradition of the *Cullavagga* which regarded disputes about the rules of monastic discipline as the basis of the first schisms of the Order. It is evidently the view held by the *Theriyaparamparā*, who tried to put the entire blame for the split of the *Sangha* at the Second Council on the other party, by presenting them as miscreants violating the rules of monastic discipline.

But turning now to the accounts of the chronicles, we note that the *Dīpavamsa* preserves for us an older and more unitary concept of the *sāsana* in the following verse.¹⁰

Yāva tiṭṭhanti saddhammā sangahaṃ na vinassati
tāvataṃ sāsanaaddhānaṃ ciraṃ tiṭṭhati satthuno

Here the word *saddhammā*, no doubt, means the teachings of the Master taken as a whole, undivided, including both the Dhamma and the Vinaya. The Dhamma and the Vinaya are also referred to severally in the *Dīpavamsa* accounts of the Councils but they are at least implicitly taken as being complementary to each other. The Buddha had already expressed in the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*¹¹ that the Dhamma and the Vinaya would serve in the role of the Master after his death. As long as these hold sway—*yāva tiṭṭhanti saddhammā*, and the authority of the compilations of the *sangīti* remain unchallenged—*sangahaṃ na vinassati*, so long will the stability of the *sāsana* be assured. Thus it is quite clear from the *Dīpavamsa*

6. Pi ni tsang che shih fo fa shou. Pi ni tsang chu fo fa i chu.

7. Travels of Fa Hsien : Translated by Legge p. 98.

8. Mahabodhivamsa 91.

9. J. P. T. S. 1890 p. 24.

10. *Dīpavamsa* Ch. IV. v 17.

11. *Dīghanikāya* II. 154.

account of the First Council that it does not subscribe to the tradition which singles out the Vinaya and gives it precedence over the Dhamma. Nor does the Mahāvamsa seem to differ from the Dīpavamsa in this respect. The author of the Mahāvamsa refers to the purpose of the First Council in such terms as ‘saddhammaṭṭhapanatthāya muninānuggahaṃ kataṃ kātuṃ saddhammasangītiṃ’¹² which are resonant of the account of the Dīpavamsa, and he sums up the proceedings of the First Council very briefly thus : *evaṃ sattahi māschi dhammasangīti niṭṭhitā*.¹³ This, it must be pointed out, is in marked contrast to the version of the Cullavagga which calls the First Council a *vinaya-sangīti* and ends with the words ‘tasmā ayaṃ vinayasangīti pañcasatīti vuccati.’¹⁴

On the other hand the Dīpavamsa, which virtually ignores the tradition which attaches special importance to the Vinaya, goes out of its way in the description of the activities of the First Council to make a few observations on the Sutta-piṭaka and its recital. The second of the two accounts of the First Council in the Dīpavamsa¹⁵ says that after the Vinaya and the Dhamma were recited by Upāli and Ānanda respectively, these two masters of the Sutta—*suttakovidā*—clarified what had been taught in long expositions and also without exposition, the natural meaning as well as the recondite meaning.

Jinassa santike gahitā dhammavinayāca te ubho
Upālithero ca Ānando saddhamme pāramīgato
pariyāyadesitaṅ cāpi atho nippariyāyadesitaṃ
nītatthaṅ ceva neyyatthaṃ dipimsu suttakovidā

Pariyāya and *nippariyāya desanā* are terms generally used in discussing the mode of teaching in the Sutta and the Abhidhamma respectively. The former refers to the illustrated discourses of the Suttanta as opposed to the *nippariyāya* or abstract, general statements of the Abhidhamma. The confusion between *nītattha* and *neyyattha*, the natural meaning and the meaning to be inferred, is given in the Anguttaranikāya¹⁶ as leading to a false accusation of the Buddha and his teaching. ‘Yo ca neyyatthaṃ suttantaṃ nītattho suttanto ti dipeti yo ca nītatthaṃ suttantaṃ neyyattho

12. Mahāvamsa Ch. 3. vv 7 & 8.

13. Ibid. 3. 37.

14. Vinaya II. 292. De la Vallée Poussin makes the following observation on this point. “Does it mean that the council was occupied exclusively with discipline, and that Cullavagga XI, section 8 has been interpolated after Chapter XI had received its title?” Indian Antiquary 1908 p. 9. However, we do not see sufficient reason for pushing the second part of the argument so far.

