The Monastic Boundary (*Sīmā*) in Burmese Buddhism:

Authority, Purity and Validity in Historical and Modern Contexts

Nagasena Bhikkhu

Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

in the Study of Religions

_____

August 2012

Department of Religions

School of Oriental and African Studies

University of London

Declaration for PhD thesis

I have read and understood regulation 17.9 of the Regulations for students of the School of Oriental and African Studies concerning plagiarism. I undertake that all the material presented for examination is my own work and has not been written for me, in whole or in part, by any other person. I also undertake that any quotation or paraphrase from the published or unpublished work of another person has been duly acknowledged in the work which I present for examination. I accept that the School has the right to use plagiarism detection software to check the electronic version of the thesis.

Signed:_____   Date:_____

Abstract

This thesis explores the monastic boundary *(sīmā)* as it relates to Burmese Buddhist theory and practice. This boundary is a sanctified sacred space within which key Theravada monastic legal procedures *(saṅghakamma)* must be performed. The Burmese consider *sīmā* to be both the birthplace of the Buddha's religion (*thathana yei mwe phwa ya thana*) and the life-force for its continuity (*thathana yei athet*). It is in the certainty of a *sīmā's* legitimacy that the validity and purity of Theravada Buddhism is maintained and preserved for future generations. Monks take ordination there and it is where confession, forgiveness and probation rituals are held, and so the sacred place where monastic impurities are washed away (*apyit ko say kyaw ya thana*).

As a result of the *sīmā's* significance for Saṅgha validity, there has been a substantial amount of care and debate devoted to defining and maintaining its legitimacy within the Theravada tradition. The tendency in Burma is to go above and beyond the efforts prescribed in the *Vinaya* canonical and commentarial authorities. This tendency reflects the history of Buddhism in Burma. Through reference to its unbroken, pure lineage and the purity of its *Vinaya* practice the Saṅgha has secured its existence and staved off rivalry from other groups, by persuading kings and others to provide patronage. I identify the rhetoric of purity and impurity/invalidity within the context of Burmese history, royal intervention, and political and monastic rivalry. I discuss the Pāli and Burmese commentarial literature and dispute material pertaining to *sīmā,* draw on oral history and conduct fieldwork in Burma and in Burmese-influenced Bangladesh to explore the impact of these textual authorities and political history on the practice of *sīmā* in the modern period, including the catastrophic impact of a *sīmā* being declared invalid, for the monks ordained there, their disciples and even the entire lineage.

Acknowledgements

When I submitted my Ph.D. application to SOAS in the 2004/5 academic year I applied feeling a mixture of uncertainty and lack of confidence about whether I would be able to achieve my goal. I was concerned about financial support and about western academic disciplines since I would be coming to them without experience. In one of my earliest meetings with my supervisor, Kate Crosby (formerly Seiyu Kiriyama Reader on Buddhist Studies and Director, Centre of Buddhist Studies; currently Professor of Buddhist Studies, King's College, London) she looked at a few samples of my writing and at my MA dissertation which I had completed in Sri Lanka five years earlier and, following a brief discussion about the potential risk of writing in the western academic style, we agreed I should first follow another Master's course in Religious Studies in order to understand and develop the required skills. This went according to plan and I successfully completed my MA in 2005 and was subsequently promoted to next stage, the M.Phil and Ph.D. course. At the end of my Ph.D. research I realised how much I had benefitted from the Masters as it had opened my eyes to both western theories of research and to disciplines in religious studies. I am deeply indebted to my supervisor for my promotion and development in these academic studies. She has continued to give detailed and repeated feedback on my work throughout my time as a graduate student, and also assisted in acquiring funding. Her advice and guidance is inestimable. I would also like to express my appreciation to my second supervisor, Michael Charney (History Reader and Member of Buddhist Studies and Southeast Studies at SOAS) my third supervisor, Professor Brian Bocking, (former Head of the Department of Religious Studies), and to David Mosse, Professor of Anthropology at SOAS under whom I undertook a yearlong course in Theory of Anthropological Studies. Their help and assistance in developing my academic understanding is greatly appreciated.

Sīmā is considered to be a difficult and complex subject but with the assistance of my Burmese teachers, *Vinaya* experts and informants, all of whom guided me through my research, I was able to overcome many obstacles. Although each of them is greatly

appreciated I am particularly grateful to the following: the Venerable U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa, former Rector, State Pariyatti Sāsana University, Yangon; the Venerable Bamaw Sayadaw, present Head of the State *Saṅghamahānāyaka* (literally means 'Great Council of the Saṅgha)[1] of Burma; the Venerable Ashin Rājadhammābhivaṃsa, Head of Maso-yein Monastic Institute, Mandalay; the Venerable Gaṇḍamālālaṅkāra, Tipiṭakadhara Sayadaw and the Head of the Dhammanāda monastery, Mingun; Dr. Ottarañāna, Head of the Birmingham Buddhist Vihāra, Dr. Nandamālābhivaṃsa, the current Rector of the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University and Dr. Candāvarābhivaṃsa, the Deputy Rector of the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University, Dr. Osadhasāra, former deputy rector of Sitagu International Buddhist Academy.

I also wish to express appreciation to my English supporters and devotees who gave of their time and energy to read and try to get to grips with the complexity of *sīmā* in an effort to help me improve my English grammar and common usage. My thanks go to Linda and Mike Tomlinson, to Robert Black, Ramona Kauth, Yann Lovelock, Visakha Sampla and Marian Hall. Each read through different sections of my first draft and proofreading offering suggestions on how I could improve my English usage. I would also like to thank U Javana, former student State Pariyatti Sāsana University, Yangon and U Janaka, Ph.D. student, (King's College, London), both corrected the Burmese terms in the thesis and glossary.

Despite academic support and guidance from different experts and scholars, this thesis would not have been achieved without the financial assistance provided by my supporters and well-wishers, the most noteworthy of whom is Dr Mar Mar Lwin who donated tuition fees throughout the course. Others contributed to my travelling expenses both at home and abroad and to the essential requisites needed when undertaking my research projects. These are Mrs Ellen Parker, Dr Aung Myint, Dr Soe Lwin, Dr

---

[1] Although the term can be translated as 'Great Council of the Saṅgha', Burmese Authority does not use this translated term. They officially use the Pāli term,

Table of Contents

List of figures:

Thesis introduction:

1.1. The Scope of this thesis

This thesis explores the monastic boundary (*sīmā)* as it relates to Burmese Buddhist theory and practice. This boundary is a sanctified sacred space within which key Theravada monastic legal procedures *(saṅghakamma)* must be performed. The Burmese consider *sīmā* to be both the birthplace of the Buddha's religion (*thathana yei mwe phwa ya thana*) and the life-force for its continuity (*thathana yei athet*). It is in the certainty of a *sīmā's* legitimacy that the validity and purity of Theravada Buddhism is maintained and preserved for future generations. Monks take ordination there and it is where confession, forgiveness and probation rituals are held. This latter purpose is also known as the sacred place where guilt is cleared or where monastic impurities are washed away (*apyit ko say kyaw ya thana*). As Kieffer-Pülz writes in the foreword to her seminal study of the canonical and early commentarial sources for the *sīmā*:

> "Sie bildet die Grundlage für eine im rechtlichen Sinnen handlungsfähige Gemeinde (*saṅgha*) und damit den Rahmen für die Durchführung der Rechtshandlungen (*kamma*) durch die Gemeinde. Eine fehlerhafte Sīmā hat die Ungültigkeit aller in ihr durchgeführten Rechshandlungen zur Folge. Dies ist insbesondere für die Ordinationstradition bedeutsam, da nur die ununterbrochen auf den buddha zurückreichende Ordinationstradition Gültigkeit hat." ['It forms the basis of a functioning community (Saṅgha) in a legal sense and consequently the framework within which the community conducts its legal procedures. A faulty *sīmā* means that all the legal procedures conducted in it are invalid. This is especially significant for the ordination lineage since only an ordination lineage that goes back in an unbroken line to the Buddha is valid.'] (Kieffer-Pülz 1992: 7).

Of the more than ten types of monastic procedure conducted within a *sīmā*, five are still observed by Burmese monks today. They are:

    i)   *Uposatha* ceremony, which is held fortnightly for the purpose of confession and recitation of the *pātimokkha* rules (Theravada code of monastic legal discipline);

    ii)   ii) *Pavāraṇā* (invitation), a day to mark the end of *vassa* (rains retreat). The rains retreat normally falls between July and October and

the *pavāraṇā* ceremony provides an opportunity for all monks who spent the retreat together to invite for admonition/criticism with regard to one's behaviour if seen, heard or in doubt by a member of the bhikkhu saṅgha that it is not allowed by the *vinaya* rules. Although such a formal invitation normally takes place on the day of *Pavāraṇā,* a monk can point out each others' wrongdoing in any time of the year if they infringe *vinaya* rules.

iii)   (3) *Kaṭhina,* a yearly robe offering ceremony which occurs within a month of the *Pavāraṇā* day;

iv)   (4) *Mānatta* (penance) and *Parivāsa* (probation) ceremony for monks who break the *saṅghādisesa* rules or who are to be expelled from the Saṅgha on account of failure to correct wrongdoing and wrong view; and,

v)   *Upasampadā* - higher ordination ceremony.[2]

---

[2] Apart from these five monastic procedures, there are two more very specific procedures observed by modern Burmese monks on rare occasions. They are found in the *Cullavagga,* but their practice today is specific to the Burmese context. Firstly, *Pakāsanīya,* an act of proclamation by the order of the Saṅgha regarding a member declaring that as his conduct was of one kind before and is of another kind now, henceforth all his physical and verbal actions are only his and have nothing to do with the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha. This action was carried out against U Okkaṭha, a Burmese monk, who held a view that '*luthe lu pyit*' – 'if a human being dies, he or she will be born again as a human being'. This view excluded the possibility of other types of rebirth in this world or beyond. Since such a view does not correspond to the view of rebirth found in canon, the Burmese *Saṅghamahānāyaka* reached an agreement to carry out the *Pakāsanīya* against U Okkaṭha and his followers in 1981 (*Naing-ngandaw Thikhya Vinaydo Aphwe* 1981:1-3). This *pakāsanīya* was in fact carried out against U Okkaṭha after his death (and in fact he had disrobed before his death), but the *Saṅghamahānāyaka* carried out this unusual procedure in order to prevent his followers from perpetuating his views. The second monastic procedure is *Pattanikkujjana,* overturning the bowl; this action is normally carried out against members of the laity or devotees who committed a crime or dishonoured a monk. Once such an action has been carried out by the community of Saṅgha, the monks do not accept alms from them. Burmese monks carried out this action against the 'rulers' during 1990 and 2007. Again this is an exceptional case, since *saṅghakamma* usually only affect monks and all those affected should either be present or be represented by a proxy in the *sīmā* when the *saṅghakamma* takes place (McCarthy 2008). See also this blog: http://aungzwa.blogspot.co.uk/2007/09/blog-post_5828.html,

Each of these monastic legal procedures is guided by *Vinaya* rules which differ in their purpose and objectives depending upon the type of monastic act being conducted. What they all have in common, however, is that for *saṅghakamma* to be complete they must be conducted in a *sīmā*. Of all such legal procedures the most important is higher ordination - the transmission of the monastic lineage. With this last exception all other monastic legal procedures undertaken in error can be corrected by confession of wrongdoing and correction on subsequent occasions, but any error in the ordination procedure would invalidate the whole monastic legal procedure making the ordination meaningless.

There are five obligatory factors that ensure the validity of a monastic legal procedure and these are especially significant to a monk's ordination ceremony. These five are: appropriate ordinand; correct motion; correct liturgy; complete assembly; and, valid monastic boundary *(sīmā)*.The quorum of monks involved in the ordination ceremony are able to easily examine whether the ordinand is qualified to undertake the ordination, as well as ensure that the correct motion and liturgy are used, but to ensure the purity, authority and continuity of the Theravada Saṅgha within Burmese tradition the last two factors are of paramount importance. It is imperative that the quorum of monks involved in the ordination is of direct and unbroken monastic lineage and that the *sīmā* within which the ordination takes place has been correctly consecrated within this unbroken monastic line.

The criteria for assessing the unbroken lineage of the monks and the rules for consecration of a *sīmā* are contained within *Vinaya* texts. I will outline the relevant texts in Chapter One. If monks follow the rules as prescribed in these *Vinaya* regulations they are considered to be of the same affiliation and can become members of the quorum operating in monastic legal communion when undertaking legal procedures within a *sīmā,* including ordination ceremony. As will be shown in Chapter Four the early development and adherence to this monastic tradition has created a communion of monks of different nationalities and different regions who are all descended from the same unbroken monastic heredity. The extent of my discussion of monastic lineage is,

however, limited in this thesis. I will return to it briefly in Chapter Two where I deal solely with the perceived history of the monastic order in Burma. This sole aim of this thesis is an exploration of how the Burmese give emphasis to the correct establishment of a *sīmā*.

As a result of *sīmā* holding such a significant place at the heart of Saṅgha validity, there has been a substantial amount of care and debate devoted to defining and maintaining its legitimacy within the Theravada tradition. This tendency in Burma to go above and beyond the efforts prescribed in the *Vinaya* canonical and commentarial texts reflects the history of Buddhism in Burma. Through reference to its unbroken, pure lineage and the purity of its *Vinaya* practice the Saṅgha has both secured its existence by persuading kings and others to provide patronage and has successfully staved off rivalry from other groups. In my review of the history of the Saṅgha in Burma I will both identify the rhetoric of purity as used by one Saṅgha group to authorise its right to exist and receive patronage as well as describe the rhetoric of impurity and invalidity that was used to undermine the authority of a rival group with devastating consequences for the losing side. In Chapter Two I survey history looking for these themes and show how they increased over time through specific political developments. In Chapter Three I explore the production of *sīmā* literature in response to colonial rule and as part of independence and post-independence notions of nationhood and conceptions of the role of the Saṅgha. I offer examples of debates on how to interpret commentarial prescriptions in the light of certain modern developments, as well as showing the dangers of being judged to have failed to conduct a valid *sīmā* consecration or practice (in Chapters Two and Three). I relate this overall stance in relation to purity, validity and *sīmā* to specific examples at the individual level so that we see how monastic conduct and concerns are governed by these themes.

Central to the debates between monks and the involvement of Burmese kings was the concept of monastic purity as defined by the *Vinaya Piṭaka*. In order to avoid improper practices a learning system was developed whilst at the same time literary works based on canonical literature were being produced. The preservation of correct

monastic practice has been at the heart of textual scholarship over the centuries. This will be addressed further in Chapter Two while the nature of the texts upon which Theravada monks base their practices will be briefly outlined in Chapter One. What will be made apparent is the extreme brevity given in these early texts to the subject of correct *sīmā* establishment and maintenance, and how this obscured – or, rather, allowed questions to arise as to what constituted – a firm and correct definition. An example of the problems arising from the lack of a clearly defined explanation can be seen in Chapter One where I illustrate the problems of two overlapping *sīmās*. This particular issue drew further attention to the commentaries and sub-commentaries but guidance was vague. This led to the development of many new *sīmā* manuals but no single unifying definition. In Chapter Three I examine the development of these manuals while in Chapter Eight I discuss how the individual interpretations put on the commentarial and sub-commentarial texts by each author eventually resulted in diverse practices within the Burmese monastic tradition.

Further commentaries on the *Vinaya Piṭaka* continued to be written. They were in response to the changing nature of the Saṅgha, to differences in interpretation of meaning in the texts and to the ways in which land and tax were governed when defining a *gāmasīmā* (village boundary). A village boundary, according to the commentaries, is the base of a *sīmā* consecration but, as discussed in Chapter Five, changes arose reflecting a Saṅgha that gained in complexity and geographical spread and came into contact with different or changing host communities. The question of whether a *sīmā* can be consecrated outside a village boundary became another issue. This is also dealt with in Chapters Five and Seven.

1.2. Methodology

As a fully ordained monk for more than twenty years I was trained in the textual sources of the Burmese-Arakanese tradition. I completed intermediate Pāli and monastic education in Burma in 1986, Pāli Upādi (Pāli diploma) from Pāli and Sanskrit Board, Government of Bangladesh in 1990; then received my BA and MA in Buddhist Studies

in Thailand and Sri Lanka respectively. This allowed me to observe the traditional hermeneutics of texts within the Burmese tradition; that is, the type of interpretation conducted in relation to canonical and commentarial *Vinaya* texts in order to understand the implications for practice. Through my participation in Kate Crosby's Pāli classes at SOAS and as a result of my having undertaken research projects on the subject, I became aware of the broader range of textual criticism that might be usefully applied to such materials. Studying Theravada Buddhism from a range of perspectives with Kate Crosby in this context and then, in particular, with reference to the work of Michael Charney (history reader and member of Buddhist Studies and Southeast Studies at SOAS), a member of my supervisorial committee, my eyes have been opened to the political and historical context of Burmese textual interpretation.

In addition to the support received from my supervisor, I extended my education beyond that of the study of religion and its texts, to train in anthropological fieldwork. Under the direction of David Mosse (Professor of Anthropology at SOAS) I took the course Theory in Anthropology in 2006-7. This year-long course provided me with training in the Methodology in Anthropological Research, in particular quantitative and qualitative methods, the latter being of particular benefit to my fieldwork as it developed. I also drew on my language expertise. As a monk from Burmese-Arakanese background, born in Chittagong, Bangladesh, I have travelled and studied among a range of ethnic groups in Bangladesh and on the Burmese border. I also regularly travel among the diaspora of Theravada groups in Europe, Canada and America, including South and Southeast Asian countries. This being the case, I have acquired not only a network of contacts but also the following languages: Burmese, Arakanese, Bengali, Thai, Sinhala and Hindi.

Since this thesis, in looking at both textual authorities and practices, has involved textual, historical studies and fieldwork, both my experiences as a monk and the training provided by my supervisor Kate Crosby, Michael Charney and David Mosse, have enabled me to look with a broader perspective on the contrasting views between the historical and traditionally perceived monastic practices and the western academic

discipline. On the whole Burmese monks, being authorities on these texts, know the details of arguments concerning purity and know the risks of accusations of impurity at a very detailed practical level, but they are less likely to see such debates from the relative perspective provided by a historical framework; they are less likely to see how debates over the details of *sīmā* and valid monastic lineage are tools, even weapons, taken up within overall competitions for power. They are much more likely to see the debates in absolutist terms, in ways we might summarise as: "Are we and are they doing what the Buddha and Buddhaghosa instructed? Is this *sīmā,* and are the ordinations conducted within it, pure and valid?", rather than seeing the agenda to be one of control, power and political rivalry from the international to national and grass roots level.

Taking this perspective I have looked at traditional historical writings about Buddhism in Burma to highlight how and why *Vinaya* in general, and *sīmā* in particular, came to be at the heart of rhetoric about purity, validity and authority. The themes that emerge in Burmese history and in the Burmese writing of Buddhist history, explain why it is that Burma more than any other country, has retained and encouraged such extraordinary commentarial expertise, unparalleled elsewhere in the world. Moreover, in examining Burmese practice I have looked at how it differs from canonical and commentarial evidence, or rather how Burmese practice emphasises the importance of reading the Canon through the lens of the commentaries rather than through the lens of personal interpretation yet, with a few exceptions, this is perhaps surprising in the overall context.

I explored the textual authorities on *sīmā* not from the perspective of examining the contents in a comprehensive way in terms of historical development, although historical development is part of my discussion, but rather from the perspective of practice. I looked at the texts specifically to establish how they provide authority for specific aspects of *sīmā*. I also examined how they are used by Burmese practitioners. This textual work and *sīmā* commentarial tradition provided the background for me to look extensively at practice, including the politics governing the extraordinary care paid to *sīmā* consecration and validity; both issues that have developed in the modern context

as Theravada Buddhist monasticism responds to the complexities of geographical spread and coming into contact with different or changing host communities. To protect its purity in these changing circumstances extra care has taken these issues beyond bare minimum requirements. To some extent I have conducted a form of critical analysis by examining the uptake of certain sources, especially Buddhaghosa's commentary on the *Vinaya,* the *Samantapāsādikā,* looking at how Pāli and Burmese tradition perceived the ambiguity and misunderstanding in its wording yet accepted it as the ultimate exposition of canonical authority. Occasionally I have compared contrasting commentaries, but only where differences of opinion left ambiguities within the tradition, most of which led to debate in later sources.

1.3. Sources and informants

Since my thesis looks at Buddhist monastic practices as they have developed in Burma over time, I have looked beyond the Pāli canon and its commentaries and incorporated Burmese literature. My textual work involved reading texts in Pāli, Burmese and English. Wherever possible I give details of the author but since many lack a first printing date, this information is omitted. For the Pāli canon and English *Vinaya* texts, I have used the Sixth Buddhist Convention's synthesized redaction and Pāli Text Society respectively. Although the entire commentary to the *Vinaya Piṭaka* is called the *Samantapāsādikā*, as I shall explain in Chapter One, I use this commentarial source in accordance with the conventions for referring to texts and textual section used by the Sixth Council (1955-6), and as found in the resulting Burmese editions of these texts. The translations from Pāli and Burmese texts provided throughout the thesis are mine unless stated otherwise. Transliteration of Pali follows that used in the Critical Pali Dictionary and by von Hinüber 1996. Transliteration of Burmese follows the transliteration method of John Okell (see Okell 1971). Since the Burmese is transliterated this may create problems for Burmese readers. I have therefore added a glossary of both Pāli and Burmese terms, providing the Romanized transliteration followed by the Burmese script form.

My approach has been mainly diachronic in that I have examined how, over the course of Theravada literature from the Burmese perspective, an understanding of *sīmā* has developed – in response to concerns about correct practice – mainly with the motive of making it far more explicit. To assist my understanding I have also talked with living *Vinaya* experts, mainly from Burma, including those monks known for their expertise in *sīmā*. These informants have helped me understand modern *sīmā* practice and recent controversies. Those named in this thesis are described giving their title, date of interview and place with only the few exceptions where an informant has requested anonymity due to risk. In each case I have given the reason for this caution.

My fieldwork consisted of the observation of *sīmā* practices, mainly in Burma and Bangladesh, but also in Western Europe, I conducted group interviews and discussions in Bangladesh, among laity and monks, both informal and formal. I conducted more formal interviews with Burmese *sīmā* experts. Examining Burmese practice in this way offers interesting contrasts with the more relaxed attitude to commentarial prescriptions in, for example, Thailand. It also offers interesting comparisons with Bangladesh. Initially I undertook a significant amount of fieldwork in Bangladesh, offering as it does an interesting contrast, being a country in which Buddhism is a minority religion and the state has no interest in *sīmā* affairs. In particular I examined the variations in practice between different ethnic groups in Bangladesh and was able to relate this to the specific history of the development of Buddhism in Bangladesh during and since the nineteenth century. The wealth of material I found, however, prevented me from including all in this thesis and I have decided on the whole to exclude the Bangladeshi material for the time being except some mentions. I am mindful that such detailed work on Bangladeshi Buddhism is still rare in scholarship and I hope still to make the material available elsewhere shortly.[3]

---

[3] My supervisor and I jointly presented a paper titled as: 'The impact of Ethnic Diversity and Recent History on *Sīmā* Practice and Construction among the Buddhist of Bangladesh' at Association for Asian Studies Conference on 15-18 March 2012.

1.4. Difficulties in the study of *sīmā*

My reflections on the discussions I had with my informants suggest that ordinary Burmese monks have no wish to discuss *sīmā* despite it being central to their practices. They leave its complexities to the *Vinaya* experts, the majority of whom seem to focus on the series of problems inherent in the commentaries and sub-commentaries. Though experts' answers are well informed they frequently refer to the opinions of their predecessors or to the authority of the commentaries and the sub-commentaries. While some experts criticise a particular area of the sub-commentaries others accept its authority, even incorporating it into their practice. This has resulted in the production of a large number of *sīmā* manuals both in Pāli and vernacular language, as outlined in Chapter Three. The necessity of accommodating and acknowledging 'contradictory' arguments when responding to problems may, at times, have inhibited the flow of my analysis. This has been necessary to accommodate all linked arguments, not as in the theory of *paṭiccasamuppāda* (the theory of dependent origination) where cause and effect occur sequentially, but rather as in the process of *paṭṭhāna* (causal relationship) where many causal relationships are involved in one area, as in the *Abhidhamma.*

I am concerned that Burmese experts may criticise those areas of this thesis where my analysis of aspects of practice deviates from textual authority, or where I record their deviations from textual authority. Such difficulties have arisen out of the complexities of defining how Burmese monastics rely on the texts to define the authority and validity of monastic *sīmā* or monastic practice while, on the other hand, accommodating those areas where their practices seem to diverge, although such divergences result from reference to previous authors' or sub-commentarial interpretations. In either case I am aware that regardless of explanation my work may not completely escape criticism.

Reference to previous authors while not wishing to give too much credence to (or take responsibility for) one's own opinions is one of the reasons why *sīmā* manuals are written and, since the range of arguments around each point is vast, a complete analysis

of each could fill a book, providing plenty of sources for a researcher. Putting all of this aside, however, consecration of a *sīmā* is very simple; it needs only a defined village boundary along with three components: the correct recitation of liturgy, the presence of a quorum of monks and the placing of boundary markers. While it would take only five thousand words to specify the complete requirements of a *sīmā* consecration, even a hundred thousand words would not see the discussion complete.

1.5. Review of Western academic writings relating to *sīmā*

Kieffer-Pülz (1992) has provided a detailed examination of the Pāli canonical and commentarial sources, as well as of the *Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya,* which I review below. I shall not attempt to repeat such detailed work. So although I do examine some of these same texts, I focus on how they directly inform the *sīmā* issues that I seek to discuss. In fact, I must acknowledge that I have not been able to take full advantage of Kieffer- Pülz's work, since her textual study is in German, a language I have not studied. However, I have found her papers in English, which she kindly sent me, very informative. I shall review them in the next section. Rather than repeat her work, in the parts of my thesis that look at the Pāli canon and commentarial sources, I focus on the lineage of commentaries that were transmitted to and developed in Burma and look at how such texts were taken up in the Burmese tradition. In response to modernity it was Burma of all the Theravada-dominated nations that maintained the keenest interest in the commentaries, for reasons that I shall explore. I therefore look at Burmese materials in Pāli and Burmese and look at Burma for the details of the how *sīmā* is practised in the modern period.

While I have, in my approach, built on the existing textual scholarship on *sīmā*, mainly by Kieffer-Pülz, whose work I review in the next section, the other area in which *sīmā* has been examined in western scholarship is within the context of archaeology and art history. Such work, which represents the majority of work on the subject of *sīmā*, is touched on below in the literature review, but is rarely relevant to the thesis. The reason for the weight of work in this area is that it draws on the enduring nature and visibility of

the stones used either as *sīmā* boundary markers, *nimitta*, or as markers of where the *nimitta* stood (see Chapter Seven), which often remain when all other material evidence has vanished and in the absence of other kinds of evidence. These stones varied in style and were sometimes inscribed, even with writing, and are therefore important for studying the history and art history of Southeast Asia. However, because such work has relatively little to do with current practice I have only included it to show the nature of the academic work relating to *sīmā* so far, rather than because art historical concerns are of significance to my thesis. As far as I am aware my thesis is the first in-depth English-language study to combine historical, textual and fieldwork approaches to the study of *sīmā* – particularly with reference to Burma and its diaspora community. Such scholarship as has been conducted on *sīmā,* some of which I have briefly mentioned in discussing my own approach above, I shall now review in more detail below.

1.6. Textual scholarship on *vinaya* literature and *sīmā*

There are a number of textual works on *Vinaya* that emerged towards the end of the nineteenth century and during the early twentieth centuries. Among them most credit should be given to three outstanding scholars: T.W. Rhys Davids, Hermann Oldenburg and I.B. Horner. The first two of these scholars started with a translation of the *Vinaya Piṭaka* of the Pāli canon. The remaining part of the *Vinaya* section of the Canon was translated by I.B. Horner. The introduction to each book, and the numerous notes which they translated, are undoubtedly remarkable, and subsequent works on the *Vinaya* have been influenced by their work. Some noticeable examples are works by: Sukumar Dutt (1924), Gokuldas De (1955), and more recently Jotiya Dhirasekera (1982), John Clifford Holt (1981), Mohan Wijayaratna (1990), Kieffer Pülz (1992) and Thanissaro (2001). Each of these scholars utilized the *Vinaya* literature through the work of these three translators.

Although the focus of these authors is different in certain areas, in a general way they are on the whole repetitive, derived from textual reports with many areas of *Vinaya* remaining unrepresented at anything beyond a superficial mention. In the case of *sīmā*

this is true of these scholars' works except for that of Kieffer Pülz and Thanissaro whom I shall look at later.

Of the scholars mentioned above, De, for example, devoted his attention to the development of *Vinaya* rules specifically concerning ordination, rains-retreat, the duties of the teacher and pupils, and regular *uposatha* practice. On the latter he draws only a few paragraphs on the development of *sīmā* and practice. This differs from the work of Wijayaratna who only focuses on everyday rules of monks pertaining to the four requisites, e.g. how a monk should look after his robes, accommodation, food and medicine. Holt, on the other hand, looked at two main areas: the history and formation of the *Vinaya Piṭaka* and monastic legal rituals. On the latter, Holt briefly covers the subject of *sīmā* as discussed in the *Mahāvagga* (Mv) but it is no different from De's report in terms of overview, the only difference being the structure of *sammukhībuta-saṅgha* (literally meaning the 'Saṅgha who are meeting face to face', which we may interpret as 'local Saṅgha') and *catuddissā-saṅgha* (which literally means the 'Saṅgha of the four quarters', which we may interpret as 'entire Saṅgha'). He then describes how these two groups of Saṅgha perform monastic rituals together in a *sīmā*.

Dutt, in his work, offers a variety of topics including the establishment of monasteries whereby he gives a glimpse of Saṅgha life in the early period of settlement. There are, however, a number of misrepresentations and he fails to accurately differentiate between *āvāsa* ('monasteries/monastic residences') and *sīmā* (monastic boundary i.e. within a residence) (Dutt 1962: 82). He states that the boundaries of two *āvāsa* must not overlap but, in fact, such prohibition of overlapping between boundaries is only considered in relation to *sīmā* (Mv ii 4, 3) not *āvāsa* (as I shall explain in Chapter Four). Jotiya Dhirasekera dedicates a section to *sīmā* in his work *'Buddhist Monastic Discipline'* (1982) under appendix iii. This contains only ten pages, but he briefly manages to cover three areas: the concept, the origin and the development of *sīmā*.[4] The

---

[4] It is interesting to note that Dhirasekera mentions two *sīmā* manuals: The *Sīmālaṅkāra* and the *Sīmālaṅkārapakaraṇa*. The former book is written in the 13th century by the prolific Sinhalese monk called Vācissara and the latter is the commentary to the former written a by Burmese monk (Dhirasekera

first two points contain nothing that differs from the previous authors, being based on the *Mahāvagga's* accounts, but on the third topic he refers to the *Samantapāsādikā*, the commentary of *Vinaya Piṭaka*, and gives two quotations defining the development of a *khaṇḍasīmā* not found in the *Mahāvagga* (abbreviation as Mv), a subject I shall tackle in greater depth in Chapter Eight. Except for the two quotations given by Dhirasekera, these five scholars on the whole based their work on the *Vinaya Piṭaka* of the Pāli canon and *pātimokkha* rules. This reliance on the canon for an understanding of Theravada is a problem noted elsewhere by Crosby, who points out the problematic effect on creating an absence in the representation of Theravada historical development (e.g. Crosby 2008). However, whereas Crosby points out the further effect of combining study of the most ancient sources with a comparison of anthropological findings, in fact none of these scholars report from the viewpoint of anthropological sources. As a result, their works substantially overlook the importance of *sīmā* both as it developed historically and as practised by the modern Saṅgha. I redress these gaps in my work and we shall see that this further confirms Crosby's point that trying to understand modern practice without reference to post-canonical work distorts our understanding, in particularly by ignoring the continuity and development that Theravada has witnessed over the centuries.

The last two scholars in the list provided above (Kieffer Pülz and Thanissaro) have produced far more work on the subject of *sīmā*. They incorporate not only the *Mahāvagga* but also a considerable number of references derived from the commentaries. In his second book on the 'Buddhist Monastic Code' (2001), Thanissaro explores the entire *Mahāvagga* and *Cullavagga,* synthesizing them into one volume. He did this by organizing the most relevant subjects required for monastic practice, for example, *uposatha*, invitation, or disciplinary transactions. His work includes what he calls in the contents, 'community transaction' and 'territories' which correspond to the two Pāli terms we shall be using a great deal in this study, namely '*saṅghakamma*' (monastic legal act) and '*sīmā*' (monastic boundary) respectively. In the section

---

1982:329). The latter is compiled by Chapada, a Mon monk of Burma around 12th Century. Unfortunately, Dhirasekera neither quotes nor tells us the content of these books, nor even how he had access to them. He only mentioned the existence of these works in his book (Buddhist Monastic Discipline 1982).

'territories' he demonstrates how a *sīmā* should be consecrated in line with commentarial advice; he even briefly offers a variety of techniques on the boundary markers employed during consecration but these are mere the commentarial description of the *sīmā*. In many cases such analysis stemmed from the works of Thai scholars on the *Vinaya*, particularly Vajirañāṇavarorasa, the author of the *Vinayamukkha*. There is one area where Thanissaro is cautious about following Vajirañāṇavarorasa. This is where Vajirañāṇavarorasa criticizes the Commentary for not using common sense when two neighbouring boundaries are connected by the branch of a tree. While accepting his 'common sense' approach, Thanissaro is cautious not to follow Vajirañāṇavarorasa criticism of the commentary (Thanissaro 2001:209). The detail of Thanissaro's work, which we shall refer to in several places in this study, stems not only from his facility with Pāli canonical and commentarial sources, but also his position as a Western monk in Thai tradition living in USA, seeking to transfer correct *Vinaya* practice to the West and therefore both master and make available in English the full range of *Vinaya* information required for the functioning not just of individual monks (the emphasis in earlier works) but also for communities of monks.

The work of Petra Kieffer Pülz marks a remarkable development, as she is the first Western scholar to dedicate a number of works, including a full length book, to the study of *sīmā*. Her book *Die Sīmā* (*1992)* is entirely based on canonical and commentarial sources, and not confined to Theravada materials. As such it reflects the kind of comparative work between different Buddhist traditions often undertaken in Buddhist textual scholarship in Germany and as such providing quite a different synchronic analysis of texts and Buddhist traditions from the kind of textual work undertaken by *Vinaya* scholars within Burmese Theravada. Her subsequent articles focus on Theravada and also draw on dispute literature and archaeological reports. For example, she wrote: 'A legal judgment regarding a sīmā controversy' (1998) and 'Vācissara's Sīmālaṅkārasaṅgaha and the disagreement between Coliyas and Sinhalas' (1999). The former dispute material is based on the *Sīmāvivādavinicchayakathā* written in the eighteenth century by the Burmese Saṅgharāja, Ñeyyadhamma. I have reviewed

this work in the dispute manual section in Chapter Three. The latter is based on material that goes back to the thirteen century. Kieffer Pülz's work has also expanded to include fieldwork, carried out by others in Thailand, resulting in a short article under the title 'Rules for the sīmā Regulation in the Vinaya and its Commentaries and their application in Thailand' (1997a). She reported a number of previous works on sīmā consecration rituals in Thailand by Western scholars, particularly Bizot, Wells and Wijeyewardene. In fact, her work has drawn from these scholars when provided an overview of both the theory and the ritual aspects of sīmā in accordance with the Thai anthropological reports. In the same year (1997b), she wrote another article: 'Nāgas Ordained and Sīmās Connected: The Importance of Vimativinodanīṭikā for Vinaya Studies' (1997b) in which she describes how different Pāli terms are used when a man receives his higher ordination. Normally, a candidate or ordinand has a Pāli name which must be put into the *kammavācā* when the ordination ceremony is conducted. She compares this with the account reported in the *Vimativinodanīṭīkā* where the candidate's name is differently given as '*Nāga*' for the convenience of the *kammavācā* recitation. Two more of her works are particularly noteworthy here, one is the 'Ceremonial Boundaries in the Buddhist Monastic Tradition in Sri Lanka' (no date of essay) published in Sri Lanka[5] and the other the 'Karmavācanās for the determination of sīmā and ticīvarena avipavāsā' (1997). In the former essay, Pülz briefly traced back the chronicle records on the determination of sīmā and she quotes from both the *Mahāvaṃsa* and the *Dīpavaṃsa*. In the latter essay she compares Theravada *karmavācā* (liturgy for *saṅghakamma*) with five early schools: Dharmaguptaka School, Mahāsaṅghika School, Mahīsasaka School, Mūlasarvāstivādin School and finally Sarvāstivādin School, thus continuing the type of comparative work found in her book *sīmā*, mentioned above. Very recently, as I was in the final stages of finishing this thesis, the most recent book by her was drawn to my attention (my thanks to Peter Skilling for this). This book is *Sīmāvicāraṇa: A Pāli Letter*

---

[5] The essay appeared in a journal named as *Wilhelm Geiger and Study of the History and Culture of Sri Lanka* and published by Goethe Institute and Postgraduate Institute of Pāli and Buddhist Studies, Colombo. Ulrich Everding and Asanga Tilakaratne served as editor in this issue. I could not find the exact date of publication in the copy I received from the author.

on monastic boundaries by King Rāma IV of Siam (2011). Clearly, Kieffer Pülz's works are the most informative to date about the traditional Theravada *sīmā*. Be that as it may, she has not yet reported on Burmese *sīmā* traditions or practice, a gap in scholarship that I make good in this thesis.

1.7. Anthropological research on *sīmā*

There is virtually no attention paid to *sīmā* in anthropological studies of Theravada, even though some studies do discuss the *uposatha* and ordination ceremonies, which require a *sīmā* for their correct performance. The attention given by Spiro (1970) in his book *Buddhism and Society: a great tradition and it's Burmese vicissitudes* is rather on ritual and belief. I only found a few stray references to *sīmā* where, for example, he states that "the ordination (Burmese, *yahan:gan* or *pazin:gan*; Pāli, *upasampadā*) must take place in a special ordination chamber (Burmese, *thein*; Pāli, *sīmā*) which laymen are not permitted to enter; indeed, they may not approach closer than the small stones stakes that surround the chamber'' (Spiro 1970: 291). Likewise, E. Michael Mendelson (1975), in his work *Saṅgha and State in Burma*, focuses on the histories of *gaing* (Pāli *nikāya,* English sect), and structures and activities of Saṅgha. In doing so, he does pick up on the significance of *sīmā* in the Burmese tradition even if he pays it little attention. With reference to King Dhammacetī (1472–1492) who attempted to purify the Saṅgha in his kingdom, Mendelson wrote:

> "The passion for exactitude in ordination halls (*sīmā*) is part of the whole pattern: if the ordination is incorrect the monks are not monks and religion is not religion" (Mendelson 1975:63).

In this reference to Dhammacetī's attempt to purify and unify the Saṅgha, the words on *sīmā* are an aside in Mendelson's research in early Saṅgha history in Burma. I shall redress this by focusing on *sīmā* within the political history of Burmese Buddhism in Chapter Two and Three. Within such works as these, then, there are just a few stray references to *sīmā*.

More recently there have been a few shorter studies of *sīmā* in the broader sense of monastery boundary in Cambodia. This is because, following the devastation of the civil war in Cambodia, Buddhism had to be actively revived under the Vietnamese and subsequent Cambodian governments. During the past decade there has been a spate of new temple building. In part because of current political insecurity and changed sponsorship patterns, the formal laying of the first *sīmā* stone has to some extent become not just a matter for the sponsors, monks and local community, but also the international Diaspora community and national or regional Cambodian politicians. Both the anthropologist Alix Kent and the Buddhologist Ian Harris have written on the topic of laying *sīmā* stones from the political perspective. Kent, looking at peace, power and pagodas in Cambodia, reports on an attempt to participate on a *sīmā* consecration but due to politician involvement the event sadly did not take place. This report broadly reflects how *sīmā* rituals play a political role in Cambodian village society. Harris gave a talk I attended at the Buddhist Forum at SOAS (21st March 2006) on 'The Monastic Boundary (sīmā) as an exploratory concept in recent Cambodian political discourse'. He pointed out that the concept of *Indrakhīla* (door of the god) and kingship seemed to have been inseparable in Cambodian *sīmā* rituals but since *Indrakhīla* was not found in the Pāli canon, Buddhist modernists attempts to reform the pure Theravada ritual. The modernist's efforts thus became entwined with Cambodian politics. Given the specific context of the Cambodian Buddhist revival, such work will not be relevant to my own study. Finally, and more recently, a number of anthropologists/Buddhist studies scholars have expanded on this work. At the AAS conference held on 15-18 March 2012 in Toronto, Canada, there are four scholars presented papers on *sīmā*. The titles of the papers are as follow: The Kalyāṇī Inscription: Borders Blurred and Reinforced by Jason Carbine, Discovering a Sīmā in a Forest: An Analysis of Cambodian Perceptions of Buddhist Tradition and Practice by Satoru Kobayashi, Sīmā: Boundaries, Sovereignty, Morality by Erik W. Davis and The Impact of Ethnic Diversity and Recent History on Sīmā Practice and Construction among the Buddhists of Bangladesh jointly presented by Kate Crosby and Bhikkhu Nagasena.

1.8. Archaeological research on *sīmā*

When monks observe the monastic activities in a *sīmā* (monastic boundary) they must be aware of the consecrated area of the *sīmā*. This consecrated area is defined or demarcated by the boundary markers, *nimitta*. If monks observe the rituals activities outside the boundary markers or if a monk in the quorum steps outside boundary markers during the rituals activities, the monastic rituals are considered invalid. All this is explained in Chapter Seven of this thesis. What is relevant for archaeological work, however, is that the boundary markers thus became the most important part of a *sīmā*, perhaps considered to be the symbol of a *sīmā*, or even considered to be the life of the *sīmā* due to the fact that the consecrated areas are only identified with the boundary markers without which a *sīmā* cannot be used. They also became the most enduring and visible part of the *sīmā*. As most of this section is formed by archaeological reports of Thai boundary markers, it is important to define the meaning of boundary markers in Thai language. There are two types of boundary markers in Thai traditional practice, one is called *luk nimit*, the original boundary markers, which normally kept underground or beneath the ground while the *bai sema*, the replica of the boundary markers displayed above the original markers. The notion of this practice is that even though the replica of the boundary markers, *bai semas,* are destroyed due to adverse weather condition, the original boundary markers *luk nimit* will stay for a long time. *Bai* means piece or items whereas *Sema* is the transliteration of the *sīmā* in Thai language but they use the term *sema* for the boundary markers since the boundary markers represent the *sīmā*.

The stone boundary markers seemed to have used when Buddhism came to Southeast Asia region, particularly in Thailand where quite a substantial number of stone boundaries are reported by archaeologists. The archaeological sites relevant to such boundary markers are mainly located in Muang Fa Daed of Dvāravadī, currently in Northeast Thailand, the ancient kingdom which is believed to have lasted between 6th and 11th century CE. More sites were also found in central Thailand and the Chaow Phrya river valley. Similarly, Boulbe and Dagen (1973:43-47) reported on fascinating archaeological remains on the site of Phnom Kulen, north of Angor. In this boundary, as

it was established, they found that the *sīmā* stones were erected in pairs of eight points, four pairs at the cardinal and four pairs in between and form a rectangle surrounding a low central mound. Even earlier than the discoveries in Thailand and Cambodia are those reported in western Burma, from the Arakanese kingdom dated back to 4th -6th century CE (Murphy 2010:101).

When these boundary markers are discovered, however, it is not always clear whether each stone is used for the demarcation of a monastic boundary (*sīmā*) because the locations of some stone boundary markers are also found in burial sites while others are found in different religious properties, such as pagodas, stūpas and monastery compounds/territory. Some scholars have been working to find out the background history of the stones and their relationship to the local belief and culture, while others argue that they show the influence of Indian civilization.

There are quite a few modern scholars who dedicated their efforts to figure out the history of the sites, the period of their existence and the civilization of the people. They are, for example, Major Erik Seidenfaden, author of the article 'Kanok Nakhon, An Ancient Settlement of in Northeast Siam and Treasures of Art' (1954) and M.C. Subhdradis Diskul, the author of an article titled: 'Muang Fa Daed, an ancient town in northeast Thailand' (1956). Seidenfaden (1954:643-647) discussed the arts and megaliths of Muang Fa Deaed, Northeast Thailand and compared the artefacts with the arts of Dvāravadī, the ancient city of central Thailand between 6th and 11th century CE. This comparison was to find out whether *sema* (this transliteration for *sīmā* is common when referring to the boundary marker in Thai language) stones between two areas are interrelated. Following Seidenfaden, Diskul reports two pieces of information: that a *sema* stone was erected within the boundary and this erected *sīmā* was decorated with sculptures (Diskul 1956: 363-4). H.G. Quartch Wales (1969) in his book, *Dvāravati: the Earliest Kingdom of Siam (6th to 11th century AD)*, like the other two just mentioned, deals with the prehistoric existence of arts and megaliths including moated sites and contrasts them with the Indian civilization, mainly referring to the Gupta period. These scholars did not categorize or analyse the objects how they were important for the monks

when performing their monastic rituals but their reports inform us about the civilization of early Dvāravadī Kingdom of pre-Thai kingdom and its subsequent development into the monastic boundary.

There are a few Thai scholars who have attempted to analyse discovered boundary markers from the sites mentioned above. In his article entitled: 'semas with scenes from the Mahānipāta Jātaka (great section of the story of the Buddha's birth) in the National Museum at Khon Kaen' (1974a), Piriya Krairiksh, for example, reports on the classification of two types of boundary markers, slab type and pillar type, especially in the Muang Fa Daed and Bahn Nong Hang areas. He analysed *jātaka* tales depicted in the carvings stones (Krairiksh 1974: 38-40) and stated that the design of *semas* (boundary markers) in Mon Dvāravadī's civilization are similar to that of Thaton kingdom, lower Burma. He also examined how the narrative scenes of these two Mon kingdoms are interrelated in terms of arts and artefacts (Krairiksh 1974a: 37, 59-63). No Na Paknam (1981), another Thai scholar, wrote a book called *the Buddhist boundary markers of Thailand*. In this book, like Wales and later Srisakra Vallibhotama (see below), Paknam studied whether *sema* in Dvāravadī developed from pre-existing megalithic culture. He concluded that *sema* in this area have developed from pre-existing megalithic practice but later became associated with the concept of *sema* (Paknam 1981:60-61).

Srisakra Vallibhotama, another Thai scholar, demonstrated the culture of *sema* culture by linking it with the rituals of human burials. In his article title: 'Sema Stone Boundary Markers from the Northeast: Survey and the Study on the Continuation of Megalithic Culture in the Region' (1985), Vallibhotama stated that *sema* has evolved from the moated sites; and when Buddhism arrived in the region, the moated burial was incorporated with Buddhist *sema* (Vallibhotama 1985:32-33). His interpretation suggested that the early concept of *sema* in this region was considered to be an amalgamation between the local customs of megalith cultures and later arrival Buddhist concept of *sema*.

The most recent work of which I am aware on the archaeological research on *sīmā* was conducted by Stephen Murphy, a SOAS PhD student who successfully defended his thesis in 2010. In his thesis on 'Buddhist boundary markers of Northeast Thailand and Central Laos, 7th- 12th centuries CE', he reports curious material about how and where *sema* (boundary markers) were used during the Dvāravadī period and its evolution down to the modern boundary markers. He catalogues four main types of boundary markers found during this period, mainly in Muang Fa Daed, in the Northeast of Thailand, what he calls the Khorat plateau, and Central Thailand. They are slab type, pillar type, octagonal type and un-fashioned type. Looking at the archaeological remains in this region, he further reports subtypes of each group, for example, the pillar type can be further divided into four subtypes and the slab type divided into nine (Murphy 2010:343). Within each type there are numerous carvings - curves, Dhammacakka motif, different mudras of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas and images, some of which are even Hindu gods such as Indra, Vishnu or Brahma (Murphy 2010, Appendix 1 and 2). According to Murphy, some of these *semas* were not connected with the canonical description, for example, some of the *semas* discovered in Muang Fa Daed were used in different religious places, buildings, pagodas, stupas which were demarcated for the religious ceremony, not necessarily for the monastic rituals (Murphy 2010:84). If Murphy is right, his report agrees with Vallibhotama and Paknam who believed that the *semas* were associated with the burial rites of pre-existing megalithic culture before its integration to the Buddhist *semas*. Therefore, we can conclude the fact that the boundary markers (*semas*) during Dvāravadī period are mixed with the local belief and norms, not necessarily related with or used for the monastic boundary, even though the custom of Dvāravadī *semas* is now transformed into monastic boundary markers in modern Thai Buddhism.

An interesting aspect of the archaeological work is that it presents a picture of changing political patronage which is reflected by new types of *sīmā* stones. This is confirmed in archaeological remains in Dvāravadī, central and north-east Thailand as reported by Seidenfaden, Diskul and Wales. This provides us with another way in which

sīmā, Buddhist historical identity and political power are connected, in addition to the ways that I point out in Chapter Two and Three. I have thus surveyed three areas of work on *sīmā*: textual scholarship including some history, anthropological work and archaeological/art historical work. My thesis relates most closely to the textual and anthropological work, while I make little use of the archaeological work.

I move beyond the existing textual work in drawing on not just the canon and early commentaries but on the later commentaries used and written in Burma. I look in far greater detail that the textual work on historic sources in order to highlight why Burma developed such a keen focus on *Vinaya* and *sīmā* in particular. I then go beyond any existing fieldwork by looking in close detail at *sīmā* practice in Burma and to a lesser extent Bangladesh, through direct participant observation, in-depth individual and group interviews and the recording of oral history. In the case of anthropological work, we shall see that it is only possible to understand current practice from the monastic perspective if one also understands both the commentarial tradition and the political history that make it so pertinent even to life in 21ˢᵗ century Burma.

Chapter One:
Canonical and commentarial Pāli literature
relevant to *sīmā* practice

1.1. Introduction

The intention of this chapter is to look at the Pāli literature in which the concept of monastic boundary, *sīmā,* is explained. The section covers both those texts that relate directly to the purpose and consecration of *sīmā* and some information about texts which, though not directly relevant to *sīmā* consecration, are relevant in as much as they help us understand the *Vinaya* rules governing all monastic activities and procedures formally carried out inside a *sīmā*. It is important to explore the literature that deals with certain *Vinaya* rules because they become relevant to the *sīmā* in practice, since the *sīmā* provides the arena in which resulting activity must or may not take place. As such, the information in the *Vinaya* about the enacting of responses to the breaking of *Vinaya* rules helps us understand the relationship between rules and practice, which in turn helps us understand the practical role of the *sīmā*. We can see this in the example of a monk repeatedly breaking a 'major' rule of the *Vinaya* i.e. *saṅghādisesa* (offence entailing an initial and subsequent meeting of the Saṅgha) and necessary to penalize him. Having been required to confess the matter in front of his community it is only within the *sīmā* that the decision as to his culpability can be made.

Before I move on to discuss the nature of the literature directly dealing with *sīmā,* I would point out that there is a large amount of early commentarial literature defining *sīmā* consecration. This literature contains a diversity of views and opinions most of which arose as a result of the brevity or obscurity of the canonical text the *Mahāvagga* on the topic. The *Mahāvagga,* 3rd volume of the *Vinaya Piṭaka* in Burmese tradition*,* is the text which first introduced the procedure for *sīmā* consecration. The commentary on this *Mahāvagga* took a challenging step to clarify what was unclear but, despite further analysis in subsequent sub-commentaries, the differences and discrepancies remained

unresolved or differently resolved. This has led to the production of many *sīmā* manuals in modern Burmese literature. I shall illustrate this range of literature in Chapter Three. In this chapter I shall do so using some sample quotations from the early canon and then commentarial texts.

1.2. Overview of the early Pāli literature relating to *sīmā*

The early Theravada Buddhist canonical texts are called *Piṭaka* (basket). This is a metaphorical term, which denotes the collection and systematization of the Buddha's teachings. There are three *Piṭaka*, collectively called the *Ti-Piṭaka* (three baskets) that are organized and preserved in accordance with the types of Buddha's teaching and later became Theravada Buddhist literatures. They are: (1) *Vinaya Piṭaka*, the collection of the monastic rules, rituals and dispute settlements of the Saṅgha. (2) *Sutta Piṭaka*, the collection of the discourses and sermons of the Buddha that defined the way one should understand and eradicate the problems and sufferings, and (3) *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, the collection of the theoretical and philosophical analysis of the Buddha's teaching. These teachings are preserved in Pāli language and with the supplementary semi-canonical works, such as the commentaries and sub-commentaries, constitute the complete body of classical Theravada texts. Of the three *Piṭaka,* only the *Vinaya Piṭaka* with its commentarial tradition is relevant to my study. The *Vinaya Piṭaka* contains the large collection of rules which grew up governing monastic life and the habits of the monks and nuns, which regulate the entire Theravada monastic Saṅgha. These rules also handle the harmonious relations, both among the monastics themselves and between the monastics and their lay supporters upon whom they depend for all their material needs.

