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A Study of the Structural Formation
shown in the Pāli version of Vinaya

A thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy

In the Department of Pāli and Buddhist Studies

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Abstract

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There have been some hypotheses concerning the formational aspect of the Pāli Vinaya. One of them is that the Pātimokkha-sutta is the earliest record of the Vinaya and the basis on which the Sutta-vibhaṅga took its current shape. However, the perusal of the Suttavibhaṅga and the Khandhaka enables us to draw a different conclusion. The Pātimokkha-sutta is merely a dry collection of rules. It does not hold any origin-stories that lead to the promulgation of the rules. Given the situation that the Buddha promulgated most of the rules after occasion had arisen, however, it is more plausible to say that the Pātimokkha-sutta was extracted from the Suttavibhaṅga than to say that the Pātimokkha-rules were invented without any reason at a certain time at once to be used on the uposatha day and that later the origin-stories were added to fit into the rules. Besides, it is observed that not a few rules in the Pātimokkha-sutta presuppose the regulations found in the Khandhaka. As for the Khandhaka, it is to be observed that a number of its regulations base themselves on the Pātimokkha-rules. Therefore, it can be

said that, when it comes to the formational relationship, both the Suttavibhaṅga and the Khandhaka must have influenced each other in assuming their present structure. While taking final shape as the present Pāli Vinaya, it has incorporated later additions since the Buddha passed away. Among the latest components of the Pāli Vinaya is the Parivāra of which most of the contents may have been composed in Sri Lanka. It must have been included in the Vinayapiṭaka at the time of the 4th Council held during the reign of King Vaṭṭagāmaṇī (1st century BCE) in Sri Lanka. The bottom line is that the extant Pāli Vinaya contains early material that belonged to the time of the Buddha as well as later interpolations in its developments in India after the demise of the Buddha and the latest elements added to it much later in its development in Sri Lanka.