15. Dīpavamsa V. 12 & 13.

16. Anguttaranikāya I. 60 Manorathapūraṇī II. 118

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suttanto ti dīpeti. Ime kho bhikkhave tathāgatam abbhācikkhanti.' These distinctions between *nītattha* and *neyyattha* and *pariyāya* and *nippariyāya desanā* that are associated here with the Sutta recital of the First Council are of interest to us for the fact that the Dīpavamsa, when it speaks of the origin and development of the Mahāsaṅghikas after the Second Council, refers to the Mahāsaṅgītikā bhikkhus as being ignorant of these distinctions and ascribes the doctrinal differences of the new schools and the subsequent changes effected in their literature to this ignorance.¹⁷ Here the Dīpavamsa also laments the fact that the Mahāsaṅgītikā bhikkhus rejected the authority of the first compilation : 'bhinditvā mūlasaṅgaham.'¹⁸ It is, no doubt, through the acquaintance with this later event that the warning is uttered, in anticipation, in the earlier account of the First Council when the Dīpavamsa says 'yāva tiṭṭhanti saddhammā saṅgaham na vinassati'.¹⁹

Now it is therefore possible to observe that the development of the Dīpavamsa tradition regarding the First Council, with special concern for the Sutta-piṭaka and the manner of comprehending and interpreting the doctrine, finds a parallel in the tradition of Buddhaghosa which expands the early Cullavagga account with special leanings on the Vinaya. In the Samantapāsādikā Buddhaghosa establishes an unbroken tradition for the Vinaya in India, from the time of the Buddha, through Upāli and his pupils, right down to the Third Council : 'evaṃ idaṃ vinaya-piṭakam Jambudīpe tāva imāya ācariyaparamparāya yāva tatiyasāṅgīti tāva ābhatan ti veditabbam'.²⁰ From thence it is safely transmitted to Ceylon through Mahinda from whom a Ceylonese therā, Ariṭṭha, masters it. Towards the very end of the historical introduction to the Samantapāsādikā,²¹ Buddhaghosa narrates the very beautiful story of the recital of the Vinaya by Ariṭṭha at the request of the therā Mahinda, the reason given for this recital being 'that a lad born in Ceylon of Ceylonese parents and ordained in Ceylon should learn the Vinaya in Ceylon and recite it in order that the sāsana established in Ceylon may take root firmly.' Is not Buddhaghosa recording for us here a tradition which makes a determined effort to implant in Ceylon a loyal school of Vinaya followers ?

The traditional account of the literary activity of the First Council has witnessed the accumulation of a great deal of divergent views around

17. Dīpavamsa V. 33-37.

18. Ibid. V. 32.

19. Ibid. IV. 17.

20. SP. I. 32-33.

21. SP. I. 102.

it. Going back to the historical kernel in the Cullavagga, we find specific mention made of venerable Mahākassapa questioning Upāli with regard to the four pārājikās, in all their details—vatthu, nidāna, puggala, paññatti, anupaññatti, āpatti and anāpatti. At the end of this, the account refers very briefly to the rest of the Vinaya recital as ‘eteneva upāyena ubhato vinaye pucchi putttho putttho āyasmā Upāli vissajjesi.’ This statement, when closely examined, leads us to the following observations. Chapters XI and XII of the Cullavagga which deal with the First and Second Councils, when viewed from their literary position, appear at the end of the collection known as the Khandhakas. These Khandhakas are regularly listed in all the later subdivisions of the Vinaya-piṭaka.²² If at the time of the compilation of the Cullavagga account of the First Council the Khandhakas were in existence and the author makes no mention of it, does it point to the existence of a well-founded accurate tradition which would not allow of an anachronism in the hands of compilers a hundred years later. A further point of interest is that Cullavagga XII, with which Cullavagga XI is closely associated in point of time, quotes the Suttavibhanga seven times as authority while discussing the validity of the disputed points—dasavattthūni—at the Second Council. The Vibhanga,²³ referred to as *ubhato vibhanga* or *dve vibhanga* or severally as *Mahāvibhanga* and *Bhikkhunū-vibhanga*, it must be pointed out, heads the list in the later subdivisions of the Vinaya.²² Therefore when the Cullavagga speaks of the contents of the Vinaya recited at the First Council as *ubhato vinaya*, and leaves out any reference to the Vibhanga with which, we may guess, it was familiar at the time the account of the First Council was compiled, we may infer that the rules of monastic discipline of the monks and nuns—*ubhato vinaya*—in their earlier form were not concerned with any commentarial explanations or descriptions. *Ubhato vinaya*, for the compiler of the Cullavagga XI, seems also a very safe term under which the earliest contents of Buddhist monastic discipline may be cited without slipping into an error of anachronism.