I shall briefly explore the formation of *Vinaya* texts here, particularly those that are relevant to the *sīmā* studies. According to the Sixth Saṅgha Convention, held in Burma in 1955, the *Vinaya Piṭaka* is categorised into five sections and they thus become five volumes of *Vinaya* Pāli canonical text[6]. They are (i) *Pārājika* Pāli (the scripture on

---

[6] Among these five volumes, the first two categories are also called *Mahāvibhaṅga* and *Bhikkhunīvibhaṅga* but all texts within these categories have the same format as the *Pārājika* and *Pācittiya Pāli* (Pāli - Burmese Dictionary 2004:20).

the 'defeated' rules) (ii) *Pācittiya Pāli* (scripture on confession) (iii) *Mahāvagga Pāli* (scripture which is the major chapter) (iv) *Cūḷvagga Pāli* (scripture which is the minor chapter) and (v) *Parivāra Pāli* (scripture that is a summary compendium). This categorisation is, however, slightly different in the Romanized script Pāli Text Society editions in the way that the texts are formatted. The Romanized edition is divided into three sections: (i) *Suttavibhaṅga* (rule analysis) (ii) *Khandhaka* (group or constituent) and (iii) *Parivāra* (brief combination) (Thanissaro 1994:6). The *Pārājika Pāli* and *Pācittiya Pāli* of the Burmese section are included in the *Suttavibhaṅga*, while the *Mahāvagga* and *Cullavagga* are found in *Khandhaka*. Both arrangements correspond to the same sections of the *Vinaya Piṭaka*.   According to Thanissaro (1994:6), historians believe that *Suttavibhaṅga* and *Khandhakas* arrived their present forms around 2nd Centuries BCE and that *Parivāra*, as a study guide, was added a few centuries later.

The *Pārājika Pāli* and *Pācittiya Pāli* deal with two types of *Vinaya* rules: *garukāpatti* (major offence) and *lahukāpatti* (minor offence). Each rule within these two (major offence and minor offence) provides *vatthu* (which literally means 'topic' and provides an introductory story of the offence), followed by *paññatti* literally, 'making known', i.e. making known the judgement, i.e. the 'ruling' and *anupaññatti* 'subsequent ruling(s)', i.e. the rules and supplementary rules.[7] Each is also accompanied by *padabhājanīya*, a word-by-word explanation (Thanissaro 1994:6-7), and contains a series of events: the historical background, i.e. who the first monk was who committed the offence; and why and how the Buddha imposed a rule in response to this monk and governing all monks thereafter (*Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī,* Burmese edition 1996:110).

In addition to these categorisations, there is one more *Vinaya* text called the *Pātimokkha* or *Pātimokkhasutta* (von Hinüber 1996:9). This contains the same list of rulings found in the *Pārājika Pāli* and *Pācittiya Pāli* but providing only the bare rules and excluding all the appended stories and commentaries. This summary of all *Vinaya* rules is designed as a liturgical formula – they are recited as part of the fortnightly rituals

---

[7] *Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī* (Burmese edition 1996:110) explains the procedures and formation of these *Vinaya* rules.

of the monastic community. We may use here the phrase '*pātimokkha* rules' to mean the *Vinaya* rules as a whole, unless otherwise stated. From the moment of their higher ordination Buddhist monks and nuns are required to observe these *pātimokkha* rules, of which there are 227 for monks and 311 for the nuns.

These *pātimokkha* rules are further classified into five different types of offence. They are *Pārājika* (offence entailing expulsion from the Saṅgha), *Saṅghādisesa* (offence entailing an initial and subsequent meeting of the Saṅgha), *Nissaggiya Pācittiya* (offence entailing forfeiture and confession), *Pācittiya* (offence entailing confession) and *Pāṭidesanīya* (offence entailing acknowledgement) (Upasaka 1975:28). Though not enumerated under the heading of *pātimokkha* rules, there are three further types of rule that govern the personal conduct of monks and nuns. They are *thullaccaya* (literally meaning 'grave lapse'[8] (e.g. an unsuccessful attempt to commit a *pārājika* offence), *dukkaṭa* (literally meaning 'badly done', i.e. offences of 'wrong doing' or 'improper conduct') and *dubbhāsita* (literally meaning 'badly spoken' i.e. an offence of wrong speech or improper speech). Of these three only the *dukkaṭa* rules are relevant here, in the context of correct *sīmā* performance. For example, if two *sīmās* overlap (an issue we shall examine in Chapter Eight) it is considered a *dukkaṭa* (a wrongdoing). There are also collective rules about how to administer the Saṅgha and aspects of it. These are also not contained within the *pātimokkha* rules but, when they become relevant, I shall return to some of them below. Such rules are found across the *Vinaya* texts. Again, we find the phrase *dukkaṭa* used in such contexts to warn against conduct that is to be avoided, even though it does not warrant inclusion in the *pātimokkha* list.

Although the major and minor rules of the *pātimokkha* are not directly concerned with *sīmā*, the success of a *sīmā* consecration is often measured by how these rules are observed by the monks. An example of this is *sīmā* consecration which requires the attendance of a quorum of four monks. If any one of these four monks has committed

---

[8] The concept of 'grave lapse' means an attempt to break a *pārājika* and *saṅghādisesa* rules or such conduct that is regarded to be as severe as *pārājika* and *saṅghādisesa*. This offence can be remedied by the act of confession before another monk but is considered to be the most serious amongst all confessional offences.

one of the four *pārājika* (defeated/expulsion) offences or been suspended for *Saṅghādisesa* offences by the Saṅgha, the *sīmā* consecration would be invalid.[9] In Chapters Four and Seven, we shall see that such defeated or suspended monks are also prohibited from associating with other monks within the same *sīmā*.

The section of the *Vinaya Piṭaka* that provides us with a crucial account of the early development of *sīmā* is the *Mahāvagga*. For this reason, therefore, I treat it as being the most relevant section to my study. There are ten *Khandhakas* in the *Mahāvagga* each dealing with various types of monastic rituals, plus reports on the new minor rules relating to these rituals not found in the *Pārājika* and *Pācittiya Pāli* rules or *pātimokkha* rules. The majority of these new rules originated relating to monastic rituals. The *uposatha* ceremony is, for example, one of the rituals introduced in the *Mahāvagga*. Not only is the ceremony extensively explained, but also details are given as to where, when and under what conditions it must be carried out. Originally, this ceremony was an opportunity for the Saṅgha to meet and discuss the Dhamma, but its subsequent development transformed it from discussion of the Dhamma to recitation of the *pātimokkha* (disciplinary rules) on full moon and new moon day (Mv ii. 2). If the monks do not perform it as directed (e.g. they recite *pātimokkha* every day or once a week instead of on full moon and new moon day, they commit an offence of *dukkaṭa* (wrong doing) (Mv ii. 4.2).

The *uposatha* ceremony continued to develop and it eventually gave rise to the establishment of the monastic *sīmā*. (See more about this in Chapter Four). The primary factors leading to its establishment were that monks had previously been prohibited from reciting the *pātimokkha* rule and performing the *uposatha* ceremony in two separate places in a residence (Mv ii. 11 and Mv ii. 8ff), plus they were restricted to only performing these fortnightly (Mv ii.4.2). By defining a permanent meeting place (to become a monastic *sīmā*) it made clear when and where they should meet to fulfil these

---

[9] If a monk breaks one of the four *pārājika*, he is no longer considered a monk even if his offence has never been revealed to the Saṅgha. Similarly, suspended monks are not allowed to join in the ceremony during their suspended period (CV I. 2-3) (Thanissaro 2001:402)

obligations. The place of *uposatha* ceremony thus became a permanent place for dealing with the *pātimokkha* rules; indeed, it also became a permanent place for all monastic legal ritual activities (See Chapter Four). The *Mahāvagga* also reports a few distinctive ritual activities that make use of the *sīmā* in addition to the *uposatha* ceremony. These include the *upasampadā* (admission to the order of monks), *pavāraṇā* (invitation) and *kaṭhina* (robe-offering ceremony). The *Mahāvagga* offers precise rules for the correct performance of these ceremonies but, according to the *Parivāra Pāli,* such ceremonies are only carried out inside a *sīmā* for their validity. The *sīmā* (monastic boundary) thus becomes the essential place for the validity of monastic rituals and is perhaps the powerhouse of the Saṅgha for all decision making processes of monastic legal activities. It is therefore crucial for the validity of the branch of the Saṅgha using a particular *sīmā.*

While the *Mahāvagga* describes the origin of *sīmā* and prescribes the ceremonial duties of monks, the *Cullavagga* is largely occupied with new types of monastic legal procedures not found in the *Mahāvagga.* There are twelve *Khandhakas* in the *Cullavagga*; most of which report on the monastic legal procedures required when monks have broken their rules, while others report on administrative affairs, i.e. looking after monastic properties. The essential part that *sīmā* plays in the management of monks is again reflected in the *Cullavagga,* where disciplinary procedures are fully set out for monks who are quarrelsome, who have disparaged the Buddha and his teaching[10]; who have committed *saṅghādisesa* offence [11] (the offence entailing an initial and subsequent meeting of the Saṅgha) or who have developed an inappropriate relationship with laypeople.[12] Ceremonies where censure takes place, for example, the *tajjanīyakamma*[13]

---

[10] According to the *Cullavagga* (CV.I.13-16), if a monk disparages the Buddha and his teaching, the Saṅgha should warn him and then expel him if he fails to correct his behaviour.

[11] If a monk breaks a *saṅghādisesa* rule, he needs to follow a monastic procedure called *mānatta,* 'penance'. If he has concealed his offence, he must first undergo *parivāsa* (probation) equivalent to the days of concealment. If he does not conceal the offence he only needs to undergo six days for the penance (Thanissaro 2001: 358). When he returns to 'normal life', an assembly of 20 monks is required to approve or clear the offended monk.

[12] According to 13th *saṅghādisesa* rule monks are not allowed to associate with the laity improperly and if they continue to do so even after a warning, they should be suspended (Thanissaro 2001:180).

(formal act of censure), *ukkhepanīyakamma* (formal act of suspension) and *saṅghādisesa*[14] are fully explained and require the use of *sīmā* to legalise the process of censure, suspension and penalty. During these ceremonies the accused monk will not only be censured for his offence but he will become subject to certain prohibitions; for example, he will not be permitted to hold any position of leadership in the Saṅgha congregation nor can he receive services from novices. Further, he cannot make a suggestion to or accusation about anyone else he suspects of committing offences. In short, he is completely barred from most of the opportunities that are an expression of responsibility or power, i.e. to vote or to have equal share of the robes, etc.

According to *Cullavagga* (CV. IV.14.2), each of these monastic legal acts or rituals, mentioned in both *Mahāvagga* and *Cullavagga*, are further classified into four types based on the degree and procedure of monastic acts involved in each action. These are: an announcement (*apalokana-kamma*); a motion (*ñatti-kamma*); a motion with one proclamation (*ñatti dutiya-kamma*); and, a motion with three proclamations (*ñatti catuttha-kamma*) (Thanissaro 2001:177). They provide the procedural instructions necessary when conducting a monastic legal act (*saṅghakamma*).

Let us look at the last two types first. They are formatted with two important patterns: motion (*ñatti*) and proclamation (*anusāvanā*), that is, consultation with the Saṅgha. There is one motion contained in both types but a different number of proclamations. The number of proclamations here reflects on the degree and importance of the monastic act; *sīmā* consecration, for example, requiring only one motion with one proclamation compared with ordination which requires one motion with three proclamations, since the ordination ceremony needs much more care for the

---

[13] The act of censure can be carried out against those monks who are quarrelsome, threatening other monks, who improperly associate with the laity, who are foolish or ignorant of their duty, who never amend minor offences and who disparage the Buddha and his teaching (Upasaka 1975:103).

[14] I have witnessed this practice in Burma (i.e. two miles away from Yangon, on the exit road to Bago in 2009) and in Bangladesh (i.e. Gahira Village, near Chittagong in 2007) where the ceremonies are still being observed by the local monks even though it is costly to feed the monks who are under probation. However, I have never seen or heard of *tajjanīyakamma* and *ukkhepanīyakamma* being practised in the modern period.

successfulness of the ritual. The importance of these two types therefore necessitates that they take place in the *sīmā*. The pattern of a *ñatti* combined with either one or three *anusāvanā* in the procedure is called *kammavācā* (transaction statement or liturgy). If there is only one *ñatti* with one *anusāvanā,* it is called *ñattidutiyakamma.* If, however, the *anusāvanā* repeats three times with one *ñatti* in the beginning, it is called *ñatticatutthakamma* as stated above. Since a *kammavācā* is formulated with a *ñatti,* Burmese monks call this: *ñatti-kammavācā,* which means 'a liturgy containing a motion'. (We shall see below that they are identified as two separate items but in practice must co-exist in that the *ñatti* forms a part of the *kammavācā*).

The *apalokana-kamma,* the first types of monastic act mentioned, is the basic formula and it is applied without motion or proclamation. When distributing food in the eating hall, for example, neither a formal motion with the Saṅgha, nor a public proclamation, is necessary. All that is required is that a selected Saṅgha member announces the procedure for sharing what is to be distributed. Thus, the task is sufficiently minor or informal that it does not necessitate the use of a *sīmā* (Vajirañāṇavarorasa 1983:2). However, the second types i.e. *ñattikamma* (motion) is considered to be a formal act of the Saṅgha as it requires a *sīmā* to complete the task. The level of formality is, however, considered to be less significant than in the last two procedures (*ñattidutiyakamma* and *ñatticatutthakamma*) mentioned above because they do not necessitate an *anusāvanā*. An example of a monastic act that requires a motion is the *pavāraṇā or uposatha* ceremony. These ceremonies take place inside the *sīmā* without having to be followed by the procedure of *anusāvanā* during the ceremony. This is because each monk should know about these ceremonies and must participate in it by the *Vinaya* rules.

The *saṅghakamma (*'procedures' or 'acts (to be performed) by the Saṅgha') explained in the *Mahāvagga* include the specification of the way to perform the *upasampadā* (monk ordination), *pavāraṇā* (invitation), *kaṭhina* (offering monastic robe) ceremony and *sīmā sammutti* (consecration of a boundary) ceremony, while the *Cullavagga* deals with the *saṅghakamma,* procedures required for offences and the

appointment of office-holders among the monks for administrative affairs. In both cases the procedures are the same: each requires a correct motion, consultation and proclamation. Therefore, the *kammavācā* must follow the pattern provided for the specific requirements of the *saṅghakamma*. If, for example, the pattern calls for 'one motion with one proclamation' (*ñattidutiyakamma*), it is invalid to use 'one motion with three proclamations' (*ñatticatutthakamma*) (Thanissaro 2001: 179). If required, the monks may interrogate or examine the case prior to the recitation of the *kammavācā*; in the case of *sīmā* consecration, for example, the Saṅgha investigates the *nimitta* (boundary markers) before the final recitation of the liturgy, as will be discussed in Chapter Seven. Thus there is a distinction between investigating and discussion on the one hand, and formally pronouncing on the other.[15] Once the *kammavācā* is recited it is normally considered to have been formally agreed by the Saṅgha.

The *Parivāra*[16] (summary compendium) does not report any new accounts of *Vinaya* rules and monastic legal procedures but it effectively summarises, in the form of a catechism, those rules and procedures which currently exist, thus making their meaning easy to understand. In the *Cullavagga* the procedure for settlement of monastic disputes is not systematically reported in one easily accessible place, but records many similar cases spread out in different places. The *Parivāra*, however, cleverly gathered related matters into one place and created a guideline for settling monastic issues for the community as a whole, except for some variations in the type of problem, thus minimising the double occurrence of prescriptions for similar procedures.

The monastic legal activities (*saṅghakamma*) discussed in the *Mahāvagga* and *Cullavagga* relate to specific criteria and conditions, for example, the number of monks required when an ordination ceremony is being carried out, or what a monk should do when observing *parivāsa* (probation) including what type of *ñatti-kammavācā* should be used. The *Mahāvagga* and *Cullavagga* do not, however, make any mention of whether

---

[15] This distinction is found at all levels of *Vinaya* ritual. On the distinction in relation to the use of the verbs *ācikh* and *uddis*, see Crosby 2000.

[16] The *Parivāra* was not included in the first and second Saṅgha Council, but was added a few centuries later (Thanissaro 2001:6).

such monastic legal activities require a *sīmā*. It is the *Pārivāra* that makes this clear. Whilst the *Parivāra* does not contain what has already been discussed in the *Mahāvagga* and *Cullavagga,* it does devote its last section to explaining in great detail how each monastic legal activity can be successfully carried out. It summarises the fundamental factors required when conducting a monastic legal activity (*saṅghakamma*). According to the *Parivāra* section, there are five factors necessary to complete each monastic legal activity (*Parivāra Pāli* Burmese edition 1991:379). They are: appropriate objects (*vatthu*), correct motion (*ñatti*), correct liturgy (*kammavācā*), complete assembly (*parisa*) and valid monastic boundary (*sīmā*). As stated above, although *kammavācā* is formulated with a *ñatti,* they are identified as two separate items (*ñatti* and *kammavācā*) in *Parivāra* in order to avoid the wrong pattern being used during the recitation. As already mentioned, if monks recite the liturgy which requires, 'one motion and three proclamations', it is invalid to recite 'one motion with one proclamation'.

The objects (*vatthu*) here can mean both the type of monastic activity and the object of the activity, so in an ordination, the *vatthu* is the ordination itself and the person who is to be ordained, i.e. the ordinand (*nāga*). So when an ordination ceremony is carried out, it requires the correct number of monks (a quorum of monks) in the assembly and this is the *parisa*; the correct combination of motion and type of liturgy (*ñatti-kammavācā*) with the correct recitation; a suitable object, i.e. the ordinand (*vatthu*); and, a valid monastic boundary (*sīmā*). If one of these five factors is not complete or not correctly employed the monastic legal activity, in this case the ordination ceremony cannot be considered valid. These five components are indeed compulsory in all monastic legal activities (*Parivāra Pāli* Burmese version 1991:379). Although the requirement of a *sīmā* is not mentioned in the section of the *Mahāvagga* where it advises on the procedure for an ordination ceremony, *kaṭhina* (robe monastic offering) ceremony, or a *pavāraṇā* (invitation) service, all Theravada monks use the *sīmā,* as these activities are considered to be acts of Saṅgha. Here we can see how the rules of *Parivāra* are embedded in the formal monastic legal activities of the monks *(Saṅghakamma)* but only explicit in the *Parivāra* itself, so the *Parivāra* in particular

informs us about how individual parts of monastic conduct come together as a whole for the collective community.

1.3. Overview of the early commentarial and sub-commentarial literature

In order to maintain and refine the understanding of these canonical *Vinaya* texts outlined above, a range of commentaries and sub-commentaries were developed. There are three commentaries on the *Vinaya*: the *Samantapāsādikā* (literally meaning 'completely pleasing'), the *Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī* ('conqueror of uncertainty'); and, the *Vinayasaṅgaha* (summary of *Vinaya*). The full name of this last text is *Pālimuttakavinayavinicchayasaṅgaha* 'Summary of *Vinaya* decisions extracted or freed from the (order of) the canonical text' (von Hinüber 1996:158). The first two were written around the fourth/fifth century and are attributed to one author universally believed within the Theravada tradition to be Buddhaghosa, although differences between the two require further scrutiny. The third commentary was compiled by Sāriputta, an orthodox Sinhalese monk, and came much later, in the twelfth century. The author of this last commentary also compiled a sub-commentary to the *Samantapāsādikā,* which I shall look at later, and a commentary on the *Vinayasaṅgaha.* All his texts were written during the reign of Parakkamabāhu-I (1153-1186) (von Hinüber 1996:158). As Crosby has shown, Sāriputta's *Vinayasaṅgaha* and its commentary are not, in fact, new compositions but the extraction and reordering of the legal matter of the *Samantapāsādikā* and its commentary respectively (Crosby 2006). They thus show a similar tendency to reorganisation for the sake of improving practical access as that described in relation to the *Parivāra* above.

The first two commentaries (the *Samantapāsādikā* and the *Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī*) are not the earliest commentaries on the *Vinaya Piṭaka.* There were at least six commentaries on the *Vinaya* in existence before Buddhaghosa's work, all of which are quoted by Buddhaghosa in his commentaries (*Tipiṭaka*: Pāli -Myanmar Dictionary 2004:28). The number of such quotations is enumerated by von Hinüber (1996: 104). They are:

1. *Kurundi- aṭṭhakathā* – about 70 quotations

2. *Mahā - aṭṭhakathā* - about 50 quotations

3. *Mahāpaccarī - aṭṭhakathā* – about 50 quotations

4. *Andhaka - aṭṭhakathā* – about 35 quotation

5. *Saṅkhepa - aṭṭhakathā* – about 10 quotations

6. *Cūḷapaccarī - aṭṭhakathā* – 1 quotation

Examples of Buddhaghosa's quotations on the commentaries mentioned above are found across the *Samantapāsādikā*, one being a different commentarial view on the *sīmantarika* (inter-space between the *sīmā*s). Buddhagosa informs that, according to the *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā*, the inter-space should be one *hatthapāsa* (literally means 'near to the hands', and refers to a maximum space of two and half cubits length between one monk and the next)[17] rule, whereas in the *Kurundi- aṭṭhakathā* it is given as one *vidatthi* (the length between the thumb and little finger) and in the *Mahāpaccarī-aṭṭhakathā* it is given as four fingerbreadths (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:337). Although such diverse views are reported by Buddhaghosa, none of these works survive today. We can only find information regarding them in the *Samantapāsādikā* sources, or in later sources based on the *Samantapāsādikā*.

Method and content again differ between the *Samantapāsādikā* and the *Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī*. The former follows the same structure as the Pāli Canon and includes the *Pārājika* (the rules entailing expulsion from the Saṅgha for life) as well as a summary and multiple analyses of the various rules identified in the *Vinaya Piṭaka*'s first two vlumes (*Pārājika* and *Pācittiya*), and continue to comment on the *Khandhaka* and *Parivāra*, primarily for didactic purposes. On the other hand, the *Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī* is dedicated solely to the *pātimokkha* rules most of which are only found in the *Pārājika* and *Pācittiya Pāli*.

---

[17] one cubit is approximately measured 18 inches and two and half inches will be 45 inches

There are four volumes of the *Samantapāsādika* in Burmese script. They are: (i) two volumes on the *Pārājika-Aṭṭhakathā* (commentary on the *Pārājika*); (ii) one volume on the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (commentary on the *Pācittiya* and the *Mahāvagga* together); and, (iii) one volume on the *Cullavaggādi Aṭṭhakathā* (commentary on the *Cullavagga* and *Parivāra* together again). These four volumes are also called '*vi-ṭha*' (*Vinaya Aṭṭhakathā*) (i), '*vi-ṭha*' (ii), '*vi-ṭha*' (iii) and '*vi-ṭha*' (iv) in Burmese abbreviation. Although Buddhaghosa gave the title of '*Samantapāsādikā*' to the whole *Vinaya* Commentary, Burmese tradition does not use this title when referring to the works of the commentary. When a Burmese monastic scholar, for example, refers to the work of the *Vinaya* Commentary, he may either use the name of the book, for example, *Mahāvagga Aṭṭhakathā,* or he may use the abbreviation of the volume, for example '*vi-ṭha*' (iii) in the case of *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā*. Therefore, Burmese ways of referencing the *Vinaya* Commentary are different from those of western scholars. Western academics, however, only use the title of *Samantapāsādikā*, for example 'SP' (*Samantapāsādikā*) first or second volume when quoting from the *Samantapāsādikā,* but they do not use the names of books. Since my study is based on the Burmese monastic practice, I shall use the Burmese referencing method i.e. the specified name of the commentary, for example *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* or *Pārājika Aṭṭhakathā*. Given that the current chapter is intended to review the development of *Vinaya Piṭaka*, Commentaries and Sub-commentaries, it is therefore important that I shall use the term *Samantapāsādika* in this chapter but in the quotations of subsequent chapters, particularly when quoting from the commentary, I shall use the Burmese referencing method.

Each section of the Pāli *Vinaya Piṭaka* is commented on or explained by its author, Buddhaghosa, following the order of the canonical text. The *Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī* has only one volume and is a quarter of the length of the *Samantapāsādikā* (von Hinüber 1996: 110). In short, the work of the *Samantapāsādikā* is to provide a guide to accessing all the *Vinaya Piṭaka,* whereas the work of the *Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī* is designed to give easy access to *bhikkhu* and *bhikkhunī* rules. According to *Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī*, these *bhikkhu* and

bhikkhunī rules are also known *dvemātikā (*twofold arrangement, that is, on the *bhikkhu* and *bhikkhunī)* in Burmese tradition.

The *Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī*'s description of *sīmā* is concise, briefly explaining the factors of two types of *sīmā*: *baddhasīmā* (consecrated or fixed boundary) and *abaddhasīmā* (un-consecrated or unfixed boundary), without giving detailed analysis. For the formally consecrated *sīmā*, the *Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī* gives three factors: monks, landmarks and liturgy, but it does not explain how these three are practically applied in a consecration. (We shall examine these three aspects in Chapter Seven). The *Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī* pays more attention to the un-consecrated *sīmā*, particularly the establishment of an *udakukkhepasīmā* (boundary created by the splashing of water). Overall, the *Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī* sets out in one place the important points of a *sīmā* whereas, in the *Samantapāsādikā*, the description of *sīmā* is provided more extensive explanations of each factor of both consecrated and un-consecrated *sīmā*. The present *sīmā* consecration techniques in Burma are thus derived from the *Samantapāsādikā,* because it is only in this commentary that sufficient information for *sīmā* performance is to be found.

In addition to the twelfth century works by Sāriputta mentioned earlier, a new sub-commentary to the *Vinayasaṅgaha* was also provided in the seventeenth century by a Burmese monk known as Taunbila Sayadaw, also known as Tipiṭakālaṅkāra.[18] This sub-commentary is called the *Vinayālaṅkāra* (decorator to the *Vinaya*). The subject matter of the *Vinayasaṅgaha* is concerned with the all important factors of the *Vinaya* and is an attempt to bring them into a comprehensive summary, while its sub-commentaries provides substantial assistance to its understanding. The *Vinayāsaṅgaha* summarise the legal aspects of the *Samantapāsādikā* into 24 chapters, each of them serving a practical purpose. One chapter is dedicated solely to *sīmā*. This chapter is the *sīmā vinicchayakathā* – exposition of monastic boundary. Crucial to *sīmā* study are the three sub-commentaries of the *Samantapāsādikā,* each composed at different times. The

---

[18] More about the*Tipiṭakalaṅkāra* is explained in the next chapter under the Burmese *sīmā* manuals.

first work, written by *Vajirabuddhi,* appeared around the sixth century and is known as the *Vajirabuddhi-ṭīkā* (von Hinüber 1996:171). The last two sub-commentaries emerged around the twelfth century. One is called the *Sāratthadīpanī* (the meaning illustrator) written by Sāriputta, from which he extracted his commentary on the *Vinayasaṅgaha* (Crosby 2006: 55) and the other, written by Kassapa, is the *Vimativinodanī* ('dispeller of wrong opinions').

Sāriputta's commentary on the *Samantapāsādikā* is methodical, concise and effective for *sīmā* consecration. Sāriputta composed his work at the request of King Parakkamabāhu (1153-1186), who unified the Saṅgha in favour of orthodox Theravada monastic practice (von Hinüber 1996:172). Sāriputta pointed out the difficulty of understanding some of the earlier instructions from the *Gaṇṭhipadas,* which were written in Sinhalese, were more than five hundred years old at the time of Sāriputta (von Hinüber 1996:173). Sāriputta also made a similar remark about the *Vajīrabuddhiṭikā*, a sub-commentary to the *Samantapāsādikā,* composed at almost the same time as the *Gaṇṭhipada,* both of which where no longer serving the purpose of monks living in the twelfth century (von Hinüber 1996: 173). These sub-commentaries were either difficult to understand or no longer applicable at the time of Sāriputta which perhaps inspired him to compose the new commentary and sub-commentary. Sāriputta not only looked to the *Samantapāsādikā* but he also explored the Pāli canon. He even revealed some passages in the *Samantapāsādikā* which deviate from earlier scripture (Thanissaro 2001: 8). Sāriputta's work was thus an attempt to accommodate the new situation in the twelfth century.

Interestingly though, not long after Sāriputta's work was completed, Kassapa, a native of south India (perhaps of Tamil origin), wrote the *Vimativinodanī.* In it he mentions his intention to remove the confusion (*sammohakārinī*), created by his predecessors. He may well have been referring to the work of Sāriputta, as Kassapa quoted Sāriputta's views and often rejected them (von Hinüber 1996:159). Kassapa was slightly younger than Sāriputta so it is feasible that he had studied Sāriputta's work before he composed his own (ibid). It is crucial to note here a revolutionary concept of

Kassapa's work. According to the *Samantapāsādikā*, it is not possible to revoke an old *sīmā* without knowing the boundary location (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:332). Kassapa, however, offered new rules for revocation which made it possible even when an old *sīmā's* location had been lost (Kiefer Pülz 1997:46-48). (For more about Kassapa's advice, see Chaper Eight). This could, of course, be one of the confusions that Kassapa referred to. This new procedure was formally applied when the *Kalyāṇīsīmā* was consecrated in the fifteen century in Burma (Sīlānanda 2002:158). The influence of the *Vimativinodanī* continued to have an effect on the Burmese *sīmā* tradition and was in use in the early seventeenth century as it is reported in the *Vinayalaṅkāra ṭīkā* (ibid). This revocation procedure even developed in the form of descriptive diagrams and it has been widely accepted by subsequent *sīmā* authors. I shall describe the process used for the revocation of *sīmā* in modern Burma in Chapter Eight.

1.4.   Inconsistency and insufficient detail as the basis for the production of further commentarial literature

While the works just mentioned are important for *sīmā* study, they are not entirely consistent with one other in some areas. The reason for such inconsistencies derives from the *Mahāvagga* where the concept of *sīmā* was first introduced. I shall point out here one example of such inconsistency in order to demonstrate why commentarial literature on *sīmā* has continued to be produced into the modern period and how earlier authorities are treated. We should first look at what the *Mahāvagga* has to say about *sīmāsambheda* (mixing up between *sīmās*). It states,

> "Let no one, O Bhikkhus, make one boundary overlap with another...." 'Let no one, O Bhikkhus, make one boundary encompass another one'. 'I prescribe, O Bhikkhus, he who determines a boundary, is to determine it so as to leave an interstice (inter-space or interval) between the boundaries" (Mv ii, 13, 2).[19]

This passage makes it clear that overlapping boundaries must be avoided and in order to avoid overlapping, an inter-space must be provided, but there is no advice or description given on how to avoid such a connection between boundaries. Meeting this regulation

---

[19] This passage is transalted by Rhys Davids and Oldenberg 1982:258.

becomes problematic when faced with issues such as whether a bridge or cable causes overlap, or whether consecrated and un-consecrated *sīmā* requires an inter-space. (Overlapping problems between un-consecrated *sīmās* and consecrated *sīmās*, can be found in Chapter Three (under dispute manuals), and Chapters Six and Eight respectively).

The *Samantapāsādikā* attempted to clarify such an ambiguity by stating that, not only is the overlapping between two boundaries a fault, but also connections caused by branches of a tree constitute a breach of the interval and so mean there is an overlap. If, for example, the branches of a tree which has grown inside a *mahāsīmā* (large boundary), makes contact with a *khaṇḍasīmā* (small boundary) (we shall look at these categories of *sīmā* later in Chapter Eight) it is also considered a fault (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:327). To avoid this linkage problem the *Samantapāsādikā* gives the following advice:

> "*Mahāsīmaṃ sodhetvā vā kammaṃ kātabbaṃ*". "the monastic activity should be conducted after clearing [the monks, etc. from] the large boundary" (ibid).

Within this statement, the object that must be cleared from the *mahāsīmā* (we have supplied 'monk, etc' in our translation) is not in fact specified. So there is the danger of an ambiguity: Is it the monks that must be removed from the *mahāsīmā* so that they are all moved into the *khaṇḍasīmā?* Or is something else to be removed? The *Samantapāsādikā* then continues to elucidate the meaning of this statement by stating that the monks should detach/disconnect the overgrowing branches of the tree thereby cutting the linkage completely. The concept of 'clearing the large boundary' is further clarified by the fact that the monks should disconnect or detach the linkage of the tree (ibid). So the clearing means clearing the monks out of the *mahāsīmā* so that they are away from the branches and clearing overlapping branches touching the *khaṇḍasīmā* also from the *mahāsīmā,* by cutting them off so that they are no longer overlapping and therefore irrelevant.

However, in spite of such elaboration, as will be seen below, there is a problem within the sub-commentaries, because the *Samantapāsādikā* did not explain what would

happen if the branches of the tree could not be removed or cut off. Another question then follows, particularly regarding the monks who stay in the *mahāsīmā*: should they all be required to attend the ceremony in the *khaṇḍasīmā* or should only those monks who are in contact with the branches of the tree be present? We can see here the detailed attention to making sure the *sīmā's* validity cannot be questioned through leaving any ambiguity unconsidered.

Much attention has been given to this particular passage of the *Samantapāsādikā* by sub-commentaries, especially by the *Sāratthadīpanī* and the *Vimativinodanī*. The concept of boundaries being faulty where linkages occur was re-examined by many *Vinaya* experts during the writing of these two sub-commentaries. The momentum even continued into the eighteenth century in Sri Lanka where the dispute over such a linkage (as will be seen in the section on dispute manuals in Chapter Three), shaped a memorable event in the history of *sīmā* practice. Furthermore, it continued into Burma into the modern period.

Let us look first at the arguments of the *Sāratthadīpanī* and *Vimativinodanī*. When Sāriputta and Kassapa wrote their sub-commentaries on the *Samantapāsādikā* they pointed out two crucial references which, according to them both, did not follow the rules of the *Samantapāsādikā*. The first reference was raised by Sāriputta in his work, the *Sāratthadīpanī*, where he refers to the *Gaṇṭhipada*, a guide book written in Sinhalese and available when the author composed his work. In contrast, the reference given by Kassapa is not taken from a specific earlier book but is attributed to the *kecivāda* ('some people's opinion'). Interestingly however, no documents survive to verify these two reports except some traces of reference in the work of Sāriputta (*Sāratthdīpanī Vol. iii* 1992:272) and Kassapa (*Vimativinodanī Vol. ii* (1992:149).

The view of the *Gaṇṭhipada* (i.e. a book's view) and the opinion of '*kecivāda*' (i.e. some people views) on the linkage problem are the same, although reported by two different authors, Sāriputta and Kassapa respectively, with two different attributions. According to Sāriputta (*Vol. iii* 1992:272) and Kassapa (*Vol. ii* 1992:149), the view of

Gaṇṭhipada and '*Kecivāda*' is as follows: when branches of a tree that is rooted in a *mahāsīmā* cause an overlap with a *khaṇḍasīmā* that those branches grow over, all the monks from the *mahāsīmā* are not required to come into the area of the ceremony; only those monks in direct or physical contact with the branches of the tree need to do so. This means that, if the monks who are in contact with the tree or branches of that tree, either stay away from the connected areas of the tree or attend in the area of the ceremony, the monastic activities will be valid. This also means that even though the monks who live in the *mahāsīmā* do not attend the ceremony, they will not create a division (*vagga*). (On *vagga*, see Chapter Four). According to Sāriputta and Kassapa, this is how both the *Gaṇṭhipada* and '*Kecivāda*' resolved the linkage problem between the *khaṇḍasīmā* and *mahāsīmā*.

Their view is, however, rejected by Sāriputta and Kassapa. According to Sāriputta, even those monks who are not in contact with the branches of the tree must sit in the area of the ceremony (*Sāratthdīpanī Vol. iii* 1992:272). He argues that if the branches of the tree are removed, contact will not occur between the boundaries and they will no longer be overlapping. If, however, the branches are not removed, both the *khaṇḍasīmā* and *mahāsīmā* become one single boundary. Therefore, when a group of monks conduct their monastic ritual in one *sīmā (*say a *khaṇḍasīmā*), the monks from another *sīmā* (a *mahāsīmā*) are required to come into the area of the ceremony. If they do not do so, the monastic legal activities are considered to be invalid due to the division of the monks.

Similarly, Kassapa followed Sāriputta's view in his rejection of the '*Kecivāda*'. Kassapa's argument is, however, based on the term used in the *Samantapāsādikā*: *mahāsīmaṃ sodhetvā* (having 'emptied' the large boundary) (discussed above). What he meant by this is that all monks within the *mahāsīmā* must either attend the ceremony or remove the linkage completely. If they do not want to do either of these they should leave the *mahāsīmā* in order to avoid division. Both Sāriputta's and Kassapa's arguments are similar but Kassapa provides the better argument in that he attempts to analyse the phrase *mahāsīmaṃ sodhetvā*. If monks do not follow either of the stated

rules of the *Samantapāsādikā*, the advice to 'clear the large boundary' does not make sense. In other words, the phrase '*mahāsīmaṃ sodhetvā*' becomes meaningful only if it includes all the monks within the *mahāsīmā*. Therefore, the *mahāsīmā* must be emptied by either all the monks attending the *khaṇḍasīmā* or leaving the *mahāsīmā* completely, or cutting off the branches causing the overlap. According to the '*Kecivāda*', however, the monks are only required to empty or clear those who are in contact with the branches of the tree. Therefore, according to Kassapa, the '*Kecivāda*'s view has not appropriately analysed or examined the view of the *Samantapāsādikā*, mainly the phrase: *mahāsīmaṃ sodhetvā*. Here, both Sāriputta and Kassapa defended the *Samantapāsādikā's* view while renouncing both *Ganṭhipada* and '*Kecivāda*'.

This inconsistency or discrepancy still continues to draw the attention of the Burmese Theravada scholars, particularly Ashin Aggavaṃsa (1880-1946), writing in the early twentieth century, whose writing will be reviewed in Chapter Three. To see how the debate continued, and in order to exemplify contested issues in relation to authority, I shall continue with this matter of the tree connecting to *sīmā* and observe how Ashin Aggavaṃsa (1880-1946) approached it. Ashin Aggavaṃsa remarkably defended both the *Ganṭhipada* and the *kecivāda*. He argued using the concept of *sīmaṭṭhaka* ('situated within boundary'), and firmly believed that if one knows the definition of *sīmaṭṭhaka*, there should not be a problem accepting the *Ganṭhipada* and '*Kecivāda*' view. *Sīmaṭṭhaka* specifically means the area where the monks are 'situated within the *sīmā*' (Ashin Aggavaṃsa 1983:113-4). This area is considered to be the entire tree as it is 'situated within the *sīmā*' but not the entire boundary. If, for example, a monk touches any branch of a tree that is connected to another *sīmā*, it is considered faulty because the tree is 'situated within the *sīmā*'. If, however, he does not touch the tree, the connection via tree does not create a fault. This means that monks who stay inside the large boundary that is connected via a tree to the one in which the ceremony is taking place, are not required to come into that ceremony if they are not in contact with that tree (ibid).

According to Ashin Aggavaṃsa, a division should be avoided as far as the tree but not as far as the entire area of *mahāsīma*. Therefore, if the monastic legal activity is conducted without removing the monks, who are connected, the ceremony will be faulty, but no attention needs to be paid to monks in the *mahāsīmā* who are not in contact with the tree. He further commented that if the tree is situated outside the consecrated boundary, it will not be considered a fault even when the branches of this tree touch two consecrated boundaries. The reasoning behind Ashin Aggavaṃsa's opinion is that this tree is not considered as *sīmaṭṭhaka*, which means that the tree is not 'situated within the consecrated boundary'. In other word, the tree cannot become part of the *sīmās'* boundary if it is situated outside the consecrated boundary. Therefore, even though monks are connected with these branches of the tree, it does not create a fault or invalidate the boundary if the tree is 'not situated within' the consecrated boundary. So, here, even though the *Sāratthadīpanī* and *Vimativinodanī* reject the *Gaṇṭhipada* and *'Kecivāda',* and say that all monks in the *mahāsīmā* must attend, Ashin Aggavaṃsa accepts the *Gaṇṭhipada* and *kecivāda* and reiterates that only those monks in contact with the tree would need to attend.

As stated above, if a tree connects two *sīmās*, the branches must be cut off or all monks from the *mahāsīmā* adjoining the boundary must attend the ceremony; but here we see that not all monks from the *mahāsīmā* adjoining the boundary are required to attend the ceremony except those directly in contact with the tree because, according to Ashin Aggavaṃsa, it only affects the monks who touch the linkage. This means that if these monks stay away from the tree, there is no fault. This is how Ashin Aggavaṃsa reviews *sīmaṭṭhaka*, which he considers it to be the only area that affects the *sīmā*. According to him, this is also how the *Samantapāsādikā* intended to interpret the linkage problem and therefore, the *Gaṇṭhipada* and *'Kecivāda'* are correctly in line with the *Samantapāsādikā*. He thus defended the concept of both *Gaṇṭhipada* and *'Kecivāda',* trying to resolve the apparent discrepancy between them.

Although there is no *mahāsīmā* and *khaṇḍasīmā* combination in Burma in the modern period, and so a decision between Sariputta/Kassapa and Ashin Aggavaṃsa does

not need to be made in relation to the *mahāsīmā*, Burmese monks of the modern period do continue to draw out further implications from the *Samantapāsādikā* on this point in response in part to modern developments. For example, they use this passage and its interpretations to consider whether or not contact between two *sīmās* via a bridge or cable is also to be considered a breach of the interval, just as a tree branch would. As will be explained in Chapter Eight, even though it is interpreted that the cable connection should be avoided, Burmese monks differ between their interpretation and the actual practice, particularly relating to the cable; in many cases this interpretation has also depended on the individual monk. This has resulted in strict observance of the ruling against overlap when monks observe their *saṅghakamma* in a *khaṇḍasīmā*.

We can contrast this on-going importance of the commentarial tradition and resolving discrepancies in it for the Burmese tradition into the modern period, with the relative unimportance of the commentarial tradition for Thailand, undergoing its own centralisation and reform around this same period (i.e. late nineteenth early twentieth century. For a discussion of the reform in Thailand see Choompolpaisal (2011). This same discrepancy received some attention from the nineteenth-century Thai scholar, Vajirañāṇavarorasa. Rather than comment on the previous commentaries or sub-commentaries, Vajirañāṇavarorasa simply states that

> ''The custom in those days was to make a separating strip between Mr. Red's field and Mr. Black's one, to avert lawsuits between the two owners: giving permission for a *sīmāntarika* (inter-space) in between the two *sīmās* is just the same. With this understanding of the prohibition against determining overlapping or adjoining *sīmā*, one should be able to work out what is or is not *saṅkara* (mixing or confusion) correctly following the Lord Buddha's explanation'' (English from Vajirañāṇavarorasa 1983:52).

This quotation attempts to define the overlapping boundary with respect to common sense viewpoints. Vajirañāṇavarorasa's interpretation was inherited from or influenced by his father King Mongkut (1852-68), the founder the '*Dhamma Yutika Nikāya*', the name of which reflects his attitude. King Mongkut wrote as many as 35 Pāli works in one of which he defined two concepts: *Āciṇṇaka* (customary belief or 'belief on a particular tradition') and *Dhamma Yutika* (cognitive investigation of

dhamma or 'common sense investigation of dhamma') (Royal collection of Pali articles by King Mongkut vol.ii. 1972: 510-515). He criticized some passages of the commentaries or sub-commentaries, for not using this application of common sense and said one should therefore scrutinize or examine the commentarial and sub-commentarial points properly before accepting them (Royal collection of Pali articles by King Mongkut vol. ii. 1972: 390, 410). According to him, the commentaries are secondary sources rather than primary or first-hand sources. The only first-hand source of the teaching is the *tipiṭaka*, the Pāli canon. Even then, some passages of the Pāli canon also deserve to be carefully scrutinized e.g. for instances of one passage of discourse contrasting with another discourse (Royal collection of Pali articles by King Mongkut vol. ii.1972: 447). His view is rational and logical and mostly derived from his interpretation of the model provided by the *Kālāmasutta* (Discourse on Kālāma Villagers). He thus founded *Dhamma Yutika Nikāya* and named it to express his stance on applying a 'rational' interpretation of dhamma in real situations (Royal collection of Pali articles by King Mongkut vol. ii.1972:444).

As will be seen in further discussion of his work in Chapter Three, Vajirañāṇavarorasa, like his father, has re-interpreted some of the unresolved or vague concepts found in the commentaries and sub-commentaries. What is interesting for us is that, unlike the Burmese interpreters who clearly feel bound to conform to the commentarial tradition and to resolve discrepancies within it, Vajirañāṇavarorasa feels free to apply his own 'common sense' opinion and appeals, rather, to general legal sense. This gives us our first hint of the contrasting responses to modernity on the part of the Burmese who increased their attention to commentarial traditions, and the Thais who – like Vajirañāṇavarorasa – identified the canon as the highest authority combined with their own opinion, rather than through the lens of the commentary, allowing the Thais to discard the intervening commentarial tradition. I shall return to the politics underlying this difference on the Burmese side in Chapter Three.

1.5. Conclusion

In this chapter I have surveyed the *Vinaya* literature of the Pāli canon in which the identification and consecration of a *sīmā* is first mentioned, indicating that the purpose both of its initial establishment and the on-going attention it receives today is because the *sīmā* provides a place and validity for a range of important *saṅghakamma* that in turn constitute the validity of both a Saṅgha lineage as a whole (Pāli *nikāya,* Burmese *gaing*) and for each individual monk who was himself, or whose predecessors were, ordained in that *sīmā.* I highlighted how the combination of this importance with the relative terseness of the *Mahāvagga* prescription led to developments of interpretation of the *sīmā* in, especially, the *Samantapāsādikā,* the fullest of the two main commentaries on the *Vinaya* but also in earlier, no longer extant, precursors that it cited. The various commentaries and manuals that arose on the basis of the *Samantapāsādikā* also addressed this topic, finding (or resolving) some ambiguities in the *Samantapāsādikā's* explanation. We noted that the Burmese tradition in the modern period remained far more concerned with maintaining the commentarial tradition and acting in accordance with it than the Thai reform tradition of the same period as exemplified by Vajirañāṇavarorasa.

I have not gone into all the details of prescriptions for *sīmā* found in the canon and commentaries here, nor how these matters were taken up by Burmese commentators and practitioners. Such detailed coverage is, rather, the subject of the second, and main, part of the thesis, where I will return to such topics thematically looking at particular aspects of *sīmā* practice in the light of the texts, commentarial tradition and modern practice, rather than proceeding on a historical model through each text in turn. Nevertheless, it should be clear from the above that the Burmese commentarial tradition continued to feel a need to pin down the practical details of how to interpret the *Samantapāsādikā* on this topic and this leads me, in Chapter Three, to provide an overview of how the commentarial tradition on *sīmā* continued into the modern period. Before doing that I shall now, in Chapter Two, contextualise that literary production by

explaining how Theravada within Burma maintains a narrative of top-down sponsorship and authorises itself with reference to the 'purity' of its *nikāya* and their practice, in particular through mastery of the Pāli canon and commentaries. Seeing how the ability to defend one's monastic validity has been a matter of life and death for both institutions and individuals throughout Burmese history allows us to see why Burma, of all the Theravada countries, maintains such a detailed emphasis on *Vinaya* and how it does so with reference to a detailed knowledge of the commentarial tradition.

Chapter Two:

The Importance of *vinaya* performance, monastic lineage and literature in Burmese Buddhism

2.1. Introduction

The Burmese Theravada Saṅgha considers its monastic lineage to go back to the Buddha and considers it to be orthodox, pure and perfect. Much effort goes into preserving this perceived authority of the tradition and this notion of its authority is used as a means of control, whether the motivation is consciously religious or political.[20] This authority is based on two important transmissions: one is the lineage of the monastic order that is believed to go back to the first ordination performed by the Buddha himself through the on-going, correctly performed, unbroken ordination lineage. The other is the Buddha's teachings and the disciplinary rules imposed by Buddha on this monastic order, and preserved both textually and in practice. One is dependent on the other in that it is the monastic order that preserves the teachings and *Vinaya*, and the maintenance of *Vinaya* that ensures the continuation of the monastic order. Ensuring the validity of the monastic ordination lineage is an aspect of *Vinaya* regulation and practice. If a monk receives his ordination without the previously recognised or approved quorum, the ordination cannot be considered valid. In turn, the teachings of the Buddha are retained by these ordained monks, not just as a form of learning but also through correct adherence to the rules that ordained monks must observe scrupulously. The combination of these two relationships constitutes the perfect authority of Theravada Buddhism. The maintenance of the purity of both is the subject of the commentarial tradition, debates over interpretation, monastic dispute and even – in Burma – court cases.

---

[20] This thesis does not examine in any detail the relationship between the Saṅgha and politics in Burma, although politics of course affect all aspects of Saṅgha life and will touch on matters relating to the *sīma* in places. Works that examine that relationship in detail include Mendelsohn 1975, Schober 2010 and Mikael Gravers forthcoming 2012.

The monastic court case of a Burmese nun, Daw Saccavādī, who ordained as a *bhikkhunī* in Sri Lanka in 2003, is one of the recent examples of Burmese monastic attitudes toward the monastic lineage, i.e. its conception of the correct monastic order. The validity of her ordination was rejected by Burmese monastic authority, specifically the State *Saṅghamahānāyaka* (literally means 'Great Council of the Saṅgha'), on the basis of the fact that the continuity of the Order of *Bhikkhunī* ended during the reign of King Vaṭṭagāminī (103-77 BCE), a Sri Lankan King living around five hundred years after the Buddha's demise (*Bhikkhunbhāvābhāva Vinicchaya* 2006:98-100).

Using a number of commentaries, namely the *Mūlapaṇṇāsa Aṭṭhākathā* Vol. ii (1993:296), the *Aṅguttara Aṭṭhākathā* Vol. iii (1991:93) and the *Mahāvagga Pāli Aṭṭhākathā* (1991:125), the State *Saṅghamahānāyaka* cited as one of their reasons for this rejection the demise of the *Bhikkhunī Saṅgha* during a war that took place between the King and invaders from South India which had resulted in the dispersal of a large number of monks (*Bhikkhunīvinicchaya Sadan* 2006: 47-50). The last recorded mention in the commentaries is of the existence of thirteen members of the *Bhikkhunī Saṅgha* surviving in a village called Bhatara. As the war intensified the villagers abandoned their village and it is here that any further record of the existence of *bhikkhunīs* ends.

The State *Saṅghamahānāyaka* thus believes this war led to the extinction of the *Bhikkhunī Saṅgha*. Leading from this, and cited as a second reason for this refusal, is that the ordination of a *bhikkhunī* may only take place when she has been approved by both *Bhikkhunī* and *Bhikkhu Saṅgha*. The Burmese State *Saṅghamahānāyaka* argues that since no *Bhikkihunī Saṅgha* has existed since that time there is no *Bhikkhunī Saṅgha* in existence authorised to give this approval (ibid). They ignore the East Asian *bhikkhunī* lineage, only taking into consideration the existence of Theravada.

However, Daw Saccavādī insisted, even demanded, that the Burmese monastic authority give her the right to operate as a *bhikkhunī* within the community. This led to her imprisonment in 2005 for a period of six months and she was released only after agreeing to renounce her *bhikkhunī* status. She was immediately sent to the airport and

exiled to Sri Lanka. To some extent the maintenance of this authority interacts with the State, however that has been constituted, and the State's maintenance of control.

While I shall not review the extensive literature on the subject of the *bhikkhunī* lineage here (for an analysis of Saccavādī, see Bonnet 2008), I want to point out that many of the arguments that pertain elsewhere and make Saccavādī's ordination seem viable to non-Burmese – the on-going transmission through the East Asian lineage derived from Sri Lanka, the use of strengthening rituals (in fact found elsewhere in Burmese Buddhism), the logical analyses of the canonical texts concerning female ordination, the reference to strong female role models of the past, or the reference to modernity and the changing position of women, none of these are recognised as worthy of consideration by the Burmese authority since they think of authority in terms of the unbroken lineage. We might also analyse the context for such insecurity in relation to breaking with tradition – what are the fears and desires to maintain control and power at play, and are there issues of nationalism? While I shall not examine these matters in relation to the *bhikkhunī* lineage I want to examine further the issue of the ways in which the Burmese Saṅgha relates to monastic and textual authority.

The purpose of this chapter, then, is to review how Burmese Buddhists understand this relationship and lay claim to such authority. I shall do this by examining Burmese stories of how the Burmese Buddhist kings treated and preserved the monastic lineage and how this momentum continued to play a role in monastic purity and authority throughout the rule of Burmese monarchs and also into the modern period.

An historical study of any religion or nation can be complex and multi-faceted, even when focussing on a single context so, for the purpose of my study, I have extracted only a few instances that exemplify the issues that are relevant and important to my research. In particular, I want it to be clear how Burmese Buddhists conceive of their history in relation to specific authorities. I shall first give a brief account of some of the events that Burmese sources record as taking place between the time of King Anawratha (1044–1077) of the Pagan Empire and the start of the British Empire.

I shall outline three areas: the beginning of the current Theravada Buddhist monastic lineage; the major reformation of the Theravada monastic lineage that emerged during the Hanthawaddy dynasty (1287 to 1539); I shall review how Burmese monks and kings are keen to promote monastic literature that led to the convening of the Fifth Saṅgha Council (1871 CE) before the British annexation (1885-1948) and, finally, I shall look at how the impact of British rule gave rise to a new trend of the monastic sects (*nikāya*) during post Mindon period. In looking at the accounts of these developments, I want to pay particular attention to what constitutes authority, i.e. what verifies the validity, supremacy or superiority of each actor for Burmese Buddhist historiography.