The Cullavagga then proceeds to describe the Sutta recital as follows. The elder Mahākassapa questions Ānanda regarding the Brahmajāla and Sāmaññaphala suttas of the Dīghanikāya and in the same manner he is said to have questioned Ānanda regarding the five nikāyas : ‘eteneva upāyena pañcanikāye pucchi’.²⁴ This winds up the literary activity of

22. SP. I. 15. SV. I. 13. Mahābodhivamsa 92.

23. Vide S. B. E. Vol. XIII p. XXXI on the terms Vibhanga and Suttavibhanga.

24. Vinaya II. 287.

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the First Council with no mention of Abhidhamma in any form. This early tradition regarding the Sutta literature, which was generally designated as dhamma, lent itself to considerable revision and elaboration during the centuries that followed. The earliest Chinese translation of the Vinaya-piṭaka—the Dharmagupta Vinaya translated into Chinese in A.D. 365—in its account of the First Council gives many more details which are not mentioned in the Pali version. Referring to the Sutta recital at the First Council, it agrees with the Cullavagga in recognising five subdivisions in it, but it goes further and gives also the names of the subdivisions. However, on a closer examination of the Chinese text we discover that the Chinese transliteration of the word āgama, which is here used in place of the word nikāya, is not applied to the fifth division which they choose to refer to as the 'mixed or miscellaneous piṭaka'—*tsa ts'ang*. A list of twelve different works contained in this group is also given. The only other instances in this account of this character *ts'ang*, which means piṭaka, being used are with reference to the Vinaya-piṭaka and the Abhidhamma-piṭaka. Does this imply, at least at the time of the Chinese translation, a separate and independent existence for the fifth division, on account of its character, outside the nikāya or āgama collections? Of the subsequent Vinaya recensions in Chinese those of the Mahāsaṅghika and Mahisāsaka schools also agree with the Dharmagupta Vinaya in including the Khuddaka collection as the fifth division in the Suttapiṭaka. The Sarvāstivāda school, Nāgārjuna and Asanga, on the other hand, make no mention of it.²⁵

Buddhaghosa while describing the literary activity of the First Council in the Sumangalavilāsinī, where he is evidently drawing on an earlier tradition, also speaks at first only of the Dīgha, Majjhima, Samyutta and Anguttara as nikāyas, reckoning their extent according to the number of suttas and bhānavāras in the Dīgha and bhānavāras alone in the rest. It is these four subdivisions, again, he has in mind when he speaks of the Suttanta-piṭaka as consisting of four sangītis: 'suttantapiṭake catasso sangītiyo'. These four nikāyas alone, according to the same tradition, were entrusted after recital to famous schools of disciples for safe custody at the First Council.²⁶ The Mahābodhivamsa²⁷—11th century—subscribes completely to this view of Buddhaghosa in the Sumangalavilāsinī. This account of the Sumangalavilāsinī and the Mahābodhivamsa are also

25. Anesaki—Four Buddhist Āgamas in Chinese p. 8.

26. SV. I. 14-15.

27. Mahābodhivamsa 94.

both agreed in introducing the Abhidhamma immediately after the recital of the first four nikāyas, thus winding up as it were the sutta or dhamma recital with those four nikāyas. This idea of the four significant and authoritative subdivisions of the Sutta collection is expressed by Buddhaghosa again in the introductory verses to the Sumangalavilāsini where he uses the term āgama instead of nikāya and also refers specifically to the Dīghanikāya as Dīghāgama.²⁸

Majjhe Visuddhimaggo esa catunnaṃ pi āgamānaṃ hi
thatvā pakāsayissati tatha yathābhāsitaṃ atthaṃ²⁹

Both Buddhaghosa and the Dīpavamsa seem to go back to the same tradition, not only in upholding the fourfold division of the Sutta-piṭaka, but also in referring to the subdivisions as āgamas.

Pavibhattā imaṃ therā saddhammaṃ avināsaṇaṃ
vaggapaññāsakaṃ nāma samyuttaṃ ca nipātakaṃ
āgamapiṭakaṃ nāma akaṃsu suttasammataṃ.³⁰

This, however, does not establish the existence of a homogeneous tradition of four nikāyas or āgamas in and about the time of Buddhaghosa. The older tradition of the five nikāyas seems to have lingered along, even feebly, and forced itself both into the Dīpavamsa and the works of Buddhaghosa, at least outside the main tradition they supported. The Dīpavamsa, while speaking of the Mahāsaṅgītikā bhikkhus, makes a very casual reference to the five nikāyas.³¹ In the Samantapāsādikā³² Buddhaghosa seems to take up completely the tradition preserved in the Vinaya-piṭaka regarding the Sutta recital at the First Council. This is in marked contrast to his account in the Sumangalavilāsini. Here Buddhaghosa expands and furnishes the details to the Cullavagga line 'cteneva upāyena pañca nikāye pucchi.' He is, in this context, more faithful to the text on which he proposes to comment than to the tradition. Defining the *pañca nikāyā* he refers to them by their names, but of the Khuddaka alone, he gives a descriptive definition in which he reveals to us one definite view of contemporary opinion regarding this nikāya. 'Tattha Khuddakanikāyo

28. SV. I. 2.

29. Ibid. I. 2. v 15.

30. Dīpavamsa IV. 16 Vagga, Paññāsaka, Samyutta and Nipātaka here clearly refer to the four principal Āgamas of what was earlier known as the Suttapiṭaka. We are unable to agree with Gokuldas De who takes this quotation to imply the early existence of a single piṭaka from which 'the three Piṭakas, especially the Vinaya and Sutta emanated' in the Third Council. Democracy in Early Buddhist Sangha—Gokuldas De p. 4.

31. Dīpavamsa V. 33.

32. SP. I. 16.

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nāma cattāro nikāye t̥hapetvā avasesaṃ buddhavacananaṃ'.³³ He is seen making a further distinction between the Khuddakanikāya and the other four nikāyas in the same account. 'Tattha vinayo āyasmataṃ Upālittherena vissajjito. Sesakhuddakanikāyo cattāro ca nikāyā Ānandattherena.'

On the other hand, when Buddhaghosa speaks of the Khuddakanikāya in the Sumangalavilāsini,³⁴ having wound up the Sutta and Abhidhamma piṭakas, it is only while recording two divergent traditions regarding the contents of this heterogeneous collection and its place in relation to the rest of the Buddha's teachings. The Dīghabhāṇakas, says Buddhaghosa, affirm the recital of the Khuddaka collection at the First Council, but they do not apply the term nikāya to it. Denying to this collection the status of a nikāya, both Dīghabhāṇakas and Majjhimbhāṇakas refer to it as Khuddakagantha. The Dīghabhāṇakas place this collection in the Abhidhamma-piṭaka and recognise a list of twelve books of which it comprises. The number of books in the Khuddaka collection according to the Dīghabhāṇaka list, it must be noted again, is the same as in the Dharmagupta Vinaya in Chinese. The Majjhimbhāṇakas disagree with them and including it in the Suttanta-piṭaka add to it the Cariyāpiṭaka, Apadāna and Buddhavamsa, thus raising the total number of books in it to fifteen which is the later recognised number of books in this collection. It must be noted here that both these lists, however, do not know of the Khuddakapāṭha.

What then is the status of the Khuddakanikāya in the Sutta-piṭaka? We have already referred to the fact that the Cullavagga XI, which is the oldest account we have of the First Council, refers to a fivefold division of the Sutta-piṭaka into nikāyas without any distinction. Unless this statement is dismissed as an interpolation, it becomes clear from this that at least a hundred years after the passing away of the Buddha, the Khuddakanikāya must have been known and accepted as the fifth nikāya of the Sutta-piṭaka. Otto Franke, who says that the two accounts in the Cullavagga XI and XII are but air bubbles, feels constrained to believe the statement about the Five Nikāyas. The compiler of Cullavagga XI, he says, mentions Five Nikāyas, and we can believe him the more readily, in that relatively early epigraphical evidence testifies to their existence. (J.P.T.S. 1908 p. 65.) However small it might have been as a collection in its early days, as is implied by its name, that the Khuddaka was recognised as a