2.2. Early Theravada Buddhism and royal monastic reform

It is believed that Theravada Buddhism first arrived in Burma during the reign of Emperor Asoka, around 350 BC. This is recorded in the *Mahāvaṃsa*, the 'Great Chronicle', which was composed in Sri Lanka by Mahānāma around the sixth century (von Hinüber 1996:91), where it is stated that Emperor Asoka sent two monks, namely Soṇa and Uttara, to preach the teaching of the Buddha in the Kingdom of Suvaṇṇabhūmi (Land of Gold). According to Kanai Lai Hazra (1982:58) Suvaṇṇabhūmi (the "Golden Land" or "Land of Gold"), is a term coined by the ancient Indians which refers broadly to Lower Burma, Lower Thailand, Lower Malay Peninsula, and Sumatra. Ray (1946:6) also accepted this concept and added that the area of *Suvaṇṇadīpa* and Suvaṇṇabhūmi (Golden island or Golden Land), which had been known to the Indian traders, even to the Arab traders, for a long time included many parts of south-east Asia. The same term - *Suvaṇṇabhūmi* is also used in a number of *Jātaka* stories, such as *Jānaka* or *Suppāraka Jātaka* including *Milindapañhā* (Ray 1946:4-6). According to *Kalyāṇī inscription* (1977:37ff), a fifteenth century CE marble inscription written in Pāli located at the entrance of *Kalyāṇī Sīmā* in Bago town 50 miles from Yangon, the area of *Suvaṇṇabhūmi* mainly referred to Thaton region. This area may include the whole lower Burma including coastal areas. This *Kalyāṇī inscription* is considered to be the earliest written record of the history of the monastic order in Burma. Later chronicles such as the

Sāsanālaṅkāra Sadan written by Ñāṇābhivaṃsa in the early 19th century, the

Sāsanavaṃsadīpikā by Paññāsāmi in the late 19th century and the *Vaṃsadīpanī* by

Mehtee Sayadaw in the late 18th century, heavily relied on the *Kalayānī's inscription*

when reporting their account of monastic lineage of Theravada Buddhism in Burma (see

bibliography).

While there is an ongoing debate as to whether the region referred to is actually

in modern Burma or modern Thailand, the Burmese claim it is in Burma, especially in

the Thaton Kingdom, an old Mon kingdom located in lower Burma (Ñāṇābhivaṃsa

1956:22).[21] For the Burmese the story of Soṇa and Uttara authorizes Burmese Buddhism

by linking it to the great Indian emperor Asoka – so important to Buddhist

historiography – and the recently 'purified' Buddhism after the Third Council under

Moggaliputta Thera (Bapat 1956:39-40). The authorization of Burmese Buddhism with

reference to a direct link to the Buddha does not stop there. According to Ñāṇābhivaṃsa,

author of the *Sāsanālaṅkāra Sadan* (literally meaning 'decorator of the religion'), the

arrival of Buddhism from India, as reported in the *Mahāvaṃsa* account, is the fourth

time Buddhism came to this land. For the Burmese then, the mission of Soṇa and Uttara

was the reinforcement of previous missions and was thus not considered to be the first

arrival of Buddhism (Ñāṇābhivaṃsa 1956:56). We thus have stories of a number of

events which authorize Burma as having a special place in the history and preservation

of Buddhism.

Ñāṇābhivaṃsa reports a few previous meetings, or connections, with the Buddha,

one of which took place even before the first sermon of the Buddha. The most well-

known of these stories is that of the two merchants, Tapussa and Bhallika, from

Suvaṇṇabhūmi who briefly met the Buddha on their trading route in India just after the

Buddha had attained enlightenment, meeting him even before he gave his 'first sermon'

to the first five monks (Ñāṇābhivaṃsa 1956:23). The Buddha gave them his hair as a

gift, and, after many adventures searching for a correct location, they finally installed the

---

[21] More recently, the political nature of claims relating to the identification of 'Suvaṇṇabhūmi' has been
noted by Assavavirulhakarn, in his work analysing the rise to dominance of Theravada in mainland
Southeast Asia (Assavavirulhakarn 2010: x and 59ff).

hairs on the hill on which the Shwedagon Pagoda was subsequently built. (For additional information on the Shwedagon Pagoda see Moore 1999). The Shwedagon Pagoda, in the heart of Yangon, has been enhanced several times over the centuries and remains to this day one of the most venerated monuments of Burmese Buddhists (Bischoff 1995:5).

The next arrival of Buddhism came with Gavaṃpati, a 'legendary' boy from *Majjhimadesa* (middle country, so India), who became an Arahant at seven years of age. According to Ñāṇābhivaṃsa, (the same account being also reported in the *Glass Palace Chronicle* (1960:78-9), Gavaṃpati's mother died after giving birth to him and was reborn in Suvaṇṇabhūmi, the place identified by the Burmese as part of lower Burma. Later Gavaṃpati visited Suvaṇṇabhūmi to teach the Dhamma to his former mother and, on his second visit, the Buddha came with him, accompanied by many hundreds of followers (Ñāṇābhivaṃsa 1956:56). Ñāṇābhivaṃsa further claims Burma as the appropriate and early recipient of Buddhism by reporting a few further visits of the Buddha to Burma. These stories, according to Burmese scholars such as Bode (1966:10)[22] and Bischoff (1995:4), are an expression of national pride and self-confidence and, while modern historiography may dismiss these stories, they are important for our understanding of how the Burmese State and people can view themselves as the rightful protectors of Buddhist purity.

Archaeological remains discovered in the ancient city of Śrī Kṣetra, the Kingdom of Pyu, also known as Prome, in lower Burma, while not confirming these stories of the early presence of Buddhism, do provide evidence to suggest the arrival of Buddhism to this land at a relatively early date: from at least the first or second century CE (Bischoff 1995:10-12). According to Stargardt (1995: 199ff.), the majority of these archaeological finds were discovered within twenty square kilometres of Śrī Kṣetra. Her report details

---

[22] In a footnote, Bode notes: ''Forchhammer (the author of *Legendary History of Burma and Arakan*, p. 10) and other scholars who have followed him in this subject since 1890 have been summed up lately (1908) by Mr. C. C Lowis in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*. He says: 'A close study of the inscriptions and native histories has revealed the fact that as the religion, letters and civilisation of upper Burma were influenced by Magadha, Nepal, Tibet and China, so those of Talaings (Mon) of lower Burma were affected by Ceylon, South India and Cambodia (Article Burma in Vol. I, P 28, *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Provincial series Calcutta 1908)'' (Bode 1966:10).

five particular finds: the Maunggun Gold plates, the Bawbawgyi Stone Inscription, the Khin Ba Mound Golden Pāli text, the Great Silver Reliquary and the Kyundawzu Gold leaf. The Golden Pāli texts consisted of twenty gold leaves, similar to small palm-leaf manuscripts, contained in a relic chamber carefully sealed by thick gold wires. Stargardt dates these Pāli texts[23], along with the other artifacts just mentioned, as early as 350 CE, being even earlier than the previously earliest known palm leaf manuscripts found in Kathmandu and dated to 850 CE (Stargardt 1995:209). Each plate contains Pāli verses, some of which are quotations from the Discourse on Dependent Origination with the others being derived from a variety of different canonical discourses (Ray 1946:37-46). Referring to these Pāli texts, Dhammasāmi remarked that they are excellent evidence for the development of 'Theravada' monastic education during the time of Śrī Kṣtra (Dhammasāmi 2004:27). I shall explore the production of Pāli literature in Burma later in this chapter.

Similar findings are also reported from the Dvāravadī[24] period, attributed to the Mon people (Bischoff 1995:10-11). The era of Dvāravadī civilisation has, however, proved to be difficult to define because there is no written history or chronicles in existence regarding Dvāravadī (Murphy 2010:39). According to Murphy's analysis on the archaeological remains found in Central Thailand, along with the Chao Phrya River Valley, the development of Dvāravadī can only go back as early as the sixth century (Murphy 2010:40) in contrast to the account given by Bischoff (1995:11). On the basis of a bronze statue of the Buddha found within Dvāravadī Kingdom, Bischoff suggests that Dvāravadī could be no later than the first and second century.

These debates and only piecemeal evidence indicate the extent to which the narratives maintained with the Burmese textual traditions, and in relation to authoritative

---

[23] The alphabets of these inscriptions are similar to south Indian characters. The similar characters were also used during early Pagan period. Two plates are now stored in the British Museum (Bode 1966:9).

[24] The Dvāravadī period lasted from the fifth/sixth to the thirteenth centuries. The term Dvāravadī derives from coins which were inscribed in Sanskrit with *Sri dvāravadī*. The Sanskrit word Dvāravadī means "she with many gates" (from *dvar* "door gate"). Its name may derive from the mythical city of Dvāraka in ancient India.

sites such as the Shwedagon pagoda, bear far more weight for Burmese Buddhist identity than available historical evidence. The assumption of a link with the Buddha and Asoka directly also leaves to one side the range of more immediate influences on the creation of Burmese Buddhism. The question of whether Mon Dvāravadī of Thailand had an impact on the Mon people of Thaton, South-eastern Burma, is still unclear. Histories suggest that the Dvāravadī was sacked by the Khmer empire around the eleventh century and most of its inhabitants fled west to present-day Burma where new kingdoms were eventually founded in Thaton, South-eastern Burma. According to the *Glass Palace Chronicle,* however, Thaton Kingdom did not emerge as a result of the Khmers' attack; the Kingdom was in fact founded in the lifetime of the Buddha, and its first king Thiha Raza – the first of 48 kings in the dynasty – died in the same year as the Buddha, namely 543 BCE (*Glass Palace Chronicle* 1960: 79, Phayre 1967: 288).

I shall not examine details about these differences, especially from the point of view of the Mon Dvāravadī Kingdom of central Thailand, but if we look at Burmese monastic chronicles such as the *Sāsanavaṃsadīpikā,* the *Sāsanālaṅkāra Sadan,* even the *Glass Palace Chronicle,* Thaton is identified with *Suvaṇṇabhūmi* and the story of Tapussa, Bhallika and Gavaṃpati, mentioned above. If this account is true, the history of Thaton should have existed as early as the time of the Buddha. According to the *Glass Palace Chronicle* (1960:79), the last king of Thaton Kingdom, Manuha, was defeated by Anawratha in the tenth Century CE. Anawratha was a powerful king of the Pagan dynasty, who later ruled the whole of Burma. We thus have a number of early kingdoms: Pyu, Dvāravadī and Thaton which, though later incorporated into the Pagan Kingdom by King Anawratha (1044-1077) who conquered the fabled Thaton Kingdom in 1057, claimed authority with reference to the early presence of Buddhism in what was later to become Lower Burma, and whose narratives of authority thus become part of the narrative of Burmese Buddhism.

Now we have seen that pre-Pagan kingdoms provided the Burmese region with origination myths linking the kingship or lands to the historical Buddha, I shall now turn to the origination myths that Burmese Buddhists retain for the Saṅgha. The roots of the

modern monastic lineage can be traced back to the Pagan Dynasty or Kingdom (849–1287), a dynasty which later, especially from the time of Anawratha (1044-1077), reigned over the whole of Burma. Buddhism in this dynasty was, as just stated, derived from Thaton, the kingdom of the Mon located in lower Burma and brought by a Mon monk of Thaton origin called Shin Arahan (1056-1115) who converted King Anawratha (1044-1077), and oversaw the subsequent reformation of Buddhism throughout the kingdom.

Shin Arahan in the twelfth century is, however, connected by the Saṅgha origination myths to the mission under Asoka in the third century BCE, mentioned above. According to Thilon Sayadaw, who writes on the basis of information contained in the *Glass Palace Chronicle* (1960:74) of late eighteenth century, *Vaṃsadīpanī* (2010:99) of late eighteenth century and *Sāsanālaṅkāra Sadan* (1956:4-5, 87) of early nineteenth century, Ashin Arahan was a disciple of Prāṇadassī and Prāṇadassī was a disciple of Adhisīla. Adhisīla was a disciple of Anomadassī, and the lineage continues back to Soṇa and Uttara, the founders of the Theravada monastic lineage in Suvaṇṇabhūmi. Shin Arahan was the tenth teacher of this lineage (Thilon Sayadaw 2010:47). Thus the eleventh century introduction of Buddhism to Pagan is authorized through a teacher-disciple lineage stretching back to the missionaries under Emperor Asoka in the third century BCE. According to this Saṅgha origination myth, King Anawratha dedicated his whole life to supporting Shin Arahan in his introduction of Theravada Buddhism to Burma. This then is the point from which we have a clear history of Court sponsorship of what would later come to be defined as Theravada Buddhism, building on the earlier land/ kingship Buddhism myths but providing much clearer protocols for the Saṅgha-State relations and the criteria that bestow authority.

I note in passing, but shall not look in detail, another form of Buddhism that existed prior to or alongside the forms of Buddhism from which modern Theravada traces its lineage. This other form of Buddhism has been referred to as Ari Buddhism (*Glass Palace Chronicle* 1960:70-71). What is of interest to our study is the way in which this form of Buddhism is referred to as a false form of Buddhism. This sets a

precedent for the discourse of 'pure' and 'false' Buddhism present in the on-going

rhetoric of such matters as doctrinal and monastic purity, including the importance

placed on correct *sīmā* foundation. The historical accuracy of the nature of this

Buddhism is unclear but, according to the chronicles which represent it as a false form of

Buddhism, it included Tantric and Mahayana elements and indigenous *nāga*

(dragon/cobra) worship (Bischoff 1995:18-19; *Glass Palace Chronicle* 1960:70-71,

Assavirulhakarn 2010: 5). According to Bode, Tantric Buddhism percolated into Burma

through Bengal (under the Pāla dynasty), Assam, and Manipur and allied itself with the

northern school prevailing at Pagan (Bode 1966:12). From the chronicles' perspective,

the earlier mission of Soṇa and Uttara thus became distorted or mixed with Mahayana

Buddhist practice and local custom over the course of time. Shin Arahan's mission was,

then, to purify what had already been introduced by the previous mission (Ñāṇābhivaṃsa

1956:56-7). Thus Burmese Theravada has a narrative of purity versus corruption which

even includes the local cults of *nāga* worship that pervade the Buddhism of South East

Asia and is authorized to some extent in the Canon.

Returning to the origination myth of Theravada in upper Burma in the

tenth/eleventh century, we see that the origination myth again makes a link between the

Saṅgha and the king, and that it echoes the earlier Saṅgha -kingship relationship in the

story of Asoka's conversion when a hunter met Shin Arahan who brought him to King

Anawratha and the pair held their first conversation. We can see parallels between this

narrative and that describing the conversion encounter between the novice monk

Nigrodha and Emperor Asoka in India (*Glass Palace Chronicle* 1960: 72-3). In fact,

Shin Arahan uses the same stanza that Nigrodha used to teach the Emperor Asoka, to

teach King Anawratha (*Glass Palace Chronicle* 1960: 72-3, *Vaṃsadīpanī* 2010:87,

Sāsanālaṅkāra Sadan 1956:85).

Impressed by Shin Arahan's expertise in the teachings of the Buddha and in his

serene appearance, the King then asks about Shin Arahan's monastic lineage, his teacher

and the Pāli texts. This gives the opportunity for the texts to make the claims to authority

that continue to inform modern Burmese Buddhism. The answers concerning monastic

lineage point to India, the birthplace of the Buddha, while the last two answers relate to his teacher, Sīlabuddhi, who sent him for this mission and to the Pāli text pointing to the Kingdom of Thathon, the capital city of the Mon (MehteeSayadaw 1966:79).[25] The King expresses an immediate concern to obtain a copy of the Pāli scriptures, and the King of Thathon's refusal to provide these is used to justify his subsequent invasion of Thathon for the purpose of obtaining a complete set of the *Tipiṭaka*. Thus the use of military force in the propagation of the Dhamma is authorised in the origination myths of modern Burmese Buddhism. The *Tipiṭaka* was brought from Thaton to Pagan along with many hundreds of monks (ibid). King Anawratha then sent three ministers to Sri Lanka to bring back further copies (Ray 1946: 100). These canonical texts were in Pāli and resulted in the start of Pāli study in the capital. Mabel Bode comments on the rapid development of Pāli studies at that time:

> ''Though the Burmese began their literary history by borrowing from their conquered neighbours, the Talaings (Mon) - and not before the eleventh century - the growth of Pāli scholarship among them was so rapid that the epoch following close on this tardy beginning is considered one of the best that Burma has seen'' (Bode 1966:14).

We have, then, in the origination myths for modern Burmese Buddhism, a narrative of kingly or State interest and intervention in the matter of securing and ensuring textual purity. The Pagan dynasty's sponsorship of Pāli scholarship soon led to the production of further Pāli works, including grammatical works, one of which is called *Saddanīti*, composed by the twelfth century Ashin Aggavaṃsa[26], the teacher of King Narapatisithu (1173-1210). This work is probably the most outstanding Pāli grammar ever composed in Burma. Mabel Bode remarks about this work:

> "The Pāli scriptures had not been a hundred years in upper Burma before a grammar – the *Saddanīti* -was composed in Pāli that called forth the wondering admiration of the scholars of Ceylon, though Ceylon was certainly the forerunner and model of Burma in exegesis." (Bode1909: xiv).

---

[25] MehteeSayadaw, also known as Paramasīrivamsa, is the author of *Vaṃsadīpanī* written long before Ñāṇābhivaṃsa's *Sāsanālaṅkāra Sadan*. He was one of the twelve monks appointed for the post of *Sudhamma* council by the King Bodawpaya (1782-1819).

[26] This Aggavaṃsa lived in the eleventh century, different from the one who wrote a *sīmā* book in the early twentieth century. See Chapter Three.

Even more curiously for our examination of the *sīmā* is the account that, as Theravada Buddhist teaching and Pāli education became prevalent, Shin Arahan introduced the King to the importance of the monastic *sīmā*. Shin Arahan requested the King to build monastic *sīmās* for the convenience of the newly arrived Theravada Saṅgha who would need to perform their monastic legal rituals. As a result, there were as many as twelve *sīmās* in different parts of the Pagan City all of which were consecrated by Shin Arahan; six *sīmās* located in the east with four *sīmās* each in the north and south of Pagan City (Khin Maung Nyunt 1997:20). The largest one is located near to the Kusinayon Pagoda on the south west of Myinkaba village. The measurement of this *sīmā* is 162 cubits length and 147 cubits breadth. Shin Arahan is reported to have continued to consecrate *sīmā* outside Pagan City. There are nine *sīmā* consecrated in Meikthila town, Mandalay Division and four *sīmās* in the precinct of Mandalay City. Each of them is attributed to Shin Arahan (Khin Maung Nyunt 1997:21) and they are still well preserved and function for monastic rituals. Here we can see the cognizance of Anawratha and Shin Arahan for the founding of future Theravada monasticism. Their combined efforts can be considered as indicative of the importance in which *sīmā* was regarded at the time Theravada Buddhism arrived in Upper Burma[27].

We can sum up the extent to which Anawratha is attributed with the establishment of Theravada Buddhism in Burma, its association with Burmese culture and supremacy and the introduction of civilisation, by looking at Ray's account:

> ''In a single lifetime, Anawratha had established and spread a true religion throughout a large portion of his dominions, and suppressed all heretical sects and beliefs; from a chieftainship he raised his principality to the position of the most powerful political authority in Burma, and by introducing the Talaing (Mon) culture of lower Burma to civilise the north, he set the people of Marammadesa or Myanmar country (as distinct from Ramaññadesa) on the road to culture and civilisation that made the annals of the Pagan dynasty a most glorious record in the history of mankind'' (Ray 1946:101).

---

[27] The importance of *sīmā* is indicated in the *Mahāvaṃsa* in relation to King Devānaṃpiyatissa welcoming the arrival of Mahinda and his companions from India, and building monasteries for them. When the king asked Mahinda whether Buddhism in Sri Lanka has been established, Mahinda replied to the king that it would not be until the *sīmā* had been consecrated (Kieffer Pülz 1997:51; Dutt 1962:54).

Anawratha passed away in 1077 but subsequent kings continued to be active in strengthening the momentum of Theravada Buddhism. They sponsored the building of many pagodas and monasteries and supported Theravada monks leading to the growth of the Saṅgha. We can still witness hundreds of pagodas elegantly situated in the old capital city of Pagan, many of which were erected by different kings throughout the Pagan dynasty.

Two developments which took place after the death of Anawratha are worthy of note. One is the refinement of the *Tipiṭaka* carried out during the reign of Kyanzitthar (1084-1113), the second king after Anawratha. This King offered patronage to the monks to enable comparisons to be made between the texts derived from Thathon and those from Sri Lanka. The *Tipiṭaka* texts were edited and then confirmed as orthodox Theravada teaching (Bischoff 1995:26). Khin Maung Nyunt (1997:11) stated that it was possible to compare between the *Tipiṭaka* brought from Thaton and that from Sri Lanka because Anawratha brought more than a thousand educated monks from Thaton during the war. These monks, supported by Anawratha, were involved in comparative studies under the guidance of Shin Arahan. This account adds to and strengthens the association between kingship and scriptural authority and allows later kings/governments to hark back to the authority of the Pagan dynasty in providing orthodox texts and monks for Theravada Buddhism whenever they sought to glorify their own position as righteous rulers.

The other development was the newly arrived Sri Lankan orthodox *Mahāvihāra* monastic lineage in Pagan. The *Mahāvihāra* ("Great Monastery") was for several centuries the centre of Theravada Buddhism in Sri Lanka. In the fifth century it was host to the commentator most associated with Theravada orthodoxy – Buddhaghosa – and it eventually became authorised as the sole monastic lineage through royal authority in Sri Lanka in the twelfth century. According to its own chronicles it had been founded by King Devānaṃpiya Tissa (247–207 BCE) in his capital Anuradhapura at the very introduction of Buddhism and the Saṅgha there. It thus makes a similar claim to authority, dating back to the Emperor Asoka, as that seen in the Pagan lineage through

Shin Arahan. During Anawaratha's reign, Shin Arahan had introduced to Pagan the Thaton lineage of Theravada monks, but during the reign of Narapatisithu (1173–1210) this further event in monastic history unfolded; the introduction of a monastic lineage from Sri Lanka. The narrative commences with Uttarājīva, another Mon monk, who took his disciple Chapada to Sri Lanka in 1171 (Bischoff 1995: 30). Upon their arrival they exchanged conversation concerning their religion with the monks of Sri Lanka and inquired into each other's lineage. According to a *Kalyāṇī inscription* (1977:42-3), these two monks, Uttarājīva and Chapada, found that the elders of Sri Lanka were the heirs of Shin Mahinda the noble saint, and the elder of Uttarājīva was of the lineage of Shin Soṇa and Uttara. They then agreed and confirmed the unity/ compatibility of their monastic order and ordained the novice Chapada into monkhood together (Ray 1946:112). Here the validity of the monastic lineage of Soṇa and Uttara is reconfirmed from the Pagan side by the two orders performing a *saṅghakamma* (monastic legal activity) together ordaining Chapada.

Soon after Uttarājīva returned to Thaton, leaving his disciple behind in Sri Lanka, he settled down in Pagan and continued the work of his predecessor, Shin Arahan. After eleven years studying Buddhism, Chapada returned from Sri Lanka with a quorum of Sri Lanka monks, ready to help his teacher. These monks were Sīvali, Ānandā, Tāmalinda and Rāhula (*Kalyāṇī inscription* 1977:44, Ñāṇābhivaṃsa 1956:96). Unfortunately, Uttarājīva passed away after only a few days of their arrival and this led to a very curious condition in Burmese monasticism. According to *Kalyāṇī inscription*, Chapada changed his mind about associating with the local monks, perhaps due to the absence of his teacher. This *Kalyāṇī inscription* (1977:45-6) reflects on the thoughts of Chapada as follows:

> ''As the Mahātheras of Ceylon associated with our teacher the venerable Uttarajīvamahāthera (at the time of his visit to Ceylon), in the performance of ecclesiastical ceremonies, it is proper that we should now perform such functions after associating ourselves with the monks of Pugāma, who are the spiritual successors of Soṇathera and Uttarathera. However, our teacher, the Mahāthera Uttarajīva, who was a native of the Mon country, was formerly the sole head of the Church, but now that the Burmese monks have become supreme, we do not wish to associate with them in the

performance of ecclesiastical ceremonies. Thus, through pride, the Mahāthera Chapada declines to associate with the monks of Pugāma in the performance of ecclesiastical ceremonies and he performed such function separately'' (Translated by Ray 1946: 114).

Chapada's mode of operation and his plan were formally welcomed by King Narapatisithu (1173–1210) who supported efforts to introduce the Sri Lankan lineage of Theravada Buddhism. The King made a raft of boats in the Irrawaddy River where these five monks could conduct ordination ceremonies (ibid). This must be a reference to the type of *sīmā* that will be explained in chapter six, namely *sīmā* in the water is called *udakukkhepasīmā* (boundary created by splashing water), which is authorised by the Canon. The King, and the quorum of five monks led by Chapada, chose this boundary independent of the existing one for the new monastic order to start its new and independent lineage. Many novices received ordination at the hands of these returnees from Sri Lanka and, in the course of time, their followers grew in number. As a result, two schools of Theravada Buddhism emerged within the Pagan dynasty, one called *pacchimavaṃsa* – the western or later lineage led by Chapada; the other *purimavaṃsa* - the eastern or earlier lineage, introduced by Shin Arahan and Uttarājīva (ibid). According to the *Kalyāṇī inscription* (1977:46), the Sri Lanka monastic lineage or *pacchimavaṃsa* arrived after one hundred and twenty four years of the Thaton Saṅgha in Pagan City. Within the Sri Lankan lineage, however, the monks divided into three further groups, namely: the Sīvali group, the Tāmalinda group and the Ānandā group. Toward the end of the dynasty the Pagan monastic lineage was thus divided into four groups: three Sri Lanka groups and one Shin Arahan group *(Kalyāṇī inscription 1977:50).*

Pagan fell to the Mongols in 1287. Although it went into decline as a political centre it continued to flourish as a place of Buddhist scholarship. The country became divided between upper and lower Burma with the upper containing two small kingdoms: the Pinya dynasty (1313-1364) and the Sagaing dynasty (1315-1364). These two dynasties briefly ruled two different parts of the regions of southern and northern upper Burma. They were soon replaced by a new dynasty called the Ava Kingdom, also known

as Ratanapura ('Place of Gems') in Pāli, established in Ava in 1364. This Kingdom ruled the whole of upper Burma till 1555 (Pamaree 2006:9-11). In lower Burma, however, the power remained under the Hanthawaddy dynasty from the fall of Pagan in 1287 up until 1539. Hanthawaddy was the most powerful and prosperous kingdom of all post-Pagan kingdoms.

Under a string of talented kings, especially Binnya Ran I, Shin Sawbu, Dhammacetī and Binnya Ran II, the kingdom profited from foreign commerce and left a reputation of having been a long golden age. Engaging in commerce with the traders across the Indian Ocean, exports and imports increased, filling the King's treasury with gold and silver, silk and spices, and all the other stuff of early modern trade (Pamaree 2006:15-16). The kingdom also became a famous centre of Theravada Buddhism. As will be explained below, King Dhammacetī established strong ties with Sri Lanka, and continued the close relationship between King and Saṅgha by encouraging monastic reforms that later had an impact throughout the country.

According to the Ñānābhivaṃsa (the author of *Sāsanālaṅkāra Sadan*) (1956:124-5), Paññāsāmi (the Author of *Sāsanavaṃsadīpikā*, also briefly called *Sāsanavaṃsa*) (1974:105-8) changes in monastic practices took place within these small Kingdoms. We can see that in describing these practices as changes, and attributing these changes to these smaller kingdoms, the author compiling the *Sāsanālaṅkāra Sadan* (1956:127) are drawing a line between the earlier more 'pure' Buddhism of Pagan – to which later rulers such as Dhammacetī or Bodawpaya will refer to for authority – and the Buddhism of this period. Ñānābhivaṃsa also shows us how concepts of purity evolved from rivalry in the form of accusations about monastic purity in the content of State involvement, and even a demand for state involvement on the part of some monks. Thus Ñānābhivaṃsa records a development that occurred during the reign of Uzana (1324-1343), the second king of the Pinya dynasty (1313-1364).

Ñānābhivaṃsa reports that Uzana was a devout king and offered the Saṅgha seven wooden temples in different parts of the city, as well as men to service them and

extra land to generate income for monastic requisites (Ñāṇābhivaṃsa1956:125-6). King did not interfere with how these properties were handled by the monks. He was not interested in being involved in the monks' adherence to their *Vinaya* rules; neither was he committed to making any effort to reform monastic practice, as we saw in Pagan dynasty. As a result, monks started utilising the properties for their own personal use. They did business in the monasteries: the monastic properties were rented out to the laity and they collected tax from them as a source of income.

According to Ñāṇābhivaṃsa (1956:130) and Siri Sobhana (1974:110), Theravada monks should not engage in business. If a monk does engage in business, he commits wrongdoing according to the eighteenth rule of *Nissaggiya Pācittiya* of the *pātimokkha* and is considered to be impure due to the fact that the act of business can corrupt the monks. Māmaka, based on Ñāṇābhivaṃsa's rhetoric, also stated that even though these monks were correctly ordained in, or descended from, the *Pacchimavaṃsa* of Ceylon and *Purimavaṃsa* of Thaton, they became corrupt because of the influence of Ari priests and claimed that some, if not all, of the practices of Ari priests were re-introduced or influenced by these Theravada monks (Māmaka 2002: 40, 56). We can see here authority for the relationship between state and Saṅgha – that it is not enough for the state to support the Saṅgha; it must also control it by demanding that the monks adhere to specific expectations. We can also see the theme of the Ari priests, those to whom divergence is attributed, being associated with the issue of the 'Orthodox' Saṅgha being vulnerable if strict *Vinaya* is not maintained.

According to Ñāṇābhivaṃsa (1956:125-6) these corrupted monks are called *pwekyaung phongyi* (literally meaning festival monks or socially active monks) due to the fact that their practices are related to social and public affairs. The term '*pwekyaung phongyi*' in normal Burmese language refers to 'corrupt' monks who do not follow the *Vinaya* rules. As will be discussed later, *pwekyaung phongyi* possessed substantial skills to offer society such as arts, healing, astrology, medicine, massage, boxing or wrestling. Even though we know that such practices pertained to and were an important part of Buddhism's spread, even from the Indian period predating it, according to

Ñāṇābhivaṃsa such practices are wrong due to the fact that they only involved lay affairs. Monastic learning and practice was 'no longer' on the daily agenda of these monks. This type of reformist rhetoric, which we can see as an attempt to reduce the remit and so the power of monks by rejecting practices that had long been a part of the Saṅgha's independence and success, continues up to the modern period.

Thus we can see the agenda of such authors who promote and put pressure on a form of Buddhism that sticks narrowly to a very tight interpretation of *dhamma* and *Vinaya;* that accepts the authority of the State or monks whose learning is authorised by the State; and, which has little relevance in society. Thus, when Ñāṇābhivaṃsa, uses this term – *pwekyaung phongyi* - he is expressing his disapproval, claiming that although these *pwekyaung phongyi* inherited the pure monastic lineage *Pacchimavaṃsa* and *Purimavaṃsa* of the Pagan dynasty, their practices later became similar to those of the Ari priests (Ñāṇābhivaṃsa 1956:125-6).

The stories and disapproval of the activities of *pwekyaung phongyi* provide the background to the establishment of a new sect or division within the Saṅgha. Two monks, Shin Sāsanadhara and Shin Parakkama, members of the resident monks in one of the seven wooden temples mentioned above, left the city and established the *araññavāsī* (forest dwellers) wing of the Saṅgha during Uzana's reign. The remaining monks, who lived in the villages and towns, according to Ñāṇābhivaṃsa, were later considered to be *gāmavāsī* (village dwellers). Since *pwekyaung phongyi* lived in the towns or villages, they became part of the *gāmavāsī* monks. According to Ñāṇābhivaṃsa, these two monks saw *pwekyaung phongyi* as morally 'corrupt' monks who deviated from their original practice in pursuit of social and lay affairs, while in founding the *araññavāsī* wing they themselves were pursuing the original agenda appropriate to Buddhist monks.

Charney points out regarding Ñāṇābhivaṃsa's attitude:

> "A careful examination of the evidence, however, suggests that far from a clear monastic category, *pwe-gaung* was used by *aranyavasi* monks as a device in Buddhist histories and royal orders … to denigrate monks of whom the authors disapproved, in order to justify monastic reform." (Charney 2006: 30-1).

"Nyanabhivamsa views this event [the formation for the *araññavāsī* division] as a major point of monastic divergence, for, from this time, Irrawaddy Valley monks permanently divided into the *gamavasi* monks who remained in town and village monastic establishments and the *arannavasi* monks who lived, studied, and meditated in forest monasteries." (Charney 2006: 31-32)

Burmese histories claim that *Pwekyaung phongyi* continued to be active during the reign of King Minkhaung (1401–1422). Ñāṇābhivaṃsa reports that King Minkhaung even appointed a *pwekyaung phongyi* who was a former boxing champion (a traditional activity for monks but observed with disapproval in reformist writings), as head of the Saṅgha, (Ñāṇābhivaṃsa 1956: 131). Such appointment to a high ranking post can be considered an acknowledgment of the existence of *pwekyaung phongyi*. If we leave aside the rhetoric of reform, we may consider that the King benefited from the traditional teachings of *pwekyaung phongyi* frowned upon by the reformers, since *pwekyaung phongyi* taught their pupils important subjects for society and livelihood, such as divination, horsemanship, swordsmanship, boxing and wrestling. *Pwekyaung phongyi* survived up to the late eighteen century but, as will be seen below, elements of *pwekyaung phongyi* were suppressed by King Bodawpaya who feared a revolt against his authority (Mendelson 1975:151).

Our understanding of the *pwekyaung phongyi* totally depends on Ñāṇābhivaṃsa's account. Surprisingly however, he does not differentiate between the *gāmavāsī* monks who live in town or city and the *pwekyaung phongyis* who are involved in the social affairs among the *gāmavāsī* monks. If we look at the dwelling place of the majority of modern Theravada monks they do not live in forests; instead, they live in villages, towns and cities. They are not, therefore, '*araññavāsī*' monks. If we apply logic to Ñāṇābhivaṃsa's interpretation, the majority of modern Theravada monks would thus come under the category of *pwekyaung phongyi*.

We can see how this rhetoric serves Ñāṇābhivaṃsa's own agenda when we see how he is making claims for his own tradition's authority and purity. He claims to have kept his distance from the *gāmavāsī* (village dwellers) and claimed that his monastic lineage was derived from the *araññavāsī* (forest dwellers). This is a claim made in spite

of his position in the Saṅgha, a position which can hardly be seen as 'forest-dwelling' in a literal sense. For in the eyes of laity and in normal interpretations the term '*āraññavāsī*' refers to 'pure' and 'orthodox' Theravada monks. Ñāṇābhivaṃsa traced his monastic lineage to *āraññavāsī* monks to accommodate his claims. If, however, we are to compare his practice to that of forest monks from whom he claims he can trace his monastic lineage, this does not fit. He had already deserted the forest and taken the responsibility of the top post in the administration of the Saṅgha during the reign of King Bodawpaya (1782-1819), perhaps even living in a more comfortable position than the *gāmavāsī* monks. Even by taking the technical definition of *āraññavāsī* found in the *Visuddhimagga* (Ñāṇamoli 1979:72), which uses a definition of distance from the nearest village rather than focusing on specific practices, Ñāṇābhivaṃsa was no longer living an *āraññavāsī* life.

This obvious contradiction between the rhetoric and actual position of the *āraññavāsī* has led previous scholars to question the intention of Ñāṇābhivaṃsa, on whose writings, particularly his *Sāsanālaṅkāra Sadan,* later writers base their account when writing about *pwekyaung phongyis.* According to Than Tun's report on a thirteenth century inscription, *āraññavāsī* monks lived in a large monastery and dealt with all manner of commercial transactions. In some cases they handled business using laymen to act on their behalf while, in other cases, the monks were seen in the market places bargaining a good price. When they put property on the market, the officials invited both parties, including the monks, to attend and liquor, meats and foods were provided. After an agreement was reached, they had their meals and announced the ownership of the land publicly (Than Tun 1988:86-87).

While Ñāṇābhivaṃsa's report contradicts the evidence in the inscription as explained by Than Tun, it is useful for us to see how it exemplifies the rhetoric of purity and reform that are used in Burmese Buddhism to bolster the authority of one group over another and to subject the Saṅgha to State sanction. Thus the derogatory description of *pwekyaung phongyi* was politically and doctrinally motivated in order to justify reform of the Saṅgha under King Bodawpaya, a process in turn inspired by Bodawpaya's quest

for personal authority and security. At the same time, Ñāṇābhivaṃsa was situated in a precarious position between King and Saṅgha, such that his rhetoric was intended to be heard in at least two quarters and he needed to maintain his own association with a purer Saṅgha in Bodawpaya's eyes if the Saṅgha was to maintain its position and conduct its own reform. As will be looked at in the next section on King Bodawpaya's attitude towards the Saṅgha, the practices of *'pwekyaung phongyi'* became part of a device to reform the Saṅgha during Bodawpaya's reign.

If we reflect on the preceding discussion on the motif of the Ari and the introduction of the concept of *pwekyaung phongyi* we can see that later scholars, writing in the service of Bodawpaya or other reform, denigrated King Uzana's less controlling support of the monks in contrast to the perception of the Pagan dynasty's interventions in the name of 'pure' Theravada orthodoxy, based on a very specific reading of the *Vinaya Piṭaka*. As will be explained below, and in the next section, some later kings hark back to this golden era of Pagan in their own promotion and purification of 'orthodox' or reform (i.e. state-controlled and less socially relevant) Theravada monastic practices.

While Buddhism underwent divisions for more than a century between both the *āraññavāsī* and *gāmavāsī*, and interactions within the groups, Buddhism in lower Burma entered another phase of purification during the reign of King Dhammacetī (1472–1492). King Dhammacetī was a former monk and he became the sixteenth king of the Hanthawaddy (Haṃsavatī) dynasty (1287-1539). He was interested in the development of monastic 'purity' particularly using the validity (literally 'perfection') of the monastic boundary (*sīmāsampatti*). *Kalyāṇī inscription* praised Dhammacetī's knowledge in the canonical texts and stated that the King had direct access to the *Vinaya* commentary and sub-commentary including *sīmā* works such as the *Sīmālaṅkāra* and the *Sīmālaṅkārasaṅgaha* (*Kalyāṇī inscription* 1977:57). The inscription reported Dhammacetī's concern about monastic boundary:

> ''*Upasampadā pana 'sīmā-parisa-vatthu ñāttayyānusāvana' sampatti saṅkhātāhi pañcahi sampattīhi yuttāva akuppā ṭhānārahā hoti. Tāsu parisuddhassu upasampadā pekkha…. sīmāpurisasampattīnaṃ pana vijjamānabhāvaṃ kathaṃ jānituṃ*

labheyyanti'': "when ordination ritual takes place, it requires five kinds of perfection, namely, 'boundary, monks (*parisa*), candidate (*vatthu*), motion and liturgy'. In the purity of a monk's ordination…, it is not easy to know the perfection of the boundary and monks" (*Kalyāṇī inscription* 1977:57)

As we already saw in Chapter One, the *Parivāra* of the *Vinaya Piṭaka* states that a monk's ordination is only valid when five conditions are met, and the first of these is the *sīmā* as also noted here in the *Kalyāṇī inscription* (1977:57). As will be discussed below, Dhammacetī's concern regarding the perfection of *sīmā* when ordaining a monk eventually led him to reform the Saṅgha.

The inscription claims that the monks within the *purimavaṃsa*, 'earlier lineage', and *pacchimavaṃsa,* 'later lineage', consecrated their *sīmā* without knowledge of the precise *Vinaya* rules. Four erroneous aspects to the consecrations are reported: firstly, a *sīmā* was consecrated without inviting the other groups within the same village boundary. According to the *Vinaya* - as will be explored in Chapter Five – this error is called *vagga* (group/faction) meaning there is a division in the relevant Saṅgha and the consecration would not be valid. The second erroneous aspect was that the consecration was conducted in spite of an overlap of trees between two *gāmasīmās*. Again this invalidates the consecration (as we discussed in relation to textual inconsistency and authority in Chapter One and which will be returned to in Chapter Eight). In the third type, the monks performed the consecration in a *visuṃgāma* (special/individual/small village boundary – see Chapter Five) without receiving permission from the king. As will be described in Chapter Five, if the king did not formally authorise such a consecration it would be considered invalid. Finally, monks established an un-consecrated *sīmā* in a lake even though it was not eligible in terms of *Vinaya* rules, e.g. a boundary established in a lake where the water is not naturally created by the impact of monsoon water (*Kalayani inscription* 1977:54-55) (see Chapter Six). The *Kalayani inscription* thus gives a justification for Dhammacetī's reform of the Saṅgha.

As Bode observes:

"for this *sīmā* was a formality on which the validity of ordination and thence the 'legitimate descent' of the teachers depended, and such consecration has always been

considered in Burma of great importance to religion and the religious reputation of a region or community'' (Bode 1966:7)

This claim concerning *sīmā* validity was the justification for King Dhammacetī to reform the Saṅgha starting from the *sīmā*. The King sent 44 monks (22 senior monks and 22 assistant monks) to Sri Lanka to receive new ordination under the 'pure' *Mahāvihāra* lineage (ibid). On their return from Sri Lanka the King patronised the establishment of a *sīmā* which later came to be known as the *Kalyāṇī sīmā* due to the fact that these monks were ordained in Sri Lanka's Kalyāṇī River. It is in connection with the establishment of this *sīmā* that the so-called *Kalyāṇī* inscription[28] was set up recording this history.

Dhammacetī invited monks from across Burma to receive ordination in the newly consecrated *sīmā*. According to Ling this invitation extended to monks from the neighbouring countries of Cambodia, Shan kingdoms and Thailand to receive this 'ancient' ordination in what was thought to be the 'pure' monastic lineage of Sri Lanka dating back to the third century BCE (Ling 1979:25). From this inscription we can see that while courtly/political intervention in the fate of Buddhism and the Saṅgha is written into the historiography of Burma, at least as far back as the tenth century with Shin Arahan and King Anawratha, in the fifteenth century we find this intervention connected specifically to *sīmā*.

We shall also see how the information in this famous inscription serves as a well-known warning to future generations of Burmese monastics concerning the dangers of not performing *sīmā* consecration in exact accordance with the commentaries in the Pāli canon. As we shall see, the risk is substantial: loss of autonomy, defrocking, the concomitant loss of status and the humiliation of either a return to lay life or re-ordination as the most junior monk in what had been a rival Order. Each Saṅgha lineage thus seeks to maintain its 'purity' from such threat and attention to the detail of *sīmā* consecration is one of the defences against accusations of 'impurity.'

---

[28] This inscription is also recorded in Mon language. According to the section of Mon inscription parallel to the Pāli inscription erected near the *sīmā*, the king patronised the establishment of 397 new *sīmās* across the kingdom.

We find similar accounts of re-ordinations in the history of Sri Lankan Buddhism, so there is precedent for Dhammacetī's actions in the imported lineages. According to Ñāṇābhivaṃsa, there were a number of times when Sri Lanka sought help from Burma for re-ordination. The first re-ordination occurred as early as the eleventh century CE during the reign of King Vijayabāhu I (1056-1111). When the devastating war between the Chola Dynasty of Southern India, and King Vijayabāhu I of Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka took place, the number of ordained monks in Sri Lanka approached a critical state such that the quorum necessary for continuing ordination, namely five monks, could not be found in the entire country. So, the continuity of Theravada monastic lineage broke down during this period. The above-mentioned Thaton Saṅgha went to Sri Lanka to re-ordain the Sri Lankan monks at the request of King Vijayabāhu I (Ñāṇābhivaṃsa 1956:36).

Sri Lanka again came under attack, this time by the Portuguese who arrived on their coast in 1505. Sri Lankans gradually lost much of their lands while the power of the King was confined to the Kandy region. Many Sri Lankans living in the coastal areas were either converted to Christianity or suppressed by the Portuguese from exercising their religion. This affected the monastic community seriously (Carrithers 1983:70), finally resulting in a total absence of ordained Buddhist monks on the island. King Wimaladharmasuriya I (1590-1604) of Kandy, who ascended the throne in 1590, almost a century after the arrival of Portuguese, sent a group of delegates to the Arakanese Kingdom located in the south west of Burma – also known as Rakkhaṅgadesa or Rakkhanga country by the Sri Lankans. A group of Arakanese monks led by Nandicakka and Candavisala set out for Sri Lanka to give ordination and establish a monastic order there. The ordination ceremony was carried out in the *udakukkhepasīmā* in 1597 at Gatambe, near Kandy[29] (Arunatilaka and Abhayasundara 1999:38). This was the second time Sinhalese monks received re-ordination from Burmese.

---

[29] http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/perera/wheel100.html#sect
http://www.island.lk/2005/08/27/satmag1.html accessed on 05-01-2012

Two more groups of Sinhalese arrived in Burma, one at the beginning and the other in the middle of the nineteenth century.[30] The former group was ordained in Amarapūra, capital city of King Bodawpaya (1782-1819). They became known as the Amarapūra Nikāya and still exist in Sri Lanka today. The other group, who received their ordination at the hands of Mon monks in the tradition of Dhammacetī's reform, is known as the Rāmañña Nikāya (Bischoff 1995:53). Ambagahapitiya Ñāṇavimalatissa led the former group who set out for Burma in 1799 and received higher ordination in 1800 under the preceptorship of the Saṅgharāja, Ñāṇābhivaṃsa. King Bodawpaya patronised their ordination but was not involved in the reform process of the second, later group. The monk who led this second group was called Ambagahawatte Sri Saranaṅkara Thera. He had previously received ordination under the Siam Nikāya (Carrithers 1983:80). Ambagahawatte Sri Saranaṅkara Thera and his colleagues took their new ordination in 1862 under Mon monks. When these monks returned from Burma they joined Paññānada, a forest dweller monk who had separated from the Amarapura Nikāya due to an issue over a water boundary (Carrithers 1983:80). This boundary issue will be looked at the Chapter three. Ambagahawatte Sri Saranaṅkara Thera and Paññānada later established the Ramañña Nikāya which still exists in Sri Lanka today.

Interestingly, while these details indicate that monastic reform was an issue in Sri Lanka as it was in Burma, it is only in Burma that we have this close relationship between the *sīmā* and the notion of the importance of 'pure' monastic lineage. Thus, by using the very specific issue of *sīmā* to question the validity of the monks over whom he sought to have control, and by recording it in the famous inscription, Dhammacetī may have begun the emphasis on *sīmā* that we find in Burmese Buddhism to this day. In the next chapter, I shall highlight the impact this has had on the production of *sīmā*-related literature in Burma.

---

[30] A century prior to these two missions, a group of monks from Siam had conducted ordinations in Sri Lanka, creating the Siam Nikāya, but this group was limited to the landlord caste (Carrithers 1983:70).

2.3.   Overview of royal involvement in monastic education

The association of reigning monarchs who attempted to 'purify' monasticism in Burma continued after Anawratha and Dhammacetī. Three further kings in particular are praised in monastic literature for their contribution to the development of Buddhist literature within Burmese monastic practices. They are King Thalun (1629–1648), King Bodawpaya (1782–1819) and King Mindon (1853–1878). The last two kings ruled in the Konbaung dynasty (1752-1885) and their contribution to Buddhism will be looked at later in this section and the next respectively.

King Thalun reigned in the middle part of the Taungoo dynasty (1510-1752) having ascended to the throne in 1629 after a long and exhaustive expansion of the empire by his predecessors, entailing constant warfare for nearly a century. According to Pamaree (2006:17, 20),[31] the Taungoo rulers had extended their power from lower to upper Burma, including the Hanthawaddy Kingdom, some parts of Siam, Manipur in north-east India and parts of Arakan and Lao. Thalun ruled this extended Taungoo territory for nineteen years between 1629 and 1648. His reign is notable for his having rebuilt a war-torn country. He instituted administrative reforms and rebuilt the economy.

Able to maintain his authority within most of this extended territory, King Thalun turned his attention to the support of Buddhism and, comparatively, his contribution to Buddhism was more remarkable than his predecessors within the Taungoo dynasty. His legacy can be seen in two ways: one was the building of pagodas and monasteries across the kingdom and the other was the introduction of the *Sudhamma zayat* (literally meaning pavilion of righteousness). The *Sudhamma zayat* was a meeting place or office of the head of the Saṅgha. The king built this *Sudhamma zayat* for a variety of purposes but mainly for the running of the day-to-day activities of monastic affairs such as dealing with monastic problems that occur within the Saṅgha and with monastic exams which

---

[31] http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/docs/wps/wps06_064.pdf
Accessed 07-01-2012.   This is online research journal written by Pamaree and published in Asia Research Institute, National university of Singapore, Working Paper Series No. 64.

are held every year by the monks. Instead of dealing with monastic issues or holding monastic exams in their monasteries, Thalun requested that they be carried out by the monks within the *Sudhamma zayat*.

To implement its use the king appointed two head monks. The first was Tipiṭakalaṅkāra, also known as Taunbila Sayadaw, mentioned in Chapter One when reviewing the commentarial tradition of the *Vinayasaṅgaha*. On his retirement to the forest he was succeeded by Ariyalaṅkāra. Once a year Ariyalaṅkāra invited the monastic community to the *Sudhamma zayat* to undertake the monastic examination, including the recitation of canonical texts. The successful candidates received royal support based on their grades. If boys, they would receive royal patronage for novice ordination; if novices, higher ordination; and, for the monks, the award would be in the form of material support and status (Dhammasāmi 2004: 63). This account of Thalun's activities indicates a further degree of political intervention or interference with monastic life, namely through centralised patronage or control of education and ordination, a further step in the Saṅgha-state involvement seen in Burma to this day.

Thalun also introduced a new post, that of *Mahādanwan,* a person who runs monastic affairs.[32] Initially the *Mahādanwan* looked after the head of the Saṅgha and other high ranking monks, but subsequently the King authorised him to undertake a new duty, that of investigating the motivation or purpose of a monk's ordination, especially for novices and young monks (Dhammasāmi 2004: 70). This investigation of monks was later criticised by monks. However, many novices and monks ordained to gain an education or as a way of escaping duties to the king such as army service (ibid) and this increase in the number of ordinands and novices reduced the country's workforce, especially those in the king's service. Thereafter, ordination was only granted to those who could prove that their motivation was a desire to follow the path of the Buddha with its ultimate goal of *nibbāna*. It can be seen then that Thalun used the rhetoric of canon-

---

[32] The *Mahādanwan* looks after the property of the Buddha or Saṅgha donated by kings. This duty is required since monks are not allowed to do business or to handle the income gained from property (Māmaka 2002:59)

based reform, such as ensuring that the desire for *nibbāna* was the focus of the spiritual life, to reduce the number of recruits to the Saṅgha. Doing so ensured an increase in the number of potential combatants whose numbers had been severely reduced during the constant warfare that had taken place in the preceding century.[33] We have then a further step in State control of the monkhood and a further step in the definition of purity – purity of motive.

Although authorisation of the *Mahādanwan* was somehow marked as an 'exclusive act' to control the excessive demands of ordination, Thalun was still regarded as one of the protectors and promoters of Buddhism because of his development of the *Sudhamma zayat* with its monastic scholarship and *Mahādanwan*. It was as a result of these innovations that a large numbers of monastic scholars emerged during this period, and I shall outline their impact in later discussion.

The scheme of Thalun monastic education and *Sudhamma zayat* continued to be active throughout the reigns of subsequent kings. Among them two kings are noteworthy here: King Bodawpaya (r.1782-1819) and King Mindon (1853-1878). They both followed the schemes of their predecessors in relation to monastic education and *Sudhamma zayat*, but they approached the purification and governing of the Saṅgha in two different ways. As will be seen in the next section, Mindon attempted to enforce a rule that monks make a vow in front of the Buddha.

Bodawpaya's efforts in monastic reform are multifaceted. His behaviour and attitude toward the Saṅgha and Buddhism as a whole suggested that he was an ambitious, strong king and some of his actions can even be considered as aggressive. For example, he enforced a rule that everyone in his kingdom should observe five precepts and stop selling alcohol and meat in the marketplace. Perhaps this is a response to religious sentiment but, as will be explained, it also indicates his propensity to seek to

---

[33] Attempts to control the number of ordinands for this purpose can be seen in Theravada Buddhism right up to the modern period; for example, the Vietnamese-backed government of Cambodia in the 1980s initially only allowed men over the age of 50 to re-ordain/ordain because they wanted to ensure sufficient numbers of soldiers in the army (Crosby personal communication).

control his subjects including monks. At one time he confiscated monastic lands donated by previous kings, making it difficult for the monks to access their monastic properties. At another time he declared that the title – *phongyi* - (literally meaning 'one whose *puñña* (merit) is great') should not be used by monastics. It had been a traditional way of addressing a monk but he insisted that the title *phongyi* was to be preserved for him alone (Bischoff 1995:53-54). This was perhaps associated with his claimed belief that he was a *bodhisattva* manifestation of Arimetteya Buddha, the future Buddha in this world system. He wanted his claim to be approved and accepted by the Saṅgha. The Saṅgha, however, rejected his view due to some of his influential and 'aggressive' involvement in the people and the Saṅgha.

As an example of his aggressive nature: he defrocked many monks, two of them high ranking monks. They were Atula, the leader of the *ekaṃsika* (a term that I shall explain below), who was also the head of the Saṅgha during the reign of King Alaungpaya, the founder of the Konbaung dynasty (1752-1885); and Bagaya Sayadaw, one of the prominent scholars of Abhidhamma. The King defrocked Bagaya Sayadaw simply because Bagaya Sayadaw disapproved of the newly composed royal calendar (Dhammasāmi 2004: 93). This new calendar was calculated by the solar calendar (solar system) but Bagaya Sayadaw held the view that for monastic practice the lunar calendar is the correct one.[34] There might have been some other element involved and this will be explored later when discussing the monks' resentment against the King's examination scheme. Atula, however, was defrocked due to a debate on the correct wearing of the robe.

The correct wearing of the monastic robe became an issue during the reign of Sanay Min (1698-1714) when opinion was divided into two groups within the *āraññavāsī* monks (Māmaka 2002:58, Ñāṇābhivaṃsa1956:181). One group became known as *ekaṃsika* (one shoulder wearing robe i.e. *atin* in Burmese) and the second

---

[34] I had found no reference in the works of Western scholars to Bagaya Sayadaw having been defrocked as a result of the calendar issue yet when I interviewed U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa, my informant, he confirmed to me that the king held the view that the solar calendar was the correct version and that Bagaya Sayadaw had opposed this view which led him to be defrocked.

group was known as *pārupana* ('covering up' or two shoulder wearing robe i.e. *ayon* in Burmese). Atula was the leader of the *ekaṃsika* group. Many debates on this subject had previously been held in the *Sudhamma zayat* but no resolution was ever reached. When Atula failed to provide an authoritative text to convince the King of his views on how the robe should be worn, the King ordered him to be defrocked and he was sent into exile in 1784. The King issued royal edicts ordering the whole monastic community to adopt the *pārupana* practice and whoever resisted was to be defrocked (Pranke 2008:6). In 1799, more than a decade after the royal edicts the same issue emerged again, this time by a forest monk called Indasāra who attempted to use another text to support the practice of *ekaṃsika*. The King ordered him to be defrocked and all texts that supported the practice of *ekaṃsika* to be burnt (Charney 2006:98). As will be explained below, Ñāṇābhivaṃsa, who was the head of the Saṅgha, successfully controlled the *ekaṃsika*'s monks and put the robe controversy an end once and for all. This gives us an example of how, after Thalun's example, later kings felt justified in controlling monastic behaviour even down to the manner of wearing the robes, and the absence of a textual authority was the deciding factor in Atula's downfall.[35]

It was King Bodawpaya who extended the previous involvement of the State in the monastic examination. Initially this exam had been taken only by young boys, novices and young monks but the king later imposed the same scheme on all monks regardless of their *vassavāsa* (years in monastic life). This divided the Saṅgha, with the majority of monks in the capital vehemently rejecting the exam scheme, strongly believing the system to be required only for novices, boys and, in certain cases, young monks. Bodawpaya argued that the purpose of this examination was to benefit the pupils and teachers not just in this life but also in their future lives (Dhammasāmi 2004: 86).

When examining Bodawpaya's view on the monastic examination it is useful to explore what Dhammasāmi, author of a recent doctoral dissertation on Monastic

---

[35] Pranke (2008: 11) reports the concept of perceived monastic textual authority in Burmese tradition referring to the *pariyatti* (learning) in the form of the Pāli canon and *aṭṭhakathā* (commentary) and *ṭīkā* (sub-commentary).

Education in Burma (Dhammasāmi 2004), has to say on the matter. Dhammasāmi believed that imposing the examination scheme on senior monks was, in fact, strongly linked to Bodawpaya's desire to control the monks. He pointed out that the level of the syllabus prescribed by Bodawpaya was inappropriate for senior monks because it was basic and only appropriate for boys undertaking monastic training or for novices who required an understanding of the basic *Vinaya* rules prior to their higher ordination (Dhammasāmi 2004: 92).

According to Mendelson however, Bodawpaya was conscious of the role of *pwekyaung phongyi* in the education scheme. The *pwekyaung phongyis* taught the subjects mostly pertaining to lay or family livelihood. For example, they taught astrology, arts, swordsmanship, wrestling, medicine and divination (as already stated above), subjects previously taught only to princes and officials. Mendelson stated that:

> ''sometime after 1812, in which year a boxing match took place at the Court between novices and lay boys, Bodawpaya apparently became fearful that rebellion might be planned in these monasteries and he thus suppressed them'' (Mendelson 1975:151).

Fearing the possible risk of a rebellion King Bodawpaya controlled the monks and their institutes, reforming the whole Saṅgha (ibid) by not only having senior monks study inappropriately basic subjects but also by restricting the syllabus to topics of little use outside of the monastic context. This point augments Dhammasāmi's point that control was the driving force behind Bodawpaya's interest in monastic affairs. Moreover, the confiscation of monastic lands (mentioned above) was also due to the king's fear of revolt. Here again, we see a king's quest for power and control lying behind claims to be safeguarding the Saṅgha from unorthodox monks.

King Bodawpaya also formed a monastic organisation called the *Sudhamma Apwe* (literally meaning The Council of Righteousness i.e. Sudhamma Council). This formal monastic organisation developed from the *Sudhamma zayat* whose original purpose had been that of an examination centre during Thalun's reign. At that time the *Sudhamma zayat* was used by monastically appointed head monks to administer both monastic examinations and the recitation of the Pāli texts, but once this new Council was

formed all appointments were made directly by the king. Bodawpaya initially appointed four monks as head of the Saṅgha under the *Sudhamma* Council. Their purpose was the promotion of pure monastic life which included monitoring the monastic examination. Bodawpaya later added a further eight monks to this office, bringing the total of monks in the *Sudhamma* Council to twelve. These twelve were not in agreement, however, when it came to promoting the king's mission and examination scheme (Māmaka 2002:44).

We do not know whether these monks participated in the examination, nor do we know whether disunity arose due to their differences in terms of *pwekyaung phongyi* and *āraññavāsī* lineage but, according to Mendelson, at least one if not many of the twelve members were sympathisers of *ekaṃsika* which Bodawpaya had previously ended (Mendelson 1975:67). Unfortunately I have not been able to track down the reason for disunity among the members of the Council; however, what has been discussed above suggests this could have been due in part to the King's institution of the examination scheme, particularly since these twelve monks were considered educated and the examination curriculum was set well below their knowledge and abilities. If this supposition is correct then the king had devised a means by which he could control the monks including *pwekyaung phongyis*. As suggested by Dhammasāmi, the examination scheme may have disunited the twelve monks) but, whatever the truth the king disbanded collective leadership of the *Sudhamma* office and appointed Ñāṇābhivaṃsa, a single authoritative monk, as head of the whole of the Saṅgha (Māmaka 2002: 44).

Much of the history of the Saṅgha written by Ñāṇābhivaṃsa, author of the *Sāsanālaṅkāra Sadan* cited above, authorises the kind of State intervention from which Ñāṇābhivaṃsa had himself benefited through this promotion. Ñāṇābhivaṃsa put his efforts into developing the king's control over the Saṅgha. He both supported the examination scheme despite it having initially been rejected by many senior monks, and wrote a letter to the king supporting purification of the Saṅgha by this method. The king approved and supported Ñāṇābhivaṃsa's mission to further the cause. Charney writes about Ñāṇābhivaṃsa's work on education as follows:

''Nyanabhivamsa carefully selected 250 monks and had them repeat and memorise the two books of the *Ubhatovibhanga* (the first two books of the *Vinaya*), consisting of the *Parajika* and the *Pacittiya*, and then recite them before Nayanabhivamsa in the *sudhamma* pavilion. Those who proved unable to do so were then made to memorise and recite the two sets of monastic rules - the *Bhikkhunī Patimokkha* and the *Bhikkhu Pātimokkha*, included in the *Patimokkha*, as well as the *suttas* included in Dhammasiri's *Khuddasikkhā''* (Charney 2006: 43).

Recitation of the canonical texts was, in fact, not a new part of monastic life in Burma. It was the traditional teaching and learning method of the Burmese Saṅgha both prior to, during the time of Ñāṇābhivaṃsa, and continues up to the present time. It remains part of the training and duty of monks to memorise the canonical texts (*tipiṭaka*) as much as they are able. Ñāṇābhivaṃsa, however employed this scheme to reform the Saṅgha, forcing it on the entire Saṅgha regardless of their expertise, as suggested by Dhammasāmi.

The two hundred and fifty monks trained by Ñāṇābhivaṃsa (perhaps later more than this number) were dispatched throughout the kingdom to preach to the laity and to rule the Saṅgha in such a manner that they became one body under the total control of the Sudhamma; the office headed by Ñāṇābhivaṃsa. They were also authorised to investigate their monastic rivals, defrock those who denied re-education in the new monastic schools and welcome anyone willing to embrace the reform movement, surrender or exchange their monastic properties and, importantly, submit to re-ordination within the reformed monastic order (Charney 2006: 44, Pranke 2008:7).

This reform movement had two objectives: one was to replace the previously loose learning system with a new, rigorous and compulsory education for all monks and the other was the stabilisation of the Saṅgha under the one common banner of the *Sudhamma* Council. In both cases the king was the primary authority.[36] Ñāṇābhivaṃsa successfully managed to achieve this goal including ensuring that the *ekaṃsika* adherents complied with the ruling made by the king with regard to applying the two shoulder

---

[36] Pranke (2008:9) points out that the Konbaung dynasty compares Bodawpaya with a number of Buddhist kings and their teachers in the past, for example, Bodawpaya with king Asoka and Anawratha while Ñāṇābhivaṃsa is compared with Moggaliputtissa and Shin Arahan respectively.

method of wearing the monastic robe. The whole Saṅgha became united under the *Sudhamma* Council; at least no opponent monks emerged to challenge its authority during Bodawpaya's rule. As noted above, one of the twelve members of the *Sudhamma* Council was an *ekaṃsika* sympathiser, but there is no record of this monk ever having challenged the *Sudhamma* Council or the efforts of Ñāṇābhivaṃsa.

The contribution of Bodawpaya to the transformation of the monastic order was remarkable and it has had a considerable impact on the shaping of the Saṅgha today including the notion that the State may intervene in all monastic affairs, including disrobing monks and removing monastic property, as well as the removal of secular subjects from monastic education; a decision that would be extended - uniquely to Burma – in the modern period.

2.4. An outline of monastic literature from Pagan to the Konbaung dynasty

While State intervention as outlined above might have been politically motivated, it resulted in Burma's prodigious production of monastic literature. The importance to Burmese monks of Pāli grammar and textual knowledge and the risk of not making such knowledge a priority has been covered in detail in my earlier discussions on the history of Theravada Buddhism since its arrival during the Pagan dynasty. Buddhist texts are written in Pāli, the language of the Theravada Buddhist scriptures and the liturgical language of Theravada Buddhism. It differs greatly from the hundred or so languages of Burma, being of a different language group. The first task of student monks is the acquisition of Pāli.

According to Ñāṇābhivaṃsa (1956:234), there are three fundamental embodiments of Theravada Buddhism: the unbroken lineage of the monastic order from the time of the Buddha (as we discussed in introduction); the learning of Theravada canonical texts, their commentaries and sub-commentaries; and, finally, the proper application of these texts, particularly the Dhamma and *Vinaya* which guide monks towards achievement of their goal, *nibbāna* (Pranke 2008: 11). Of these three

foundations mastery over the texts and their correct application are key to survival of the *sāsana* (the religion of the Buddha). If Buddhist monks did not learn and practice according to the canonical texts and if they do not hand these over the next generation the disappearance of the Buddha's teaching would become inevitable. This prediction was not unique to Ñāṇābhivaṃsa but was drawn by him from a social perception of the Burmese people as a whole. We have already outlined how Burmese kings paid attention to the preservation and promotion of traditionally perceived 'unbroken' Theravada Buddhist monastic lineage and 'purity' and we can see that whatever the political motivation, doing so fits well into narratives of Theravada history and understanding of the importance of the Dhamma in maintaining society. This momentum continued even after the disappearance of Burmese kings, as we shall see in subsequent chapters.

We can observe this by looking at how Burmese monks put effort into protecting Buddhism by studying, teaching and by practice. Learning starts with the Pāli grammar, recitation and memorising of texts, together with studying how Pāli texts are translated. The merit of this learning and practice is shared by devotees who, through their devotion and respect, support the monks in their endeavours. There are hundreds of thousands of students in hundreds of monastic colleges all being fed and supported by devotees out of faith in the importance of maintaining the Dhamma and the merit of doing so.

According to the *Sāsanavaṃsa* (a 19th century treatise on monastic lineage) such monastic learning has a long history. Both the *Sāsanavaṃsa* and the 19th century *Piṭakat-tawthamaing* (History of *Tipiṭaka*) enumerate the substantial amount of Pāli literature written throughout Burmese history. Written in Pāli the *Sāsanavaṃsa* finally became known to western academia through the efforts of Bode (1897) who wrote a thesis on the *Sāsanavaṃsa* which was later published as a book on *The Pāli Literature of Burma* (1909) and then by Law (1952) who translated the *Sāsanavaṃsa* into English. The *Piṭakat-tawthamaing*, however, was only recently translated into English by Peter Nyunt

(2012).[37] According to Paññāsāmi, author of the *Sāsanavaṃsa*, he based his writing on the *Sāsanālaṅkāra Sadan* which was written by Ñāṇābhivaṃsa around fifty years earlier, but he translated it into Pāli at the request of a Sri Lankan monk (*Tipiṭaka* Burmese Pāli Dictionary 2004:42, *Laṅkāsāsanavisuddhikathā* 1979: xi).

Based on the *Sāsanavaṃsa* Bode tells us about the eight Pāli works of Chapada composed by him during the Pagan Dynasty. The most outstanding of these are the *Sankhepavaṇṇanā* (a commentary on the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* (manual of *Abhidhamma*) of Anurudha of Sri Lanka); the *Sīmālaṅkāra* (the procedure of monastic boundary); the *Vinayasamuṭṭhānadīpanī* (manual of the origin of *Vinaya*); the *Mātikatthadīpanī;* and the *Paṭṭhānagaṇanaya*. The last two are Commentaries on the *Dhammasaṅganī* and the *Paṭhāna*, the first and last seven books of the *Abhidhamma* respectively (Bode 1909:18-19).

Mahāsirijeyyasu (1815-1892), author of the *Piṭakat-tawthamaing* (History of *Tipiṭaka*) named more than forty minor and major Pāli grammars composed by Burmese monks (Mahāsirijeyyasu 2000[38]: 180) the most outstanding of which being the *Saddanīti* which was composed by Ashin Aggavaṃsa (see section two of this chapter, above). According to my informant, U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa[39], former rector of the State Sāsana University, Yangon and Mandalay, more than ten 'major' and 'minor' Pāli grammars composed by Burmese monks are still used in the curriculum of the *sakyasīha dhammācariya*.[40]

Caturaṅgabala, a minister of the Pinya dynasty (1310–1364) wrote the *Abhidhānappadīpikāṭīkā*, a Pāli dictionary which is still in use today. The work of

---

[37] I thank Ven.Dr.Dhammasami for drawing my attention to this publication, which was published too recently for me to consult before the completion of my thesis .

[38] The first and second editions are not mentioned in the copy I have retained but this copy is referred to as a third printing, dated 2000.

[39] Interviewed February 2009.

[40] *Sakyasīha dhammācariya* is the board of a monastic exam in Mandalay. There are two terms, *Sakkayasīha* and *dhammācariya*, which convey the meaning of this exam board. The former (*Sakyasīha*) is the name of a pagoda in Mandalay where the exam was first conducted in 1902/3 during British rule and the latter (*dhammācariya*) means teacher of the Dhamma. So, *sakyasīha dhammācariya* is an examination board for teacher level monastic of education. This examination board still exists in Mandalay, Burma.

Caturaṅgabala is an example of how Pāli study was undertaken by Burmese monks. According to Bode (1909:29), many of Buddhaghosa's commentarial works were also analysed as a result of the rigorous Pāli learning system. For example, Sirīmaṅgala, a monk of Pinya, tackled the grammatical aspect of the *Samantapāsādikā, Aṭhasālinī* and *Sammohavinodanī.* The focus on the grammatical analysis of Pali commentarial works informed this specific shape of the word-for-word translations into Burmese. Such translations are called *nissaya,* which literally means 'dependent' or 'support.' An interpretation of this meaning is that such commentaries provide support to a learner who needs a support to understand Pāli texts.

Although, generally, *nissaya* is in the form of a word for word translation from the Pāli into Burmese, the specific form of the translation is influenced by grammatical analysis. So when a Pāli term or compound is translated, some specific rules about the formation of Pāli grammar are applied. For example, the term *arahanta* is generally translates as *yahanda* in Burmese ('enlightened one' in English) but many Burmese monks translate it as *yanthu do go that phyat pyi thaw pokgo* ['those who have defeated (killed or rooted out) their enemy']. The meaning here corresponds to the grammatical significance of the Pāli term. There are two combinations in this term: *ara* and *hanta.* The former comes from the root *ara*= enemy and the latter *hanta*= to kill. If we translate these two meanings: we may translate it as 'killer of enemy'. The enemy here means the defilements (*kilesa*).

We can see the distinction between the common translation (*vohārattha*), which means enlightened one and grammatical translation (*saddattha*), which means 'killer of enemy or defilements'. To understand the translation of the last meaning, it is necessary to know the significance of grammar as mentioned above. We can also investigate another example. The term *khīṇāsava* generally translates *athawo taya konkhan pyi thaw thu* ['whose mind is free from mental obsessions']. It also has two combinations: *khīṇa* and *āsava. khīṇa* derives from the root *khay+a,* which means 'decay or eradication' and *āsava* derives from the root *ā+sasa,* which means 'intoxicated mind or polluted mind'. When these two terms (*khīṇa+āsava*) combine together, it becomes '*bahubbīhi*

compound' in Pāli grammar, which corresponds to the meaning: 'whose mental intoxicance has decayed or eradicated'. Therefore, the translated meaning is related to the grammatical understanding of the term

The *nissaya* thus offers a technique for paraphrasing Pāli words by finding the root or stems of the term in question to determine its meaning, which is often taken to be a philosophical meaning (*Tipiṭaka* Burmese Pāli Dictionary 2004:17). According to my informant, U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa, Burmese monks use a variety of styles of translation. For example, when we translate *Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*, we may translate straightforwardly as: 'I go for refuge to the Buddha'. We may also translate using the root and derivative meaning that is involved in each term of the phrase; for example, 'I go for refuge the wise person whose quality is a worthy refuge for the overcoming of suffering and leading to the happiness'. Many Burmese monks use this interpretation or translation when they give five precepts to the laity. They translate such a distinctive way because each term derives from the root and derivative meaning. Buddha, for example, derives from the root *budh+ta*= to possess wisdom while *saraṇa* derives from *sara+ yu*= to dispel the suffering and *gaccha* derives from *gamu*=going to him. Such translation, based on a specific type of grammatical analysis, is considered to be a part of the *nissaya* way of translating.

Pāli grammar and *nissaya* are interrelated, one depending on the other, when attempting to understand Pāli words, especially in Burmese language. It is of particular relevance to Burmese students as the *nissaya* is designed to deal with a precise method (*naya*) and meaning (*attha*) when translating between Burmese and Pāli (Tin Lwin 1961:3). This method enables students to place word terminations *(vibhatti),* verbs (*kriyā*), tense case and mood in the correct context particularly when Pāli verses or sentences are being translated into Burmese.[41] Thus the method of *nissaya* could be treated not just as a grammar, manual or dictionary but also as a classical guide that provides an accurate emphasis on translation (Okell 1967:95-6).

---

[41] For the only in-depth studies of *nissāya* in English and French, see Tin Lwin (1961), John Okell (1961) and William Pruitt (1986, 1994)

As is evidenced by the Pāli grammar composed by Ashin Aggavaṃsa, Pāli was already in use during the time of the Pagan Dynasty. However, the format of the '*nissaya* translation' is said to have only been fully developed around the middle of the fifteenth century. The use of this *nissaya* has remained active ever since (Okell 1967:99). Even though the evidence of *nissaya* can be traced back to the fifteenth century, the first source of *nissaya* composition goes back to the Pagan dynasty, perhaps not long after the arrival of the Pāli Canon in the capital city of Pagan around the twelfth century (Tin Lwin 1961:1). The monks who composed the *nissaya* during the Pinya dynasty may perhaps have used this early source but any records have since vanished or been replaced by later developments. This is similar to how Buddhaghosa's writings replaced pre-existing commentaries (see Chapter One). Many of the twentieth century or earlier Burmese writing styles have extensively employed the *nissaya* style (Okell 1967:97) and this format is still applied in monastic colleges in Burma today. Ray remarks on how a monk could pursue his monastic scholarship:

> "There in the darkness and solitude of the library hall of the monastery he devoted whatever time he could, day in and day out, in reading the works most suited to his line of study, and writing down on palm leaves the thoughts and comments of his own, not for any earthly fame or gain, but as a work merit" (Ray 1946:125)

Such effort in teaching and learning the Pāli grammar or textual scholarship is likely to have played a key role in the development of the Pāli and vernacular literatures of Burma. Many monastic scholars appeared throughout the dynasties from the Pagan to the Konbaung, and scholarly monks continue to be active in the production of Pāli and monastic literature up to modern times. To name but a few outstanding Pāli scholars of the past there is Mahā Nāma who lived during the Hanthawaddy Dynasty (1287-1539). He was an outstanding Pāli scholar who wrote the *Madhusāratthadīpanī ṭīkā,* a sub-commentary to the *Mūlaṭīkā* which is one of the works of Buddhaghosa on the *Abhidhamma* commentary (*Tipiṭaka* Pāli-Burmese Dictionary 2004:41). Then, during the Ava Dynasty (1364-1555) there is Ashin Ñāṇakitti, author of the *Pārājikakandha yojanā* (a sub-commentary on the Commentary to the *Pārājika* section of the *Vinaya)* and the

Abhidhamma yojanā[42] *(*a sub-commentary on the Commentary to the *Abhidhamma)* and

Ariyavaṃsa, author of the *Maṇisāramañjūsāṭīkā,* a work on the

Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha (Manual of *Abhidhamma*). Ariyavaṃsa[43] brilliantly offered a

new look at the *Abhiddhamma* in terms of its meaning and grammatical analysis as well

as the fundamental construction of the *Abhidhamma* itself (Ñāṇābhivaṃsa1956:145). All

the works mentioned here have proved of inestimable value to subsequent scholars.

In the ongoing context of Pāli literary production is Taunbila Sayadaw, also

known as Tipiṭakālaṅkāra, (already mentioned in Chapter One), who composed the

Vinayālaṅkāra ṭīkā in the seventeenth century during Thalun's reign (1629-1648). The

Vinayālaṅkāra ṭīkā is a sub-commentary to the *Vinayasaṅgaha,* (see Chapter One).

According to Ñāṇābhivaṃsa there were many Pāli and vernacular authors contemporary

to Tipiṭakālaṅkāra. To cite some of the better known there was Ashin Saddhammapāla,

author of the *Nettivibhāvinī ṭīkā*; Ashin Tilokaguru, author of the *Dhātukathā ṭīkā* (a

supplementary commentary emphasising the *Mūla ṭīkā* one of the sub-commentaries on

the *Atthasālinī*); and, Jambudīpa, author of the *Niruttisaṅgaha* and

Saṃvaṇṇanānayadīpanī (Pāli grammar and philology); other remarkable contemporaries

of Tipiṭakālaṅkāra were Shin Maniratana and Shin Sāradassī (Ray 1946:210). The

former worked on the *Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī, Atthasālinī,* and the *Sammohavinodanī,* while the

latter worked on the *Gūḷhatthadīpanī,* an explanation of the difficult passages in the

seven books of *Abhidhamma*. His other work, composed in Pāli, was on the

Visuddhimagga and was called *Visuddhimaggagaṇṭhipadattha.* According to Bode this

last work is similar to Buddhaghosa's composition of the *Visuddhimagga* (Bode

1909:56). Each of these scholars emerged between 1600 and 1750, the second and the

last part of the Taungoo dynasty (1510-1752). Many of them made translations of

canonical texts into Burmese; for example Ariyalaṅkāra, whose knowledge is regarded to

be equal to Tipiṭakalaṅkāra, alone, translated the *Atthasālinī* of Buddhaghosa, the

---

[42] Some Thai monks claimed that the *Abhidhamma yojanā* was composed by a Thai monk in Chiang Mai, northern Thailand, but according to Ashin Sīlānanda the work itself mentions the name of the author in the introduction (*Tipiṭaka* Burmese Pāli Dictionary 2004:40).

[43] He is probably the scholar to whom Oldenberg remarks that the Burmese are indebted for his versions of a great number of Pāli works (Bode 1966: 54).

Saṅkhepavaṇṇanā of Saddhammajotipāla (also known as Chapada), the
Abhidhammatthavibhāvanī of Sumaṅgala, as well as the *Vibhanga* of
Abhidhammapiṭaka. Jambhudhaja translated the whole *Vinaya Piṭaka* (Ñāṇābhivaṃsa
1956: 177).

Many more works appeared during the Konbaung Dynasty (1752-1885) and
Ñāṇābhivaṃsa, the Saṅgharāja of Bodawpaya, was an example of an extraordinary
scholar of his time. Within the first decade of his monastic life he wrote the
Peṭakālaṅkāra[44], a sub-commentary on the *Nettipakaraṇa* of the *Khuddaka Nikāya*
(minor collection). He continued to compose more works, both in Burmese and Pāli, for
example the *Sādhujanavilāsinī* of the *Dīghanikāya* and the *Ariyavaṃsalaṅkāra.* The
former work is also called the *Sīlakkhandavagga abhinavaṭīkā* (new sub-commentary of
the *Sīlakkhandavagga*) of the *Dīghanikāya,* but the latter is a commentary on the
Jātakaṭṭhakathā (a commentary on the stories of Buddha's previous births) (Ray
1946:334). More than twenty-four works of literature are attributed to him
(Ñānabhivaṃssa 1956:203).

There were numerous scholars dedicated to composing works in both Pāli and
Burmese around this time; for example, the *Niruttibhedasaṅgaha* (Pāli grammar) was
composed by Sayadaw U Bok who was also responsible for at least thirty-seven books,
most of them translations from the Pāli Canon to vernacular language, with commentary.
There were also the *Khuddakapāṭhaṭīkā* and *Sambandhacintā abhinavaṭīkā* by Ngakhone
Sayadaw; the *Pācittiyā yojanā* by Phayargyi Sayadaw; the *Kaṅkhā yojanā mahāṭīkā* by
Thitseing Sayadaw; and, the *Sāsanavaṃsappadīpikā* by Paññāsāmi, (*Tipiṭaka* Pāli–
Burmese Dictionary 2004: 42).

More literary works are also witnessed during King Mindon's reign. For example
Ñeyyadhamma, Head of the Saṅgha at this time, composed the *Surājamaggadīpanī* and a
sub-commentary on the *Majjhimanikāya,* One of his most memorable works is the

---

[44] According to *Sāsanālaṅkāra Sadan* (1956:207), this sub-commentary is based on the old sub-
commentary written by Buddhaghosa, Ñāṇābhivaṃsa extended the meaning and analysed the text even
better than the old version.

Sīmāvivādavinicchayakathā (an exposition on the controversy of monastic boundary (see Dispute Manuals in Chapter Three). Paññāsāmi, a disciple of Ñeyyadhamma, also composed many Pāli works, for example the *Akkharavisodhanī* (a work on Pāli orthography; the *Āpattivinicchaya* ('an exposition on ecclesiastical offences'); the *Vivādavinicchaya* (an exposition on controversy [in relation to monastic discipline]'); the *Nirayakathādīpaka* (an expression on hell); and, the *Uposathavinicchaya* (an exposition on *uposatha* for laymen who observe eight precepts on *uposatha* day). Overall, the production of Pāli literature in the nineteenth century was so remarkable that, according to Bode's comment (1909:93), the history of twelfth century Pāli literature had repeated itself.

These works do not represent the whole development of monastic literature during the reigns of the Burmese kings but are examples sufficient to review and understand how Theravada Buddhism developed following its introduction in the Pagan dynasty. It was as a result of this extensive development that Mindon, who ruled the last part of the Konbaung dynasty, managed to inscribe the whole canonical, commentarial and sub-commentarial texts on to marble slabs, which will discuss in the following section.

2.5. Fifth Buddhist council and Mindon's influence on the Saṅgha and the development of new *nikāyas*

When King Mindon ascended the throne in 1853 more than half of the country, including Yangon and coastal areas, had already been annexed to the British Empire. Most of his rule was devoted to the effort of defending the remaining part of Burma from British invasion. Bischoff wrote of Mindon:

> ''He (the King) and many of the leading Sayadaws of his court were increasingly aware that the British were only waiting for an occasion to annex the whole of Myanmar. Mindon's army clearly would not be able to stand up to the might of the Indian colonial government. Therefore it was not only to support religious activities in the occupied territories but it was also essential to prepare the religion for the time when it would have to survive without the support of a Buddhist monarch'' (Bischoff 1995: 60).

Bischoff correctly described Mindon's position and objectives. Mindon had, however, tactically defended the remaining part of the country at the cost of political and financial concession to the British. The king managed to satisfy the British by providing commercial access to the upper country while, at the same time, carefully planning for the protection, promotion and purification of Buddhism in Burma for the future. Despite the adverse conditions that prevailed, the king initiated a number of major initiatives which he undertook with the conviction that they were meritorious and would protect, promote and purify Buddhism. The concepts of protection, promotion and purification, though not initiatives directly attributable to the king, are manifest in Mindon's achievements. He was responsible not only for the inscription of the canonical texts on to marble slabs, but it was under his authority that the Fifth Saṅgha Council was organised; the promotion and purification of the *Sāsana* by the new schemes of monastic education were set in place; and, the imposition of new rules on the monks were established.

Mindon revived the *Sudhamma* Council in an attempt to bring the Saṅgha with him in undertaking what he called his 'meritorious actions'. He appointed Ñeyyadhamma as both *thathanabaing* (head of the Saṅgha) and head of the *Sudhamma* Council as had been the case with his predecessor Bodawpaya. There were eight high ranking monks appointed to implement these plans. The *Sudhamma zayat* once again became a permanent meeting place for monks to whom he had given full authority to implement his work but, as will be shown later, when he commenced purifying the Saṅgha his actions were controversial; they even caused the establishment of a number of new *gaing* (*nikāya*/sects).

One of Mindon's early objectives was to inscribe the canonical texts, believing it essential to the preservation and protection of the Buddha's teaching for a time when Burmese kings would no longer be in power. Mindon patronised *Sudhamma* monks to collect all available old and new manuscripts in an attempt to inscribe the whole *Tipiṭaka*. The collected canonical manuscripts were examined carefully to determine whether they were correct or whether there were omissions or distortions. In 1860, after

careful examination, the king arranged to have the whole Canon inscribed. This was completed in 1868. Seven hundred and twenty-nine slabs were used. Each slab was placed in a small house inside a pagoda to protect them from adverse weather conditions. A central shrine was built in the middle of the erected pagoda to pay respect and gain blessings from the holy teaching of the Buddha (Myat Myat Htun 2007:85, 92). This was an example to ensure that the teachings would survive a time when monarchy had ceased.

While work on inscribing the texts was in progress, Mindon prepared to hold the Fifth Saṅgha Council. The Fourth Saṅgha Council had been held in Sri Lanka during the first century CE in the reign of King Vaṭṭagāmaṇī (Bapat 1956:44). The Fifth Saṅgha Council was a continuation of the Fourth and scheduled to be held on completion of the inscription. The actual Convention was, however, held three years later. Constant recitation of the whole collected texts was held between May and September 1871 and took five months. We do not know whether the inscription of the canonical texts was carried out in order to hold the Fifth Saṅgha Council or the Fifth Saṅgha Council was as a result of the inscription of the canonical texts but, according to the sequence of events, the Fifth Saṅgha Council came after the completion of the inscription (Myat Myat Htun 2007:85). Both the inscription and the act of convening the Fifth Saṅgha Council are remembered as Mindon's foremost meritorious deeds[45]. The entire Convention was led by the most learned monks, namely: Venerable Jāgarabhivaṃsa, Venerable Narindābhidhaja and Venerable Sumaṅgalasāmi, in the company of 2,400 monks (Myat Myat Htun 2007:85) but the *Thathanabaing*, Ñeyyadhamma, had already passed away in 1866 five years before the Saṅgha Council.

In the meantime there were other items to be dealt with on Mindon's agenda, the two most remarkable being the promotion of monastic education and the purification of the monastic order. Mindon introduced a new curriculum for the promotion of education.

---

[45]According to Dhammasāmi (2004:125), both the inscription of the texts and the convening of the Fifth Saṅgha Council were the combined effort of the King and nationalist monks to secure the Buddha's teaching at a time when British invasion appeared increasingly inevitable.

During the reign of King Bodawpaya the curriculum had contained only *Vinaya* and Pāli grammar; the new curriculum added *Abhidhamma* studies and instituted three consistent levels of achievement, namely: *pathamange* (primary), *pathamalat* (intermediate) and *pathamagyi* (advanced) (Dhammasāmi 2004:128-9). Successful candidates were awarded requisites by the king. If the successful candidate was a lay student, Mindon sponsored him for novice ordination and if a novice passed the exam he was sponsored for royal higher ordination, a practice similar to that of Bodawpaya.

While both the work of inscribing the Canon and the promotion of the monastic examination went smoothly, Mindon started to reform the Saṅgha. The term 'reform' is meant to convey the reinforcement of *Vinaya* rules imposed on the monks by the Buddha. Mindon worried about their lack of adherence to the *Vinaya* rules having seen monks chewing betel nut in the afternoon while others were begging for food past the permitted time. He saw monks wearing shoes when collecting their alms; others smoking on the road, sitting in the marketplace and chatting with laypeople (Ray 1946:246, Saya Theint 1969:359ff). Since these actions contravened a reformist interpretation of the *Vinaya*, Mindon requested Shankalaykyun Sayadaw (one of Mindon's teachers, but not chosen to be on the Sudhamma panel) to prepare guidelines for the control of monks who did not observe their precepts. The resulting guideline is called the *Alajjīdhammavinicchaya* (an exposition on shameless rules) Shankalaykyun Sayadaw extracted from the *Vinaya* twenty-one rules for emphasis and these subsequently became a legislation for the monks. Some examples are: not to associate with the laity; not to travel around outside the monastery; not to handle money; and, not to misuse donated requisites (Dhammaghosa 1981:156ff). Some of these rules though not found in the actual *pātimokkha* codes are contained in the *Vinaya Piṭaka* and Commentaries. These rules were selected for emphasis by Shankalaykyun Sayadaw because the king wanted to see the monks more disciplined when staying inside or traveling outside the monastery. The *Alajjīdhammavinicchaya* can perhaps be treated as a device to control the monks using the rhetoric of reform and *Vinaya* compliance. The themes of textual knowledge and *Vinaya* practice are here again emphasised in the narrative concerning Theravada

orthodoxy, as can be seen in the demeanour of previous kings and indeed throughout the Burmese Dynasties.

In addition to these twenty-one rules the king required monks to make a vow in front of the Buddha (Ray 1946:246). This requirement applied especially to newly ordained monks. Prior to this no such vow had ever been required of a Theravada monk who had been solely required to observe 227 rules from the time he became a Theravada monk or as soon as his ordination had been conducted in the *sīmā* (see more *Vinaya* and monastic practices in Chapter Four). According to Mindon, the new legislation plus the vow in front of the Buddha would give additional strength to the 227 rules that were obligatory to a newly ordained monk. The members of the *Sudhamma* Council took charge of implementing this new legislation.

There were, however, some high ranking monks who rejected both the implementation of the *Alajjīdhammavinicchaya* and the compulsory vow for their disciples. According to Mendelson (1975:99, 102), Thingaza Sayadaw, Gnettwin Sayadaw and Bamaw Sayadaw were three leading monks who, though previously having receiving royal title were opposed to the king's involvement in monastic affairs. Though patronised by the king, his queen and the princes, these monks would spend only brief periods in the capital before escaping to the solitude of the hilly area of Sagaing (Mendelson 1975:99, 102) where they may not directly be affected by the influence of the king. They believed the rules imposed by the king were intended to undermine the independence of the Saṅgha and they were concerned about the psychological burden they would impose upon monks who believe that the breaking of vows leads to rebirth in a lower state. *Sudhamma* monks, however, stated that the taking of monastic vows was not a new concept for monks already used to taking vows and monks should not feel themselves sinful or subject to rebirth in a lower state as they had already vowed to observe the precepts at the time of their ordination. They were stating, therefore, that the new vow was a reiteration of that taken when a newly ordained monk undertook to observe the 227 *Vinaya* rules (Ray 1946:246). Here we can see how Mindon differed

from his predecessor King Bodawpaya. Mindon did not attempt to control the Saṅgha by finding ways to remove unworthy monks as Bodawpaya had; he was only concerned with purifying or reforming the Saṅgha by instituting the monastic vow and adding the twenty-one *Alajjīdhammavinicchaya* (Māmaka 2002:65).

My efforts to track down recorded information on the impact and success or otherwise of this vow has proved unsuccessful. We do not know, therefore, to what extent both the vow and the legislation were implemented, nor how many newly ordained monks actually observed this vow. We can only presume that it might have been adopted within the range of *Sudhamma* influence, particularly in upper Burma (still under Mindon's control) and, even then, only during Mindon's reign. As far as I am aware modern Burmese monks know nothing of this regulation; so its' use might have ceased during Mindon's reign. As will be seen later, the regulation was ineffective to the Saṅgha in lower Burma even during Mindon's reign because, when the vow was introduced in the capital city, lower Burma had already been annexed to British rule. This led the monks to become independent from central control even to the extent of their establishing a new *nikāya*. Even more interesting, the Saṅgha within the capital city itself was also divided. As will be explained below, some monks left the city to avoid *Sudhamma* control while others confronted the *Sudhamma* Council using the king as their support.

Burmese monks in general admire and value Mindon's promotion and protection of Buddhism but Burmese monks are also aware that his approach when handling matters of Saṅgha resulted in the subsequent establishment of new *nikāya,* sects (*gaing* in Burmese) within the Burmese Saṅgha. There are, for example, nine different *gaings/nikāyas*[46] in Burma today all of which emerged during or after the reign of Mindon. They are (1) *sudhamma,* (2) *shwegyin,* (3) *mūla dvāra,* (4) *mahā dvāra,* (5) *anauk khyaung dvāra* (6) *catubhūmika gnettwin* (7) *weluwun* (8) *gaṇavimutti* and (9) *mahāyin nikāya*. I shall now look at how these *gaings* (sects) were established during the

---

[46] There was a *gaing* known as '*Joti Gaing*' in Shan State but it was not registered in 1980 Saṅgha Convention.

Mindon and post-Mindon period. This will give us an understanding of how Burmese monks maintain the old traditional monastic line while using their canonical knowledge and *Vinaya* practice to influence the wider monastic community, even to the extent of new *nikāya* establishment.

Fearing they would not obey his reform movement King Bodawpaya had purged a large number of monks and brought the rest into one group. As a result all remaining Burmese monks, at least within the *Sudhamma* Council, were united into one Saṅgha under the name of *Sudhamma*. Following his predecessor, Mindon adopted the previous king's system and appointed a *Thathanabaing* (head of Saṅgha) and formed the *Sudhamma* Council (just mentioned). In this way the *Sudhamma* Council and the *Thathanabaing* represented the Saṅgha of the entire country.

However, due to Mindon's interference in Saṅgha affairs the *Thathanabaing* was unable to fully control the monks. An example of this relates to a high ranking monk known as Shwegyin Sayadaw who had received a great deal of respect and admiration from the king yet had been challenged by the *Sudhamma* Council. On being summoned by the *Thathanabaing* to present himself at his office Shwegyin Sayadaw, also known as U Jāgara, refused and decided to leave the city. Mindon had to intervene to prevent him from departing. Shwegyin Sayadaw left an elaborate account of his problems with the *Thathanabaing* which reflect the humiliation he had felt at having been met with absolute silence by the *Thathanabaing* on three previous visits. It was for this reason that Shwegyin Sayadaw had ignored this last summons.

The *Sudhamma* Council did not, however, agree with Shwegyin Sayadaw's account of events. According to the *Sudhamma* account, Shwegyin Sayadaw had never been to the office of the *Thathanabaing* prior to the summons (Dhammasāmi 2004:109) which implies that he might have taken offence at being summoned due to his being well respected and honoured by the king. When the *Sudhamma* Council reported this matter to the king the consequences took them unexpectedly in a new direction. The king authorised Shwegyin Saydaw to exist independently outside the power of the *Sudhamma*

Council (Mendelson 1975:97) which resulted in Shwegyin Sayadaw and his disciples being considered *gaṇavimutti*[47] (free from *gaing*). Later Shwegyin Sayadaw was incorporated into Mindon's effort to promote Buddhism outside the capital city without the authority of the *Sudhamma* Council. Shwegyin Sayadaw sent his disciples to different towns outside the capital and in each town he appointed one *Gaing Gyoke* (head monk of the town), one *Gaing Ok* (administrator of the town) and one *Gaing Dauk* (assistant administrator of the town). These monks were sponsored by Mindon while Shwegyin Sayadaw ensured their 'religious' duties were performed effectively. Mindon also offered similar sponsorship to the members of the *Sudhamma* Council in different regions. Their duties were initially associated with the promotion of the Buddha's teaching and practice but soon incorporated social and public administration. These monks were, for example, requested to act as advisors to the local leaders in the matter of proper tax and administration and even more interestingly requested not to provide logistical support to the criminals or to the political activists who may have engaged in revolt or rebellion activities (Myo Myint 2010:51, 64-65). Shwegyin Sayadaw went a step further to use his relationship with the king in the matter of taxation. He convinced the king not to increase tax to more than 10% of income (Dhammasami 2004:112). Remarkably, the king adopted his advice. This indicates that their amicable relationship was not just in religious matters but also in the matter of administration. Although the disciples of Shwegyin Sayadaw and Sudhamma monks were helpful in the king's administration and promotion of Buddhism, these two groups did not work together. They separately conducted their duty for the promotion of Buddhism in different regions, but the consequence was that this eventually led Shwegyin Sayadaw to establish a separate *nikāya*, which later came to be known as *Shwegyin Nikāya* (Māmaka 2002:72). The *Shwegyin Nikāya* is now the second largest *gaing* (*nikāya*) or sect in Burma today after the *Sudhamma*.

---

[47] The previous kings also authorized some forest monks to be *gaṇavimutti,* mainly because the king wanted them to practice meditation without *Sudhamma* influence, but such authorisation was only given to the individual monk. Their disciples are not counted as *gaṇavimutta*. Thus, these monks did not develop as a group or *gaing* but since king had given permission to be *gaṇavimutti* to both Shwegyin Sayadaw and his disciples, it later formed a group and led to establish a *gaing*.

In the meantime the palace had become an area of unrest following an unanticipated major palace revolt carried out by two of Mindon's sons in 1866. It had resulted in three other princes and many ministers losing their lives, including Prince Kanaung who was the right hand of King Mindon. Mindon himself only just narrowly escaped. Mindon invited many Sayadaws to give sermons in the palace during this mourning period. U Paṇḍava (the future Hngettwin Sayadaw), a disciple of Thingaza Sayadaw, one of the members of *Sudhamma* Council, was one of the monks who conducted regular sermons in the palace after the palace revolt. According to Māmaka (2002:140), U Paṇḍava delivered his sermons in such a skilful manner that he was able to console the members of the palace at a time of their greatest suffering. The chief queen was particularly delighted by the sermons and the king appointed U Paṇḍava to be her tutor. The king even offered him the title *tipiṭakālaṅkāra* (literally decorator of three baskets) due to his knowledge and expertise in the canon.

U Paṇḍava did not stay long after the palace revolt. Receiving permission from his teacher, Thingaza Sayadaw, he left for Minwun Hill, near Sagaing, in 1867 and spent three years in silent meditation retreat in a cave there known as *Gnettwingu* (bird's cave). One of Mindon's queens later built him a monastery near the cave and he lived there for about fifteen years before moving to Sagaing Hill. Because of this cave U Paṇḍava came to be known as Gnettwin Sayadaw (Māmaka 2002:141). His meditation practice whilst on retreat was based on the *Satipaṭhāna Sutta* (discourse on mindfulness), the most authoritative teaching on meditation in the Pāli canon and the basis of *vipassanā* meditation practices in Burma today. U Paṇḍava later taught the same method to his followers and his meditation skills; teaching and strict *Vinaya* practice endeared him to his followers (ibid).

Sometime during the 1860s, seven years prior to his retirement to the forest (according to Dhammasāmi (2004:107), U Paṇḍava criticised the traditional offerings made in the pagoda. He requested that his devotees not make offerings at the pagoda saying they only attracted rats and ended up becoming refuse. Such a teaching was considered a deviation because Burmese people traditionally offer food, flowers, candles

and incense at the pagoda. Even more provocative was his statement that lay people should only take five precepts once in their lifetime. It is normal for laypeople to repeat the five precepts whenever they perform meritorious acts such as making offerings to the Buddha or the Saṅgha but according to U Paṇḍava the observation of five precepts should not be broken once taken. Repeatedly taking precepts from a monk was a weakness of the laity and failure to observe the five precepts a failure of his claim to being a Buddhist no matter what his daily practices or offerings at the shrine (Mendelson 1975: 107-110).

U Paṇḍava then put forward his views on monastic practice. According to him monks must train before ordination and practice meditation as a part of life after ordination. No monk should receive a gift for himself but should hand it to the Saṅgha and he continued to stress that monks should not take up permanent residence maybe staying no longer than one or two years in one place (ibid). According to Mendelson (1975:107), such oratories were an attempt to challenge the *Sudhamma* Council. U Paṇḍava should not have preached or advocated such views without prior authorization by *Sudhamma* Council because only the *Sudhamma* Council has the prerogative in any matter relating to monastic affairs. Mendelson states that even though U Paṇḍava was a former tutor of the chief queen of Mindon and a prominent forest monk he had to leave upper Burma because of his difficulties there with the king and the *Sudhamma* Council (ibid).

According to Dhammasāmi (2004:105-7), however, U Paṇḍava's departure from the capital was in no way connected to difficulties with the king or with the *Sudhamma* Council. He cites as evidence in support of his opinion the fact that the king had offered U Paṇḍava the title of *tipiṭakālaṅkāra* and appointed him tutor to his chief queen. In addition, his having left for the Minwun Hill with the permission of his teacher Thingaza Sayadaw, a member of the *Sudhamma* Council, would support the fact that U Paṇḍava's retirement was unconnected to the *Sudhamma* Council. Further, if his having requested lay devotees to stop offering flowers or other items at the pagoda shrine had been for any reason other than to prevent hygiene problems, he would surely have included offerings

at temples and in laypeople's homes. One would not consider, therefore, that such a request would be subject to criticism by the *Sudhamma* Council (ibid). With regard to the guidance given to monks (mentioned earlier) Dhammasāmi does not believe it deviates in any way from the teachings of the Buddha and is of the opinion that it could have been intended as an alternative approach for monks not benefiting from their current practice (Dhammasāmi 2004:106). Finally, U Paṇḍava's departure from upper to lower Burma was not, in Dhammasāmi's opinion, due to difficulties with the king and the *Sudhamma* Council but rather because of his desire to teach his 'own way of meditation', that of *Satipaṭhāna* meditation and *ājīvaṭṭhamaka*[48] as taught by the Buddha. According to Dhammasāmi's argument it was a year after the defeat of the king that U Paṇḍava departed which does not suggest any conflict with the *Sudhamma* Council. If he indeed had a problem with the *Sudhamma* Council he would most likely have departed during the time of the monarch. His departure should not therefore be seen as an attempt to establish a separate *gaing*.

The fact that U Paṇḍava travelled down to lower Burma in 1886 with many followers, both monks and laity, would seem to support his having already been a well-known and respected teacher in upper Burma when he left, rather than that he had established his own *gaing* as a result of difficulties he experienced with the king and the *Sudhamma*. Perhaps, he chose lower Burma as a favourable place to establish 'his own way of meditation' (as Dhammasāmi remarked), because the monastic community in lower Burma were settled, having adapted to British rule, while in upper Burma the Sudhamma Council were in a confused, unsettled state following the defeat of the king.

U Paṇḍava spent more than ten years in lower Burma teaching his philosophy across the region and by the time of his death in 1909 at the age of 79 he had already established more than twenty monasteries where his disciples practised meditation and pursued monastic education. He left behind around five hundred monastic disciples

---

[48] There are eight precepts in the *ājīvaṭṭhamaka*, which are mainly observed by laypeople. They are, not killing, not stealing, not to commit sexual misconduct, not to speak harshly, not to tell lies, not to gossip, not to slander and finally, the precept of right livelihood, taken from the noble eight fold path.

(Māmaka 2002:144). The monasteries and disciples of U Paṇḍava kept their teacher's tradition informally until 1980. When the State *Saṅghamahānāyaka* was established for the first time in 1980, they were formally registered as a new *gaing (*Pāli *nikāya),* the *Catubhūmika gaing* (four spheres of practice) also known as *Gnettwin gaing.* The *Gnettwin gaing* still exists to the present day.

While monks in upper Burma broke away from the traditional authority of the *Sudhamma* Council despite the king being in active control, monks in lower Burma were free to break away from the domain of the *Sudhamma* and the control of the king as their authority was no longer accessible due to the region being under British control. Okpo Sayadaw, also known as Ukkaṃvaṃsamālā, is an example of a monk in lower Burma who established an independent *nikāya* or *gaing* during Mindon's reign.

Okpo Sayadaw was born in 1817 in lower Burma, just a decade before the British took control in 1826, so he was effectively brought up under the influence of British rule. As a young novice Okpo Sayadaw studied in different towns and cities in lower Burma, noticeably Danupyu, Henzada and Yangon, all of which were under British control. After his higher ordination in 1838, Okpo Sayadaw travelled to upper Burma for further monastic education. He spent more than ten years studying with different scholars such as Bagayar Sayadaw, Sankyaung Sayadaw and Myatheindan Sayadaw. These Sayadaws lived in the capital and were highly honoured by the king for their scholarship and propagation of Buddhism. While studying under them he had received a number of invitations to visit the palace but he always refused (Māmaka 2002:118-9). In 1851 he returned to lower Burma and started to teach the people 'traumatized' by the effects of the Anglo-Burmese war.

Okpo Sayadaw gradually began to teach a new concept of Burmese prayer in an attempt to replace the traditional prayer in lower Burma. The traditional prayer starts with the words *Okatha, Okatha, Okatha,* which means pardon or forgive (me) (three times). The traditional stanza then continues with '*kāyakan, vacīkan, manokan i kan thon pa do dwin ta-pa –pa thaw kan phyint pyit hmar khay the shi thaw*' [there are three

actions, which are physical, verbal and mental action; if I have committed 'wrong action' towards you with any of these three actions]. This stanza is used when a devotee pays his or her respects to the *tiratana* (Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha), normally in front of a shrine or in front of the monks when offering something to them. Having sought forgiveness from the *tiratana* with this traditional stanza, they humbly bow down three times. This traditional stanza thus includes three aspects of meaning, the first is seeking forgiveness from the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha, the second is offering humble respects to them and the third is seeking a wish of what he or she wants from this prayer.

Okpo Sayadaw, however, wanted to change this prayer to ''*kāya dvāra, vacī dvāra, mano dvāra i dvāra thon pa do dwin ta-pa –pa thaw dvāra phyint pyit hmar khay the shi thaw*' [there are three doors, which are physical, verbal and mental door; if I have committed wrong 'action' towards you with any of these three doors]. Okpo Sayadaw does not criticise the remaining part of the stanzas as each individual's wishes may be different from that of others but he criticises the usage of '*kan*' (action) as he considers it the wrong expression. *Dvāra* literally means door. It can be any door in the literal sense but here it describes a way of seeing the body, speech and mind as agents or avenues of action. The reason for this apparently subtle yet significant change is this: Okpo Sayadaw argued that the term '*kan*' (action) should not be used for the forgiveness because '*kan*' is an effect rather than an action but he suggests the term *dvāra* is the correct version for the seeking for forgiveness because it is the real cause of an action. Therefore, one should use the correct expression i.e. identify the actual cause when seeking forgiveness in front of the shrine or monks.

Dvāra is here considered as an 'actor/agent' of an action because to complete 'the task of a physical action' the devotee needs *kāyaviññatti* (physical movement) and the instrument of this physical movement is called *dvāra*. Because of this physical movement, the action can be completed. If someone asks: "how can his action (good or bad) be completed?" the answer refers to a person's physical movement (*kāyaviññatti*) without which the action cannot be carried out. So the cause of the action must be expressed during the prayer or request for forgiveness and this cause is the '*dvāra*'

rather than the 'kan'. Therefore everyone should use *dvāra* when they seek forgiveness at a shrine. The question then arises what is meant by 'the actor'? According to Okpo Sayadaw, the actor is the *kāyadvāra* (physical door), the *vacīdvāra* (verbal door) or the *manodvāra* (mental door) making the 'physical door' the agent of the action. A thief, for example, cannot complete his action without an instrument. This instrument may either be an external or internal one, the internal one is the *kāyaviññatti* in the case of bodily action while the external one is the weapon, knife or any other instrument external to himself that allows him to commit to act. But they are interrelated, for example, the external 'agent' cannot be used without an internal movement, such as hands or legs and these movements are *kāyavññatti* and whatever *kāyaviññatti* is manifested in the physical door before the action is called *kāyadvāra*. In support of this he quotes from many commentaries and sub-commentaries, one of them is, for example, from the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī aṭṭhakathā* (1990: 127): '*kāyadvārena kataṃ kammaṃ kāyakammanti*' (an action done by means of the physical door means a physical action). Any part of the physical body might be involved in the action but the specific area where the action is carried out is called the physical door (*kāyadvāra*). Similarly, the verbal and mental doors are interpreted as 'verbal actor' and 'mental actor' respectively.