33. SP. I. 16.

34. SV. I. 15.

nikāya from early days of the sāsana is further established by the fact that the period of the Bharhut stupa, circa 250—200 B.C., also knows this five-fold division of the Sutta collection. A Rail Inscription there refers to an elder Bodhi Rakhita who is a *pañcanekāyika*—a Master of the Five Nikāyas.³⁵ In the absence of any direct evidence, it is not possible to say whether a parallel tradition of four nikāyas existed from the earliest times. The Milindapañha, in a reference to learned monks associated with Nāgasena, speaks of those who had mastered the Tipiṭaka, five nikāyas as well four nikāyas.³⁶

Te ca tepiṭakā bhikkhū pañcanekāyikā pi ca
catunekāyikā ceva Nāgasenaṃ purakkharuṃ

Strictly speaking, the term *catunekāyikā* here cannot be taken to mean anything more than the selection of four nikāyas for special study. How and why one of the nikāyas has been left out of the known list of five, is the point of interest in this statement. Although the historical kernel of the Milindapañha has been ascribed to the first century A.D., the antiquity of this verse which occurs in the Bāhirakathā has yet to be established. It may not be far removed, in point of time, from Buddhaghosa who is keenly aware of this tradition of four nikāyas.

However, that this fourfold division of the Sutta-piṭaka is pre-Buddhaghosa in its origin, is also evident from the fact that the Dīghabhānakas themselves, whom Buddhaghosa quotes, are doubtful about the rightful place of the Khuddaka collection in the Sutta-piṭaka, and prefer to put it under the Abhidhamma. This reveals to us the other important fact that the nature of the contents of the Khuddaka collection must have to some extent undermined the prestige of the Khuddakanikāya as a subdivision of the Sutta-piṭaka. There is also evidence of a post-Buddhaghosa literary tradition which seems to have held fast to this view of four nikāyas. The Mahābodhivamsa agrees with the Sumangalavilāsini in reciting first and assigning for safe custody at the First Council, only four nikāyas. Then comes the Abhidhamma recital as in the Sumangalavilāsini, after which the Khuddaka collection, referred to as the Khuddakavatthu and not as nikāya, is recited.³⁷ It is in the Saddhammasangaha, generally placed towards the end of the 14th century, that we get a list which seems to restore fully the five nikāya division and establish for it canonical authority

35. Cunningham : Stupa of Barhut 142.
Barua & Sinha : Barhut Inscriptions 28-30.

36. Milindapañha : Trenckner 22.

37. Mahābodhivamsa 94.

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at the First Council level. The complete collection of the Khuddaka is called a *nikāya* at the time of the recital and is recited and placed immediately after the *Anguttara* as the fifth *nikāya* of the *Sutta-piṭaka*. However, true to the tradition preserved by Buddhaghosa, this *nikāya*, unlike the others, is not assigned to any school of disciples.³⁸

After a comprehensive description of the activities of the First Council both in the *Sumangalavilāsinī* and the *Samantapāsādikā*, Buddhaghosa enumerates the various classifications of the whole of the Buddha's teachings known in his day. 'Evaṃ etaṃ sabbam pi buddhavacanam rasavasena ekavidham' etc. In his comments on the diverse classifications, Buddhaghosa provides us with a wealth of tradition with which it is not possible to deal here. Nevertheless, two things are relevant to our present study. Buddhaghosa, who quoted the *Bhāṇakas* in the most detached manner to indicate the contents of the Khuddaka collection, knows now of a Khuddakanikāya consisting of fifteen books which also includes the Khuddakapāṭha, unknown in the lists of the *Bhāṇakas* quoted above.³⁹ The number of books in the Khuddaka collection seems to have been fixed at fifteen probably prior to the addition of the Khuddakapāṭha, for when the Khuddakapāṭha is added on to the already known *Majjhimabhāṇaka* list of fifteen works, the *Mahāniddeśa* and *Cullaniddeśa* of the earlier list are immediately treated as one single work. This keeps the total number of works in the collection unaltered at fifteen. The Chinese translation of the *Samantapāsādikā* which we have quoted above, on the other hand, does not contain the Khuddakapāṭha in its list of the works of the Khuddakanikāya and it refers to fourteen instead of fifteen subdivisions. Takakusu and Nagai say in their edition of the *Samantapāsādikā*⁴⁰ that this proves that the Khuddakapāṭha therefore is an interpolation later than A.D. 489. But we fail to see how the point is thereby established. The earliest lists of the contents of the Khuddakanikāya preserved in Pali are those of the *Dīgha* and *Majjhimabhāṇakas*. Both these speak of the *Niddeśa* as two different works, severally named as *Mahāniddeśa* and *Cullaniddeśa*. And the earliest lists where the two are treated as one, as in the Chinese *Samantapāsādikā*, are in the *Samantapāsādikā* (I. 18) and *Sumangalavilāsinī* (I. 17) which also include the Khuddakapāṭha as one of the fifteen works. Therefore we are more inclined to think that the inclusion of the Khuddakapāṭha and the treatment of the *Niddeśa* as one work went, more or less, hand in