Okpo Sayadaw's philosophy became widespread across lower Burma and followers of this concept came to be called members of *dvāra*. I shall now explain how this led to the creation of a new *gaing* and the connection with *sīmā*. According to Māmaka (2002:113) two devotees, one a follower of the *dvāra* prayer and the other a follower of traditional *kamma*, challenged each other to debate on who was right and who was wrong. A verdict was finally requested from the *Sudhamma* Council. Their leader, the *Thathanabaing,* replied that they were neither right nor wrong and stated that both were acceptable when making an offering to the Buddha. When Okpo received news of this indecisive answer from the *Thathanabaing*, he wrote him a long letter quoting texts in support of his reinterpretation of the traditional prayer. He demanded that the *Sudhamma* Council accept his interpretation as being the only correct one. According to Māmaka, when the *Thathanabaing* received Okpo's letter he regretted his

neutral decision. He stated that had he known Okpo's intention and his attitude against the traditional prayer, he would have protected the traditional prayer as the right version (ibid). As far as my fieldwork has been able to lead me, it would appear that the *dvāra* prayer is only used by followers of *dvāra,* a considerably small minority when contrasted with the followers of *kamma.*

Soon Okpo Sayadaw's 'arrogance' turned in another direction. The *Sudhamma*-controlled monastic lineage in lower Burma had started to divide into two groups due to the fact that Okpo Sayadaw declined to associate with local monks in the Henzada area. These local monks were the most influential monastic leaders of the villages and towns and all were directly appointed by the *Thathanabaing*, head of the Saṅgha in the capital city, Mandalay. The reason behind the decline in Okpo's association with these local leaders relates to the subject of the monastic *sīmā*. As can be seen in both this chapter and the previous one, Burmese monks are particularly cautious with regard to the validity of the monastic boundary. According to Okpo Sayadaw, the *udakukkhepasīmā* (monastic boundary that had been created by the splashing of water, (to be discussed in detail in Chapter Six), and where legal monastic rituals such as the ordination ceremony were being conducted by the monks of Henzada, should be considered faulty due to its connection with the *gāmasīmā* when water is being splashed from the pavilion (Sobhana 1974:334-5, Māmaka 2002:120). In my discussion of Dispute Manuals in Chapter Three, I will explain this problem in more detail and describe a similar case which had divided the Saṅgha in Sri Lanka at that time. It is worthy of note that members of the *Sudhamma* Council in the region were unable to exercise authority over Okpo's very public protestations regarding the need to both change the prayer and invalidate the monastic boundary.

The *Sudhamma* monks in nearby regions attempted to reunify with Okpo Sayadaw, but he refused to collaborate with them unless all monks who had previously ordained in this *sīmā* were re-ordained in a correctly established *sīmā*. His demand not only extended to those monks who had already received their ordination in this *sīmā* but

also to those subsequent generations of monks who had received ordination from these monks which meant that the whole chain of ordinations transmitted through other ordination ceremonies was also to be considered invalid (Māmaka 2002:121).

Okpo went on to write a *sīmā* book called the *Gāmasīmādivinicchaya*[49] (exposition of village boundaries) and as a result of his decision not to associate with the Sudhamma within their *sīmā* he was responsible for consecrating more than sixty *sīmās* across the region (Sobhana 1974: 512, 514*).* This eventually led Okpo Sayadaw to establish his own *Nikāya* called the *Dvāra Nikāya* (Sobhana 1974:334-5, Māmaka 2002:121). Both the establishment of a new *Nikāya* and his refusal to reconcile were considered to be a challenge to traditional authority. Perhaps his challenge was in part inspired by the presence of British rule, since this created a vacuum in the hierarchy in a situation where previously either the head of the Burmese Saṅgha or ultimately the King could have intervened. With the establishment of his own *nikāya/gaing*, Okpo Sayadaw became an authoritative monk independent from the *Sudhamma* in the area and he used strict *Vinaya* rules to influence both laity and monks. Some monks were not direct disciples but became members of his group simply because of their respect for his excellent performance in strict *Vinaya* practice, monastic education and his *dhamma* talks, as well as his popularity throughout the region.

There are five distinct rules he put forward to his monks: firstly, monks were not allowed to travel in any vehicle pulled by 'beings' for example a chariot or bullock cart in the case of animals or rickshaws in the case of human beings. This rule was likely to have been in response to some monks unattractively and unpleasantly travelling around in such vehicles. He did, however, permit the use of transport such as cars or boats. Secondly, the umbrella was not permitted unless it was raining or in the case of a sick monk. Thirdly, monks should not harbour government enemies or engage in politics. As will be seen in Chapter Three, this is perhaps because Okpo did not want to agitate the British administration when many *Sudhamma* monks had started to incite against their

---

[49] My attempt to buy or read this book was not successful. I only received this information from *Sāsanavaṃsadīpanī*.

rule. At the same time, Okpo maintained that the Court of Law had nothing to do with monks. It can be considered a distinctive characteristic of Okpo that he attempted to avoid political influence from both the Burmese king in upper Burma and the British rulers in lower Burma. Fourthly, drinking, foods and other consumables were to be in accordance with the *Vinaya* rules and, finally, his disciples were not permitted to associate with other monks in the *sīmā*. This last rule was only imposed after the controversy over the issue of *udakukkhepasīmā*, (mentioned earlier) (Mendelson 1975:96).

Interestingly, the *Dvāra Nikāya* divided again and established two more *nikāya*. The first group divided due to regional settlement by six high ranking monks of a group who lived together on the riverside area of the western Ngawan River. They accepted Okpo's teaching without associating with the conventionally organised group in Henzada, the main centre. They were only a few but, due to their geographical settlement and long distance from the main group in Henzada, they identified themselves as the *Anauk Khyaung Dvāra* group (western river *dvāra* followers), the only separate group existing during Okpo Sayadaw's time. The other two, which came into being thirteen years after the death of Okpo Sayadaw, were within the Henzada region and became rivals over leadership of the *gaing*. The first group, mainly led by the disciples who lived in Henzada town, appointed a leader under the name of *Dhammānudhamma Mahādvāra Nikāya* (earlier and later teaching of the great *Dvāra Gaing,* also known in the shortened form *Mahādvāra Gaing*) and the second group, mainly the followers who lived in Okpo's village where Okpo Sayadaw had spent most of his life, used their relationship with the Okpo Sayadaw to dominate his disciples in Henzada town. Because of rivalry between the town and village monks, the village monks (that is those residing in Okpo's village) again separately appointed their own Head under the name of *DhammaVinayanuloma Mūladvāra Nikāya* (The Original *Dvāra Gaing* in accordance with the Dhamma and *Vinaya,* also known in the shortened form *Mūla Dvāra Gaing*). As a result of this there are three *dvāra gaings*: they are, in short term, known as *Anauk khyaung Dvāra, Mahādvāra* and *Mūladvāra* and each of them appointed their own Head

and each became a separate *nikāya* adding to the three *nikāyas* in the State Saṅgha Convention in 1980.

Three more *nikāyas* were registered in the 1980 Saṅgha Convention. They are *Mahāyin Nikāya*, *Veḷunwan Nikāya* and *Gaṇavimutti Nikāya*. *Mahāyin Nikāya* was founded by a Mon monk who came from Thailand to help the Mon people in Burma. His monastic name was Buddhavaṃsa but he was normally known as Mahāyin Sayadaw using the name of his birthplace, Mahāyin village, central Thailand, where he was born in 1841. He was educated at a royal temple, Wat Bowonniwet, the headquarters of the *Dhammayutti Nikāya* in Bangkok. Buddhavaṃsa made his way to Burma in 1874, just a decade before the British took control of the whole of Burma. After twenty years of residency in Mawlamyine, capital city of Mon State, he began to offer monastic education and a formal examination in the Mon language. As he became popular in the region, because of his active involvement in teaching and strict *Vinaya* practice, he gradually influenced not only devotees but also monks in the region. He established a printing house, the first in the Mon State, where he printed many canonical works in Mon language for the monks, including collecting old manuals, manuscripts and traditional writings for children (Māmaka 2002:155). His influence in the region later led him to set up his own *nikāya* called *Dhammayutti Nikāya,* but the majority of Burmese called it *Mahāyin Gaing*, and the members of this *gaing* are mostly found in Mon State or monks who come from Mon State.

Just as all founders of nikāya used their ability and influence on both monks and laity, such was the case with another monk called Paṇḍavaṃsa, who set up his own nikāya during the post-Mindon period. His early years were spent in Mandalay, the capital city of Mindon, where he studied under various scholars. In 1893, within a decade after the British occupation of the whole Burma, he moved to Yangon and established a monastery there in 1895. His knowledge and ability, both of the canonical texts and in his teaching, became widespread across lower Burma. He later came to be known as Weḷuwun Sayadaw, 'a term deriving from the Pāli word veḷuvana (bamboo

forest) because the monastery where he lived had been built of bamboo. Paṇḍavaṃsa, offered education to many monastic students in his bamboo monastery and effectively established a monastic institute. Owing to excessive demand he later expanded to four monasteries; two in Yangon, one in Pathein, South West Burma and another in Myan Aung near Henzada, lower Burma. Each of these was known as a Weḷuwun monastery following the main centre (Māmaka 2002:133). In 1919, all Weḷuwun monasteries held a joint examination and agreed to hold a meeting on its completion. The most senior monk at the meeting was U Visuddha and members of the congregation unanimously agreed to appoint U Visuddha as Head of the Weḷuwun Order. Thus, the Order was born at that meeting (ibid). After his death, Paṇḍavaṃsa became the Head of the Weḷuwun Gaings. The Weḷuwun Gaing was born out of the monastic institutes created by Paṇḍavaṃsa and continuance in existence to today.

Finally, the last *Gaing* is called *Gaṇavimutti*, which translates as being free from *gaing* or *nikāya*. This came about through the efforts of Indavaṃsa, a monk who came from Dawei, the region currently situated in the Taninthayi (or Tanitharyi) Division of the Southern Division of Burma. He studied in the capital city Amarapura and, due to his scriptural knowledge, received 'royal higher ordination'[50] in 1851. Indavaṃsa returned to Dawei in 1857 and became one of the leading educated monks in the area. In 1866 he was involved in a monastic dispute over whether monks should collect or accept money from the laity as they do when collecting alms. He proved that collection or acceptance of money was not supported by the Canon but, as a result of this decision, he and his followers separated from the rest of the Saṅgha in the same year. He immediately moved to a remote village called Kudau/Kado and spent more than thirty years there teaching and practising strict *Vinaya* without any influence from the *Sudhamma* monks. In 1895, when he had spent more than thirty years without them, he wrote a letter to the *Thathanabaing* seeking formal authorisation to exist on his own. The *Thathanabaing* approved him and his followers to become *gaṇavimutti* (free from *gaing*) (Māmaka

---

[50] We have already discussed the royal ordination which was offered to those monks who are well-versed and had passed the royal exam. Indavaṃsa was an example, who received this honour from the King because of his learning knowledge.

2002:149-50). We have seen that the development of the *Shwegyin Nikāya* existed due to the king's intervention, but here the *Gaṇavimutti* was established with the authorisation of the *Thathanabaing*. His followers and disciples subsequently protected their identity as being free from any other *gaings*. Interestingly, the members of this group automatically became a *gaing* as they have registered in the 1980 Saṅgha Convention.

Each of these nine *nikāyas,* which still exist in modern Burma today, was developed either during or after King Mindon's reign. The reasons for this can be looked at from a number of different viewpoints. Two are sufficiently remarkable to note here. One relates to King Mindon's interference in monastic practice and the other to the presence and influence of the British in lower Burma. A combination of these two caused the so-called Mindon (post Mindon) sects *(nikāya)* to be established. Regarding the former, we can understand this from the example of Shwegyin Sayadaw to whom Mindon showed a great deal of respect and veneration due to his strict *Vinaya* practice. As stated earlier Mindon separated Shwegyin Sayadaw from the *Sudhamma* and allowed him to exist independent of their control. We may never know for sure whether Shwegyin Sayadaw influenced the king by using the strict *Vinaya* rules to receive his support, but we do know that Shwegyin Sayadaw retained his authority with the help of the king. He also imposed on his disciples the prohibition on chewing betel nut in the afternoon as well as not allowing them to go out from the monastery; both rules being favoured by the king.

If we look, however, at the development of Gnettwin and Okpo, their rhetoric was not to gain power or status from the king but to gain freedom from the king's control over Saṅgha affairs. They each had made their way to lower Burma to distance themselves from the influence of the *Sudhamma* Council. At this point in time the *Thathanabaing*'s control was only within a narrow area of upper Burma, but it is worth noting that even there the king and the *Thathanabaing* were not unified in the common purpose of protecting the unity of the Saṅgha as had been the case during Bodawpaya's reign when he purged those monks who did not follow the *Sudhamma* Council. In the case of King Mindon, the example of Shwegyin Sayadaw suggests that he supported the

existence of an independent Saṅgha rather than unifying the Saṅgha under the umbrella of the *Sudhamma* Council.

While the king's attitude towards control of the Saṅgha was quite 'moderate' compared with Bodawpaya, the presence of a foreign government in Lower Burma further contributed to the Saṅgha becoming harder for the king to control. Not long after the arrival of the British in lower Burma there are reports of monks moving to upper Burma for royal protection, yet some monks from upper Burma made their way to lower Burma, one example being Okpo. Okpo Sayadaw originally came from lower Burma but he spent his time in upper Burma until 1851. According to Mendelson (1975:114), the British presence in lower Burma provoked the establishment of small sects which the monks could easily govern themselves and create power within the group even when political authority was no longer in their favour. The creation of different *gaing* and its momentum became even greater after the fall of the capital city. The British noncommittal attitude towards the appointment and authorisation of a new *Thathanabaing* further strengthened Okpo Sayadaw and Gnettwin, indeed many others monks acting independently of central control both in lower and upper Burma. By the time the British took control these Saṅgha had claimed authority over their disciples.

If we consider the individual attitudes and abilities of these monks, strict *Vinaya* practice and canonical expertise seem to have played an important role in *nikāya* development. As explained earlier, Okpo Sayadaw had advocated rigorous monastic practices such as not wearing shoes, not travelling in bullock carts or rickshaws; he even restricted the use of umbrellas. Shwegyin Sayadaw instituted rules of behaviour when consuming food such as the prohibition on chewing betel nut in the afternoon, as well as restrictions regarding smoking and receiving silver and gold. On the other hand, Weḷuwun and Mahāyin Sayadaw established monastic institutes and centres of learning for monks. All of these practices were one aspect of the leaders' propensity, but the traditionally perceived *Vinaya* tradition was not different from one another. On the whole, a key to their success in that it enabled them to gain and maintain their authority

and to attract monks and lay support who valued their knowledge and ability to use the canonical texts to teach both monks and laity in simple and effective ways.

Mindon died in in 1878. His son Thipaw took the throne immediately after, but only survived as ruler for seven years. He was defeated in the third Anglo-Burmese war in 1885 and he was sent into exile in India. During his seven year reign King Thipaw appointed twelve high ranking monks to the *Sudhamma* Council and two *Thathanabaing* (Head of the Saṅgha), Mālālaṅkāra and Jāgarabhidhaja, also known as Shwegyin Sayadaw, but Jāgarabhidhaja withdrew from the position and Mālālaṅkāra became the sole Head of the Saṅgha as well as Head of the twelve members of the *Sudhamma* Council. Mālālaṅkāra, supported by the king, sent monks into nine regions or locations to propagate the teachings of the Buddha across the kingdom. Each location received two high ranking teachers, fifteen monks, one lay secretary with two assistants and two stewards for the welfare of the monks (Māmaka 2002:66-7). The king's mission had been to perpetuate his father's religious endeavours but, with the loss of his kingdom, the lineage of Burmese kings and their involvement in the preservation of Theravada monastic Buddhism and propagation of its doctrine from the time of the Pagan Empire finally ended.

2.6. Conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to show how in Burmese Buddhism there is, both in its traditional and more recent history, a model in which the authority of the Saṅgha comes from a combination of *Vinaya*, lineage and political favour. Political favour alone is insufficient and it is granted to/claimed by those who can also claim greater monastic 'purity' within which the *sīmā* plays a significant role, to the extent that the rejection of existing *sīmā* validity and the establishment of new *sīmā* has been part of nationwide competition for power.

From the Pagan dynasty up to the present day the Pāli canon has guided monastic authority. In this chapter I have explained how Burmese people claimed authority for

Theravada Buddhism in the past and I have shown how the canonical texts are considered to be one of the central constituents for the authority of Burmese monastic practice. From the 'historical' arrival of Theravada Buddhism to Burma during the Pagan dynasty, the chain of monastic lineage has always been backed by the canon. Burmese monks seek to preserve and practise their monastic vow in accordance with the Canon, with consecutive kings demonstrating that they provide support and legislation to avoid deviation from it and to ensure the upholding of the purity of the Buddha's teachings.

While there have clearly been political motives – be they of the king or of the monastic rivalry of monks – there is no doubt that the rhetoric of preserving the pure Dhamma and *Vinaya* is believed by many of those who have espoused it. Moreover, it has led to a combination of important features of Burmese Buddhism unparalleled elsewhere, including a rigorous monastic education in the canon and commentaries, rather than one watered down through a secular curriculum that is tested against centralised, prestigious examination systems and affecting monastic status: also a strong awareness of and aspiration to maintain the *Vinaya* both as it pertains to individuals and to the Saṅgha as a whole (and hence the importance of *sīmā*); and, the expectation of a relationship between monastic and political authority. We can see how this relationship led to centralised Saṅgha authorities that sought to control Saṅgha affairs in part on behalf of, but also in part in defence against, the king/political authorities. We also see that while the centralised Saṅgha authorities can hold great power that power can be challenged by charismatic monks with direct access to the king/political authorities, and that the disruption to political power during the British period also allowed such challenges.

Nevertheless, even with a non-Buddhist alien government in lower Burma, the power struggles between different Saṅghas/Saṅgha members were still expressed in terms of the interpretation or upholding of correct *Vinaya* (and sometimes also Abhidhamma) conduct and lineage, including *sīmā* validity. This and occasionally also geography played its part in the emergence of multiple ordination lineages (*gaing/nikāya*) that are not able to share the same *sīmā*, although the Sudhamma Council

still maintains authority over all of them, including matters of *sīmā* validity. The influence of such matters as have occurred in different monastic legal activities in the *sīmā*, particularly as shown in the attitude of the *Dvāra Nikāya,* remains active even up to the present day. However, this does not undermine the present 'State *Saṅghamahānāyaka* Committee' (*Saṅghamahānāyaka*) in that the constitution of the State *Saṅghamahānāyaka* recognizes different *gaings* and their separate monastic legal rituals as was agreed in the 1980 Saṅgha Convention, but different interpretations of the *Vinaya* or Dhamma are absolutely prohibited. To this State *Saṅghamahānāyaka* all *gaings* are represented but the head of this authority has always been elected by the members of the *Sudhamma* Saṅgha since its formation in 1980 as they represent the largest group among the nine *gaings* mentioned above. Thus, the *Sudhamma* Saṅgha carries the ultimate authority in the decision making process using the *Vinaya* rules and their completely transparent ways.[51]

Much of this chapter gave an outline of Burmese Saṅgha history in relation to *Vinaya* so that we could place within that overall context the significance of *sīmā,* showing it to be an important factor in the perceived correct performance of monastic ordination and a potential weak point in the arising of rivalry, since a doubt about its validity could allow accusations that the associated ordination and even ordination lineage were invalid. We see that the kings mentioned in this chapter were involved in the promotion of monastic purity and utilised the establishment of *sīmā* as a way of ensuring success. Examples of this are Kings Anawaratha and Dhammacetī who focused their efforts on monastic purity with the correct performance of monastic ordination in the *sīmā* as guided by the Canon. Later kings such as Bodawpaya and Mindon put their energies into supporting monastic education as well as securing the purity of monastic practice, even using occasional force such as the defrocking of monks who deviated from guided practice as set out in the Canon.

---

[51] When problems occur within the Saṅgha, the initial power is given to their respective *gaings* to resolve the problem in accordance with the Vinaya rules but if the problem cannot be solved, the issue then transfers to higher authorities: town, City, Division and even to the State *Saṅghamahānāyaka* respectively, which case the representative members of the State *Saṅghamahānāyaka* conclude their final verdict.

In later chapters I will explore how attitudes towards the Canon and different interpretations of *sīmā* became tools for defining monastic purity. Dhammacetī's model of monastic purity, recorded in this chapter, might have been influenced by his attitude to *sīmā*. In Chapter Three I will analyse how British influence formed a new monastic movement and how this has affected the production of *sīmā* literature in Burma up to the present day.

Chapter Three:

Burmese textual authorities on *sīmā* from

the 19th century till the present time

3.1. Introduction

The 'purity' or 'perfection' of a *sīmā* is fundamental to the validity of monastic rituals, and its position as such in Burma has been repeatedly confirmed in high-profile events in Burmese history, as indicated in the preceding chapter. The canonical texts that explain the concept of this 'purity' or 'perfection', however, have been regarded at times as inconsistent or at least insufficiently explicit to prevent all doubt from arising and, in many cases, this has been the focus of contention and controversy. There are many recorded disputes in the history of monastic boundaries in Burma which confirm the importance of the reference back to and interpretation of canonical and commentarial sources, showing how these authoritative texts play a key role in defending the 'originality' or 'correctness' of the *sīmā* establishment. This focus on inconsistencies in the authoritative texts nevertheless comes about both because of and in spite of their importance, and this focus remains active and diverse in Burmese monastic scholarship. As already outlined in the first chapter referring to the commentarial and sub-commentarial texts, this is one of the reasons for the ongoing production of Burmese *sīmā* literature. In chapter one I gave a brief overview of the canonical and classical commentarial literature relevant to *sīmā,* a subject explored in much fuller depth by Kieffer Pülz (1992). Here I shall look at the ongoing production of Burmese *sīmā* literature, in both semi-Pāli and Burmese manuals that arose out of that preceding material. However, my list of *sīmā* texts is not exhaustive. Rather I have tried to discuss representative texts, specially, those referred to by my informants who are experts in *sīmā* procedure.

In reviewing the literature produced in Burma I cover four areas: an outline of the state of the Saṅgha during the British occupation which will help give an understanding of the second: an analysis of how the British occupation and post-British period gave rise to the production of *sīmā* literature. I will explain the new momentum given to the perception of the purity of doctrine and monastic practice by the Burmese government following the British departure, being the focus of attention in perhaps surprising, or unanticipated, ways when producing *sīmā* literature. Finally, I shall outline the *sīmā* dispute literature that emerged during the British occupation. Overall, therefore, this chapter looks at the nature of the *sīmā* literature that developed as the result of a combination of foreign occupation and the focus on the strengthening of monastic 'purity' which took place after the British left.

3.2. An outline of Buddhism under British rule

In previous chapters I have outlined the history of Theravada monastic lineage and royal support in the promotion of 'pure' Theravada monastic practice and development of Pāli literature. I have also reported on the substantial amount of monastic literature produced during the reigns of Burmese kings. However, when Burma lost its sovereignty to British colonial rule such literature gradually declined and a new movement or direction was shaped. This new movement is associated with a series of new activities, all of which were caused by the fact that the monastic life was no longer under the traditional and royal control. As I shall explain below, the centuries' old monastic tradition was divided by the British influence and the political monks and educated monks became active as a driving force in response to this influence.

During the first Anglo–Burmese war, which took place in 1824-26, nearly a half of the country, including all coastal areas and lower Burma, had already been added to the British control. As was mentioned in the previous chapter and will be explained further below, the impact of the British rule meant that Buddhist monks in lower Burma were able to act independently of the royal control and support. This led them to establish a separate sect even before the fall of the capital city, Mandalay. Burmese rule

gradually became narrower and confined only to the upper Burma but allegedly the king was still counting the final days for the departure of the British from lower Burma, contrary to the actual outcome. Thibaw, the last king who ascended the throne in 1876, did not survive even a decade before the whole of Burma was conquered by the British in 1885.

As stated in previous chapter, during the short period of Thibaw's reign however, he created a committee of twelve members headed by Mālālaṅkāra, *Thathanabaing* (head of the Saṅgha) to overlook the welfare of Buddhism, but this committee gradually lost its cohesive force following the loss of the king (Māmaka 2002:66). Initially the British had recognized the head of the Saṅgha appointed by King Thibaw but they failed to provide any ministerial support when decisions on monastic and religious affairs were required. Burmese monks requested the British to provide monks with full authority as had been the case prior to the capture of the king but the British rejected this request immediately. When Mālālaṅkāra (the head of the Saṅgha) died 1894 the Saṅgha appointed a new head to maintain the order of the tradition and again requested the British government to endorse the newly appointed leader. The British government again failed – from a Burmese Buddhist perspective – to recognize the importance of this appointment saying they would not interfere in religious affairs (Māmaka 2002:66-67). Instead, they declared that they would maintain a neutral policy when dealing with religious issues.

Prior to occupation by the British, the Burmese had been well aware of the effect of foreign occupation having seen how Sri Lanka completely lost its hereditary Theravada ordination due to European colonization. A few reports containing references to the deterioration of Buddhism in Sri Lanka still exist, two being remarkably recorded in Burmese Pāli literature: the *Sāsanavaṃsa* (lineage of the doctrine) and the *Laṅkāsāsanavisuddhikathā* (words on the purity in Lanka Buddhism1880). According to Paññāsāmi, the author of the former work, monks came from Sri Lanka to seek re-ordination in Burma in 1800 and 1812 having recognized that monastic tradition had

been lost from the island due to foreign occupation (Ray 1946: 237, Mabel Bode 1897:46). In the latter account, Shwegyin Sayadaw, (U Jāgara) the founder of Shwegyin Nikāya and the author of the *Laṅkāsāsanavisuddhikathā,* records his experiences during his stay in Sri Lanka in 1879. He reconfirms previous reports recorded in the *Sāsanavaṃsa* regarding the lives of monks and the state of Buddhism in Sri Lanka as a whole. He gives a variety of reasons for the decline of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, the main ones being: that a non-Buddhist authority ruled the island; that the single authority of the Saṅgha had disappeared, and, that members of the Saṅgha were no longer united (*Laṅkāsāsanavisuddhikathā* 1979[52]:16). Each of these factors was connected, the first two being particularly witnessed by the Burmese monks themselves. This adds to the themes that influence the sense of validity and purpose of the Burmese Saṅgha outlined in the previous chapter. In addition to the importance of authoritative texts, *Vinaya* orthopraxy and relationship with the ruler, we now have the additional theme of the Saṅgha needed to remain united as well as an even greater emphasis of the importance of rulers participating in Buddhist affairs. Moreover this comes to be associated, as we shall see, with the maintenance of Burmese sovereignty in the face of alien aggressors.

Similar to the problem faced by Sri Lankan Buddhism alluded to above, Burmese monks had, in fact already, experienced disunity among themselves. One *gaing* particularly significant to note here as the *nikāya* establishment came into existence partly because of the British rule in lower Burma is the *Dvāra gaing,* described in the previous chapter. The challenge of the *Sudhamma* Council by founder of the *Dvāra gaing*, Okpo Sayadaw, in refusing to associate with the *Sudhamma* monks is also perhaps not only enabled by the political context but also inspired by it: When the majority of Saṅgha in lower Burma experienced the insecurity of the new political situation and were perhaps frustrated due to loss of royal support, Okpo Sayadaw drew a following among these frustrated monks by offering hope. He stated that Buddhist monks did not need a protection from the secular authority or king as long as they

---

[52] The book was first printed in 1879 in Sri Lanka. The 1979 printed version was exactly after 100 years of the first one but does not mention about the number of prints prior to 1979.

observed their *Vinaya* rules correctly. According to him, monks are already being protected by the *Vinaya* rule but had forgotten to use this monastic ideal for centuries. He thus wanted to revive it when facing with a difficult time under the foreign occupation, and *Vinaya* becomes a replacement security independent of its authorisation through the king. According to Okpo Sayadaw, the monks can achieve their goal, *nibbāna*, without secular protection, even when the nation is under the threat foreign occupation (Ling 1979:65). Such a belief may not have been practical if he were to live under the domain of Burmese king but this is effectively a response to the non-Buddhist rule when desiring to establish his own *gaing*.

When British won in the final battle in 1885, the state of monastic life deteriorated further. The British policy of religious neutrality meant that they did not become involved in the welfare of monastic life and promotion of Buddhism as a whole. This policy first applied in lower Burma, and one outcome was Okpo Sayadaw's new *gaing*, but now it now posed a threat to Buddhism throughout the whole country. Consequently, in the vacuum of authority many Burmese monks, in receipt of no central government support, turned their attention to political activity. Resistance to British rule and increased self-awareness when defining the originality of Theravada Buddhism became more active aspects of Burmese Buddhist identity.

The few accounts which give witness to such awareness cite two developments: the political involvement of the monks, on the one hand, and, on the other, the heightened motivation to produce Buddhist literature recording and protecting the teachings of the Buddha. On the political front, Buddhist monks unusually forged closer links with and gained greater influence over the laity, some even becoming political leaders. Although involvement in politics is considered to be improper in the traditional Theravada monastics in Burma, it was not considered wrong by society as a whole since

it was seen as necessary to protect Buddhism.[53] There are many accounts of the involvement of monks in politics at this time. Spiro, for example, observes:

> "Between 1885 and 1897, in various parts of the country, a series of rebellions against British rule were led by Buddhist monks…….wherever there was an appearance of organized resistance, Buddhist monks were among the chiefs. No political movement of importance has been without a monk as the leading spirit." (Spiro 1982: 383)

Spiro's report highlights the political aspects of monks' involvement at the time when Buddhism was under threat by the foreign occupation. There were many instances where the conduct of foreigners was unacceptable to the local or religious customs of Burma. The most notorious example of such conduct is probably the occasion when foreigners reportedly disregarded normal Buddhist etiquette by entering the Shwedagon Pagada without removing their shoes. This created a considerable amount of resentment toward the presence of foreigners in the place of worship and it became even a device for the Burmese monks in their political cause to oppose the British occupation ((Schober 2011:73, Ling 1979:82). Trevor Ling reported the striking slogan of the anti-foreign spirit spoken out by some monks, who justified their nationalistic aspiration in terms of Buddhist religious ideas:

> ''Freedom from bondage and progress towards nirvana was interpreted by the Sayadaw U Thilasara in 1923 to mean freedom from political bondage. Independence for Burma was to mean nirvana within this world, and was to be attained by means of political struggle, according to another popular preacher, Sayadaw U Nye Ya'' (Trevor Ling 1979:85).

Alongside the new degree of political activity on the part of some monks unusually for the cause of *sāsana* ('Buddhist religion') described by Spiro and Ling, a new method was also undertaken by some educated monks for the same explicit cause, namely the protection of the *sāsana*. Their objectives were mainly to preserve the Buddha's teaching by devoting themselves to learning, writing and teaching. Ledi

---

[53] See Mahinda Deegalle article on ''Politics of the Jathika Hela Urumaya Monks: Buddhism and Ethnicity in Contemporary Sri Lanka,'' *Contemporary Buddhism* 5 (2) 2004: 83-103.). Deegalle discussed the reason behind the establishment of monks' political party in Sri Lanka. He pointed out political monks' arguments referring to the safeguard and protection of Buddhism and the Sinhalese nation from unethical conversion and Tamil separatists.

Sayadaw (1846-1923), a prominent monk during this period, is an example of a monk who dedicated himself to the production of Buddhist literature as a response to the threat to Buddhism of foreign occupation. He produced as many as seventy manuals on different topics both in Pāli and in the Burmese language including the *Paramattha-dīpanī* (manual of ultimate truth), the *Nirutti-dīpanī* (a book on Pāli grammar) and the *Paṭṭhānaniddesa-dīpanī* (manual of causal relationship). Some of these works reflect his motivation and, in many cases, illustrate the need to defend or protect the key elements of the original teachings of the Buddha against the perceived threats of the period. He made visits across the country delivering lectures and encouraging the laity and monks alike to hold firmly to Buddhist values and asked them to form a Buddhist group in each village to preserve such values (Trevor Ling 1979:81). In 1885 Ledi Sayadaw wrote the *Nwa-myitta-sa* ('advice to love cattle'), a poetic prose letter, arguing that Burmese Buddhists should not kill cattle and eat beef. Since Burmese farmers depended on buffalo and cattle as beasts of burden to maintain their livelihood, it was thought that the marketing of beef for human consumption threatened their extinction. Of course, beef-consumption was associated with the colonial power and their army. Ledi Sayadaw led successful beef boycotts during the colonial era and, despite the presence of locals who ate beef, his advice interestingly influenced a generation of Burmese nationalists to adopt this stance. Trevor wrote:

> "His preaching and writing had a direct influence on the thought and ideology of the Thakin[54] (leader or ownership) movement which became one of the important elements of Burmese nationalism a decade or so later" (Trevor Ling 1979:81).

Ashin Janakābhivaṃsa (1899-1977), another prolific scholarly monk, is worthy of some attention here for his work on Pāli and for the patriotic movement. He was an active monk and younger than Ledi Sayadaw more than forty years. He also wrote more than 60 works on Buddhism some of which were influenced by Ledi Sayadaw (1946-1923). The most well-known works are, for example,

---

[54] Thakin is an ideological term, normally referring to the leader of a family and used by his servant. The ideology of Thakin started to be used in the political arena during British period, which means that Burmese are Thakin, not slaves.

bhidhammatthasaṅgahabhāsāṭīkā, Rūpasiddhibhāsāṭīkā, Pārājikabhāsāṭīkā, Parivārabhāsāṭīkā, Kaṅkhābhāsāṭīkā, Pātimokkhabhāsāṭīkā and *Mahāvābhāsāṭīkā.* In his work on *Mahāvābhāsāṭīkā,* he examined the *Mahāvagga Aṭṭhakathā* prescription for monastic boundary (*sīmā*) contrasting it with the sub-commentaries. This indicates that *sīmā* studies were considered an important issue during British period. He also wrote many manuals for both schools children and general Buddhism for adult. Two of them are very provocative called *Bhāthāthway* (the doctrine of life force) and *Anagat thathana-yay* (future Buddhism) where he talks about Buddhism and its relationship with the national identity, and the reason for the disappearance of Buddhism from the world. The impetus of his works was also the perception of threat posed by the foreign occupation.

Such active consciousness as that, which inspired Shwegyin Sayadaw's report on the condition of Sri Lankan Buddhism, Ashin Janakābhivaṃsa 's lectures and Ledi Sayadaw's campaign to protect Buddhist values, can be further seen in the formation of a number of Buddhist organizations during early British rule in upper Burma, such as, for example, the *Cetiyaṅgaṇa Pariyatti Dhammānuggaha Aphwe* (Pagoda's Doctrinal Welfare and Scholarship Association) in 1894, the *Pariyatti Sāsanahita* (Doctrinal Scholarship and Education Board) in 1898, the *Buddha Kalyānamitta Athin* (Organization for Buddhist Welfare and Friendship) in 1897 and Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA) in 1902, all of which were established independently after a decade of repression under British rule (Ling 1979:78-9, Dhammasāmi 2004:148).

The intention of the former two organizations was purely to promote and to protect the doctrine of Theravada Buddhism by providing scholarly examination while the foreign occupation continued to be a risk to Buddhism in Burma. The exam board, which was organized by *Pariyatti Sāsanahita,* and called *Sakyasīha* due to the fact that its examinations were held in *Sakayasīha* Pagoda in Mandalay while the exam board of *Cetiyaṅgaṇa Pariyatti Dhammānuggaha Aphwe* was known in the shortened form *Cetiyaṅgaṇa* referring to the place of examination at Shwedagon Pagoda (Dhammasāmi

2004:137). Many scholars emerged through these exam boards, for example, Ashin Janakābhivaṃsa just mentioned above and Ashin Aggavaṃsa, a prolific scholar on the *sīmā* whose works will be discussed in the next section. These two exam boards continue to exist since their establishment in early colonial rule. The certificates from these boards are highly respected in modern Burmese monastic education. During the same period, *Buddha Kalyānamitta Athin* set up a lay school in Mandalay where Buddhism was taught and Buddhist lunar holy days were observed by the students regularly. It also raised the social and national awareness for the protection of Buddhism. YMBA also shared similar objectives with *Kalyānamitta Athin* but later it became a leading organization involved in the national and religious cause and served as a vehicle to protest against colonial rule (Ling 1979:79).

In the broader context, the objectives of these organizations are united under the common goal i.e. to protect and promote Buddha's teaching; hence they are together known in Burmese as *amyo-bhāthā–thāthanā* ["(organizations for)" (Burmese) ethnic, language and Buddhism)] (Dhammasāmi 2004:138). So, one may state that the majority of monastic literature produced during this British-Burma period is a response, whether directly or indirectly, to the threat posed by European Imperial aspirations and modernity. This, in turn, created both self-awareness and the perception of a need to defend the tradition of the Buddha's teachings, as well as an emphasis on Buddhism as the symbol of national identity. As will be reviewed below, the literary works produced during the late nineteen and nineteenth centuries, including *sīmā* manual, are thus a response to a broader crisis affecting Burmese Buddhism.

3.3. *Sīmā* handbooks in Pāli and Burmese created during British rule

We have already seen above the condition of monastic life and the attitude of Buddhist devotees and monks for the protection and development of Buddhism during British occupation. In this section, I shall look particularly at the *sīmā* literature composed during the period in which monastic life was seen to be under threat under British rule. The production of *sīmā* handbooks emerged after the Fifth Saṅgha

Convention, which was held just before the complete annexation by the British and this momentum continued throughout British Rule in Burma. There were at least four remarkable books that emerged during the early British occupation. They are:-

1. *Tipeṭakavinicchaya kyan* (manual of three baskets 1929) by Maingkhaing Sayadaw (1842-1900)

2. *Hsanbon theinbon kyan* (different boundaries illustrations 1929) by Maingkhaing Sayadaw (1842-1900)

3. *Visuddhāyon ason apyat* (*Visudhāyon* solution guide 1909) by Visuddhāyon Sayadaw (1838-1916).

4. *Thein myozon Mahāṭīkā* (great sub-commentary on the diverse boundary 1936), by Bhaddanta Ashin Aggavaṃsa (1880-1946).

These books reflect the specific social and political crises of the time caused in part by the influence of foreign occupation and the lack of Burmese authority. We can particularly observe these crises reflected in the introduction to each chapter in both the *Tipeṭakavinicchaya-kyan* and the *Visuddhāyon ason apyat*. The background of each chapter outlines the doctrinal and disciplinary problems with each issue being composed at different times in response to the different disputes that arose as a result of monastic problems. Overall, both works are inconsistent in terms of the matters raised in the books themselves, but each point of the discussion is expertly quoted, collected and even systematized from the work of the Canon, Commentaries and sub-Commentaries, making them easily accessible to the reader.

The date of first publication of both the *Tipeṭakavinicchaya-kyan* and the *Sanbu-theinbun kyan* is not clear. The first printed version of both appeared in 1929 but the author died in 1900. The entire volume seems to have remained unprinted, probably kept within the monastic domain, possibly in the hands of the author's disciples until its publication in 1929. The *Tipeṭakavinicchaya-kyan* contains two volumes of work but only one substantial reference to *sīmā*. This is called *gāmasīmādivinicchaya* ('exposition of village boundaries, etc.') and is found in the first volume. It is interesting to note how the author quotes from the *Mahāvagga* to define how a village boundary *(gāmasīmā)* can

become an automatic monastic boundary *(sīmā)* without consecration. As I shall explain in Chapter Five, this can cause complications when a monk consecrates a *sīmā* within a *gāmasīmā.* In his second work, *Hsanbon theinbon kyan* (different boundaries illustrations), the author has dedicated it to illustrating the various types of *sīmā* using numerous examples in diagrammatical form. These diagrams are still effective and have been reorganized by a subsequent author writing about *sīmā*.

The study on *sīmā* produced by the author, Visuddhāyon Sayadaw (1838-1916), shares a similar structure to Maingkhaing Sayadaw's research both in terms of background information and on the nature of the specific doctrinal problem. However, the work of Visuddhāyon Sayadaw contains more chapters on the subject of *sīmā* than Maingkhaing Sayadaw in the following three areas: *sīmāsambheda vinicchaya* (exposition of connected boundary); *sīmāvinicchaya* (exposition of boundary); and, *pakatigāmasīmā vinicchaya* (exposition of the original or natural village boundary).

Interestingly, as Visuddhāyon Sayadaw (1838-1916) composed the section on *pakatigāmasīmā*, he introduced a new concept not found in the Pāli or commentarial literature; that of the '*sāsanamye*' (religious lands, premises, e.g. pagodas or places of worship). Visuddhāyon Sayadaw's interpretation was that monks had the authority to consider a '*sāsanamye* as a *visuṃgāmasīmā*' (small village boundary) (Visudhāyon Sayadw 1985:181). In other words, according to this Sayadaw, *sāsanamye* and *visuṃgāmasīmā* are identical in terms of monastic practice. Reference to the Commentary shows that this is not, in fact, the case (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:333). Authorization by a king is required when defining a *visuṃgāmasīmā* ('small' separate village boundary). If a monk wishes to use a *sāsanamye* for monastic purpose, it is still a requirement that it be converted to a *visuṃgāmasīmā* which strictly requires the king's authorization (Ashin Aggavaṃsa 1983:67, 69-70).

Despite Visuddhāyon Sayadaw's opinion being at odds with the Commentary and sub-Commentary on the subject of *sāsanamye,* he had shown a moderately sympathetic understanding of the 'common sense' approach to certain monastic property which I

mentioned in Chapter One as the dominant interpretive stance to emerge in Thailand. Visuddhāyon Sayadaw argued that, if the pagoda was offered to the Buddha by the king, or was granted by government authority, the monks or disciples of the Buddha could use these lands for monastery purposes and monastic rituals. He thus considered this matter to be of a similar nature to that of *visuṃgāmasīmā* on the basis of them both being the property of the Buddha. Therefore, if this principle were to be applied, then monks would be able to conduct *saṅghakamma* (monastic legal activities) in the area of *sāsanamye,* i.e. in the pagoda or any other place of worship (Visuddhāyon Sayadaw 1985:181). As will be discussed in Chapter Five, in the section on *visuṃgāmasīmā,* Visuddhāyon Sayadaw's interpretation was controversial and rejected by many *sīmā* authors in subsequent production of *sīmā* literature.

Just as some Burmese monks e.g. Visuddhāyon Sayadaw (1838-1916) had certain view and practice on *Vinaya*, the Thai monk Vajirañāṇavarorasa's work reflected modern thinking. He was a former prince and a son of King Rāma IV. Writing during the period of the ongoing reform of the Thai Saṅgha under King Monkut that commenced in the 19th century, Vajirañāṇavarorasa (1860-1921) follows the tradition of reform as presented throughout the history of Theravada by referring back to canonical sources, yet breaks from the practice of earlier reforms by taking his own 'common sense' as a higher authority in places where he deemed the text unsatisfactory.

Thus in his *Vinayamukha* book (Vol. iii chapter xxiv section on *sīmā*), with reference to *sīmā nimitta* (boundary marker), he complained about the commentary for not employing reasonable sense for example, a water mark is defined by digging the ground in eight directions and putting water in the dug ground to mark the consecrating place. If even a small drop of water remains until the completion of the *kammavācā* (liturgy) recitation, this can be used (Vajirañāṇavarorasa 1983:20). Vajirañāṇavarorasa's argument is that the author of the *Vinaya* Commentary (i.e. Buddhaghosa, the most esteemed commentarial author in Theravada history) himself added that in such a place it is proper to construct a pile of rocks or use other *nimitta*. By making such a comment, approving one thing and suggesting the use of another *nimitta*, the *Vinaya* Commentary

author created confusion by indicating the risks of such a water mark while many other *nimittas* are available to mark the boundary. Vajirañāṇavarorasa argued that it is a risk because once consecration starts the water cannot be refilled. He stated:

> "I am amazed that *ācariya* (Buddhaghosa), who composed the *Mahāvagga* – commentary dared to contradict a reasonable view so strongly and shamelessly, while comparing *vinayakamma* with playthings. He completely misunderstands the flavour; it is quite disturbing'' (Vajirañāṇavarorasa 1983:20).

Returning to the Burmese tradition, by the end of British rule in 1947 three further *sīmā* manuals had been written. They were the *Visuṃgāmasīmāvinicchaya* (exposition of separate village boundary 1924) by Abhayārāma Sayadaw; the *Sīmāvinicchaya* (exposition of boundary 1938) by Ashin Paññā Mahāthera; and, the *Thein myozon Mahāṭīkā* (great sub-commentary on the diverse boundary 1936) by Bhaddanta Ashin Aggavaṃsa (1880-1946) (popularly known as Kyun Ywar Sayadaw). These three works were, to a degree, set in the social and political context of British rule. As will be examined in the Dispute Manuals, the first two were based on two different disputes that occurred during the foreign occupation. Before turning to specific disputed literature, however, I should acknowledge that in considering the reasons behind the production of the above literature we should always bear in mind that they too reflect some kind of crisis, some need to establish or protect the authority for a particular practice, belief or tradition, or at least to make a specific topic accessible or comprehensible, suggesting the risk of diminished or lost expertise.

As for the last work, Ashin Aggavaṃsa states that his intention when writing his work is to protect Buddhism. He inextricably links *Vinaya* and *sīmā* saying, *Vinaya* is the backbone of Buddhism and *sīmā* is the cornerstone of the *Vinaya* (Ashin Aggavaṃsa 1983: iii, 23 -4). Ashin Aggavaṃsa drew on the views of many scholars available to him at the time; some of them were, for example, Kyiwan Sayadaw, Manle Sayadaw, Sankyaung Sayadaw, Salin Sayadaw, Khinmakan Sayadaw but only a few of these are verifiable today. Despite this, his reports remain useful to modern researchers wanting to understand the complex and diverse opinions of earlier monks on the *sīmā* issue.

Ashin Aggavaṃsa's work was particularly influenced by Maingkhaing Sayadaw and Visuddhāyon Sayadaw, but he dealt with many different topics relating to *sīmā*, across a wide range of issues not found in the writings of his predecessors. Ashin Aggavaṃsa even contested the opinions of previous authors, for example Visuddhāyon Sayadaw's view on *sāsanamye* (religious properties), just mentioned above. He stated that when a worshipper applied to the government for a religious property he or she would have to use the specific term *'sāsanamye'*, (pagoda or religious centre) to clearly stipulate its purpose. Once its purpose had been clearly specified it would be wrong to use it for different purposes such as using a religious centre or temple as a house (Ashin Aggavaṃsa 1983:61). Such an example is a serious concern discussed in the *Samanapāsādikā* because two boundaries are not allowed to interfere with one another (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:324), as will be discussed in Chapter Eight.

Ashin Aggavaṃsa also criticized the view of the two sub-commentaries (*Sāratthadīpanī* and *Vimativinodanī*) on *sīmāsambheda* (connection between boundaries), which we have already discussed in the section four of chapter one. There are three notable points where his criticism is made: connection between two consecrated boundaries; connection between two un-consecrated boundaries; and, connection between consecrated and un-consecrated boundaries. Ashin Aggavaṃsa supports the *Gaṇṭhipada*'s view on this subject, which is in defence of the connection between two consecrated boundaries (See Chapter One and Chapter Eight) (Ashin Aggavaṃsa 1983: 313-4).

3.4. *Sīmā* literature and monastic reform after British rule

Further works on the topic of *sīmā* appeared after the British departed from Burma in 1947. I call this the second period of production of works on *sīmā* as the context in which they were developed differs slightly from the first. The momentum of this period started in 1950 and ended in 1985. During this period Buddhism in Burma became increasingly active in two ways: firstly, as a result of the Sixth Saṅgha Convention which was held in 1955 by the patronage of the Prime Minister U Nu; and,

secondly, by an attempt to purify the Saṅgha. This latter was called *thathana-daw thant shin tidant pyant pwa yay* (purification, perpetuation and propagation of the doctrine). These two events are linked together, especially in terms of the gradual promotion of authentic Theravada teaching and monastic practice. The Sixth Saṅgha Convention was regarded as a continuation of the Fifth Saṅgha Convention held in 1871 by King Mindon in Mandalay (Ling 1979: 59). Both conventions came just before and after British occupation and, in both cases, the explicit motivation was to preserve the authentic teachings of the Buddha. During the Fifth Saṅgha Convention the entire *Tipiṭaka* (the three main division of the Buddha's teaching) was engraved on marble stone slabs (Ling 1979:124). However, there were slight errors made during carving and a revision became necessary.

U Nu formed the *Buddha Sāsana Nuggaha Ahpwe* (Organization for the Promotion of the Buddha's Doctrine) in 1947 in order to encourage and continue the work of his predecessor. He especially patronized two areas: *pariyatti* (the scholarship and theory of Buddhism) and *paṭipatti* (the practice of Buddhism including meditation). The *Buddha Sāsana Nuggaha Ahpwe* subsequently gave rise to another organization called the Buddha *Sāsana* Council (BSC) in 1952 (Mendelson 1975: 265ff). This Council took the initiative to celebrate both 2,500 years of Buddhism in 1954 and the convention of the Sixth Saṅgha Council in 1955. Where the earlier Convention had been responsible for the carving of the sacred texts on to marble, after the Sixth Saṅgha Convention all *Tipiṭaka* texts were printed on paper and up to the present time these are regarded as the purest and perfect teaching of Theravada Buddhism within the Burmese tradition. They are also regarded as the most authoritative editions in scholarship generally.

In his support and promotion of Buddhism U Nu drafted a 'State Constitution' which made Buddhism the State religion. However, before it could be put into action negative responses from non-Buddhist minorities brought him to a halt, even affecting his political life to the extent that it ultimately collapsed. His authority had been severely weakened by challenges posted by minority rebel groups and by the Communist Party

and these eventually led to General Ne Win seizing power in 1962 (Spiro 1982:385-6). U Nu's work on a new Constitution was deferred as Ne Win was busy with the internal political affairs and fighting insurgency, but a decade later Ne Win started to redraft a 'State Constitution' for the country and this included a monastic Constitution. One of his intentions was to control both the interests of the public and monks engaged in political activities. The notion of Buddhism as a State religion was excluded from this new draft but he cautiously turned his attention to removing monks identified as 'corrupt', perhaps a similar line of rhetoric, which we saw in Chapter two. According to Dhammaghosa (1981:143), the accusations were made that many monks were increasingly involved with *siddhi-vijjā* (the power gained by charm or magic), astrology, business and politics and that there were even bogus monks who just put on their robes without following the *Vinaya* rules while many others broke their fundamental monastic rules, mainly *pārājika* (see more about *pārājika* in Chapter Four). I have observed earlier that such statements are part of the political rhetoric, and also discount traditional practices, and we can see how such rhetoric follows traditional lines of argument.

As a result of this perceived need to control monks, the government initiated a pre-consultation plan to draft a constitution for the Saṅgha in 1975 but action came later, in 1980. The Minister for Home and Religious Affairs offered religious titles, namely Abhidaja Mahāraṭha Guru ('State Spiritual Adviser') and Aggamahāpaṇḍita (Great Scholar), to the high ranking monks 1978, as an effort to implement the objectives that had already been consulted on at the ministerial level for this constitution. In 1979, U Newin, a Founder of Socialist Republic of the Union of Myanmar, gave a public speech on the need of *Thathana-daw thant shin tidant pyant pwa yay* (purification, perpetuation and propagation of the Buddha *thathana*) (Ashin Kelasa 1980:6). He also gave an assurance to organise an all *gaings* (sects) representatives' assembly in 1980. The Government thus invited senior monks from around the country to attend a series of meetings at which the Monastic Constitution was to be redrafted.

The finished Constitution was finally agreed at a three day convention held from 24th to 27th May 1980 with the attendance of 1235 participating monks represented from

across the country (Dhammaghosa 1981:176). The Convention selected and elected two main administrative bodies along with the State Advisory Committee: *Naing- ngandaw Baho Saṅghawunsaung* (State Central Working Committee), *Naing- ngandaw Saṅghamahānāyaka* (literally means 'State Great Council of the Saṅgha') and *Naing-ngandaw Ovādācariya* ('State Advisory Committee'). 300 monks were selected from 1235 'Saṅgha Representatives' for the State Central Working Committee. From these selected members of the State Central Working Committee, there were 33 members elected for the State *Saṅghamahānāyaka* Committee. The member of the State Central Working Committee together with the State *Saṅghamahānāyaka* Committee again confirmed the 81 members of the State Advisory Committee, who were already previously selected (Ashin Kelasa 1980:71,160,162).

The elected members of the State *Saṅghamahānāyaka* Committee appointed a subordinate working committee called *Naing- ngandaw Vinicchaya Apwe* ('State Council for the Exposition on *Vinaya* Issue') along with a new guideline for their role in the monastic affairs. We may call this committee as 'State *Vinicchaya* Committee'. This guideline is entirely based on the *Vinaya* rules and its name is called *Naing- ngandaw Vinicchaya Letswe* ('State Guideline for the 'Exposition on Vinaya Issue'). Members of this Committee played a key role in combating those monks who were not observing the precepts particularly relating to the women, businesses and politics including those practices that did not conform to Theravada teaching. This Council later introduced a new rule that prohibited the monks from visiting entertainment places i.e. theatre and football ground. The action for the *thathana-daw thant shin ti dant pyant pwa yay* was initially carried out by the State *Vinicchaya* Committee but if they could not solve a problem, the matter normally transferred to the State *Saṅghamahānāyaka* Committee. The State *Saṅghamahānāyaka* again worked with the State Central Working Committee to find the solution and in many cases, they both joined together to form a 'Special *Vinicchaya* Committee'. While both the State *Saṅghamahānāyaka* Committee and the State Central Working Committee worked together to handle the monastic problem, the fundamental activities of the State *Saṅghamahānāyaka* were to deal with the education

and promotion of the *sāsana* e.g. by opening the State *Pariyatti Thathana* University and Saṅgha hospital. The State *Saṅghamahānāyaka* also established *Taungtan-thathanapyu Aphwe* (a missionary commission to spread the Dhamma in hill tracts areas).