38. *Saddhammasaṅgaha* 26-27.

39. *SV*. I. 15. *SP*. I 16.

40. *SP*. I. 18 n. 5.

hand. In the Chinese Samantapāsādikā the Niddesa is treated as one work and the Khuddakapāṭha is not found. The very nature of the Khuddakapāṭha might have led the Chinese translator to discriminate against it.

The new *pañcanikāya* theory which Buddhaghosa brings to light in his comments is equally revealing.⁴¹ The five nikāyas are collectively meant to embrace the whole of Buddha's teachings. As the first four nikāyas retain their true sutta character, this has been made possible by making the Khuddakanikāya so elastic as to include within it the whole of the Vinaya and Abhidhammapīṭakas, besides its own collection of fifteen works. 'Katamo khuddakanikāyo. Sakalam vinayapīṭakam abhidhammapīṭakam khuddakapāṭhādayo ca pubbe nidassitapañcadasabhedaṁ thapetvā cattāro nikāye avasesam buddhavacanam.

Thapetvā caturo p'ete nikāye dighāḍḍike
tadaññaṁ buddhavacanam nikāyo khuddako mato ti.

Buddhaghosa also speaks of five nikāyas including the Khuddaka as subdivisions of the Suttantapīṭaka while commenting on the threefold division of the Buddhavacana into Vinaya, Suttanta and Abhidhamma.⁴² Buddhaghosa, by this classification of the whole of the Buddha's teachings into five nikāyas and the definition of the Khuddakanikāya, seems to restore to the Khuddaka its title of nikāya in a new guise. This new classification seems to have been advantageous not only to the Khuddakanikāya but also to the Abhidhammapīṭaka which thereby found for itself a definite place even in the oldest division of the Buddha's teachings into Dhamma and Vinaya. Its place in the Suttapīṭaka could not be doubted any longer.⁴³

In the divergent and almost contradictory comments and traditions which Buddhaghosa has included both in the Sumangalavilāsini (SV.) and the Samantapāsādikā (SP.) we see the great regard which he has for contemporary opinion and his attempts at reconciliation as distinct from the high fidelity with which he records earlier traditions.

Since writing this article we have read Professor E. Lamotte's study of the Khuddakanikāya in 'Problèmes concernant les textes canoniques "mineurs"—Journal Asiatique : Tome CCXLIV. Année 1956 Fascicule

41. SV. I. 22-23. SP. I. 26-27.

42. SV. I. 17.

43. Ibid. I. 16, II. 565-566.

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no. 3. We seem to share some problems in common which we have approached from different angles. Hence we should like to conclude with the following observations.

Perhaps the author has in mind the account of the Cullavagga XI when he says that it is the Sinhalese tradition—la tradition Singhalaise—which takes the compilation of the Khuddakanikāya to have been effected at the same time as the beginnings of Buddhism, i.e. at the Council of Rajagaha. We have already endeavoured to show the significant corroboration which this tradition of the Cullavagga receives from inscriptional records of Barhut and Sanchi. (Vide n. 35). We would readily admit, as stated earlier, that as the very name Khuddaka suggests, this collection at first must have been considerably small. However, we find it difficult to ignore the fact that if the theory of Five Nikāyas which we find in the Cullavagga was known early, the Khuddaka then would have very naturally borne the title of a nikāya. If when he says “ Rien ne permet d’affirmer que cette collection ait été compilée avant l’époque de Buddhaghosa au v^e siècle de notre ère,” he means that this collection did not take its final form before the time of Buddhaghosa, we would give as further proof of this gradual accumulation of the Khuddakanikāya the inclusion of the Khuddakapāṭha in the present list of fifteen works of which it comprises, perhaps as late as the time of Buddhaghosa. (Vide n. 39).