These Committees, just mentioned above, gave rise to a number of *Vinayavinicchaya* (exposition on the *Vinaya* rules) books within five years (between 1980 and 1985). The work of Nyaung Yan Taw-ya Sayadaw (1982), who was the leader of the Sixth Saṅgha Convention, was one of the most familiar works committed to the solution of monastic problem during this period. The name of the book bears his name: *Nyaung Yan Sayadaw Vinicchaya Paungkhyot*, (the comprehensive solution of Nyaung Yan Taw-ya Sayadaw) in which he also dealt with the *sīmā* issue. Interestingly, the Burmese religious ministry also reprinted *Thein myozon mahāṭīkā* (great sub-commentary on the diverse boundary), originally published in 1936 by Ashin Aggavaṃsa and *Visuddhāyon ason apyat* (*Visudhāyon* solution guide 1909) by Visuddhāyon Sayadaw (1985: xxvii), *Parivāsa Mānattādi Vinicchaya Kyan* (exposition on probation and penance practice 1982) by Sankyaung Sayadaw (1874-?). Each of these books contains new preface stating about the problem of monastic practices that are needed to be addressed by producing proper guidelines. The *Thein myozon mahāṭīkā* especially praises for the 'purification and restoration of genuine *thathana* (Ashin Aggavaṃsa 1983: i) while considering this book as an inspiration for the solution of problem.

The momentum driving the revitalization of the doctrine continued in many different forms since the Sixth Saṅgha Convention and this is also reflected in the rise of books on *sīmā*. There was the publication of *Thein myozon bhāsāṭīkā* (sub-commentary to the various boundaries 1968) by Ashin Sobhitācāra and *Thein Thindan* [(Guide to the boundary study (first published) in 1975] by Ashin Sīlānanda. *Thein myozon bhāsāṭīkā* deals with the method of revocation and consecration using canonical, commentarial and sub-commentarial sources. The author mainly focuses on three areas: the procedure of revocation required when an old *sīmā* is abolished; the method for new *sīmā* consecration; and, finally, the usage and establishment of un-consecrated *sīmās*. Ashin

Sobhitācāra does not, however, analyze these; he merely systematizes canonical, commentarial and sub-commentarial sources.

Ashin Sīlānanda, however, takes a different approach in his book *Thein Thindan* (Guide to the boundary study); first published in 1975, which contains a series of edited lectures he had given on *sīmā*. Since *sīmā* is of the greatest importance to the purity of Theravada monasticism, it has proved to be a complicated issue. Ashin Sīlānanda reports in his book on disputes relating to the consecration of *sīmā* taken from two dispute manuals: *Visumgāmasīmāvinicchaya* (exposition of separate village boundary 1924) by Abhayārāma Sayadaw and *Simāvinicchaya* (exposition of boundary 1963) by Ashin Paññā Mahāthera. These books were written based on two *sīmā* disputes that occurred during the time Burma was under British rule. I shall write more about these two books in the next section covering dispute manuals. Ashin Sīlānanda received inspiration from these two disputes to write a more complete version of a *sīmā* book. This was written in the Burmese language. Being a well-known monastic scholar his work is particularly valued for his analytical skill.

The work of *Parivāsa Mānattādi Vinicchaya Kyan* focused on the transgression of *Vinaya* rules where the author discussed about a series of procedures dealing with the probation and penance. These procedures were abstracted from the *Vinaya Piṭaka* and regarded to be the complete guidelines for the Burmese practitioners. Interestingly, the validity of a *sīmā* is included as being one of the guidelines necessary to complete the task of the probation and penance. The author thus dedicated a section on both consecrated and un-consecrated *sīmā*. As for the un-consecrated boundary, he briefly discussed referring to *udakukkhepasīmā* (boundary created by the splashing of water), *sattabbhantarasīmā* (a boundary defined in an uninhabited forest or open space by seven *abbhantara* 'intervals', a topic we shall return to in Chapter Six), *gāmasīmā* (village boundary) and *visumgāmasīmā* ('separate' land within the village boundary) while providing procedures of a *sīmā* consecration within *gāmasīmā* and *visumgāmasīmā* lands.

The final period of *sīmā* publications is very recent. Between 2003 and 2009 four books were written: the *Sīmā Vīmaṃsanakathā* (expositional verses on boundary 2003) by Bhaddanta Vaṇṇitābhivaṃsa; the *Sīmāvinicchayādi kyan* (expositions of the boundary 2007) by Bhaddanta Kovida, the *Thein Lan-hnun* (guide to the boundary 2006) by Kavisāra, and *Gāmasīmādivinicchaya* (exposition of village boundaries 2009) by Ashin Sudhammācārābhivaṃsa. Whereas previous works on *sīmā* were influenced by social and political contexts, these books were perhaps aimed solely at students who wanted to access the commentary and sub-commentaries. The *Sīmā Vīmaṃsanakathā* focuses on the diverse locations of a *sīmā* selected during consecration and on how *nimitta* (boundary markers) should be arranged if a *sīmā* is established inside an erected house. The author also discusses how a *sīmā* should be established on top of a marble slab. The second and third books, similar to each other in terms of content, report a variety of topics with concise information again collected from the canon, commentary and sub-commentaries while the last book (*Gāmasīmādivinicchaya*) mainly focuses on how monks within a village boundary are organised and managed during a *sīmā* consecration. These four books are therefore, much smaller than previous works on *sīmā*, with only one or two Pāli quotations given on each topic, without any discussion.

3.5. Dispute literature and manuals

I have suggested above that a sense of crisis lay behind the production of some new or revised texts within the tradition and, indeed, some of the literature on the subject of *sīmā* was produced in response to very specific crises. This latter material I have termed 'dispute literature' as it was dedicated to resolving or recording the outcome of disputes. While dispute manuals could have been included with the traditional manuals described above, they differ in that, rather than exclusively repeating material from pre-existing sources or giving an overview, they move the topic on and represent new developments. These manuals were written in response to a specific dispute where there was a doubt or an accusation that a particular *sīmā* was incorrectly established and therefore invalid. As far as I am aware there were five major dispute manuals produced in the period between British Burma and early modern Burma. They are: (1) the

Sīmāvivādavinicchayakathā (exposition of the boundary controversy 1858) by
Ñeyyadhamma (the Saṅgharāja of Burma). This first dispute manual gave rise to another
two manuals: (2) *Sīmānayadappana* (a mirror of the *sīmā* consecration methods, 1885)
and (3) *Sīmālakkhaṇadīpanī* (manual of boundary characteristic 1881). (For the
development of these two *sīmās*, see below). The last two manuals written by Burmese
monks are: (4) *Visuṃgāmasīmāvinicchaya* (exposition of separate village boundary
1924) by Abhayārāma Sayadaw and (5) finally, *Sīmāvinicchaya* (exposition of boundary
1963) by Ashin Paññā Mahāthera.

The first manual, the *Sīmāvivādavinicchayakathā,* was reported in Kiefer Pülz's
article on '*A legal judgment regarding a sīmā controversy*' (1998). (See introduction).
Kiefer Pülz, however, admitted that the author of *Sīmāvivādavinicchayakathā* did not
explain details about the background of the dispute. Her report thus drew on Kitsiri
Malalgoda's (the author of *Buddhism in Sinhalese society* 1976) account to discuss about
the background of *Sīmāvivādavinicchayakathā.*[55] According to Kiefer Pülz's article
mentioned above, a *sīmā* dispute started within the *Amarapura Nikāya*, one of the three
Nikāyas in Sri Lanka around 1845 (Kiefer Pülz 1998: 214). This *Nikāya* descended from
the Burmese tradition, and divided into two groups based on the years of their ordination
in Burma. The main centre for the first group, who ordained in 1800, was located in
Valitara, the coastal line of Balapiṭiya, and the latter group, who ordained in 1808, had
their base in Dadalla, not far from the former. When the former group returned home
from Burma, they established an *udakukkhepasīmā* ('water boundary created by the
splashing of water', a topic explored in Chapter Six), a permanent pavilion in the Madu
river, Balapitiya, for their regular *saṅghakamma*. Later, Dadalla monks joined to perform
their *saṅghakamma* with Valitara monks in the same *udakukkhepasīmā* till a dispute
occurred in 1845 (ibid).

---

[55]Kiefer Pülz notes that the *Sīmāvivādavinicchayakathā* was edited by Minayeff and published in 1887 in
the Journal of the Pāli Text Society (Kiefer Pülz -210). But the further background in her work came from
a number of other sources such as Kitsiri Malalgoda (1976:151), Niharranjan Ray (1946:247-248) and
Jotiya Dhirasekera (1982:329-333). The manuscript of *Sīmāvivādavinicchayakathā* retained and
catalogued in the Royal Library of Copenhagen under the 'Catalogue of Oriental Manuscripts'.

Due to an increase in the number of members, and a demand for space within the established *udakukkhepasīmā*, the Valitara group extended their *udakukkhepasīmā*, using platforms (Kiefer Pülz 1998:215). Previously, this *sīmā* was located away from the bank of the river but, because of the new extension, the area between *udakukkhepasīmā* and the shore 'nearly' connected each other, remaining only small gap. This eventually became the source of dispute between these two groups as Dadalla monks withdrawn their association with the Valitara monks in this boundary (Kiefer Pülz 1998:215, Dhirasekera 1982:330). The main argument of Dadalla monks is that the platform must be kept away from the bank of the river more than one splashed water area. In other word, when splashing the water from the pavilion, it must not drop on the bank of the river because the area of the shore/bank belonged to the *gāmasīmā* (village boundary). Therefore, these two boundaries are considered being mixed with one another because of the splashing water. According to Dadalla monks, this is called *sīmāsaṅkara* (mixed boundary), which invalidates both boundaries and it is required that these two boundaries (*gāmasīmā* and *udakukkhepasīmā*) be separated from each other more than one splashed water area for valid monastic practice to take place. The Dadalla monks requested the demolition of the extended platform. The Valitara monks, however, insisted that a gap (an interval) is sufficient to separate between them, not necessarily to measure the boundary with the splashed water. This view is also shared with the modern Burmese monks' practice as the splashing of water is no longer applicable in modern Burmese practice (see Chapter Six). The Dadalla monks finally decided to withdraw their participation in this *sīmā* and requested the re-ordination of any monk who had received ordination in it.

In 1858 a group of Dadalla monks took their dispute to the office of the Burmese Saṅgharāja, Ñeyyadhamma who was the head of the Saṅgha at the time of the dispute. He wrote the *Sīmāvivādavinicchayakathā* based on the account given by the messengers. He decided, apparently, to base his decision on the rule found in the *Vimativinodanī* which states that the extended platform was, in fact, a *sīmāsaṅkara* (mixed boundary) (Kiefer Pülz 1998: 213-4). It was thus deemed invalid for monastic practice. The

Valitara monks, however, rejected this judgment and one of their *Vinaya* experts, Ambagahapitiye Vimalasāra, wrote the *Sīmālakkhaṇadīpanī* (manual of boundary characteristic 1881), in which he not only defended the *Balapiṭiya sīmā* (Kiefer Pülz 1998: 216) but also rejected the Ñeyyadhamma's decision. In the subsequent debate between these two groups, a Dadalla monk named Radombe Dhammālankāra wrote another manual: the *Sīmānayadappana* (a mirror of the *sīmā* consecration methods, 1885) mentioned above (Dhirasekera 1982:329-333). This manual re-emphasized and confirmed Ñeyyadhamma's work. These three manuals were, therefore, produced as the result of a single issue of *udakukkhepasīmā* in Madu River, Balapitiya, Sri Lanka.

The news of this dispute spread to the wider Theravada Saṅgha in Burma and Thailand via different channels. W.P. Guruge reported a series of letters communicating between Sri Lankan monks and the Thai King. One of the letters seeks the Thai Saṅgha's opinion on this dispute. It said that "the opinion of the Burmese Saṅgha was obtained in 1856[56] but the controversy continued" (1984:169). Ven. Subhuti wrote this letter to the Thai king especially to obtain the opinion of the Thai Saṅgha. They, nevertheless, did not reply with any opinion on the problem, but another Burmese high ranking monk, the founder of *Shwegyin Nikāya*, who was known as Shwegyin Sayadaw, cautiously became involved in the event. He had learned about this problem practically during his stay in Sri Lanka in 1879 (Shwegyin Sayadaw 1979:14). He responded to the event by writing a book called – *Lankāsāsanavisuddhikathā* ('discussion of purity in Lanka Buddhism 1880) but its content has little to do with a judgment on this *sīmā*. The author, rather, requested unity within the Saṅgha. He called the two groups *saṅkaravādī* (advocates of mixed boundary i.e. between *udakukkhepasīmā* and *gāmasīmā*) and *asaṅkaravādī* (advocates of unmixed boundary i.e. between *udakukkhepasīmā* and *gāmasīmā*). The former group is the Dadalla monks, who believe that the *udakukkhepasīmā* has indeed mixed with *gāmasīmā* while the latter, the Valitara monks, who do not accept the argument of former group. Shwegyin Sayadaw too, like Thai Saṅgha, did not support

---

[56] The date 1856 is derived from Ananda Guruge but the date given by Kiefer Pülz is 1858, based on the book written by Burmese Saṅgharājā. I do not know which is correct.

either sides, only stated that the argument between the two groups might never end unless they applied the Dhamma, the teaching of the Buddha, rather than applying the *Vinaya* to the issue of this *sīmā*. He provided many examples and advices for the promotion of unity between these two groups.

As we saw Ñeyyadhamma made a decision regarding this *sīmā* that it should be a mixed boundary without having seen the site in person. Interestingly however, Shwegyin Sayadaw, being highly scholarly monk, did not comment wrong or right to either side even though he witnessed the *sīmā*. Perhaps, he was aware of the decision given by Ñeyyadhamma, which could contradict the argument of the high ranking monk if he were to make any decision. Shwegyin Sayadaw's neutrality may also be the fact that each group retained their view based on the different souces of Vinaya texts. My attempt to trace these three dispute manuals proved unsuccessful. Therefore, I cannot discuss their contents except the information given above.

While the five manuals referred to above resulted from a challenge to the views on the correct establishment of an *udakukkhepasīmā*, more dispute manuals continued to emerge in response to different crises occurring both in Sri Lanka and in Burma. Two *sīmā* consecrations, one taking place in 1924 in Colombo and the other, in 1938, in Burma both resulted in new dispute manuals. Both *sīmās* were consecrated within *visuṃgāmasīmā* but the disagreements were for two different reasons. The former consecration, which took place in Colombo City, was considered faulty due to issues over the *kammavācā* (liturgy) while the latter, in Burma, was caused by the issue of extended lands, akin to the one that occurred in Balapitiya, Sri Lanka. Abhayārāma Sayadaw, a Burmese monk, led the former, a *visuṃgāmasīmā* that was consecrated in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in 1924. This *sīmā* was challenged by Venerable Upasena Mahāthera, a Rāmañña Nikāya monk and author of *Abaddhasīmāvinicchaya*[57] (exposition of un-consecrated boundary) (Abhayārāma Sayadaw 1973: IV). According to

---

[57] The information about this book recorded in the *Visuṃgāmasīmāvinicchaya*. The author, however, does not provide the content of this book; he only stated that Upasena wrote against the consecration in his work on *abaddhasīmāvinicchaya*. I was unsuccessful in tracing this book.

this monk, the activities in the *visuṃgāmasīmās* found both in Burma and Sri Lanka were not successful because of the recitation of *ti-cīvara-avippavāsa-sīmāsammutti-kammavācā* (liturgy for the consecration as not being without one's triple robes). This *ti-cīvara-avippavāsa-sīmāsammutti-kammavācā* is one of the two liturgies employed in every *sīmā* consecration. Upasena Mahāthera stated that there is no such term as *nagara* (city) contained within the liturgy, only the terms *gāma* (village) and *nigama* (village market town). Therefore, if a *visuṃgāmasīmā* is consecrated in a city, the same liturgy which is recited in *gāma* and *nigama,* cannot be practiced and, since Colombo is a city, the consecration of a *visuṃgāmasīmā* cannot be successful.

Abhayārāma Sayadaw responded to Upasena by writing a manual called the *Visuṃgāmasīmāvinicchaya* (exposition of separate boundary). In it he provides ample references and quotations on the meaning of *gāma* and *nigama* from the canon, commentary and sub-commentary to prove that the consecration of a *visuṃgāmasīmā* is completely valid in a city. The references are varied, being not only from the *Vinaya Piṭaka* but also quotes from the *Abhidhamma* and the *suttas.* One of his arguments is that if *avippavāsasīmā kammavācā* is only used when a *sīmā* is consecrated in a village boundary, the second *pārājika* offence regarding stealing has to be altered, because the second *pārājika* only uses the terms *gāmam vā araññaṃ vā* (village and forest) for the offence, there being no *nagara* (city) but if a monk steals anything from a *nagara* (city) area, he equally offends. The same method would, therefore, apply in the case of *visuṃgāmasīmā* consecration in a city. More about this argument see Chapter Five.

As for the *visuṃgāmasīmā* consecration in Burma, the dispute was mainly related whether a *visuṃgāmasīmā* can be extended to *gāmasīmā* area. The dispute manual called the *Sīmāvinicchaya kyan* (exposition of boundary manual 1963) was first published in 1963 by Ashin Paññā Mahāthera, but the *sīmā* consecration was completed more than thirty years earlier at Mehtee temple, a Shwegyin *Nikāya* temple, Mawlamyine, Myanmar in 1938. The temple had received a total grant of 40 feet from the local government under the name of *visuṃgāma* (separate village boundary) land but it was of a size insufficient for the purpose of consecrating a *sīmā*. The participating Saṅgha

therefore extended it 10 feet to the north and south during the consecration. The extended land came under question by the local monks who considered it faulty for the reason that this extended land is no longer considered a *visuṃgāma*; it rather becomes part of the *gāmasīmā* (village boundary). Therefore, the extension to the *gāmasīmā* area is considered faulty. Ashin Paññā Mahāthera composed the *Sīmāvinicchaya kyan* in order to defend the validity of this *sīmā*. In its defence the author followed the rules explained by *Mahāpadumathera* which are recorded in the *Samantapāsādikā*.

3.6. Conclusion

In this chapter I have looked at how the issue of *sīmā* became a topic of close consideration in the context of British rule and then nationalism and nation building. *Sīmā* literature was produced in response to a number of issues, one of which was the result of a combination of foreign occupation and the focus on the consolidation of monastic 'purity and unity' and such scholarship thrived in the context of the promotion of Buddhist learning and an examination system based on the knowledge of Pāli and *Vinaya*. I divided the literature into two types, '*sīmā* manuals' more generally, both free-standing and contained within discussions of *Vinaya*, and 'dispute manuals', a response to specific disputes about the validity of a *sīmā*, which arose both in Burma and in the Burmese-derived ordination lineages of Sri Lanka. I observed that the emphasis on Pāli knowledge and correct *Vinaya* continued in the modern period, in part in reaction to the political clout of monks that had developed during the British period, in part as an expression of Buddhism's place at the heart of Burmese identity and nationhood.

I pointed out the importance of the canonical and commentarial sources, showing how these texts involved in defending the 'correctness' of the monastic practice and *sīmā* establishment. I also noted the 'common sense' approach developed in Thailand in relation to *sīmā* practice was on the whole discounted by the Burmese who emphasised the interpretation of the canon through the commentaries, especially the *Samantapāsādikā*. In subsequent chapters of this thesis, I shall examine the practical

aspects of *sīmā* in Burmese Buddhism, referring back to the canonical, commentarial and more modern literature outlined in preceeding chapters.

Chapter Four:

Development of the early monastic Saṅgha

and its relationship with *sīmā*

4.1. Introduction

In previous chapters, we have examined how Burmese kings and monastic scholars made rigorous efforts to preserve and redefine what they regarded as the original teaching of the Buddha. Purity of the monastic boundary was, as we saw, one of the fundamental factors without which Burmese believes that Theravada monasticism cannot be considered pure. We did not, however, look at the earliest account of monastic boundary in those previous chapters. My intention in this chapter is, therefore, to introduce the early concept of monastic boundary and its practice. It will lead us to understand the concept of *sīmā*, especially why it is so important even in the modern monastic practice. This chapter will also explain the crucial parts of *sīmā* consecration as guided in the early canon- namely referring to the unity and purity of the Saṅgha - and will be useful in the subsequent chapters.

There are four sections in this chapter. The first section deals with the early narrative concerning the monastic boundary which relates how the *uposatha* ritual gives rise to the concepts unity and purity of monks of a residence (*āvāsa*). This section will tell us how this *uposatha* ritual eventually gives rise to the necessity of having a monastic boundary. In sections two and three, I shall look at how this early concept of unity and purity of a residence gradually developed into diverse monastic communities and how these communities associated with one another to establish a common Saṅgha under *Vinaya* rules. Here we shall see the importance of a *sīmā* when making a monastic decision by this common Saṅgha. I shall then explain in the fourth section how the development of unity and purity is finally redefined by a new concept known as *hatthapāsa* rule (*hatthapāsa* literally means 'near to the hands', and refers to a space of two and half cubits length) rule. Principally, each of these sections finally brings about a

concept in which the authority of monastic decision making process depends on the monastic boundary.

4.2. Background of *sīmā* and early monastic practice

Sīmā literally means a boundary, limit or border. It can apply to the boundary of a house, a village or a district but its meaning becomes specialised when referring to a boundary created solely for the purpose of monastic ritual. Such rituals only become valid when conducted within a specialised boundary created using specific guidelines. Its literal meaning therefore becomes distinctive when applied in a monastic context. How this boundary is defined will be explained in Chapter Seven. As I shall explain there, monks today, with the pressure of Burmese emphasis on maintaining monastic purity, face a considerable challenge in applying the inheritance of canonical and commentarial definitions, and regulations in establishing a valid *sīmā* in the modern context.

The creation of *sīmā* can be traced back to the introduction of the fortnightly *uposatha* ceremony that forms the basis of monastic self-regulation and unity. *Uposatha* was a pre-Buddhist Vedic ceremony adopted by the Buddha at the request of King Bimbisāra. The narrative to this ceremony is that the *paribbājika*, (wandering religious mendicants contemporary to the time of the Buddha) observed *uposatha* once a week when they would assemble and discuss their teachings; perhaps even debate their individual schools of thought with those of other *paribbājika* sects (Mv II.2ff). The king, so the *Mahāvagga* relates, was concerned that the disciples of the Buddha did not follow such a practice and believed that it would benefit their teaching. Buddha accepted and introduced *uposatha* observances to his disciples. However, he reformed his predecessor's practices by asking his disciples to observe *uposatha* twice a month, at the new moon and full moon days of the lunar calendar (Mv II.4). The Buddha continued to reform the *uposatha* ceremony. He, for example, replaced the discussion of teaching with the recitation of the *Pātimokkha* codes and since the recitation of these codes is only a matter for the monks (and, separately, nuns) this resulted in the laity being barred (Mv

II.3; 16.8). As a result the ceremony became an occasion for monastic affairs independent of the laity's involvement.

The procedures for conducting the ceremony were undeveloped and the monks were described as not being completely sure as to what they should do when reciting the *pātimokkha* codes. This uncertainty provides the narrative context for many questions to be raised by the Buddha's disciples regarding the *uposatha* ceremony including crucial questions such as the size of ceremony (how many monks should attend), who was eligible to attend and where the ceremony should be held. This last question is fundamental to the development of a *sīmā* and will be examined later. The size of the ceremony came into question because monks were unsure whether all monks across a region, or every disciple of the Buddha, should be invited to attend the ceremony. The Buddha responded to this by adding a new rule defining the 'activity of *uposatha* as being complete unity' (*samaggānaṃ uposathakammaṃ*) achieved by the attendance of 'all members of a residence' (*sāmaggī yāvatā ekavāsoti*) (Mv II.5.1)[58]. In order to prevent separate services taking place within a residence (*āvāsa*), he added another rule where he stated: 'Let no one, O Bhikkhus, fix upon two *uposatha* halls in one residence (*ekasamiṃ āvāse*)' (Mv II.8.3). This not only determines unity of the monks but also prevents disunity of the Saṅgha within a monastery.

To meet the needs of sick monks in a residence (*āvāsa*), the Buddha permitted them to send their consent to the ceremony via an attending monk (Mv II.23). Where possible, however, the Buddha insisted that the ceremony be held near the bed of a sick monk (Mv II.22.3). Only where this was not possible was the sending of consent by proxy approved. It was in such ways that the Buddha reformed the Vedic-period, pre-Buddhist ceremony of *uposatha* to meet the need for unity of his disciples in an *āvāsa*. With regard to the question of eligibility of a monk at the *uposatha* ceremony, the Buddha states that a monk who has committed an offence should not be included in the ceremony unless his confession is made prior to the ceremony taking place (Mv II.27.1). The *uposatha* ceremony brought into focus an awareness of purity and this might well

---

[58] Rhys Davids and Oldenburg translate this passage as: ''I prescribe, O Bhikkhus, that the *Uposatha* service is to be held by the complete fraternity'' (Mv II.5.1).

have been one of the reasons why the Buddha asked for the recitation of the *Pātimokkha* rules since it would assist monks in remembering the rules and confessing having broken any of them.

Two fundamental rules have now been established: unity and purity. On the one hand, all members of a residence are required to observe the ceremony and, on the other, they should be free from offence. The importance of purity and unity of the Saṅgha is fully reflected in how a sick monk should behave if he cannot attend the *uposatha* ceremony. Buddha stated that before sending his consent or proxy the sick monk must confess his purity in front of the messenger (Mv II.22.1). The messenger will then take two proxies to the ceremony: one giving consent to the ceremony (Mv II.23), thus showing that the sick monk has no complaint and supports decisions taken in his absence (Mv II.23.3), and the other affirming the purity of the sick monk in his precepts, his having confessed in front of the messenger before sending his proxy (ibid). The messenger should report these at the start of the ceremony in order for its validation (Mv II.22.4)

The next issue requiring a ruling was the assembly place for *uposatha*. Recorded disputes among the disciples regarding the place of assembly are found in the *Mahāvagga* (Mv II. 11 and Mv II. 8. 1). Some monks wanted the *uposatha* ceremony to be held in their *āvāsa* while others claimed their *āvāsa* to be more suitable. There are more monks, who do not know where the *uposatha* ceremony would be held (ibid). This narrative of argument and uncertainty again provides the backdrop to the laying down of a new rule from the Buddha. To overcome this problem Buddha introduced two solutions: one, a monastic boundary (*sīmā*) and the other, an *uposathāgāra* (*uposatha* structure or hall). These two places developed one after the other and both are intended for the same purpose: to serve the unity and purity of the monks. The determination of these two boundaries is, however, slightly different, as theoretically, *uposathāgāra* is much easier than *sīmā*. Monks can establish an *uposathāgāra* by agreeing the place they want to sit for the service. The Buddha suggested a few familiar places: a *vihāra* (monastery), an *addhayoga* (a barrel-vaulted building), single storied building, a gabled

building or cell, any one of which could be determined for permanent usage by the monks' agreement (Mv II.8.1). Once a place has been agreed, a competent monk recites the following liturgy:

> "*suṇātu me bhante saṅgho yadi saṅghassa pattakallaṃ itthannāmaṃ vihāraṃ uposathāgāraṃ sammanneyya esā ñatti*": "let the Saṅgha hear me. If the Saṅgha is ready, let the Saṅgha agree that this *vihāra,* called such and such, be our *uposatha* hall. This is the announcement" ((Mv II.8.1).

The *vihāra,* monastic residence, thus becomes the place for the *uposatha* ceremony. The determination of a *sīmā* is, however, quite different from an *uposathāgāra* as it involves a number of rules, one being determination of the boundary markers (Mv II.6). As will be seen in my examination of the consecration of a *sīmā* in Chapter Seven, the procedures for *sīmā* consecration are considerably methodical and specific; they not only require consecration within accurate boundary markers but also the ceremony must be conducted by the correct number and type of monks and the correct recitation of liturgy, as guided by the *Samantapāsādikā.*

The liturgy (only a motion) for *uposatha* just stated above is only aimed at the *uposatha* service, but as further will be explained in Chapter Seven, the liturgy (a motion with one proclamation) for a *sīmā* consecration is more technical in terms of its intention and usages because it included two important terms: These are: *samānasaṃvāsa* (common communion or common affiliation, literally 'shared living') and *uposatha* (the *uposatha* ceremony). The former term, according to the *Sārathadīpaniṭīkā* (vol iii. 1992:274), may apply to all monastic legal activities including *uposatha* ceremony whereas the term *uposatha* is specific to the *uposatha* ceremony. Ashin Janakābhivaṃsa (2003:342) has further commented on the *Sārathadīpaniṭīkā's* definition stating that *uposatha* comes under the concept of *samānasaṃvāsa* because the *uposatha* ceremony is one of the monastic legal activities. Therefore, the *uposatha* is also considered to be a part of *samānasaṃvāsa* (common/shared communion). A question can be asked why in *sīmā* liturgy the term *uposatha* is included separately if the term *samānasaṃvāsa* covers all monastic legal activities. According to Ashin Janakābhivaṃsa (2003:342), it is because the term '*uposatha*' has already been used before the concept of

samānasaṃvāsa and when all monastic legal activities were considered to be part of *samānasaṃvāsa,* the term, *uposatha,* continued to be distinctive on its own practice. Therefore, when a *sīmā* is consecrated, it requires to use both terms: *uposatha* and *samānasaṃvāsa* (ibid). The notion of *samānasaṃvāsa* is thus applied to, and has implications for, a wide range of other monastic rituals such as *upasampadākamma* (the monastic legal activities for the ordination ceremony), *kaṭhina* (the monastic legal activities for the robe offering ceremony) and *pavāraṇā* (invitation) ceremony. Although these monastic rituals are different in term of practice, each of them is called: *samānasaṃvāsa* due to the fact that such monastic rituals can only be carried out by the community of monks who are eligible to become a member of the common communion (*samānasaṃvāsa*) and all of them (with exceptions due to illness or Saṅgha business) must attend if they are within the *sīmā*. Our discussion about this eligibility will continue in the next section. The liturgy of a *sīmā* consecration thus uses the term - *samānasaṃvāsa* to include all monastic communions. Because of this term - *samānasaṃvāsa* – used in the liturgy of a *sīmā* consecration, all activities of the full community, i.e. entailing *samānasaṃvāsa*, are only conducted within a *sīmā* and this therefore replaces the *uposathāgāra* which, with the new definition, became insufficient for this purpose. It is in the *sīmā*, therefore, that all monastic legal procedures are conducted including the *uposatha* ceremony. As will be examined in the next section, the connotation of *samānasaṃvāsa* becomes more complex because of its application to all monastic rituals.

The term *sīmā* does not contain the inherent meaning that all monks of an *āvāsa* must attend to validate the ceremonies conducted within it. The term therefore requires further definition and clarification. When conducting a monastic legal activity in a *sīmā* the most suitable monks will be selected and invited to conduct monastic rituals. For example, when an ordination ceremony is carried out inside the *sīmā* of an *āvāsa* (residence) the choice of suitable monks can be made from amongst those living within the community or from suitable monks living outside in other communities. The meaning of the term *sīmā* is, therefore, that of an independent unit of a saṅgha set within

a monastery and separated from the rest of the monks' resident within it. Here we see the first and earliest type of monastic division within an *āvāsa*: being between the monks who are invited to perform the ceremony inside the *sīmā* and the remaining Saṅgha who are excluded from the ceremony.

However, even though some resident monks are excluded from the *sīmā*, the monastic legal activities within the *sīmā* do not create division, since the *sīmā* has its own legal status and the monks who are invited into the *sīmā* represent the monks of the whole *āvāsa*. It was in this way that the *sīmā* started to rule the *āvāsa* and, indeed, the original unity of the *āvasa* is now replaced by the unity of monks within a *sīmā*. In other words, unity of a Saṅgha is now defined by the *sīmā*, there being a representative assembly of monks selected by the Saṅgha, acting on behalf of the whole *āvāsa*. More importantly, this assembly has the legal monastic authority to decide any matters occurring in the *āvāsa*. As will be explained when I discuss the *hatthapāsa* rule below, this unity of representative Saṅgha requires them to sit closely next to each other to validate any ceremony taking place in the *sīmā* (See also Chapter Five).

The *sīmā* and unity of the representative Saṅgha became crucial for early monastic unity. Each *sīmā* was deemed to be a unit of Saṅgha and each unit of Saṅgha performed monastic legal activities using the same procedures. If, for example, there are many *sīmās* in a region there will be many units of Saṅgha within that region. The members of the Saṅgha within a *sīmā* are called *samānasaṃvāsaka*, which simply means equal members: *samāna*=equally and *saṃvāsaka* = co-resident. When acting as *samāna-saṃvāsaka* these representative monks ensure that all monks living in the same residence are equal in terms of monastic legal activities (M V. II. 5ff) since they act on behalf of the whole *āvāsa*.

Consequently, the early consecrated *sīmā*, originally founded in an *āvāsa*, later came to be known as *samānasaṃvāsasīmā* – (boundary for common communion or boundary for shared communion). This boundary was contrasted with other *āvāsa* which were called *nānāsaṃvāsasīmā* - boundary for members of a different co-residency, i.e. there is a recognition by one group of monks of a valid *sīmā* for the use of a different

community. As Dutt correctly states, monks themselves made a distinction with regard to both accommodation and participation in the monastic rituals activities between the 'co-dwellers' (*samānasamvāsaka*) and the 'separate dwellers' (*nānāsaṃvāsaka*)' (Dutt 1962: 57). The monks of Jetavana Vihāra, for example, were identified as *nānāsaṃvāsaka* when contrasted with the Pubbārāma and a similar identification is used when the monks of Pubbārāma contrasted with the monks of Jetavana Vihāra.[59] As we shall see in the next section, in spite of this separation, all monks are technically eligible to associate with each other if they observe the same *Vinaya* precepts. (As we saw in Chapter Two (e.g. Opko Sayadaw), however, monks may decline to do so if they do not recognise the *Vinaya* practice of the other monks, and this became a way of dismissing the validity even of a dominant group in order to claim independent validity.)

This early concept of *samānasaṃvāsasīmā* further developed in response to an incident that took place during an *uposatha* ceremony. The *Mahāvagga* records that, on one occasion, whilst crossing a river to participate in an *uposatha* ceremony Mahākassapa, who followed the rule of *ticīvara-dhutaṅga,* the ascetic practice of keeping three robes (lower, upper and double layer robes), got his robes completely wet. As a result, the Buddha thereafter permitted the monks to keep double layer robe within the same *samānasaṃvāsasīmā*. To validate this allowance, monks need to recite another *kammavācā* called *ticīvara avippavāsakammavācā* (liturgy for not being separated from the three robes). After the recitation of this liturgy, this same *samānasaṃvāsasīmā* became *ticīvara avippavāsasīmā* (in brief *avippavāsasīmā*) thus giving monks like Mahākassapa the benefit of the robe.[60] Thus, the same *samānasaṃvāsasīmā* will function for both monastic legal activities and the benefit of the monastic robes.

---

[59] If there are, for example, three monasteries in a village, with a *sīmā* in each monastery, monks in each monastery have the right to perform *saṅghakamma* separately because each *sīmā* is called *nānāsaṃvāsasīmā* (boundary for separate communion). As will be explained in Chapter Five, monks who perform their *saṅghakamma* within a *gāmasīmā* (village boundary, i.e. an unconsecrated *sīmā*) are also called *nānāsaṃvāsasīmā* contrasting to those who perform their *saṅghakamma* in a monastery's consecrated *sīmā*.

[60] Theravada monks in modern times, however, 'normally' do not determine to wear the double layer robe except when they perform monastic legal activities. If, however, a monk determines to wear three of them, they should be kept with him. This is how the rule applied in the case of Mahākassapa because he has taken a vow or determined to wear three robes.

The idea is that if *ticīvara-dhutaṅga* monks live within this boundary, the double layer robe does not need to be worn or kept close to hand within this boundary. They can keep away this robe anywhere inside the boundary. The *ticīvara-dhutaṅga* monks, however, require to keep the this robe with him if they live outside the *avippavāsasīmā*. This boundary is thus designed for the benefit of those monks who are determined to wear three robes (upper, lower robes and double layer robe) as was the case with Mahākassapa. As will be seen in Chapter Eight, the determination of this boundary is carried out the whole monastery compound during the commentarial periods i.e. 5th/6th century. This allowed the monk to relax the rule of wearing the double robe while staying within the monastery compound.

What we have discussed thus far is one type of *samānasaṃvāsasīmā*, which is consecrated within an *āvāsa*. The *samānasaṃvāsasīmā*, however, continued to develop into a number of different forms, some of which can become an automatic boundary without consecration. The *Mahāvagga* (Mv II.12.7) has, for example, reported three such *samānasaṃvāsasīmā* which are not consecrated but can offer the same service. These boundaries are called *abaddhasīmā* (un-consecrated boundary). They are: *gāmasīmā* (village boundary), *udakukkhepasīmā* (boundary created by the splashing of water); and, *sattabbhantarasīmā* (a boundary defined in an uninhabited forest or open space by seven *abbhantara* 'intervals', a topic we shall return to in Chapter Six). Each of these boundaries may be used by different types of monastic dwellings where no consecrated boundary has been established. If, for example, a group of monks find their accommodation nearby a village, they could use the village boundary for their monastic rituals. Similarly, the monks who live nearby a river or in the forest, may define their boundary within their forest location. These three boundaries do not need to be permanently consecrated but there are rules that must be followed when defining them. Importantly, they are the same as consecrated *sīmā* in terms of function and validity: all monastic activities can be carried out within such boundaries except the benefit of wearing robe. Details of these three un-consecrated boundaries will be examined in next two chapters, Five and Six respectively.

4.3. *Samānasaṃvāsasīmā* and monastic unity

As the disciples of the Buddha increased in number, the establishment of *āvāsa* and *samānāsaṃvāsasīmā* also increased. The relationship between the *āvāsas* and among the disciples was vital to maintaining the unity of the growing Saṅgha. How did this growing Saṅgha actually maintain its unity and how could they assess the eligibility of their communion among the different communities? Could they associate with each other in spite of having different *āvāsa* and, if they could do so, what were the criteria adopted for this association? The answers lie in how the concept of *samānasaṃvāsasaka* (members of the same communion) is interpreted, which I shall explore here.[61]

The term '*samāna-saṃvāsa-sīmā*' is made up of three separate words. The first two, '*samāna*' and '*saṃvāsa*' are crucial to understanding the concept of *samānasaṃvāsasīmā*. This will explain the concept of Theravada Saṅgha as a whole. Both the Pāli Text Society's *Pāli –English Dictionary* and the *Concise Pāli -English Dictionary* translate *samāna* as 'equal' or 'same', giving us an important key to the understanding of '*sīmā*'. The word, '*saṃvāsa*', forms another fundamental and, possibly, most crucial part of the meaning. '*Saṃvāsa*' in the *Pāli -English Dictionary*, *Concise Pāli -English Dictionary* and *Dictionary of Early Buddhist Monastic Terms*' is translated as 'living in co-residence'; 'living together'. Taken together, in contracted form, these two words '*samāna-saṃvāsa*' may be interpreted as 'same and equal within a co-residence'. As already discussed above, this interpretation is limited to 'a single residence'. If *sīmā* is added to these two terms ('*samāna* and *saṃvāsa*'), it becomes '*samānasaṃvāsasīmā*', meaning 'boundary for monks who live in the same residence' or 'boundary for monks who live together'.

In the *Vinaya* texts, translated by T.W. Rhys Davids and Hermann Oldenburg (1982:249) *samānasaṃvāsasīmā* is interpreted as 'boundary for common residence'. Vajirañāṇavarorasa (1983: 381) and Thanissaro (2001:2003ff) interpret *samāna* as 'common', but when they interpret '*saṃvāsa*' the former interprets it as 'affiliation' and

---

[61] Historically, of course, not all of the Saṅgha did maintain unity and geographic distance is thought to have been a fundamental factor in the development of diverse 'schools', rather than active disagreement.

the latter as 'communion', so, there is a slight difference in their interpretation of *'samānasaṃvāsasīmā'*. Thanissaro interprets the three words together - *'samāna-saṃvāsa-sīmā'* as 'a territory of common affiliation', basing his interpretation on the fact that monks are affiliated to each other in their monastic practices. Vajirañāṇavarorasa (1983:272), however, interprets *'samāna-saṃvāsa-sīmā'* as 'a boundary for having the same communion'. When, for example, an *uposatha* ceremony is observed by the monks they are called *samānasaṃvāsa*. In a similar way, when a monk receives ordination, it is called *upasampadā* ceremony, but the quorum of monks involved in the ceremony is equally called *samānasaṃvāsa*. Vajirañāṇavarorasa seems to mean that when *saṅghakamma* is carried out; all participating monks are considered to be in common communion (*samānasaṃvāsa*). Overall, Thanissaro's translation as 'affiliation' suits most purposes and is specific enough in English to convey the meaning without too much further definition, whereas 'common communion' is a somewhat vague phrase. However, two problems are the way in which monks not dwelling in the relevant *āvāsa* are excluded and how monks making up the quorum only may be included, not the entire community in the relevant *āvāsa*. The term *saṃvāsa* needs to be represented in our translation of the term.

Thus the concept of 'common affiliation' can be considered to comprise all monks who are affiliated to, or are members of, Theravada monasticism, whereas the concept of 'common communion' refers to those Theravada monks who perform their monastic communion together in a *sīmā*. The important point here is that 'common affiliation' could be understood as corresponding to each and every resident of a Theravada monastic community but does not include the importance of monastic legal activities (*saṅghakamma*). On the other hand, the definition 'common communion' also seems to omit a feature. It lacks an emphasis on 'each and every resident' of the Theravada monastic community. This concept must thus be limited to the time when monks perform monastic legal activity. Both interpretations are true but a fundamental aspect is missing in each. Thanissaro's interpretation fails to stress the time when monks perform their monastic legal activity, while Vajirañāṇavarorasa fails to stress the

potential common affiliation of all Theravada monks at all times. Each of these interpretations fails to fully explain how monks from different regions are eligible to associate within the same *sīmā*. This is perhaps due to limited English term, which is not easy to convey the whole meaning, which I would like to add here for the additional feature.

According to my informant, U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa, a former rector of the State *Pariyatti Sāsana* University, Yangon, whom I interviewed on 15th January 2009, the concept *samānasaṃvāsa* is always serviceable regardless of monks' residence or the time of the monastic legal activity. His argument is particularly related to the precepts taken by Theravada monks. If a Theravada monk observes his precepts from the time of his ordination, he is considered a member of *samānasaṃvāsa,* even if he is of a different nationality. U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa further states that it is crucial to understand what *saṃvāsa* (communion or companion) is and what is the meaning of '*asaṃvāsa*' (non-communion or non-companion) in terms of monks' precepts. He first points to the three types of *saṃvāsa* (communion) referred to in the *Pārājika Pāli* (1993:34) (the first book of the *Vinaya Piṭaka*)*.* These are: *ekakamma saṃvāsa* –'one community's activity within a co-residence'; *ekuddesa saṃvāsa* – 'one *uposatha* ceremony within a co-residence'; and, *samasikkhā saṃvāsa* - 'observing the same precepts within a co-residence'. According to this reference in the *Pārājika Pāli*, monks in a given monastery cannot have two types of community legal activity, two *uposatha* ceremonies and two different sets of precepts. The monks are, therefore, the same and equal to each other within a monastery with regard to 'monastic legal activity', '*uposatha* ceremony' and 'monk's precepts'. In other words, 'equality within a residence' is interpreted in three different ways: firstly, the monks participate equally/share in their *uposatha* (*ekuddesa*) ceremony; secondly they are equal in/share their attendance of 'monastic legal activity' (*ekakamma*) and finally, they are shared their observance of the precepts (*samasikkhā*).

In this last concept, according to U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa, all Theravada monks are considered to be the same in terms of two hundred twenty seven *Pātimokkha* precepts.

These precepts are classified into eight groups. They are: (1) *Pārājika* (Defeat) – four rules entailing expulsion from the Saṅgha (2) *Saṅghādisesa* – thirteen rules entailing an initial and subsequent meeting of the Saṅgha (3) *Aniyata* – two indefinite rules (4) *Nissaggiya Pācittiya* – thirty rules entailing forfeiture and confession (5) *Pācittiya* - ninety two rules entailing confession (6) *Pāṭidesanīya* – four rules entailing acknowledgement (7) *Sekhiya* - seventy five rules of training (8) *Adhikaraṇa –Samatha* - seven rules for settling disputes. Some of these rules may not be applicable to the current monastic environment, especially to those monks who live in the town and city. However, the Theravada monastic tradition still recognises these rules and recites them in every *uposatha* ceremony in Burmese and Thai monastic tradition. Because of these rules, the monks generate a connection between one resident and another. Even if they do not live together in the same residence they are eligible to join in the monastic legal activity if they are present there. Monks from different regions or different countries can join a single *sīmā* in whatever place they find themselves, provided that they observe the same *pātimokkha* precepts. In this context, the precepts, as required rules for monks, qualify all Theravada monks to be included in monastic legal activity (*saṅghakamma*) wherever it occurs. With reference to these three facts, U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa interprets *samānasaṃvāsa* in Burmese as *"tu-thaw paung phaw chin shi thaw yahan"*, 'monks who have the same Vinaya precepts and monastic ritual practices'.

U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa also points out that monastic legal activity in a *sīmā*, for example the *uposatha* ceremony, occurs only once a fortnight for about an hour, whereas for the rest of the time the monks are still considered *samānasaṃvāsa* because they remain in association in everyday activities such as eating or chanting together and all observe the same *Vinaya* rules. Here we can see how monks' precepts are embedded in the concept of *samānasaṃvāsaka* of each and every residence. Only with the combination of monks' precepts, affiliation between residences and their monastic communion can *samānasaṃvāsaka* be rightly interpreted. These are, according to U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa, the most important factors in the unity of all Theravada monks from the time of the Buddha up to the present day.

4.4. *Nānāsaṃvāsasīmā* and monastic disunity

U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa goes on to discuss the monks who do not observe their precepts. If, for example, a monk breaks one of the four *pārājika* (defeated) rules, and if he is proved to be guilty of the offence, he will be permanently expelled from the community, both in terms of monastic legal activities and living together. Such monks are, particularly, considered to be *asaṃvāsa* (non-companion and non-communion). These four rules are: not to engage in sexual intercourse; not to steal; not to take the life of a human being; and, not to falsely claim to have attained enlightenment (T.W. Rhys Davids and Hermann Oldenburg (1982:3-5). These are the gravest offences a monk can commit and result in irrevocable separation. Such a convicted monk is no longer able to participate in any of *samānasaṃvāsasīmā*. The breaking of all other rules can be remedied but these four are terminal. According to the *Vinaya*, if a monk breaks any of these four rules, and it is proven, there is no possibility of maintaining his status in the community (Janakābhivaṃsa 1982:37, *Pacittiya Pāli* 1993: 277). The mutual respect with which monks are expected to treat each other is withdrawn from him and this extends to living and eating together. Thereafter, he loses his right to participate and must give up his life in the monastic institution at will or the rest of the community will not associate with him. Having broken his monastic vows, it is up to him whether he wants to join in a different group (*nānāsaṃvāsaka*) but it is certain that he is no longer a member of a *samānasaṃvāsaka* who observe the same precepts.[62] Therefore, he can become *nānāsaṃvāsaka* in terms of living together with similar offenders.

While defeated monks are expelled from the *samānasaṃvāsaka* (members of common affiliation or communion), there are also monks who are temporarily suspended under a rule called '*ukkhepanīya kamma*' (driving out by the monastic act). A monk can be suspended from the *samānasaṃvāsaka* for a period of time. According to *Vinaya* rule,

---

[62] Since my study is not related to the concept of how monks practice or observe their *Vinaya* rules, I shall here leave out the codes of conducts and procedures that apply when breaking their rules, for example, how a *pārājika* monk is even formally expelled from the monastic legal activities and how they are treated after the expulsion.

such a suspension is carried out for one or more of three reasons: holding a different view; failing to confess one's offence; and, failure to improve on what has been confessed (Janakābhivaṃsa 1982:9, CV. 1.25-35). The first suspension, that of 'holding a different view', occurs when a monk denies the teaching of the Buddha; holds views contrary to the teaching; or, holds a strong view that is different from that of the rest of the community. This includes 'wrong interpretation' of the *Vinaya* rules as well as of the teaching (Mv X.1.10). This is called *laddhinānāsaṃvāsaka* (member of different communion on account of different view) (Mv ii 36, 2).

The *Vinaya Piṭaka* records the names of several disciples who held such views. There are, for example Aritha, (MN.I.130ff, *Pācittiya Pāli* 1993: 175), Malukyaputta (MN.I.427ff, MN.I.432ff) and *Chabbaggī* ('the group of six') (Mv II.7ff). The views of Aritha and Malukyaputta are not relevant to my study being generally connected with their interpretation of Dhamma, but it is worth noting that during early monastic settlement such differing views might have contributed to the establishment of different groups. Of relevance to my work are the records providing evidence of the views of the *Chabbaggī* monks, the 'group of six'. This group represents bad monastic behaviour that must be avoided. On one occasion, for example, these monks started to consecrate a *sīmā* the size of four or five *yojana* (According to Myanmar – English and Pāli Dictionary, one *yojana* is distance of about six miles) which resulted in the Buddha imposing a new rule on the monks prohibiting consecration of a space in excess of three *yojana* (Mv II.7)

The infringement of certain rules requires no suspension but the monks need to confess to each other. In the *Pātimokkha* codes there are, for example, ninety two *pācittiya* ('to acknowledge or to confess) rules where confession can be sufficient with no further action needing to be taken. However, other infringements result in suspension. These are, for example, the *saṅghādisesa* rules which require an offending monk to undertake six days *mānatta* (penance) and a period of probation (*parivāsa*). If he has concealed his offence for a month he will have to remain under probation for an additional period of a month over and above the six days of penance (Thanissaro 2001:374ff). If he does not comply with this rule he may be suspended from

samānasaṃvāsaka.[63] If a suspension is imposed, the action is called *kammanānāsaṃvāsaka* (different communion because of monastic action). He is also prohibited from entering into the same communion (*Parivāra Pāli* 1991: 281). Therefore, he is considered to be a member of a different communion, simply because of the fact that the rest of the monks will not associate with him in the *sīmā* during probation period.

According to the *Mahāvagga* (Mv X.1-10), a dispute occurred in Kosambi between disciples of *Vinayadhara* (strict practitioners of the *Vinaya* rules) and disciples of *Dhammakathika* (religious preacher), the former having accused the latter of being careless over minor rules. The *Vinayadhara* monks formally suspended the *Dhammakathika* disciples from *samānasaṃvāsaka*. Subsequently, they were divided between two groups (disciples of *Vinayadhara* and disciple of *Dhammakathika*) and this division became even greater as the monks took sides, becoming either pro- or anti-*Vinayadhara*. This brought about the creation of two different *uposatha* observations at the same *sīmā*. While the former group considered themselves to have retained common affiliation (*samānasaṃvāsaka*) the latter, by performing their *uposatha* in a separate *sīmā*, were named separate affiliation (*nānāsaṃvāsaka*), not because they chose to name themselves as a separate affiliation but because they performed their *uposatha* in a separate *sīmā*. This is an example of how a Saṅgha becomes divided or disunited because of the precepts.

According to the preceding discussion, we can see two types of *nānāsaṃvāsaka*: one is for monks who observe different *Vinaya* rules or who fail to observe the prescribed *Vinaya* rules plus who interpret Buddha's teaching differently; and, the other

---

[63] Although I am reporting here what *Vinaya* rules are suggested or are enforced on monks who break one of the 227 *pātimokkha* rules, in reality there is no strict practice among the modern monks. Many rules are simply ignored by monks as they are not compatible to the modern world - for example, holding money, watching TV (i.e. shows), etc. This type of confession is only used as a procedure of ritual. The type of offence is not asked for, nor revealed, by the confessing monks. "Do you acknowledge your offence?" the monk is asked. He replies "Yes, I acknowledge it". "Will you restrain the next time?" "Yes, I will" he answers. Such a confession cannot, however, legitimate a monk breaking a *pārājika* offence. The remaining precepts are regarded to be minor or ignored by the monks. There is a wealth of *Vinaya* literature dealing with precepts and procedures not in fact practiced by the monks.

is for those monks who follow the same *Vinaya* rules and Dhamma but who live in different *āvāsas*. Because of such differences, the *Mahāvagga* suggests that incoming monks be investigated to determine whether there are such differences. If the incoming monks are of the same tradition they will qualify to join the community even though they previously belonged to *nānāsaṃvāsaka* (different co-residence) in terms of *ukkhepanīyakamma* (expelled out by the monastic act). However, the *ukkhepanīyakamma* must have already been withdrawn by the Saṅgha. If the incoming monks are ordained in a different tradition, or do not follow the same *Vinaya* rules, they are considered as members of *nānāsaṃvāsaka* (belonging to a different group) and are not eligible to participate in the same monastic legal activities (Mv II.34.11-13). For this latter group, it may not be difficult for expelled monks to organise themselves into a community and when this occurs this community can also be known as *nānāsaṃvāsaka*.

4.5. *Hatthapāsa* rule

As stated above, if a Theravada monk has never been suspended or expelled from his community and is a follower of the common monastic tradition, he can be a member of *samānasaṃvāsaka* regardless of his residence, nationality, etc. However, when monks associate with each other in a *sīmā,* either a consecrated or un-consecrated *sīmā,* there is a further fundamental rule that must be followed. This rule is called the *hatthapāsa* rule, and is compulsory for all monastic legal activities. *Hatthapāsa* literally means 'near to the hands', and is a space of two and half cubits length. One cubit is 18 inches long and two and half cubits are a space of 45 inches length which must not be separated between the monks when they are within the *sīmā*. This is an additional condition which identifies those monks participating in a legal activity as those within this distance from each other. In other words, it is a further definition, beyond *samānasaṃvāsa,* which clarifies who is and who is not, participating, regardless of who has the potential right to do so. Further, the rule makes participation clear even without a permanently established, consecrated *sīmā,* for it applies to every monastic legal activity whether such activity occurs in a consecrated boundary or an un-consecrated boundary including when a *sīmā*

is being consecrated (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:323). The idea behind it is that even though the monks from the entire monastery attend within the defined boundary, some monks could show their disapproval or discontent by separating themselves from the rest of the group. Such an act is considered to be disunity, also call it *vagga* (group) and the ceremony would not be considered valid. Without following the *hatthāpāsa* stipulation, then, monastic legal activities are not valid. All monks within the *sīmā* must sit next to each other within the *hatthapāsa* area when conducting any *saṅghakamma*.

The direct term *hatthapāsa* is not found in the *Mahāvagga*. As far as I am aware references to *hatthapāsa* in early *Vinaya* rules refer only to two monastic practices, both of which are unrelated to *sīmā*. One reference is to monks keeping their robes with them when away overnight since they should only keep their robes within the *hatthapāsa* area (Thanissaro 1994:200ff). The other is when monks receive offerings from the laity (Thanissaro 1994: 394, 408). On this occasion the distance between monks and laity must not exceed one *hatthapāsa*. Other than these two instances the *Vinaya* rules does not report on the usage of *hatthapāsa*.

According to Bamaw Sayadaw, the current head of the State *Saṅghamahānāyaka*, whom I interviewed in January 2009, even though the early *Vinaya Piṭaka* does not report on *hatthapāsa* during monastic legal activities, the concept of *hatthapāsa* is to be understood in the requirement that a sick monk be present during the *uposatha* ceremony. As stated earlier, the unity of monks is regarded so highly that every effort should be made to conduct the *uposatha* ceremony near to the sick monk's bed, thus upholding the unity of monks within the *āvāsa*. When this arrangement is not possible, there is a requirement that the sick monk send his consent to the ceremony, even then, an *āvāsa* should not hold two monastic legal activities. Bamaw Sayadaw refers to the following quotation in *Mahāvagga*:

> "*Na tveva vaggena saṅghena kammaṃ kātabbaṃ*": "in any case, a legal activity should not be performed by [only] a section of the Saṅgha" (*Mahāvagga Pāli* 1979:147).

This means that with one group holding its own *uposatha* ceremony, there is disunity. In other words, by not holding two *uposatha* ceremonies, the monks are united within a single ceremony. According to Bamaw Sayadaw, this example is indeed considered to be the same rule as *hatthapāsa* rule in early canon, to maintain the unity within the residence. This has briefly introduced us also to the concept of *vagga*, literally group, but shorthand for 'disunity', shorthand we shall draw on in later sections.

The concept of *hatthapāsa*, while minimally referred to in the canon and not explicitly in relation to *sīmā*, became prominent during the commentarial period. The *Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī*, for example, states that it is an obligatory practice to sit within the *hatthapāsa* area of a *sīmā* during monastic legal activities (*Kankhāvitaraṇī* 1996: 87, 91). As will be explained in Chapter Seven, the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:323) calls it *hatthapāsānaya* ('bringing to within *hatthapāsa*') and considers it one of the most important rules used during *sīmā* consecration. This rule has been active and compulsory to all monastic legal activities from the time of the commentaries. According to Bamaw Sayadaw, Burmese monks take this rule very seriously. When, for example, Burmese monks observe the *uposatha* ceremony, the monk who recites the *Pātimokkha* rules first reminds the congregation of the *hatthapāsa* space to be observed by each monk at the ceremony. Below photo is an example of how monks sit during monastic legal activities. They are physically in contact with each other, which is even closer than the prescribed *hatthapāsa* rules, so is thus suggested the unity of monks.
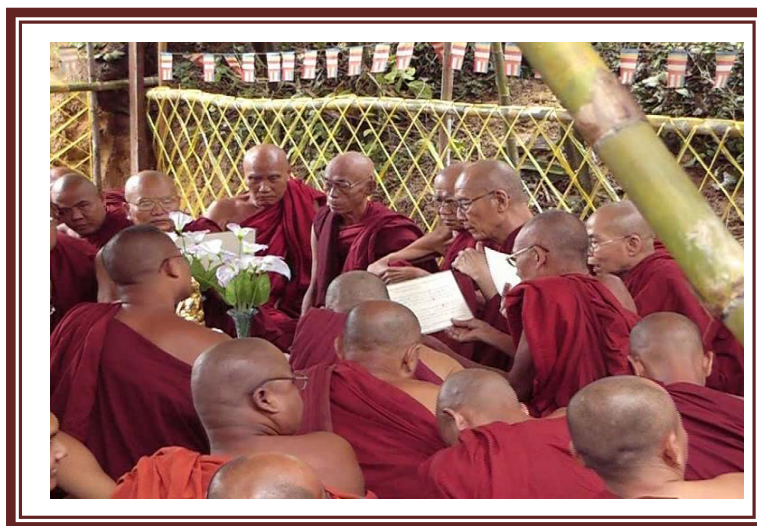
Figure: 4.5. Monks took their seats in *hatthapāsa* position

If the participating monks, including those who brought the proxy, are more than an *hatthapāsa* away from the main group, they are considered to be *vagga* ('group', i.e. separate group or in disunity, as explained above) or physically separated, as observed by Bamaw Sayadaw.

To explain a little more about this concept of *vagga,* in this context *vagga* literally means a group or division, and refers to the monks of a particular group who are either inside a defined *sīmā* at the time of monastic legal ritual activity or anywhere outside the *sīmā*. The latter is of the same nature as the *vagga* which took place during the Kosambi dispute stated above, but the former type of *vagga* is measured when monks are not sitting within a *hatthapāsa* of each other within the *sīmā* (*Mahāvagga Pāli* 1979**:** 482). In Burmese monastic terms this is interpreted as *oksu* (group) or *kwe-pya-chin* (division) and the practical aspect of this rule used in the *sīmā* consecration will be explained in Chapter Seven. Although, as I have explained, the literal meaning of *vagga* is 'group' or 'division', it is more appropriate to interpret and translate it as 'disunity'.

Whilst the laity are normally allowed to sit within the wider boundary area[64], they must not sit within the *hatthapāsa* as this area is strictly exclusive to the monks and if

---

[64] There are exceptions to this, in relation to specific *sīmā* and in relation to beliefs about women or geographic variation regarding the use of the *sīmā*. However, while I studied this issue in some detail and

monks do not sit there they are considered *vagga* and the monastic legal activity is unsuccessful. Should the laity sit within the *hatthapāsa* area, this also would invalidate the monastic activity. At this juncture it can be understood that *hatthapāsa* defines a dedicated area within the (temporarily or permanently) defined boundary within which the concept of monastic unity is portrayed in practice.

4.6. Conclusion:

This chapter introduced that the earliest account of *sīmā* practice is related to the observation of the *uposatha* ceremony in a specific residence or area of monastic settlement, *āvāsa,* but that it went onto be transformed into a number of developments, one of which is to unite Saṅgha within an *āvāsa* while other is to purify their monastic rule. We saw that the further definition of *sīmā* is set within a narrative context of uncertainty on the part of monks, disagreement between them or rejection of the bad behaviour of the 'group of six' that allows the Buddha to be the authority specifying correct conduct and definitions. These narratives reflect a process of development even within the canonical period. This chapter thus provided the historical development of the *sīmā* in the canon touching on some developments that cross over from the canon to commentarial period. This basic definition will help us in later chapters.

The sought-after unity that is the driving force behind much of the further specification of *sīmā* practice is the canon, and later in the commentaries, is defined by the fact that no monk within a residential area at the time of the ceremony is excluded or fails to attend the ceremony while all attendant monks are required to be pure in their precepts. The concept of *sīmā* was introduced when a regular place was needed for this *uposatha* ceremony and it replaced the definition for *ad hoc* gathering places. The unity of the Saṅgha within a *sīmā* later came to be known as *samānasaṃvāsaka* (members of common/shared communion) and when contrasted with another *āvāsa* it became *nānāsaṃvāsaka* (members of different communion). Each unit of Saṅgha plays a

---

have presented on it elsewhere (AAS 2012), for reasons of space I have not included much discussion of lay *sīmā* practice in this thesis.

significant role in the decision making process and the result of each decision, if it has been arrived at by following the same monastic codes and procedures, is also accepted by others. In this sense, the monks who undertake the rituals inside a *sīmā* become the authoritative monks of the *āvāsa*. However, when they make legal decisions or carry out legal rituals, they must be united by sitting in the *hatthapāsa* area. The *hatthapāsa* area is thus exclusively preserved for all monks within the *sīmā* and is considered to be a small boundary within the larger boundary.

In our discussion with Burmese informants, we saw how Burmese monks are able to explain a later commentarial development as implied in the canon, even if not explicit, a feature of Burmese treatment of the canon through the commentarial lens that I identified earlier in Chapter One, Two and Three. In the next section we will look at how this principle of *hatthapāsa* also applies in a *gāmasīmā,* 'a village boundary', a technical term for the use of a broader secular boundary as a monastic *sīmā.* The possibility of a broader village boundary as a monastic boundary for *saṅghakamma* may be what necessitated this more specific *hatthapāsa* area within an area. It is a crucial concept also for the definition and creation of a designated and consecrated monastic *sīmā,* and for that reason we shall examine the concept and practice of *gāmasīmā* next. We shall see there how Burmese monks are expertly elaborated on the tiny matter of commentarial points, thereby distinctively preserved, some cases reinterpreted to defend the commentarial definition of the *gāmasīmā.*

Chapter Five:

The secular or unconsecrated boundary, *gāmasīmā*, as the basis for the fundamental principles of *sīmā* practice

5.1. Introduction:

According to the *Mahāvagga* (Mv II.12.7), the Buddha allowed his monks to conduct their monastic rituals within a *gāmasīmā*, literally a 'village boundary,' but no detailed definition of this term is found in the early canon. The *Samantapāsādikā*, however, attempted to provide a definition by delineating the boundary in relation to the area of the villagers' lands within which an appointed village leader collected tax. The sub-commentaries subsequently abandoned the concept of tax and interpreted the commentary to mean that the map of a village is sufficient to define a village boundary. Such inconsistency between the commentary and sub-commentaries, presumably a reflection of changing concepts regarding land, led to divided opinion between Burmese monks with some following the commentary and others the sub-commentaries. There are recorded cases of monks disputing over these definitions.

The reason behind the need for accurately measuring the size of a *gāmasīmā* is related to the *hatthapāsa* rule, which has been discussed in the previous chapter. As we have discussed, it is a requirement that all monks be present within the *sīmā* and observes the *hatthapāsa* rule that each monk participating in the ceremony must sit within an arm's length of the nearest monk within the group participating when monastic legal activities are taking place within a defined village boundary. In spite of the kind of inner boundary created by the *hatthapāsa* area, if a monk unknowingly enters a village boundary during the ceremony it is considered *vagga,* disunity, (literally 'group', i.e. separate groups and so 'division', as explained in the previous chapter). This *vagga* invalidates the ceremony. If a visitor arrives before the ceremony begins he may either stay outside the boundary until the ceremony is completed or alternatively, he may enter

the *hatthapāsa* area and join the other monks. The correctly defined boundary of a village enables men to guard the entrance or crossroads of a village to prevent visiting monks from invalidating the ceremony by breaking the *hatthapāsa* rule.

The purpose of this entire chapter is to deal with how the *hatthapāsa* rule is employed for monks who live in a village boundary and how they manage visiting monks. To examine the guidelines in Burmese practice, I have divided the chapter into six sections. They are: (1) *gāmasīmā* and its relationship to monastic ritual, (2) *gāmasīmā* in canonical and commentarial definitions, (3) definitions of *gāmasīmā* in Burmese tradition, (4) the relationship between a *gāmasīmā* and *visuṃgāmasīmā* (a 'small' separate village boundary), (5) a *visuṃgāmasīmā* outside a *gāmasīmā* and its relationship to religious property and (6) structure of a *gāmasīmā* applied to a *nagarasīmā* in monastic practice

I shall examine the canonical background of the specific requirements that must be taken into account when establishing a monastic *sīmā*; the high degree of specificity; and what this tells us about the function of *sīmā* in Burmese monastic life and in lay-monastic relations. The first three sections explain how a secular village boundary became a monastic boundary, and how the canon, commentary and sub-commentaries define the size and dimensions of a village boundary, including how such scriptural definitions are either disapproved of or adopted within Burmese tradition. In sections four and five, I will examine the commentarial rules and guidelines which led to the development of a new concept in defining a separate village boundary within a defined secular village boundary. This newly developed village boundary is called *visuṃgāmasīmā* ('small' separate village boundary), and is the equivalent size of a monastery compound; but to create this boundary there are a number rules that must be adhered to. I shall also look at here how the concept of a 'secular monastic village boundary' transformed into a new monastic boundary outside the village i.e. in the area of city and countryside. Finally, I intend to examine how city monks interpret the village boundary in order to accommodate monastic rituals in cities.

5.2. *Gāmasīmā* and its relationship to monastic ritual

The word *gāmasīmā* means a 'village boundary' (*Gāma*=village, *sīmā*=boundary). It denotes a secular boundary, normally created by a cluster of different houses and families living together next to each other. A village usually has a name and some kind of defined boundary or limit. Theravada monks depend on the villagers for their food and other monastic requisites. So, they normally establish their monasteries in a corner of a village area or on the outskirts of a village. Some big villages may have two or more monasteries while others may have only one monastery (or none, of course) for the entire village. While the laity supports the monks' living, in their turn, monks provide spiritual guidance, ritual performances and other kinds of religious, psychological and leadership support to the laity. This is how they depend on each other.

As stated above, monks need some kind of boundary to conduct their monastic rituals such as the *uposatha*, and they may therefore consecrate a *sīmā* within their monasteries. If, however, no *sīmā* has been consecrated, the existing secular boundary of the village is automatically considered to be the *sīmā* for the Saṅgha rituals (Mv II. 12. 7). The relevant *Mahāvagga* passage quotes the Buddha's authorisation for conducting the *uposatha* ceremony using a village boundary as follows:

> "*Asammatāya bhikkhave sīmāya aṭhapitāya yaṃ gāmaṃ vā nigamaṃ vā upanissāya viharati, yā tassa vā gāmassa gāmasīmā nigamassa vā nigamasīmā, ayaṃ tattha samānasaṃvāsā ekuposathā*": "if no boundary has been agreed or established, O Bhikkhus, the village boundary of that village or market town boundary of that market town, relying on which village or market town the [monks] dwell, is to be considered the boundary for shared residence [communion] to support the performance of a single *uposatha*" (Mv II. 12.7)

This is the only place in the Pāli canon, in the section of *Mahāvagga*, which deals with *sīmā*, where we can find a definition of a *gāmasīmā*. It gives no further information about the size and dimensions of a village boundary including no indication of where the monks should be within this *gāmasīmā* when they perform their ceremony. We have to depend on the commentarial and sub-commentarial definition to define the size and dimension of a village boundary to which our discussion will focus in the next section.

The passage, however, portrays two important features of a *gāmasīmā*: one is the authorisation of a new *samānasaṃvāsasīmā* (boundary for shared residence and communion) and the conducting of a single *uposatha* service within the village boundary. Both the practice of *samānasaṃvāsa* and *uposatha* service, which was previously authorised to be conducted in a consecrated boundary of an *āvāsa* (monastery), is here allowed to be conducted within a village boundary. (We discussed the relationship between *samānasaṃvāsa* and *uposatha* above, in Chapter Four.) The other authorisation is that monks can conduct their monastic rituals in any part of the village boundary without having to have any consecration. The village boundary is considered to be a readymade boundary for the monks. Even if monks do not live within the village boundary, they can still use the village boundary whenever they need to for the monastic rituals. Because of this new authorisation, all *āvāsa* (monasteries/monastic residences) within a village boundary become a single unit of the local village Saṅgha when conducting their monastic rituals or activities (*saṅghakamma*), hence the phrase *ekupasatha* – a single *uposatha*. This means that no matter how many monasteries are established within a village boundary, all monks from each monastery are considered to be in the same communion and must co-operate with each other (Sīlānanda 2002:5-6).

If there are monasteries with a defined or consecrated monastic *sīmā* within a village boundary, two jurisdictions for the *samānasaṃvāsasīmās* come into being; one is the consecrated *sīmā* of the monks inside their *āvāsas* (monasteries) and the other is the *gāmasīmā* which is for those monasteries without a consecrated *sīmā*. The term for the monastic *sīmā* which is consecrated – normally within a monastery grounds – is *baddhasīmā*[65], literally 'bound or defined boundary' (Ashin Paññā Mahāthera 1999:3). This contrasts with the village boundary, the more specific terms for which is *abaddhasīmā* 'un-consecrated boundary' (Ashin Paññā Mahāthera 1999:4). The former

---

[65] This boundary is also called a *khaṇḍasīmā* (*khaṇḍa* means cut and *sīmā* means boundary) because it has consecrated by taking a portion of *āvāsa* compound. This boundary is particularly contrasted with a *mahāsīmā* (large boundary), the two existing next to each other during commentarial period. See Chapter Eight.

sīmā is smaller than the latter, but it is notable that both *sīmā*s may function for the *uposatha* ceremony and other Saṅgha rituals.

The attendance requirement mentioned in the preceding chapter, i.e. the *samānasaṃvāsa* (shared residence), is affected by which type of *sīmā* is in place. The *hatthapāsa* rule is compulsory when the monastic rituals are carried out in any type of *samānasaṃvāsasīmā*. When a *saṅghakamma* is, for example, performed in a consecrated *sīmā* of a monastery, the monks can choose the suitable monks from the monastery to attend the ceremony but it is not necessarily a requirement for the entire membership of the village boundary to attend, not even by all members of the same monastery. The monks who are outside this consecrated *sīmā* are not considered to be divided; thus they cannot harm the ceremony. Even though this consecrated *sīmā* is established within the *gāmāsīmā*, it is considered an independent boundary. However, every selected member, who is inside the consecrated *sīmā*, must sit within the *hatthapāsa* area.

If, however, the same *saṅghakamma* is held within the *gāmasīmā*, they cannot choose the monks. Just as they follow the *hatthapāsa* rule in the consecrated *sīmā*, monks from all monasteries within the village are required to follow the same *hatthapāsa* rule even if it is not their monastery that has initiated the ritual (Sīlānanda 2002:5ff). This includes even those monks who have consecrated *sīmā* in their own monasteries. The reason for this practice is that all monks, regardless of their monasteries' variation, are within a single boundary of a village. Thus all monks resident in the village, rather than just monks' resident in the monastery, must attend the Saṅgha rituals. In other words, each monk of the village boundary must come to the *hatthapāsa* area to validate the ceremony. We can imagine how this, in a modern urban setting, with multiple monasteries, might both make demands of the monks in all monasteries and restrict the independent functioning of those monasteries that do not have their own consecrated *sīmā*. This issue explains a further significance of establishing a monastic *sīmā,* namely independent authority for the monastery in question to conduct its rituals independently of others.

A further way in which having a consecrated boundary gives authority to an individual monastery, is that the monks of such a monastery can avoid attending the rituals of those monasteries using the *gāmasīmā*, i.e. there is then an unequal relationship whereby those without a *sīmā* must invite all monks within the *gāmasīmā,* but those monks with a *sīmā* can act independently as well as choosing to attend or avoid participation in the rituals of the monastery with no *sīmā*. For, as will be explained in Chapter Seven, monks from the 'consecrated *sīmā* monastery' can avoid attending the *saṅghakamma* (monastic legal activities) of a *gāmasīmā* by staying inside their consecrated boundary while the ceremony is being held in the *gāmasīmā*. Monks then constitute two separate communions within a *gāmasīmā*: one is the communion of the consecrated *sīmā* and the other is the communion of the un-consecrated *sīmā*. These two *sīmās* are called *nānāsīmā* (separate boundary) (Ashin Paññā Mahāthera 199:6). We saw the same concept in Chapter Four where two *samānasaṃvāsasīmās* considered each other as *nānāsamvāsasīmā* (separate communion) when conducting their monastic activity separately.

If there are many monasteries that have consecrated *sīmās* within a *gāmasīmā*, each of them is considered to be one, separate communion. Each monastery with a consecrated *sīmā* thus must follow the same procedure if they do not want to attend at the *gāmasīmā*'s rituals. If they do not stay inside the consecrated *sīmā* at their own monastery, they must join in the *gāmasīmā's* rituals because the village boundary, except for these previously consecrated zones, is considered one jurisdiction for a monastic communion (ibid).[66] As already stated in Chapter Four, an exception to the full attendance however, occurs in the case of sickness. For if a monk within these monasteries with either consecrated (except he stays inside consecrated zone) or un-consecrated *sīmā* is sick he is required to send his proxy to the *saṅghakamma* (Mv II. 22.1ff). If he neither attends nor sends his proxy to the ceremony, the *saṅghakamma* is considered defective, and this monk is guilty of an offence of wrongdoing (*dukkaṭa*)[67]

---

[66] The same procedure is applied to control the monk during *sīmā* consecration, on which see Chapter Seven.

[67] On *dukkaṭa* 'wrongdoing' or 'improper action and the other types of *vinaya* offense, see Chapter One.

(ibid). We can thus see that even if monks with their own consecrated *baddhasīmā* can avoid attending the *saṅghakamma* of the monastery that lacks its own uses the *gāmasīmā* or *abaddhasīmā* by remaining within their own *sīmā*, a degree of co-operation on their part is still required for the validity of *saṅghakamma* of the monastery without its own consecrated *sīmā*.

The *saṅghakamma* was initially envisaged in a context where there was only one monastery and a single recognised ordination lineage. Yet in practice, with developments in the complexity of the Saṅgha, the adherence to the Buddha's instructions for its performance leads to the application of those instructions to multiple temples even of different ordination lineages, even if, as stated in previous chapter, only Theravada lineages are recognised.[68] Therefore, as stated above, this village boundary is at that juncture defined as one 'local council[69]' of the Saṅgha and the monks from that entire council, even from different monasteries and representing different Theravada ordination lineages, must co-operate together for the *uposatha* ceremony or any other *saṅghakamma* taking place within a village boundary.

The same procedure of co-operation within the single community, as thus conceptualised, also applies to the consecration of a *sīmā* itself, because the consecration of a *sīmā* is considered one of the monastic legal activities (*saṅghakamma*), which monks perform together (Sīlānanda 2002:4-5). Therefore, when a monastic boundary is consecrated within a village jurisdiction, all monasteries within the village boundary must co-operate with each other either by attending at the *hatthapāsa* area or sending their proxy or consent to the ceremony (Sīlānanda 2002:2-3). I shall look at the detailed explanation of a *sīmā* consecration in Chapter Seven. As far as I have discovered from

---

[68] The attitude to non-Theravada monks is different. *Mahāyāna* monks are, for example, considered to be *nānāsaṃvāsaka* 'of a different affiliation or different communion' (Thanissaro 2001:568). I have explained the concept of Theravada monks in reference to *samānasaṃvāsa* in Chapter Four. In that chapter I have particularly looked at how all Theravada monks (regardless of their nationalities) are regarded to be the same communion with regard to three factors: *uposatha* ceremony, monastic rituals and 'Theravada' monk's precepts.

[69] I use the word 'local council' here to mean the monks resident with the entire village boundary. I believe that it is easy to call 'local council monks' those who are under the same village boundary where the monasteries are being established. Those monastery's monks must be included when conducting any monastic legal ritual activity.

my fieldwork in Burma, this is the only type of *saṅghakamma* that is conducted in the *gāmasīmā*. With the exception of *sīmā* consecration, all monasteries in the village and urban area use consecrated boundaries for their monastic rituals (*saṅghakamma*). Those monks without a *sīmā* in their monastery conduct *saṅghakamma* within the *sīmā* of another monastery, thus amplifying the extent to which monasteries without *sīmā* have less autonomy than those with a consecrated *sīmā*.

According to the preceding discussion, then, monks define the unity of their monastic communion in relation to the village boundary. Further, the unity within the jurisdiction of the village boundary must be demonstrated in the ways described at times of monastic legal activities such as *uposatha* or *sīmā* consecration (which we shall look at below) to express the entire Saṅgha's agreement and to thus ensure the validity of that legal activity. Thus the village boundary and the monks are related by means of monastic legal action.

5.3. *Gāmasīmā* in canonical and commentarial definition

As already stated in the previous section, the *Mahāvagga*, the earliest text to deal with the establishment of a *sīmā*, does not define the size of a *gāmasīmā* nor even indicate how it is to be defined, at least not in the section in which the Buddha asks his disciples to adopt the *sīmā* practice. The concept of *gāmasīmā* is nevertheless explained elsewhere in the *Vinaya* rules, notably the one which forbids stealing from village and forest (*Pārājika Pāli* 1993: 56). In this rule, the canon explains a typical village of the canonical period and if we are to understand the earliest definition of a *gāmasīmā*, we turn to apply the *Vinaya* rule that defines the size of a village boundary in relation to the offence of stealing. According to this *Vinaya* rule as it is mentioned in the second *Pārājika sikkhāpada Pāli* (the canonical text on the rules entailing expulsion) of the *Suttavibhaṅga* section of the *Vinaya Piṭaka* (*Pārājika Pāli* 1993: 56), a village may include one house, two houses, three houses, four houses up to a large village; it can even be considered the working place where a family builds a house in order to look after its paddy fields and farms. This means that a village need not comprise many

houses; even one house can be considered a village. The nature of such a village is typically different from the modern villages, simply because a modern village is not defined by a house or by a farm house. According to this passage however, even a farm house could become a village if a family stays there for about four months during a rainy season; the entire area of its lands are thus called a village, regardless of how far it is from their original village (ibid). This is how the second *pārājika* rule explains the formation of a village, *gāma,* during the canonical and commentarial period.

The *Pārājika sikkhāpada Pāli* [70] (1993**:** 56) and *Pārājika Aṭṭhakathā* (vol. i. 1993:260) continues to explain two more methods of measurement for a *gāmasīmā*: one is a village boundary, which is the area enclosed by the wall[71] and the other is the area enclosed by a village 'vicinity'[72] or village precinct (*gāmūpacāra*) and this village precinct is measured by throwing a stone from the village wall or gate (*indakhīla*). If an average man throws a stone from the village gate (*indakhīla*)[73], the point at which the

---

[70] The same definition is also found in *Visuddhimagga* (Ñāṇamoli 1979:72)**.**

[71] According to the *Pārājika Aṭṭhakathā* vol. i. (1993: 260) this definition refers to the *Abhidhamma* concept of a village boundary but I have not managed to find such a definition within the *Abhidhamma.* I was told by my informant, Bamaw Sayadaw, that this reference is taken for granted when referring to the *Abhidhamma's* definition of a village boundary (*gāmasīmā*).

[72] The same the *Pārājika Aṭṭhakathā* vol. i. (1993: 260) states this definition is considered to be the *Vinaya* method of a village boundary. *Gāmūpacāra* may be interpreted as a village precinct or neighborhood. In English, I believe that the phrases 'village vicinity' and 'village precincts' and 'neighborhood' are all acceptable renderings of *gāmūpacāra.*

[73] With regard to *indakhīla*, the term *indakhīla* has two words: *inda* (the God *Indra*) and *khīla* (door). It literally means 'the door of the God Indra', one of the gods of the Indian pantheon transmitted with Buddhism. This term '*indakhīla*' is quite popular in the Pāli canon. We find it, for example, in the *Ratana Sutta* 'discourse on the jewels', which is used in *paritta* (protective) chanting. Also *Pārājika Aṭṭhakathā vol. i. (*1993:260) mentions two doors installed in Anurādhapura City of ancient Sri Lanka. Burmese people translate *Inda* as *Thigyamin*, the god who administers the world. In ancient practice in India, in particular, when a village was consecrated, the God Indra is said to have been invited to install the power and protection for the villagers. The God then guarded the village at the door or the gate (*khīla*). If we take the door into account, it may have been the case that such a village has a fence. We can refer such an interpretation to the way a village precinct is defined. According to *Visuddhimagga* (Ñāṇamoli 1979:72), the village precinct is defined by 'the range of a stone thrown by a man of medium stature standing between the gate-posts of a walled village'. The 'walled village' is considered to be the fence of a village, since many Burmese villages have fences to define their villages although this practice is not related with the concept of *Indakhīla*. The concept of *Indakhīla* nevertheless plays crucial part in Thai and Cambodian *sīmā* consecrations. Thai monastic practice is strongly influenced by the concept of a village door (*Indakhīla*) when they consecrate a *sīmā*. The *Indakhīla* is not a point which defines the village boundary

stone lands is considered as the radius of the village precinct. If, however, there is no wall provided for the village boundary, the village boundary should be defined first by throwing a stone from the outermost house of the village and then by throwing another stone from the point where the first stone has fallen, the next point at which the stone falls is understood to lie on the boundary of the radius of the village precinct (ibid). As the village precincts are defined, all lands lying beyond this village precinct are referred to as the forest (*ārañña*) which will be dealt with in Chapter Six (*Pārājika Pāli* 1993: 56, *Pārājika aṭṭhakathā* vol. i. 1993:260).

In this interpretation, there is no indication of the authority of the king's involvement in the definition of *gāmasīmā*, at least not in the Pāli canon. The lack of any apparent governmental or royal involvement in the defining of a village in the period during which the canon was compiled is in contrast to the situation reflected in the commentarial account (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:33), which will be analysed below.

---

but is a point that has been used in the *sīmā* consecration. They believe that *sīmā* has been separated within the village boundary and it can only be consecrated within the village boundary. This is true if we consider the method of *visuṃgāmasīmā* consecration, which I explain in section four of this chapter. Since it has been consecrated within the village boundary, this consecrated land is considered to represent the village boundary. This is also considered equivalent to the consecration of a village boundary. A Thai monk, Pra Mahā Laow Paññāsiri, the abbot at Buddhavihāra temple, King's Bromley, Litchfield, UK and with whom I conducted an interview on 29th November 2008, told me that many Thais believe that the *Indakhīla* is a protection and a 'life-force' of a *sīmā* that represents the village boundary. This could be one of the reasons that Thai *sīmā* consecration has a special place called *Indakhīla*. This place is normally found near to the middle where the main Buddha is placed. Monks can choose one or as many of the eight types of landmarks, *nimitta*, permitted for the *sīmā* (See Chapter Seven). In the current practice in Thailand, there are eight landmarks posted outside the building. These landmarks are considered as a 'life-force' of the *sīmā* because if the landmarks are lost, the area of the consecrated boundary will become unknown to the practitioners. Therefore the life-force of a *sīmā* remains as long as the landmarks make the separation between the consecrated and un-consecrated zones. According to Paññāsiri, many Thais believe that *Indakhīla* is an additional landmark and consider it as being the head of the eight types of landmarks. If we add this *Indakhīla* to the eight of types of landmarks, it becomes nine types of landmarks being practised in the Thai tradition of *sīmā* consecration. Many Thai believe that the *Indakhīla* itself is considered the main 'life-force' of the *sīmā* consecration. This is, however, not practised by the Burmese monks and the concept of *Indakhīla* is not stated in the canon either. This information is only related to Thai traditional belief and since this practice is not shared with the Burmese tradition and is not consistent with the main text above, but I have included it for its comparative interest.

It is also clear from this context that a village boundary is much smaller than the forest as the defined measure of a village boundary is limited to the village precincts.

Surprisingly, this canonical definition of a *gāmasīmā* is not recognised by Burmese monks as a legitimate village boundary for a *sīmā* consecration as Burmese monks rely much on the definition offered by the *Samantapāsādikā*, *Vimativinodanī ṭīkā* and *Sāratthadīpanī ṭīkā* (see literature review, chapter one). There are two technical terms which are frequently used by the Burmese monks to express the size of a *gāmasīmā* (village boundary). The first one is *gāmakhetta*[74], to denote the village farm, which includes all village territory including parks, farms or playgrounds (Sīlānanda 2002:3) and the second one is *visuṃgāmasīmā*, meaning a 'small' separate village boundary (ibid). *Visuṃgāmasīmā* (a 'small' separate village boundary) means a small plot of land which has become detached from the *gāmakhetta* (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:333). Technically a monk can establish a *visuṃgāmasīmā* in any part of the village boundary but practically this *visuṃgāmasīmā* is only found within the monastery area. As will be explained in section five of this chapter, this *visuṃgāmasīmā* is treated as the most effective *sīmā* for monastic practice.

Here I shall deal with only the concept of *gāmakhetta* (village fields) as it appears in the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965: 322, 333). This commentary specifically relates the boundary of a *gāma* to the organisation of taxation on the villagers by the appointed village leader. This commentary states that,

> "*tattha yatthake padese tassa gāmassa bhojakā baliṃ labhanti so padeso appo vā hotu mahanto vā hotu gāmasīmā tveva samkhyaṃ gacchati*": "the area of 'village' lands, whether small or large, in relation to which village leaders collect tax is designated by the term *gāmasīmā*, village boundary" (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:333).

This statement is fundamental for understanding the *gāmasīmā* as interpreted in the commentary. According to this quotation just stated, the *gāmasīmā* is defined as comprising all areas for which villagers pay their tax to a designated leader. Here, we can see the differences between what the early *Vinaya* text and its commentarial

---

[74] The word *gāmakhetta* is not used in the *Mahāvagga* to denote the village boundary. However, the concept of *gāmakhetta* appears in the commentaries on the *Mahāvagga* e.g. *Samantapāsādikā* (1968:333) and *Kankhāvitaranī* (1996: 98).

definition of a *gāma* as stated in the *Pārājika Pāli* (1993**:** 56) and *Pārājika Aṭṭhakathā*
vol. i. (1993:260) as an area marked by a boundary of determined by the throwing of a
clod, on the one hand, and the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* just cited above on the other, which
uses the concept of taxation. In the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:333), then, the
definition of *gāmasīmā* extends from the early account of the village precinct to the area
of villagers' farms (*gāmakhetta,* literally 'village field') for which the villagers pay their
tax to the designated village leader.

Therefore, Burmese monks interpret this "village farm" (*gāmakhetta*) to mean
both the original village boundary (*pakatigāma*) defined as the place where villagers
have their houses or by the village precincts, plus the lands of the villagers such as paddy
fields, open space, playgrounds, gardens, plantations including the villagers' cemetery or
roads (Sīlānanda 2002:181-2). If the boundary of *gāmasīmā* indeed includes the
villagers' farms, whatever monasteries are established nearby the village, certainly come
within the *gāmakhetta.* In other word, even though monks establish their monasteries
outside the original village boundary (*pakatigāma*), they will come under the
gāmakhetta. Therefore, these monasteries also fall in the same category of *gāmasīmā.* I
have provided a diagram called 'village boundary' below to illustrate the concept of the
original village boundary. Burmese monks also adopt the Pāli term '*gāmakhetta*' into
their language, as *gamakhet*, which means the same as the Pāli. In brief, the *Pācittiyādi
Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:333).defines the village boundary by two criteria; one is the area of
villagers' lands subject to taxation and the other is the area subject to the authority of one
village leader, who is responsible for the collection of tax. The authority of the king or
the government is involved in both cases via the operation of the tax collection and the
appointment of the village leader.

If the commentary only defines the *gāmasīmā* with reference to the imposition of
taxation and the role of the village leader, there is a problem with those *gāmakhetta* on
which the villagers do not pay tax. This problem is raised particularly in the
V*imativinodanī,* the replacement sub-commentary to the *Vinaya* written by Coliya
Kassapa Thera in around the 12th century (this sub-commentary was identified in Chapter

One). The V*imativinodanī* (vol. ii. 1992:157) does not reject the concept of taxation, but considers that 'taxation' is just used as a convenience or a popular idea (*yebhuyyavasena*) in defining the village. According to the *Vimativinodanī* (vol. ii. 1992: 156), taxation is considered as a mere 'conventional concept', and it says,

> *"Baliṃ labhantīti idaṃ yebhuyyavasena vuttaṃ* "the phrase 'taxation' (literally, they collect tax') is used because of popular convention" (ibid).[75]

This means that the word 'taxation' is used because it was a conventional understanding on the part of the majority – as opposed to a technical or precise term – at the time of commentarial composition. The following map helps give a better understanding of a complete village jurisdiction.

---

[75] By the time the *Vimativinodanī* was written in 12th century or at least in the area in which he wrote in southern India, currently the Tamil Nadu state of India, other ways of conceptualizing village space may had developed that took into account the entire geographic space in contrast to the property-specific delimitation found in earlier works, although these too may also have developed in relation to either taxation or some other kind of service due the king, such as military service or the governing system of the locality.
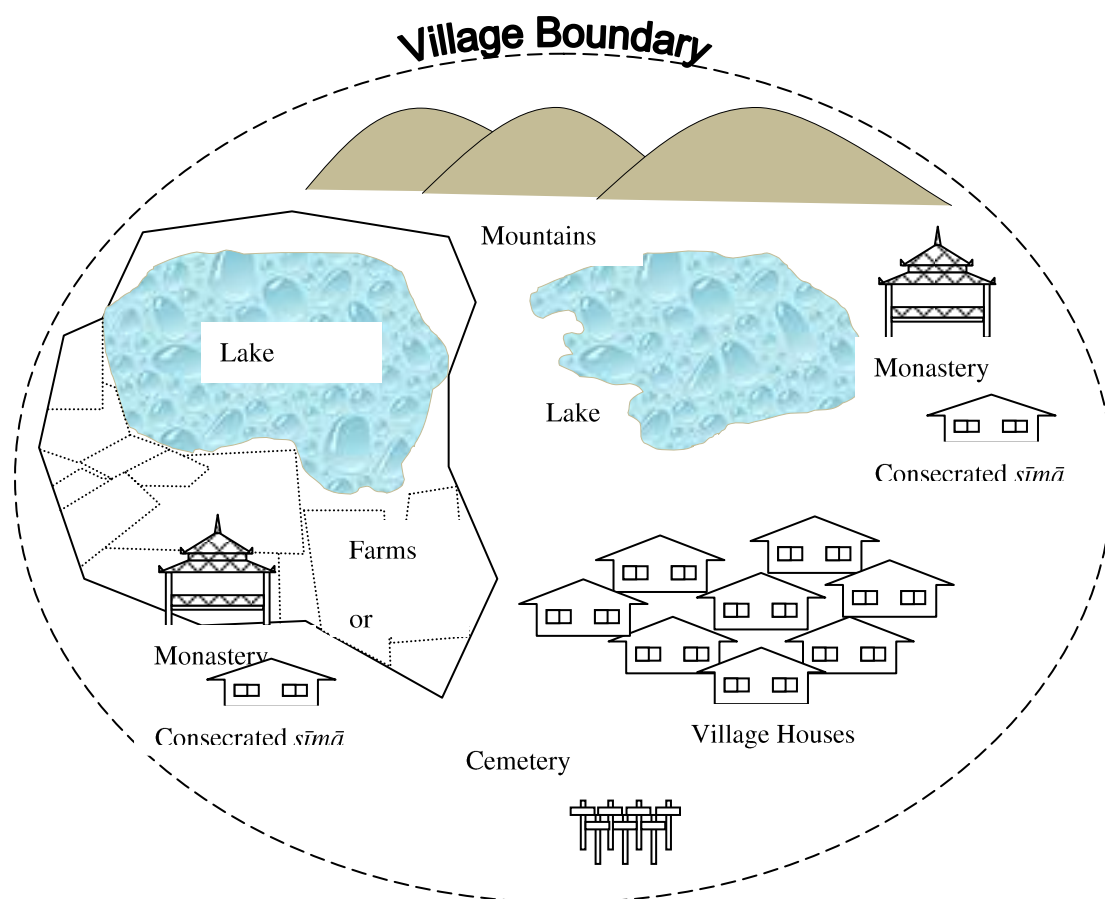
Figure 2: 5.3. The example of *gāmakhetta* boundary

Let us consider the diagram of this village boundary. The diagram includes the houses, farms, cemetery, gardens, hills, lakes, including monastery and consecrated monastic *sīmā*. *Vimativinodanī* argues that there are places in the village which do not belong to the villagers e.g. a lake, community garden or cemetery, which are nevertheless considered to be part of the village (*Vimativinodanī* vol. ii. 1992: 157). Villagers do not pay tax for such places; they only pay for their possessions or property. The concept of 'taxation' in this instance is not always considered appropriate to define the *gāmasīmā*. *Vimativinodanī* comes up with a new definition, which corresponds to a new development: governmental mapping or records. It states:

> *''rājādīhi paricchinnabhūmibhāgo hi sabbova ṭhapetvā nadīloṇijātassare gāmasīmāti veditabbo'':* "whatever lands which are divided or allotted by the king except river or salt lake (lake in general) are called *gāmasīmā*" (*Vimativinodanī* vol. ii.1992: 157).

The fundamental point here appears in this phrase: *rājādīhi paricchinnabhūmibhāgo*: 'the lands (allocation of land) have been divided by king or

the government authority'. It does not state the factor of whether these lands pay tax by the villagers or not but the important factor here is given to the king or the government authority in defining the village boundary. The *Vimativinodanī* here suggests that even the un-taxable areas of a village boundary are also considered as parts of a village boundary. In other words, the *Vimativinodanī* here makes an effort to show that the boundary of *gāma* should be defined by the king's authority and the concept of taxation is thus considered as a generalised, popular term (*yebhuyyavasena vuttaṁ*) rather than a precise definition. The *Vimativinodanī,* however, excludes the lake or river (*thapetvā nadīloṇijātassare*) as they contain their own separate boundary called *udakukkhepasīmā* (boundary defined by throwing splash water) in monastic practice, which will be examined in Chapter Six.

If we only employ the definition of the taxable lands to define the village boundary, the un-taxable lands have to be excluded for the purposes of monastic practice. Therefore, only one part of the village boundary, where the tax is collected by the designed village leader, (or the areas to which villagers pay their tax to the designed leader), can be considered as a valid *gāmasīmā*. This is, however, not the case in terms of the current practice. As we have indicated in previous section and will be discussed more details in Chapter Seven, when a *sīmā* consecrates in a village boundary, the monks from the whole *gāmakhetta* (both taxable and un-taxable) lands are included. Therefore, monks from the entire taxable and un-taxable areas of a village boundary are required to sit in the *hatthapāsa* area during the consecration.

Moreover, the *Vimativinodanī* uses two words to define this cartographical concept, which have some bearing on the definition of a *gāmasīmā*. The first word is *rājapaṇṇesu* 'on the maps of the king' or 'on the record of the king' and the second is *bhūmibhāgesu* 'in the allotments/divisions of land'[76] (*Vimativinodanī* vol. ii. 1992: 157). The meaning of the word '*rājapaṇṇesu*', however, may be not the same as we use in the present day, since modern mapping is a relatively recent phenomenon. The idea of 'map'

---

[76] On the uptake of the *Vimativinodanī* where it augments *Pālimuttakavinayavinicchayasaṅgaha* in the 17th-century *Vinayālaṅkāra* written by Tipiṭakalaṅkāra in Burma, see Crosby 2006: 58.

should therefore be understood in relation to 'allotment' in the second phrase, meaning the 'allotment' (*bhūmibhāgesu*) normally distributed or recognised by the local government authority. The concept of this 'map' may be just a mark assigned for the convenience of distributing or allocating land, or perhaps some kind of official register, rather than a map in the modern sense.

The establishment of a village boundary in Burma today has not remained entirely consistent with this pattern. Some villages in upper Burma, for example, are defined by the village fence as described in the *Pārājika Aṭṭhakathā* vol. i. (1993:260) while the villages in other regions may have no fence, as I will explain further in the next section of this chapter. However, the fence is not entirely relevant for a modern boundary definition for the administration and allotment of government support, as each village has a defined boundary, which is either marked out by the public crossroads or trees around the outskirts of the village lands.

Furthermore, each such village boundary encompasses an area run by an appointed village leader to look after the people or they are looked after by another nearby village leader (Sīlānanda 2002:204-6). As will be discussed more in the next section, these are considered as representatives of the government in the case of the current Burmese ruling system. The allotments (*bhūmibhāgesu)* belonging to the villagers is worked out by this village leader who is appointed by or acts on behalf of the 'king' (or government). The village leader is only important here in terms of the allotment but he cannot define the *gāmasīmā*. This is because the *gāmasīmā* is, according to the *Vimatinodanī* cited above, defined by the government authority or king. Moreover, even though the village leader is changed or replaced by another, (even when the collection of tax from the villagers is carried out by another village leader), the area of a village boundary will remain the same. Therefore, the map of the government (*rājapaṇṇesu*) is more important than the village leader. If someone moves into the defined area of the map (*rājapaṇṇesu*) that has defined the village, he or she may either receive allotment from or pay their tax to the king via the appointed village leaders. Here

we can see that *Vimativinodanī* does not reject the idea of village leader and taxation, as long as the village leader operates under the defined area of the village that is mapped by the king or government authority. We can contrast this with the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:333) where it is only stated that the *gāmasīmā* is defined by the area according to which the village pay their tax via the village leader.

When a *sīmā* is consecrated in such a village boundary, some Burmese monks nevertheless prefer to use the *gāmasīmā* defined in *Vimativinodanī* while others have retained the commentarial concept of taxation. Thus, in spite of the understanding of a village boundary being different in modern Burma from that found in the Pāli commentarial tradition, it is the Pāli commentarial definitions that dominate when it comes to the interpretation of the term *gāmasīmā* in the *Vinaya* context. I will explain details about the Burmese village boundaries in the following section.

5.4. Definitions of *gāmasīmā* in the Burmese tradition

Burmese monks interpret the village boundary inconsistently as they must follow two different approaches in the interpretation of a village boundary. As just stated above, some monks accept the commentarial concept of the village leader and the collection of taxation as the defining criterion while other monks are not convinced and they take the interpretation of a village boundary as developed by the *Vimativinodanī*. Moreover, while they follow these texts in defining a village boundary, they cannot ignore current government regulation of village boundaries wherein the definition of a village boundary is applied in yet a different way, unrelated to those commentarial and sub-commentarial definitions. These differences create a predicament in the interpretation of a *gāmasīmā* among the Burmese monks. I shall here explain the current government system for village boundaries and how this type of village boundary is used, reinterpreted for the monastic *sīmā* consecration.

Burmese villages are called, in Burmese, *Ywar* (*ya-wa* pronounced in one word). Each *Ywar* has a name and a defined border, which is normally marked by the road, a tree or trees or stones and this 'defined border' and 'name of the *Ywar*' is documented in the local government bureau. If, however, many small *Ywar*s are established next to each

other, these small *Ywar*s are together called *Ywar Oksu* (a village group). Most of *Ywar Oksu* are found next to each other within a perimeter of two miles although it may depend on the regions where we can sometimes see such *Ywar Oksu* much closer to each other. This *Ywar Oksu* too has a defined 'border and name' separately from one *Ywar Oksu* to another. There are two types of leader, appointed to govern the *Ywar*, one is for the *Ywar Oksu*, which contains many *Ywar*s, and the other is one for each affiliated *Ywar* (small *Ywar*) within the *Ywar Oksu*. The leader of *Ywar Oksu* is called *Yayaka Lugyi*[77] while the leader of each affiliated (small) *Ywar* within the *Ywar Oksu* is called *Ywar Kaung*.[78] The *Yayaka Lugyi*[79] possesses more power in terms of the collection of the taxation from the *Ywarthar* (villagers) and settling any disputes within the *Ywar*, whereas the authority of *Ywar Kaung* is only to assist the activities and policies of the *Yayaka Lugyi* in their small *Ywar* (mostly small village) for which they are responsible.

However, there are diverse practices adopted in structuring and establishing both '*Ywar*' and '*Ywar Oksu*' depending on the locations and regions. In most areas in lower Burma for example, the organization of '*Ywar Oksu*' has not developed in the governing pattern of the rural community but we can see such a governing system predominantly adopted in upper Burma. This means that the governing system of the *Ywar* in lower Burma has not developed into the formation of the '*Ywar Oksu* (village group) policy, although we can still witness the different structure of the *Ywar* in terms of the appointment of the *Yayaka Lugyi* (village leader). In some places, for example, there are many solitary *Ywar*s, which are being run by one *Yayaka Lugyi*; while in other places, the same model of *Yayaka Lugyi* (village leader) is responsible for two or three small *Ywar*s. Even then these small *Ywar*s are not affiliated to each other to be called *Ywar Oksu*, as the system is mostly implemented in upper Burma. So, the setting of a *Ywar* in

---

[77] *Yayaka Lugyi* is an abbreviation derives from *yat kwet aykhyan tha-ya yay hnint hpwan hpyo yay kaungsi* (local peace and development council).

[78] This *Ywar* Kaung is also known as *Ywar Sar*, *Ywar Ok* and *Ywar Thugyi*. Each term conveys the same meaning: 'villager leader', 'village headman' or 'village boss' in English.

[79] The term *Yayaka lugyi* has been changed to a new term for the village leader since the formation of new government in 2011. The term is called *Kyay ywar ok chok yay hmu*- administrator of a village. This new term comes to my knowledge after my viva or just before the submission of the amended version of my thesis.

lower Burma is quite large, which is suitable to run by a *Yayaka Lugyi* whereas the organisation of a *Ywar* in upper Burma is mostly small and organised by *Ywar Oksu*. Generally speaking, there are two types of rural administration in Burma in which a *Yayaka Lugyi* is employed or appointed. One is *Ywar Oksu* and the other '*Ywar*'. The former contains a few small *Ywar* while the latter is mostly one *Ywar* but this latter type of *Ywar* is considerably bigger than the small *Ywar* that is found in *Ywar Oksu*.

This creates a problem in validating a *sīmā* consecration. There are two issues involved in the problem: should the monks accept one single *Ywar* (village) in defining a *gāmasīmā* or should they accept all *Ywars* which are affiliated to *Yayaka Lugyi* (a village leader) to define a *gāmasīmā*? As will be discussed below, Ashin Aggavaṃsa (1983:45), Visuddhāyon Sayadaw (1985:180) and Ashin Sīlānanda (2002:187) argue that since each small *Ywar* (village) within the *Ywar Oksu* (a village group) has a 'defined boundary', the single *Ywar* is thus eligible for a *sīmā* consecration without including the remaining *Ywars* in the *Ywar Oksu*, while others do not accept such a model, particularly Nyaung Yan Taw-ya Sayadaw, details of whose views will be discussed later. Nyaung Yan Taw-ya Sayadaw's argument is that despite each *Ywar* having a defined border, there is only one *Yayaka Lugyi* for the entire *Ywar Oksu*. Therefore, it is necessary to include all *Ywars* within the *Ywar Oksu* (a village group).

According to Ashin Aggavaṃsa (1983:45), Visuddhāyon Sayadaw (1985:180) and Ashin Sīlānanda (2002:187), if a *Ywar* is already recognised by the government authority, the concept of *Yayaka Lugyi* and the collection of taxation can both be disregarded as they are not crucial element in defining a *gāmasīmā*. This means that if, for example, one of the three established *Ywar Oksu* (a village group) conducts a *sīmā* ceremony, monks from the other two *Ywars* are not required to attend at the consecration ceremony; the requirement is only applied to the monks of the single *Ywar* where the *sīmā* consecration ceremony is being held. As already stated in the previous section, this is how *Vimativinodanī* explains the definition of a *gāmasīmā*. If we consider the definition of a *gāmasīmā* described in the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:333), this measure, however, excludes the other two elements: one is *Ywar* (village) leader, for

which the current Burmese term is *Yayaka Lugyi*; and the other is the collection of taxation: both of which are used in the interpretation of a *gāmasīmā* in the *Samantapāsādikā.*

Following the concept of the *Vimativinodanī,* both Ashin Sīlānanda (2002: 187) and Ashin Ashin Aggavaṃsa (1983:45) offer two reasons for the exclusion of the *Ywar* leader and taxation in defining a *gāmasīmā*: they argue that there are places where no villagers pay tax for the parks, gardens or playground even though these places are included in the village boundary by the government's definition. If taxation is considered as a key fact in defining a *gāmasīmā,* these un-taxable places should be kept out of the *gāmasīmā* area. They object that this is unfeasible in current practice because these un-taxable areas are in fact not excluded from the *gāmasīmā.* If, by their argument, the *gāmasīmā* is defined only by the area on which the collection of taxation is received, there will be a problem in the *sīmā* consecration. The monks who stay in the un-taxable areas during consecration should not be included because they are un-taxable areas of the *gāmasīmā.* This is, in any case, opposite to what happens in reality and in practice, as all monks within the entire *Ywar* (village) boundary are understood to be included anyway during *sīmā* consecration. According to Ashin Sīlānanda (2002: 187) and Ashin Aggavaṃsa's (1983:45) argument, monks staying in un-taxable areas who do not attend would be considered to have caused disunity, *vagga*, within the *Ywar* (village) boundary. Therefore, the *sīmā* consecration would be invalid. If monks within the un-taxable area are required to attend the *sīmā* consecration ceremony, their argument comes to the conclusion that the concept of taxation alone should not be taken into account in defining a *gāmasīmā.*

In their second argument, both Ashin Aggavaṃsa (1983: 45) and Ashin Sīlānanda (2002: 187ff) consider the fact that the appointment of a village leader is not always reflected in the current practice of the establishment of a *Ywar*. In current practice, the marking of the village area is generally encompassed by government authority and someone is authorised to look after the villagers, including being responsible for the collection of tax. But this authorised *Ywar* leader may or may not be appointed from the

same village as the new village: the leader can be someone from a nearby village. So, in their view, the border of the *Ywar* is more important than that of the appointment of a *Ywar* leader especially when it is concerned with a *sīmā* consecration. Therefore, even though a new *Ywar* is led by a leader of a nearby *Ywar*, the defined boundary of this new *Ywar* is considered as a *gāmasīmā*. In other words, it is not necessary to appoint a *Ywar* leader (*Yayaka Lugyi*) to be able to consider a *gāmasīmā* to exist, as stated in the previous section. Therefore, if a monastic *sīmā* is established in such a new *Ywar*, it is not required to control the nearby village monks as the new *Ywar* has already been recognised with a separate *Ywar* boundary. Whether or not a *Ywar* has a leader, this instance suggests that the government's recognition is more important than having any appointed leader to the village. The concept of the defined border of a *Ywar* is thus counted as a *gāmasīmā* regardless of its affiliation to a *Ywar Oksu* or to a nearby *Ywar*.