We have already stated that as far as we are aware neither the Dīghanor Majjhimbhāṇakas know of the Khuddakapāṭha as a work of the Khuddakanikāya. But on this negative evidence alone we are unable to go so far as to state that the Dīghabhāṇakas and Majjhimbhāṇakas excluded the Khuddakapāṭha from their Khuddaka collections. For he says : “ A Ceylan, au temps de Buddhaghosa (v^e siècle), l’école des Dīghabhāṇaka excluait du *Khuddakanikāya* trois sections—Khuddakapāṭha, Cariyāpiṭaka et Apadāna—et rattachait les douze autres à l’*Abhidhammapiṭaka*. Par contre les Majjhimbhāṇaka, après avoir éliminé le *Khuddakapāṭha*, faisaient passer le restant dans le *Suttapiṭaka*.” (Sumangalavilāsini p. 15). What then, may we ask, is the fate of the Buddhavamsa ? Do the Dīghabhāṇakas retain it in their Khuddaka collection ? Then and only then can the Majjhimbhāṇakas who, according to the statement quoted above, add nothing to this collection, come to possess it. But on the evidence of the Sumangalavilāsini the situation is something very different. The Dīghabhāṇakas have no Buddhavamsa while the Majjhimbhāṇakas have three additional texts over the Dīghabhāṇakas in Cariyāpiṭaka, Apadāna and Buddhavamsa.

The author has also drawn our attention to a reference in the Atthasālinī p. 26 which refers to the Khuddakanikāya as consisting of fourteen books. But the authenticity of this statement, we notice, is somewhat weakened when we compare it with the list of the works of the Khuddakanikāya given on p. 18 of the same work. It is identical with the other lists of fifteen works in the Sumangalavilāsinī and Samantapāsādikā which also refer definitely to the Khuddakanikāya as *pamarasabhedo*. But the Atthasālinī here leaves out this record of the numerical strength of the Khuddakanikāya as consisting of fifteen works, perhaps, we may assume, with the definite motive of being able to allude to this fourteen-fold division. Being unable to determine which of the fifteen works was meant to be excluded in the Atthasālinī, we cannot say anything more at present.

In support of his theory of the existence of a Sūtraṭīka in Four Āgamas the author also quotes two Chinese versions of the Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra. But these exist for us only in the form of translations, dating from a period not very much earlier than the fourth century A.D. Thus we are unable to accept their 'canonical antiquity' except in a restricted sense, and there is no guarantee that they do not embody a later tradition moulded in keeping with the views of those responsible for the various recensions.

The Ceylon Thera Sudinna who is referred to in the article, no doubt provides an interesting divergence of opinion. His sole criterion for testing the authenticity of the Buddhavacana is the literary pattern, i.e. conformity to the sutta type. Anything which does not bear the title of sutta, says Sudinna, is not the word of the Buddha. That this is a weak argument resulting from a misconception is clear from the fact that the very early ninefold division of the *navaṅgasatthusāsana* which covers the word of the Buddha knows many literary forms besides the sutta. Further, and what is more relevant here, we cannot but point out the fact that immediately preceding the statement of Sudinna quoted above is a very categorical statement to the contrary, viz. that there are many sayings of the Buddha which are not all cast in the sutta pattern : 'asuttanāmakam hi Buddhavacanam nāma atthi seyyathidam Jātakam . . . Apadānan ti. (SV. II. 566). And Sudinna is here quoted by Buddhaghosa only in order to take note of a dissentient view. The heterogeneous and unorthodox character of the contents of the Khuddakanikāya which is the subject of dispute here too, we have already suggested, must have led to its exclusion from the orthodox Sutta collection, and our hypothesis of the independent

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existence of the Khuddakanikāya outside the Four Principal Nikāyas at a later date finds support in the comment "Cependant, tout en refusant de les incorporer dans leur Tripiṭaka, les Sarvāstivādin eurent aussi des Textes mineurs qu'ils citent fréquemment dans leurs ouvrages sous le titre de Kṣudraka, et les Mahāyānistes qui pour les écrits canoniques sont tributaires des Sarvāstivādin font de ces Kṣudraka un Piṭaka special, distinct du Tripiṭaka traditionnel."

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