Ashin Aggavaṃsa (1983:46) went even further stating that there is no indication of a *Ywar* (village) leader or taxation in the Buddha's definition of a *gāmasīmā*. If the taxation were all that was taken into account in the definition of a *gāmasīmā*, this does not correspond to the early concept of *gāmasīmā*. He stated that the *Mahāvagga*, the early canonical text on the *sīmā*, only mentions about the village boundary but the concept of taxation or village leader is not mentioned in the early canon and thus is not necessary to define the boundary by the village leader or taxation. Ashin Aggavaṃsa used two phrases in Burmese language to differentiate between the early concept of *gāmasīmā* and later concept of *gāmasīmā*: *ne-thi-hmu* (defined border 'of a village') and *a-khun-thi-hmu* (the collection of taxation). The early literature states only '*ne-thi-hmu*': the defined border of a village, rather than '*a-khun-thi-hmu*': the collection of taxation. Therefore, the former, *ne-thi-hmu*, is considered to have been represented in the opinion of the Buddha. Ashin Aggavaṃsa (1983:43) also called the former phrase, the *ne-thi-hmu* as *padhāna* (main factor)*:* the defined border of a village as the main factor, which means the most important factor in definition of a *gāmasīmā*. However, the phrase, *a-khun-thi-hmu* is *appadhāna* (collection of taxation as not a main factor) not important in

defining a *gāmasīmā* because this concept appeared much later, only during the commentarial period.

While Ashin Aggavaṃsa interprets the concept of *ne-thi-hmu* referring to the Buddha's original words, Ashin Sīlānanda (2002:204-5) has even created an analytical formula to understand these two points – ''*nethi hmu* and *akhun thi hmu*'':

1. *Netha thi ywe akhun mathi ya*: only the recognition of the defined border area (*gāma*) but without the collection of taxation.

2. *Akhuntha thi ywe nemathi ya*: only the collection of taxation but without the recognition of the defined border area (*gāma*)

3. *Hnapa zon thi ya*: both the recognition of the defined border area (*gāma*) and the collection of taxation

4. *Hnapa zon ma-thi ya*: neither the recognition of the defined border area (*gāma*) nor the collection of taxation

Number (1) suggests that even though there is no collection of tax from an area, if the area is defined by the government, this will consider as *gāmasīmā*. This means that the concept of number (1) is entirely entitled to be a *gāmasīmā* even if the taxation is not collected by or not paid to the *Yayaka Lugyi* or anyone who is responsible for the taxation. Since the number (2) statement is measured only by the collection of taxation but without having the recognition of the defined area, the number (2) definition cannot be considered as a *gāmasīmā*. This means that taxation alone cannot be the defining characteristic of a *gāmasīmā* if there is no defined area authorised by the government. If however, the area is recognised as both a defined *Ywar* and as an area for collection of taxation as described in the number (3), such an area can be a *gāmasīmā*. So, given that the concept of government's map or recognition is crucial in defining a *gāmasīmā*, the number (1) and (3) is the feasible place for the monastic *gāmasīmā*. The number (4) description is not considered as a *gāmasīmā* by any criterion of the taxation or the defined border. In this last criterion, there is neither officially defined village boundary

nor is officially designed village leader to collect the tax from the villagers. Therefore, such a boundary is not, by any means, qualified to be a *gāmasīmā*.

This fourfold definition, however, has been contested by another Burmese monk who believes that the authorisation of a *Yayaka Lugyi* is the only way of defining a *gāmasīmā*. According to Nyaung Yan Taw-ya Sayadaw (1982:167-8), the head of the sixth Saṅgha synod, which was held in 1955-1956 (see Chapter Three) and the author of the *Nyaung Yan Vinicchaya Baungkhyot*, 'The Complete Analysis of Nyaung Yan Taw-ya Sayadaw' (see about this monks his work in Chapter Three), the *Yayaka Lugyi* or the village leader plays the most important part in the definition of a *gāmasīmā*. His interpretation is entirely based on the *Samantapāsādikā's* description of a *gāmasīmā* in which the village leader and the authority in the collection of taxation are employed to measure the area of *gāmasīmā*. While he quoted the *Samantapāsādikā's* account of a *gāmasīmā*, he points out a number of sub-commentaries which support the *Samantapāsādikā's* view. His first quotation, which we have already quoted in section of three of this chapter, is as follow:

> "*tattha yatthake padese tassa gāmassa bhojakā baliṃ labhanti so padeso appo vā hotu mahanto vā hotu gāmasīmā tveva samkhyaṃ gacchati*": "the area of 'village' lands, whether small or large, in relation to which village leaders collect tax is designated by the term *gāmasīmā*, village boundary" (Nyaung Yan Taw-ya Sayadaw 1982:166, *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:333).

This is how the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā's* (1965:333) account of *gāmasīmā* has been taken for granted. Nyaung Yan Taw-ya Sayadaw specifically underlines the concept of *bhojaka* (tax collector) to portray the area of the *gāmasīmā*. The second quotation is taken from the *Vinayālaṅkāra ṭīkā*, a sub-commentary compiled by a 16th century Burmese monk known as Taunbila Sayadaw. This passage is intended to point out the relationship between the taxation and the village leader:

> "*Yāvatikā tasmiṃ gāmakhetteti yasmiṃ padese sīmaṃ bandhitukāmā tasmiṃ ekassa gāmabhojakassa āyyuppattiṭhānabhūte gāmakhette ṭhitā bhikkhūti sambhandho*": "when it is desired to consecrate a *sīmā* within a village area, it should be consecrated with the monks who stay in the taxable area of the village from which a village leader collect the tax".
> (Nyaung Yan Taw-ya Sayadaw 1982:166ff)

In his additional words, he states that the extent of a village should be defined by a 'single tax-collector' (*ekassa gāmabhojakassa*) who is responsible for the collection of tax. The area of this tax-collector is thus counted as one *gāmasīmā*. Finally, another quote from the *Vinayavinicchaya*:

> "*gāmapariccedoti sabbadisāsu sīmaṃ paricchinditvā imassa padesassa ettako karoti evaṃ karena niyāmito gāmappadeso*": "the limit of a village boundary is measured by means of all areas of the land within which the tax is regularly collected from that village area" (Nyaung Yan Taw-ya Sayadaw 1982:166).

In the first quotation he has attempted to validate the concept of taxation in the *Samantapāsādikā*, the earliest recognised commentary of the *Vinaya Piṭaka*. By the second and third quotations, he has attempted to show that the concept of taxation reported in the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:333) is indeed supported by the sub-commentators. In brief: each quotation of these texts has pointed to the concept of tax in defining the *gāmasīmā*. Since the collection of tax is carried out by the *Yayaka Lugyi* (village leader) in the present system of village administration, the whole area controlled by this *Yayaka Lugyi* is essential to the definition of a *gāmasīmā*.

Nyaung Yan Taw-ya Sayadaw (1982:166) has also rejected the system which focuses on the role of *Ywar Kaung*, a subordinate leader to *Yayaka Lugyi*, and this rejection is considered also to be a rejection of the *Vimativinodanī*, which defines a *gāmasīmā* by mere recognition of the *Ywar*'s boundary without taking taxation into account. The reason behind this rejection is that *Ywar Kaung* is only a leader of one of many affiliated '*Ywar Oksu*' and has no ultimate power to collect the tax from the villagers. If a *sīmā* is consecrated in any of these affiliated *Ywar*, the monks from the entire *Ywar Oksu*, which is led by the *Yayaka Lugyi*, must come to the *sīmā* consecration ceremony; only then is the definition of a *gāmasīmā* correct and valid. This means that if a *sīmā* is consecrated within an affiliated *Ywar* of an '*Ywar Oksu*' without bringing all monks from the area of *Yayaka Lugyi*, he considers it invalid. Here we can see differences between Nyaung Yan Taw-ya Sayadaw on the one hand and Ashin Sīlānanda and Ashin Aggavaṃsa on the other. This suggests that some Burmese monks accept only the commentarial definition of a *gāmasīmā* while others adopt the later sub-

commentarial definition. As a result of this, Burmese monks have not been consistent in their reference to a particular source of definition of *gāmasīmā*. Each of them has brought justifications to support their argument from different commentary and sub-commentaries.

Such arguments, however, are not necessarily borne out in terms of current practice. According to my interviews, there are three examples, in which the concept of *Yayaka Lugyi* has evidently been involved in the *sīmā* consecration. Two examples are derived from upper Burma where the jurisdiction of one *Ywar Oksu* (group village) and one *Yayaka Lugyi* (the leader) domain is included during the *sīmā* consecration. The other example is based in lower Burma, which is not different from the first two examples in terms of the *Yayaka Lugyi*'s domain but is different in terms of the number of *Ywar* included during the consecration.

I have received the former example from U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa, interviewed in January 2009, the former rector of the State Pariyatti Sāsana University, Yangon. He related his experience of a *sīmā* consecration in Myingyan Ywar (Myingyan village), Myingyan Myone (Myingyan Town), Upper Burma. In that place, there are three *Ywar*s under a *Ywar Oksu* (village group), called *Ashay Ywar Oksu* (see number 2 in diagram below). They are (1) Thein Ywar, (2) Kyargaing Ywar and (3) Mayogun Ywar. The first two *Ywars* are set up next to each other and only about a few thousand yards away from each other but the last *Ywar* is quite far away, about two miles away from the other two *Ywar*s. Since these three *Ywar*s come under Ashay Ywar Oksu, when a *sīmā* was consecrated at Kyargaing Ywar, all monks from these three *Ywars* attended at the consecration. In this case, the maximum extent was included, namely all three *Ywars*, which seems to be the safest: there can be no accusation of *vagga*.

I have designed a map to understand this consecration:
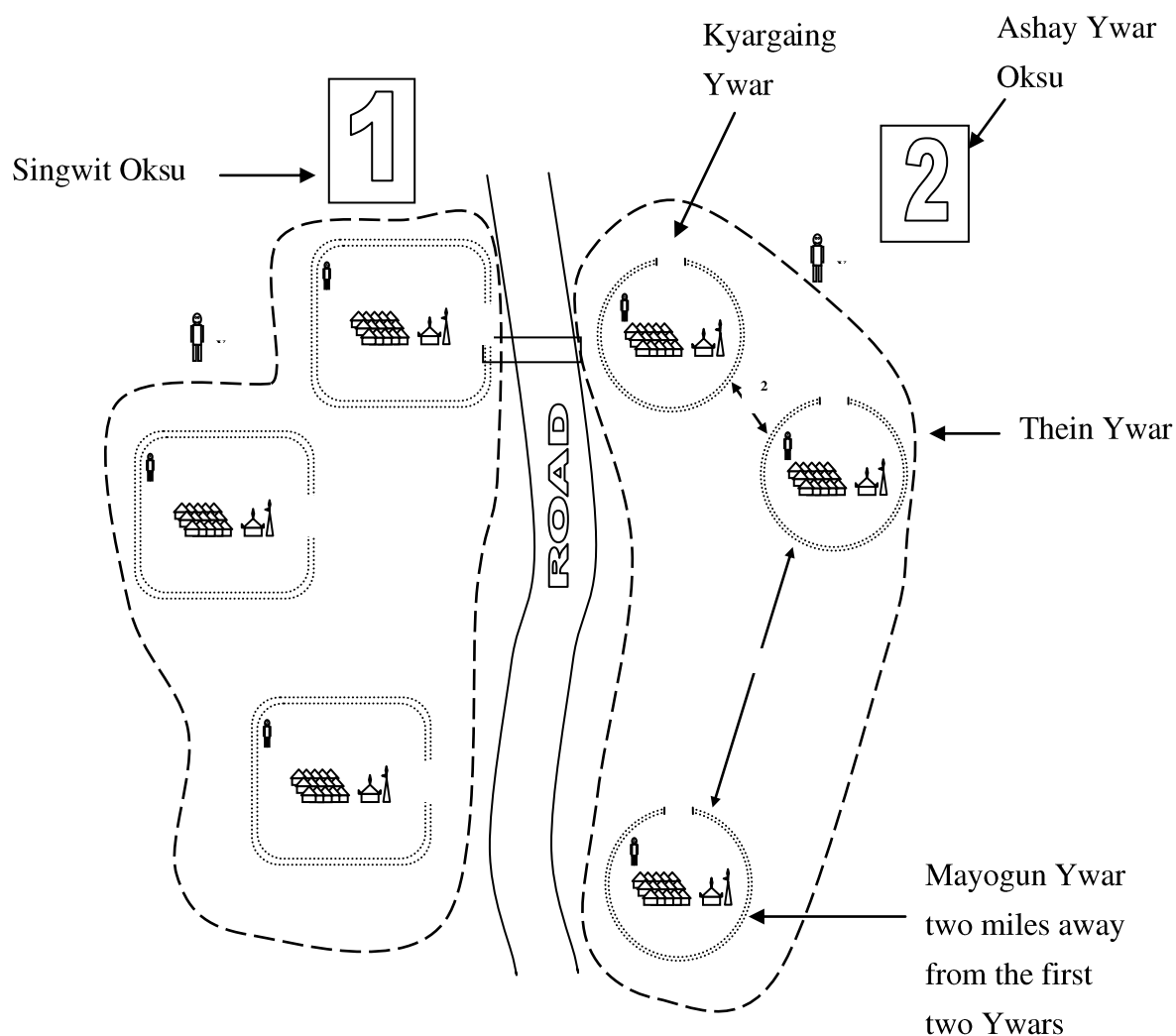
Figure 3: 5.4. The example of two *Ywar Oksus* and relevant *sīmā* consecration

Interestingly, there is another *Ywar Oksu* near to the first two *Ywar*s (Thein Ywar,

Kyargaing Ywar), called Singwit Oksu as can be seen in the diagram above (see number

one) and this *Oksu* is much closer to Kyargaing Ywar (where the *sīmā* was consecrated)

than that of Mayogun Ywar. However, during the *sīmā* consecration Singwit Oksu's

monks are not invited even though this *Oksu* is much closer than that of Mayogun Ywar.

Monks from the Mayogun Ywar were, however, invited during the consecration, in spite

of being two miles away, due to the fact that this *Ywar* comes under the same *Ywar Oksu*

(village group). The Singwit Oksu is nevertheless considered to be part of a different *Ywar Oksu*. Therefore it is the potential definition of *gāma* as *Ywar Oksu*, i.e. a Burmese governmental administrative concept, that is influencing the understanding of *gāma* here, not a geographic understanding of *gāma* or the desire to involve close neighbours.

Such a consecration involving the entire *Ywar Oksu* (village group) is confirmed by another informant's experience. U Janaka, interviewed in May 2009 and currently a research student King's College, told me that he attended a *sīmā* consecration in March, 1997 at Tunbala Ywar (Tunbala village), Pinbebu Township, Sagaing Division, (Upper Burma). Tunbala Ywar is part of the 'Ywar Thaya Oksu'. When he attended the *sīmā* consecration, all monks from the eight small *Ywar*s were invited for the *sīmā* consecration because these *Ywar*s come under the 'Ywar Thaya Oksu'. In contrast to U Janaka and U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa's experience, another informant, U Javana, a monk from Bago Division, lower Burma, interviewed in February 2009, also witnessed a similar practice in his village: Kyanigan Ywar, Pauntay Myo, Lower Burma. As discussed regarding the formation of a village boundary in lower Burma, the Kyanigan Ywar is considered as an independent *Ywar* (village) led by a *Yayaka Lugyi*. When a *sīmā* was consecrated in Kyanigan Ywar in 2006, the head monk did not invite all monks from nearby villages. He chose only a few competent monks to come and perform the ceremony. According to U Javana, it is not necessary to invite all monks from nearby *Ywar* because Kyanigan Ywar is not depended on the *Yayaka Lugyi* of nearby village. It is an independent *Ywar*, which operated by its own *Yayaka Lugyi*, which he considers it to be the same type *gāmasīmā* as it reported in the *Samantapāsādikā*.

Here we can see how the management of monks differ between upper and lower Burma when conducting a *sīmā* consecration in a village. The controlling of monks in upper Burma, as just discussed, took account of the whole *Ywar Oksu* (village group) as the structure of the villages governed by the system of *Ywar Oksu* whereas the management of monks in lower Burma is, however, 'mostly' accountable to the single village boundary. Most of such single village are, however, quite substantially large. Therefore, there is one *Yayaka Lugyi* appointed to look after the village. The different

between lower and upper Burma is that they are only different in terms of the structure of the *Ywar*, for example, upper Burma mostly use the system of *Ywar Oksu* to appoint a *Yayaka Lugyi* whereas in lower Burma the *Yayaka Lugyi* is appointed to a single *Ywar* base on the fact that the majority of *Ywar* in lower Burma is larger than *Ywar* in upper Burma. In other words, even though they are different in terms of the governing system of the local villages between lower and upper Burma, they are the same in terms of administrative body of both cases were led by the *Yayaka Lugyi* (village leader).

Of these three informants, U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa, being educated and experienced professor mentioned above, has made a further comment. He states that Burmese monks are extremely cautious about the *sīmā* consecration because they are worried about imperfection or invalidity in the *sīmā* consecration. They always attempt to work such a way that the consecration does not lead to any doubt. He called it in Burmese language, '*thanthaya kin-yakin kyaung*': 'for the overcoming of the doubt'. If there is a doubt in defining a single *gāmasīmā* within a *Ywar Oksu* (village group) it is better to include all villages; when, for example, Kyargaing Ywar conducted a *sīmā* consecration, the monks from Thein Ywar and Mayogun Ywar are also required to attend the ceremony. If some monks from Thein Ywar did not attend the ceremony, the consecration would be considered invalid. These three case-examples shared one common principle, which is to manage or to bring the monks into *hatthapāsa* area during *sīmā* consecration. It is therefore suggested that the delineation of a village boundary may differ between lower and upper Burma. However, when a *sīmā* is consecrated within a defined village boundary, all monks are required to attend at the *hatthapāsa* area. As stated in Chapter Four, the rule of *hatthapāsa* is one of the fundamental components of a monastic legal ritual activity, which is here depicted with these three examples just stated above. By there being an imperfect attendance of the monks within a defined village boundary, the consecration will be considered invalid.

Here we can see the relationship between the correct delineation of a village boundary and the requirement of monks attending any ceremony. We can also see this extra care in terms of the way in which *Vinaya* including *sīmā* is so important for Saṅgha

authority in Burma discussed in Chapter Two and Three – no one wants to run the risk of being accused of being part of an invalid tradition and so they will incorporate all possible interpretations rather than run the risk. We shall now look at an example of what happened when all these precautions are not taken.

According to a report (1989) conducted by the *Saṅghamahānāyaka hnyunkya hlwa,* (State *Saṅghamahānāyaka* Directives) disapproved a *sīmā* consecration conducted by U Kesara in Ratanasiri Yatkwet (Ratanasiri council), Zaykyonaymye, Mawlamyine, Mon State. As will be discussed further in section seven of this chapter, *Yatkwet* is considered to be an 'equivalent' area of a council within a town or city and also consider the same administration system of an *Oksu* (or *Ywar*), the only difference being that the *Yatkwet* (a local council area) system is found in the town or city while the *Oksu* (*Ywar*) in the countryside. Therefore, U Kesara must invite all monks from the *Yatkwet* area when consecrating his *sīmā* in Ratanasiri Yatkwet. However, when he consecrated his *sīmā* at Shwevamyint monastery, he did not invite all the monks within Ratanasiri Yatkwet. It was for this reason the local Saṅgha Council accused him of *vagga* (division). When the dispute was passed for adjudication to the State Central Working Committee of the 'Vinaya Unit', it ruled that U Kesara was - to the Council's satisfaction - in the wrong, the basis for this ruling being that U Kesara had not followed the commentarial rule of *gāmasīmā* that all monks within the entire Ratanasiri Yatkwet must either attend the *hatthapāsa* area or send their consent for the ceremony. As he had failed to do this the validity of his *sīmā* consecration was withdrawn immediately.

There may, of course, have been other reasons for this focus on U Kesara's consecration of the *sīmā* at Shwevamyint Kyaung. As can be seen in Chapters Two and Three, while the *Vinaya* is used as a criterion for judging orthodoxy or orthopraxy, challenges such as this often seem to come about as a reflection of some other kind of 'monastic politics'. Nonetheless, it shows us that the important point in defining a legal *gāmasīmā* is to correctly organise the monks to the satisfaction of all the definitions, otherwise one risks one's *sīmā* and also subsequent acts conducted within it (including ordination) being declared invalid.

In summary, some Burmese monks strictly interpret the *Ywar* in terms of the jurisdiction of the *Yayaka Lugyi*, the leader of the *Ywar* or (*Ywar*s from which the *Yayaka Lugyi* collects the tax from the villagers) while others merely accept the *Ywar* boundary without taking taxation into consideration. Thus it is clearly demonstrated that the interpretation of a *gāmasīmā* by Burmese monks is not consistent. In spite of there being different interpretations among the Burmese monks, I do not find any disputation of one another's concepts, at least during my research in Burma in 2009. However, when they consecrate a *sīmā* either in a defined '*Ywar Oksu*' (village group) or in a single '*Ywar*' (village), all village monks are required to attend the consecration ceremony. If they cannot attend, they must send their consent to the ceremony. Under any circumstances, monks are not allowed to be concerned with *vagga* (division) within the defined village boundary during monastic rituals. They are thus required to attend the ceremony within the *hatthapāsa* area. Defining a correct village boundary is thus crucial in order to define what the complete attendance of monks is during monastic legal activities.

5.5. The relationship between *gāmasīmā* and *visuṃgāmasīmā*

In preceding sections we discussed the diverse concept of *gāmasīmā* using references to early canonical and commentarial texts and described how these texts are interpreted by Burmese monks. The concept of a *gāmasīma* has been transformed from the original size of a village to a small village boundary (*visuṃgāmasīmā)*. In this section I shall look at how a *visuṃgāmasīmā* is defined in the commentary and how Burmese monks have interpreted the definition to accommodate it within Burmese tradition.

The term *visuṃgāmasīmā* is made up of a combination of three words: *visuṃ*: 'separate/detached', or 'special/particular'; *gāma*: village; and, *sīma*: boundary. Its meaning is that of a 'small' village boundary separated from the main *gāmasīmā* (village boundary) but created within it. There are a number of rules a monk is required to follow when seeking to establish a *visuṃgāma* land within a *gāmasīmā* the most important of which, according to the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:333) is that the land is granted either by the authority of the king, or by his government.

The *Samantapasādikā* states:

> *"yampi ekasmiṃ yeva gāmakkhette ekaṃpadesaṃ ayaṃ visuṃgāmo hotū'ti*
> *paricchinditvā rājā kassaci deti sopi visuṃgāmasīmā hotiyeva"*: "a plot of land which
> the king gives to someone within a particular village area having demarcated it, labelling
> it as 'a separate village', is indeed identified as a separate village boundary,
> *visuṃgāmasīmā"* (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:333).

Once the plot of land allocated for the *visuṃgāmasīmā* has been separated from the
gāmasīmā, it ceases to be part of the original *gāmasīmā* and is no longer under the
administrative control of the village boundary leader. From one piece of land there are
now two: one smaller plot the size of a monastery compound and the remaining land the
village boundary[80]. Having been marked out by the monks and authorisation sought and
gained from either the king or the government, the *visuṃgāmasīmā* has become a
samānasaṃvāsasīmā (boundary for the shared/common communion) where monks can
perform their monastic rituals.

For a better understanding of the above, Ashin Aggavaṃsa (1983:47) divides the
rules of *visuṃgāmasīmā* into four constituent factors:

1. the village boundary's land *(gāmakhetta)*
2. a portion of land *(ekaṃ padesaṃ)*
3. the title of *visuṃgāma (visuṃgāmasimā)*
4. the king or the government's authority *(rājā)*

As already stated in section two of this chapter, the concept of *gāma-khetta,* the first rule
of *visuṃgāmasīmā,* is that of the entire village boundary and equates to the concept of a
gāmasīmā where the villagers in a defined area pay tax to a village leader. By either
definition, an existing *gāmasīmā* is considered to be one of the pre-conditions of a
visuṃgāmasīmā. According to the second rule, a plot of land (*ekaṃ padesaṃ*) has to be
selected from within the *gāmakhetta* (village lands) in order to create a *visuṃgāmasīmā*.
It follows, therefore, that the complete area of *gāmakhetta* (village lands) cannot become
the property of *visuṃgāma;* as technically, this land has to be much smaller than the

---

[80] I have explained about a controversy relating a *visuṃgāmasīmā* in the section three of this chapter.

village boundary. So the two defining points of these first two rules are: one, in the relationship between a *gāmasīmā* and the plot of a *visuṃgāmasīmā* the latter cannot be created without involving the former; and two, that a *visuṃgāmasīmā* cannot be created outside a *gāmasīmā*.

According to the third rule, this plot of land must be given the title of *visuṃgāma* when it is selected from within the village. It is crucial that it be differentiated from any other plots of land found within a *gāmakhetta*. According to Ashin Aggavaṃsa (1983:69-70), permission must be given under the name and meaning of '*visuṃgāma*' in order to validate monastic rituals that take place within it. Any other terms of usage such as: plot for a public school, pagoda, monastery, or community centre – would not allow for monastic rituals.

The fourth rule emphasises the necessity of the king (*rājā*) or his government granting land for this purpose. If, for example, a village leader donates a plot of *visuṃgāma* land to a monastery, it will not qualify for monastic rituals until converted into '*visuṃgāma*' by the power of the king or by the government. Only when this conversion has taken place can the land be used for monastic purpose. Thus the relationship between rule three '*visuṃgāma*' and rule four '*rājā*' 'king' or government authority, plays another important role in defining a *visuṃgāmasīmā*.

Although each rule is important to the defining of a *visuṃgāmasīmā*, the last rule: the king's power holds the greater importance. There is a general perception of the king or government authority having the legitimate and authoritative power to integrate or disintegrate villagers, including moving a village from one place to another. The king or government authority also possesses the power to appoint a village leader, or remove him from his position. It follows, therefore, that there is no other body or institution with the power to give a plot of *visuṃgāmasīmā* land. As mentioned in the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* this power lies either with the king or with the government authority, the latter being recognised by Burmese monks as being proxy to the king's authority (Maingkhaing Sayadaw 1971:195).

It is current practice in Burma for the determination of a *visuṃgāmasīmā* to be authorised jointly by the Ministry of Land and the Ministry of Religion, i.e. at a very high level of central government authority, giving us an indication of the weight given to such matters as Saṅgha governance. Lower ranks such as Town Leader or Deputy Commissioner are not qualified to grant *visuṃgāma* land in Burma today. Ashin Sobhitācāra (1968:90) and Maingkhaing Sayadaw (1971: 198) do not, however, agree with present government regulations. They take their reference from the report of a monk from Dawei, Lower Burma, called U Sāgara, who sent a lay devotee to the king in Mandalay to request a *visuṃgāmasīmā* grant. After expressing sympathy to the devotee for his long journey from lower Burma to the palace in upper Burma, the king asked whether he had already applied for this grant from the Deputy Commissioner. This was at a time when the Dawei areas had been annexed by British Colonial Rule and were therefore no longer under the Burmese king's dominion. Therefore, Burmese king did not (or cannot) authorise the *visuṃgāmasīmā* grant sought by U Sāgara, instead the king requested to seek this grant from the Deputy Commissioner. Later, the land was granted to U Sāgara by the Deputy Commissioner.

This record has been interpreted by Ashin Sobhitācāra and Maingkhaing Sayadaw, and indeed by the majority of Burmese, as implying that someone with the status of a Deputy Commissioner is eligible to grant *visuṃgāma* land (ibid). In practice, it is easier to have permission from such a person than from the Ministries. We see here both the practical aspect, dealing with a local matter at a more local and flexible level and the issue of high-ranking monks contesting the over-centralised state control of the Saṅgha, basing their challenge on their detailed knowledge of *Vinaya* case history across different political periods. For *Vinaya* law is regarded as persisting independently of different temporal systems.

There is a second reference in support of the first just given: that of Ashin Sobhitācāra's quote from Ashin Aggavaṃsa's description concerning religious property adopted by the British Colonial Regulation. This regulation was adopted in 1876 by the British Colonial Rule under the Land Provision (32) of section (6). According to this

regulation, if the value of the land is within a 'hundred pounds' the Deputy Commissioner is eligible to grant the land. If the value of the land is between 101 pound and 200 pound[81], the land can only be granted by the consent of the Inland Revenue Authority (Aggavaṃsa 1983:60, Sobhitācāra 1983:92). Ashin Aggavaṃsa states that, since the Land Provision (32) of section (6) does not categorically state that the deputy commissioner is not eligible to grant a *visuṃgāmasīmā*, the deputy commissioner has indeed the authority to grant *visuṃgāmasīmā* and the approval of the East India Governor is only required if the value of the land is over 200 pound. As an interpretation of the foregoing, Ashin Sobhitācāra believes that *visuṃgāma* land can be granted by an official of equal status to the deputy commissioner and it is not necessary for it to be authorised by the top officials of the country. This interpretation is considered to be true and is accepted by many Burmese monks, although the current government is still not convinced it should be acknowledged, especially with regard to granting *visuṃgāma* land.

While the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* advocates the king or his government official as the authority who grants *visuṃgāmasīmā*, the recipient of the land is another concern. Despite the fact that *visuṃgāma* land is granted to a monastery, it is a requirement that a donor's name be used when the application is submitted to the government authority (Sīlānanda 2002:189). It is not necessary that the land be granted to a monk; It can, in fact, be granted to anyone (*kassaci deti*), layman or monk. However, as recorded by Ashin Sobhitācāra (1968:88)[82] and according to Ashin Sīlānanda, many Burmese monks believe that the donor or applicant cannot be the same person who has already been

---

[81] The value of the sterling pound during 1876 is different from what we value today. However I have not been able to estimate the value between the modern currency and the currency rate in 1876.

[82] Ashin Sobhitācāra's has stated that his opinion has derived from his predecessors, which he terms *ācariyavāda*, 'the opinion of previous teachers'. These teachers by whom his work, at least in this interpretation on recipients, is influenced are Moenangun Sayadaw, the second Nyaung Lun Sayadaw, Shwe-ye Saung Sayadaw, Pakokku Sayadaw, Kyiwan Sayadaw, Aung Mye Shwebung Sayadaw, Min Kyaung Sayadaw (Sobhitācāra 1968:88-89). These Sayadaws were well-known among the Burmese monks during and before the Second World War. He, however, referred only to two books; one is written by his teacher, the second Nyaung Lun Sayadaw, called *Vinayagaṇṭhiṭhāna Kyangyi* 'Anthology on the Vinaya' and the other is called *sīmāvinicchaya* written by Pakokku Sayadaw. Since he did not report any detail of their sources, I here only mention as a fact that Ashin Sobhitācāra had indeed not claimed this as his own opinion but as his concurrence with the opinions of previous teachers (*ācariyavāda*).

appointed village leader since he/she is already considered owner of the village in terms of his power over the management of the villagers and logistic support. It makes no sense, therefore, for a property already belonging to a person to be given to that person again. This particularly applies if the government gives *visuṃgāma* land to a village leader since it cannot be considered to be '*visuṃgāma*' (Visuddhāyon Sayadaw 1985:180) because this plot of land cannot be considered separate if it already belongs to the village leader (ibid).

Ashin Sīlānanda, however, presents a different argument. He states that if the government has the supreme authority to divide one village into two groups that same government authority has the power to appoint the same village leader to look after both villages: the old village and the new. Ashin Sīlānanda's logic suggests that the new village can be led by the same person and yet, according to the government, it is now considered to be two villages. If such an authorisation is possible by government authority, the same model can be applied also in the case of *visuṃgāmasīmā*. Although the *visuṃgāma* land has been given to the same person (the village leader), it should be regarded as a separate village boundary so long as the government authority has defined two separate boundaries (Sīlānanda 2002:195). When, for example, a village leader is appointed, that same leader can also control another village boundary. It is not necessary, therefore, to include all the monks from the entire village boundary during monastic activity. It is only required that the monks within the *visuṃgāmasīmā* be included when conducting monastic rituals. With this argument Ashin Sīlānanda also holds the view that the recipient is not central to the concept of *visuṃgāmasīmā*. What is central is the authorisation of the government authority in order to separate a plot of land (ibid).

5.6. *Visuṃgāmasīmā* outside a *gāmasīmā* and its relationship to religious property

The definition given above is considered to be the 'traditional' definition of a *visuṃgāmasīmā* as interpreted by the majority of Burmese monks. There are, however, some Burmese monks who adopted a different view. Visuddhāyon Sayadaw, for example, provides a new argument, perhaps a new interpretation, to the existing

visuṃgāmasīmā. Contrary to Ashin Aggavaṃsa's argument, he believes that a *visuṃgāmasīmā* should not be restricted to a village boundary but can also be established outside a *gāmasīmā*. His argument comes in two parts: one is the textual description, which we shall discuss below about Visuddhāyon Sayadaw's response to Shankalaykyun Sayadaw and the other is a new interpretation of who should be the recipient of a *visuṃgāmasīmā*. Within this new interpretation the power of king and place of worship are employed in defining a new type of *visuṃgāmasīmā*. This will be described later.

Visuddhāyon Sayadaw cites the case of a high-ranking monk known as Shankalaykyun Sayadaw who held the belief that a *visuṃgāmasīmā* could not be established outside a village boundary. Although this account cannot be verified from other sources, it is reported that in the last quarter of the nineteenth century another high-ranking monk, Shwegyin Sayadaw, founder of the Shwegyin Nikāya, consecrated a *visuṃgāmasīmā* outside a village boundary. Shankalaykyun Sayadaw rigorously rejected the success of this consecration (Visuddhāyon Sayadaw 1985:179), arguing that a correct *visuṃgāmasīmā* (separate boundary) can only be established within a *gāmasīmā*, similar to that of Ashin Aggavaṃsa cited above. Since this *sīmā* was outside a *gāmasīmā* area, Shankalaykyun Sayadaw did not count it as being a valid *visuṃgāmasīmā*. Shankalaykyun Sayadaw accordingly declared that all monastic legal activities which had taken place within this *sīmā* would be invalid, including ordinations. He even stated that a monk ordained within this *visuṃgāmasīmā*, who subsequently committed a *pārājika* offence, would be offered a new ordination by him since any previous ordination in a defective *sīmā* was invalid. Since the committing of a *pārājika* offence prohibits a monk from the monkhood in his lifetime, this statement reflects the strength of his conviction. We are reminded again of the importance with which Burmese monks hold the purity of a *sīmā* to be essential for the validity of a monk's ordination, as we saw the same conviction by Dhammacetī during the 15th century.

In response to Shankalaykyun Sawadaw's conviction, Visuddhāyon Sayadaw makes an attempt to establish the monastic concept of a *gāmasīmā* set outside a village boundary. Whilst not denying the traditional interpretation of a *visuṃgāmasīmā* as stated

above, he wanted to ascertain whether or not 'unoccupied land' or the 'non-village area' of a region could become a *gāmasīmā*. The reasoning behind this was that if such lands are indeed included under the term '*gāmasīmā*' (village boundary), they would then be eligible to be established as *visuṃgāmasīmā*. He therefore re-defines the commentarial concept of *gāmasīmā*, quoting the passage from the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* that we identified above:

> "*tattha yatthake padese tassa gāmassa bhojakā baliṃ labhanti so padeso appo vā hotu mahanto vā hotu gāmasīmā tveva samkhyaṃ gacchati*": "the area of 'village' lands, whether small or large, in relation to which village leaders collect tax is designated by the term *gāmasīmā*, village boundary" (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:333).

This passage was cited under section two of this chapter when examining the canonical and subsequent commentarial definition of *gāmasīmā*. While the meaning of a *gāmasīmā* is defined by the role of a village leader and taxation from the villagers, Visuddhāyon Sayadaw suggests that such a definition is not acceptable where there is no village. Following *Vimativinodanī*'s definition, as discussed above, he argues that if the un-taxable areas of a village are indeed included within a *gāmasīmā*, then the area outside it should also be included, because they are areas also not subject to payment of tax to the village leader. It follows, therefore, that neither the collection of tax nor the size of an area is important in defining a *gāmasīmā* (Visuddhāyon Sayadaw 1985:180).

He then sets out a new type of monastic *gāmasīmā* to be found outside a defined village boundary. He gives the measurement of this boundary from the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* where it states that:

> "*Samudde dīpako vā pabbato vā hoti. So ce dūre hoti macchabhandhānaṃ agamanapathe araññasīmāsaṃkhyameva gacchati. tesaṃ gamanapariyantassa orato pana gāmasīmāsaṃkhyaṃ gacchati. Tattha gāmasīmaṃ asodhetvā kammaṃ kātuṃ na vaṭṭati*": "when a fisherman cannot come back to his home within a day from the long distance of an island or from a mountain on that island, the area where he has been working is considered to be a 'forest boundary'. If he can come back, the whole area is considered a *gāmasīmā*. It is, therefore, not allowed to conduct monastic rituals within this whole area unless all monks attend" (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965: 336, *Vinayasaṅgaha* 1970:198).

This measurement should also be applied to any part of the country. If, for example, a villager can return to his village within a day 'walking and working' at his workplace,

the workplace is considered to be within a *gāmasīmā* (Kovida 2007: 15, *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965: 336, Sankyaung Sayadaw 1982: 217).

There is no definitive way given in the commentary to calculate the exact hours of such a journey. They can only be defined by using the 'normal' rowing time of a fisherman's vessel to his working place, or by the 'normal' walking pace of a villager. This raises the question of how one should define the time and distance, and how one should determine the time a workman should leave his home and return when his work is ended. According to Sankyaung Sayadaw (1982: 217), the normal walking or rowing time is counted as being approximately three hours each way, making six hours a day travelling time plus six hours of work time. When a workman returns home before dark having completed six hours of work, then the whole area counts as a *gāmasīmā*. It is possible, therefore, to define a *visuṃgāmasīmā* within this journey-distance. If a workman cannot return to his home after working a six hour shift, the working area is counted as a *sattabbhantarasīmā,* a boundary defined in an uninhabited forest or open space by seven *abbhantara* 'intervals', a topic we shall return to in Chapter Six, provided that this area is large enough to contain 196 arm lengths square.

The most important point of Visuddhāyon Sayadaw's interpretation is, that if the 'king' gives a plot of land to a man within this area, it will no longer be a *sattabbhantarasīmā* as once the land has become occupied it will become instead a *gāmasīmā* (Visuddhāyon Sayadaw 1985:1979). To reiterate: land that is occupied cannot be *sattabbhantarasīmā* because its key characteristic is that it must be away from human residence for at least 196 arm's length from its outer edge. However, since this land can become a *gāmasīmā*, this same plot of land can also be considered to be a *visuṃgāmasīmā* because, theoretically, whichever place can be considered a *gāmasīmā* can also become a *visuṃgāmasīmā* (Visuddhāyon Sayadaw 1985:179).

Here we can see one aspect of the argument posed by Visuddhāyon Sayadaw but there is another matter he raised which provides a new perspective in support of his view. As already discussed in section five of this chapter, a *visuṃgāmasīmā* follows a number of rules: the power of the king, its term *visuṃgāmasīmā* and its boundary. As

will be explained below, Visuddhāyon Sayadaw attempted to argue another aspect of *visuṃgāmasīmā* wherein he excluded the term *visuṃgāma* and the village boundary. This argument relates particularly to the relationship between the *sāsanamye* (religious property) and the king. There are many places of worship that count as religious property (*sāsanamye*), such as pagodas and monasteries that have been donated by the king. Some can be found outside a *gāmasīmā* while others are within. The question raised by Visuddhāyon Sayadaw is whether or not such places of worship outside the village boundary can actually be considered to be *visuṃgāmasīmā*.

When the king makes a donation of land to the *Buddhasāsana* (religion of the Buddha) it automatically becomes Buddhist property. Any religious land donated by the king anywhere in the country is automatically free from tax whether it is *vatthukamma* (literally meaning the 'object generated by a conduct', i.e. the property donated by the king as meritorious conduct) or *sāsanamye* (religious property). Visuddhāyon Sayadaw pointed out the meaning of 'recipient' as depicted in the commentary: '*rājā kassaci deti*' 'the king gives to someone'. He clarifies this statement by stating that the word *rājā* is to be understood to mean the king who is the donor of the *visuṃgāma* land, but the word *kassaci*, meaning 'someone' can also mean 'something' and might apply to Buddhism or to an unnamed Buddhist property. When the king gives land or *visuṃgāma* land to Mr Kyaw, for example, Mr Kyaw becomes the owner of the land. In the same way the king can donate a pagoda without giving ownership of the property and this property would then be the property of Buddhism as a whole. It could then be said that every follower of the Buddha is owner of the property.

Visuddhāyon Sayadaw defines these religious properties as *visuṃgāmasīmā* using this example: when someone applies for a *visuṃgāma* grant in the area of a pagoda or any other religious property, the government authority replies to the applicant in this way:

> *"kyaung mye phayar mye myar ko kyanoke- taw ma paing mapay naing"*: "we are not eligible to grant a '*visuṃgamasīmā*' on a religious or pagoda's property" (Visuddhāyon Sayadaw 1985:181).

In fact, the property is previously not a *visuṃgāma* but the land may not be given to anyone else either. This statement, according to Visudhāyon Sawadaw, construes the nature of the property in two ways: one, that the religious property has already been donated by a king; and the other, that this religious property is considered the permanent property of the *Buddhasāsana*. This first point iterates yet again that the king has the power to give a piece of land anywhere in the country and, on donation by the king, it becomes the property of the *Buddhasāsana* whether inside or outside the village boundary. According to Visuddhāyon Sayadaw, it is for this reason that the government authority does not consider it necessary or appropriate to re-give the same property to the *Buddhasāsana*.

Since the Saṅgha are dedicated followers of the Buddha, guardians of the Buddha's teaching, the *Buddhasāsana*'s property is considered to be the property of his followers, the monks. Therefore 'Buddhist monks should be eligible' to use the religious property under the term of *visuṃgāma* (Visuddhāyon Sayadaw 1985:181, Sīlānanda: 2002:200, Sankyaung Sayadaw 1982:202). In this instance, *visuṃgāmasīmā* is not confined to the *gāmasīmā* as it is stated by Ashin Aggavaṃsa, nor is it confined to a particular recipient. Here, even though this property is not converted into *visuṃgāmasīmā,* the *Buddhasāsana* (religion of the Buddha) is counted as the recipient of the *visuṃgāma* land so long as the property has been donated by the king or proxy of the king's authority.

There had been in fact precedents of well-known Burmese monks who adopted the same view as Visuddhāyon Sayadaw, for example, Sayadaw U Bok, a high profile scholar during 18th century, consecrated a *sīmā* using the religious property near Maunthaung village, upper Burma (Visuddhāyon Sayadaw 1985: 182). Ñānābhivaṃsa (1956:227) reported about Tantee Pagoda, which was just a place of worship that donated by King Thalun 1629-1648). The pagoda, however, was regarded an automatic *visuṃgāma* land without any authorisation of the king. These two examples suggested that a religious property is considered an automatic *visuṃgāma* land even though it is not authorised by the authority or the king. The fundamental condition in defining a

visuṃgāmasīmā is, as just discussed, dependent on the authority of the king. Visuddhāyon Sayadaw perhaps influenced by his predecessors e.g. Sayadaw U Bok, but he managed to put the concept in line with the 'common sense' understanding of the religious property donated by the kings. Here we see how Visuddhāyon Sayadaw's view differs from that of Ashin Aggavaṃsa.

5.7. Structure of a *gāmasīmā* applied to a *nagarasīmā* in monastic practice

When considering conditions pertaining to monastic settlements in modern Burma, we find that a relatively small proportion of monks are settled in genuine village locations. The majority of monks reside in cities or urban areas. This poses a new question: how can monks who live in cities perform their monastic *sīmā* consecration? Such a question is fundamental to an understanding of *nagarasīmā* (city boundary). As has already been discussed in the section two of this chapter above, the concept of *sīmā* in early Buddhism refers only to *gāmasīmā* (village boundary) and *nigamasīmā* (market town boundary). No reference to a city boundary is found in the early Pāli scripture. This creates a problem for the monk wishing to offer a consolidated interpretation of a *nagarasīmā*. I shall here explore how Burmese monks respond to this problem. I will also look at different arguments posed by Burmese monks when defining *sīmā* consecration within a *nagarasīmā*.

Burmese monks have developed two responses to this problem. The first is the implication of the definition of *gāma* used elsewhere in the *Vinaya*, while the second is the interpretation of the governing system of the country as a whole, particularly comparison between the bureaucratic system of the rural area and city or urban area. The implication and connotation of *gāma* has been extensively explored by Abhayārāma Sayadaw, who was the founder of the Abhayārāma monastery in Mandalay and author of the *Visuṃgāmasīmāvinicchaya* (reviewed in Chapter Three). He compiled the *Visuṃgāmasīmāvinicchaya* in response to a dispute over a *visuṃgāmasīmā* at the Mahāvisuddhārāma monastery, Colombo, Sri Lanka during the British colonial period. The *visuṃgāmasīmā* consecration was led by Visuddhāyon Sayadaw, the founder of the

Mahāvisudhāyon monastery, Mandalay in 1924, but the consecration of this *sīmā* was challenged by the Venerable Upasena, a Sinhalese monk (Abhayārāma Sayadaw 1973:2). According to Upasena's view, a *visuṃgāmasīmā* cannot be consecrated within a city boundary because a *visuṃgāmasīmā* is only designed to work within a *gāmasīmā*[83] and is not designed to work for a *nagarasīmā*. Such a view is neither interpreted nor accepted by Burmese monks, as the majority of *visuṃgāmasīmā* in Burma are found within a city area. In response to the challenge, Abhayārāma Sayadaw (1961:27) investigated the connotation of *gāmasīmā* elsewhere in *Vinaya* literature and defended the *sīmā* consecration in Colombo city. He provided two arguments, both of which are important to my study here. Both are regarded as authentic and embodying the Burmese practice of *visuṃgāmasīmā* in a city. One argument quotes from the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965: 333) where a city boundary is defined in terms of a *gāmasīmā*:

> "*gāmaggahaṇena cettha nagaraṃ gahitameva hoti*": "here the applicability of a village is definitely extended to that of a city".

Moreover, many of the sub-commentaries to the *Samantapāsādikā* (reviewed in Chapter One) offer the same definition, that of a city boundary being the same of a village boundary. These are found in the following references: *Sārathadīpanī ṭīkā* (vol. ii.1992: 126), *Vinayasaṅgaha aṭṭhākathā* (1970:194), *Vinayālaṅkāra ṭīkā* (vol. i. 1993: 107). Each of these references interprets a city boundary as in the *Samantapāsadikā* quotation cited above. The same references are also cited by Ashin Janakābhivaṃsa (2003:343) and Ashin Sīlānanda (2002:186) who both reached the same conclusion. They believed that although the *Mahāvagga* (the early *Vinaya* literature on *sīmā*) does not mention the existence of a city boundary, it is covered by the term *gāmasīmā* (ibid). This is indeed considered to be the only response we can suggest if we want to interpret a *nagarasīmā* with reference to the *Vinaya* literature and, indeed, by the way all Burmese monks take for granted.

---

[83] I have noted a similar problem in the previous section relating to the establishment of a *visuṃgāmasīmā* outside the village boundary, which, according to the Shankalaykyun Sayadaw, is not permissible. Visuddhāyon Sayadaw opposed Shankalaykyun Sayadaw's view and considered it wrong. Here is another problem with *visuṃgāmasīmā* consecrated in Colombo by Visuddhāyon Sayadaw but this *sīmā* consecration was defended by his friend, Abhayarama Sayadaw.

Abhayārāma Sayadaw's (1973:27) next argument concerns the concept of a *gāma* as interpreted in the second *pārājika* (defeat) offence: the offence of a monk stealing. It states that, if the meaning of *gāmasimā* only refers to a 'village' boundary, then the second *pārājika* would only apply to a very limited area. The second *parajika* only uses the terms *gāmaṃ vā araññā vā* (village and forest) for the area within which a monk can be guilty of a stealing offence. He argues that, although there is no reference to a city (*nagara*) mentioned in this offence, a monk is equally guilty of the offence if he steals from a city area. The logic of Abhayārāma Sayadaw's argument is that its parallel should apply in the case of a *gāmasīmā*. While it literally means 'village boundary' it should not just be restricted to such a specific area but include the city as well (ibid). The meaning of *gāmasimā,* therefore*,* encompasses the concept of city, meaning simply that a *nagarasīmā* (city boundary) is considered to be equal to, or same as, a *gāmāsīmā.*

We can see here that although the 'common sense' argument found in the Thai writing on *sīmā* by Vajirañāṇavarorasa, noted in Chapter One and Three based entirely on opinion, is not possible in Burma, a different kind of 'common sense' argument, based on the logical consequences of comparing one section of *Vinaya* to another, is a reasonable argument in the Burmese context, following as it does in the tradition of understanding definitions in one passage in the canon in the light of other occurrences. This example of this found in the Chapter One in the section of *Parivāra* where we discussed about the requirement of *sīmā* in all *saṅghakamma* even though the rule *saṅghakamma* in the section of *Mahāvagga* or *Cullavagga* does not mention its requirement. We can also observe it in this chapter concerning the definition of *gāmasīmā* in the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* has reinterpreted in the *Vimativinodanī* by means of 'common sense' arguments.

While Abhayārāma Sayadaw's argument is presented as the Burmese interpretation of a *nagarasīmā*, the question remains of how a *nagarasīmā* should be defined, since the dimensions and location of a village boundary (*gāmasīmā*) and city boundary (*nagarasīmā*) differ. It is necessary, therefore, to look at how the characteristics of a *gāmasīmā* can encompass a *nagarasīmā*, and define the matching

point between the characteristics of a *gāmasīmā* and a *nagarasīmā*. We have already discussed the requirement that a *gāmasīmā* must have government recognition of a village (*Ywar*) boundary and must be taxed by a village leader (*Yayaka Lugyi*). If a city boundary is defined by the terms and implications of a *gāmasīmā*, there is the problem of which one of these two interpretations applies. This raises questions such as: should a city boundary be interpreted by the taxation of an 'area leader' i.e. a local council? Should a city boundary be accepted by the recognition of a complete city boundary? Should the city boundary be interpreted by a defined border of a town? There is no exact interpretation of these questions among Burmese monks, as will be seen below. Many Burmese monks have different opinions on monastic *sīmā* consecration within a city boundary.

The normal definition of a *gāmasīmā* within the context of a city is connected to government administration and the logistical conurbation of the city. A city is, for example, divided into local governing bodies. In Burma today the governing system defines a city boundary by establishing numerous councils to control local areas. Yangon and its conurbations have many such councils each with a '*Yatkwet Kaungsi Lugyi*' (council leader) and a '*Myone Kaungsi Lugyi* (township leader). As will be explained later, some monks understand only the town as a whole to be an equivalent measure of a *gāmasīmā*, while others believe that, since the city is divided into councils and towns, only one council within a town is sufficient to equate with a *gāmasīmā*, because the administrator of a council area and the administrator of a *Yayaka Lugyi* (village leader) area of a village boundary are the same in terms of administration. Importantly also, the council administration has a defined border similar to that of the *Ywar* (village) boundary. The only difference is that the geographical region, such as the local area of the city, uses the term 'council' (*Kaungsi* in Burmese) whereas the local area of the county or countryside calls it *Ywar* (village). Both have an administrator: *Kaungsi Lugyi* for the councillor and *Yayaka Lugyi* for village administrator. These two administrations are thus matching between the village boundary administration and council boundary administration.

If, for example, the administration of a *gāmasīmā*'s jurisdiction is the same as the administration of a council jurisdiction, 'one council jurisdiction will be the same as a *gāmasīmā*'. This interpretation is demonstrated in the practice of many Burmese monks; for example, Bhaddanta Dhammānanda, the abbot of Sagaing Sathintaik Monastery, has prudently tested the governing system between council and *gāmasīmā* (village). During my fieldwork in Yangon in January 2009, one of his disciples, Ashin Kusala, gave me his teacher's work on a *sīmā* consecration record. The notebook is called *Sagaing Sathintaik Thein Thamaing* (history of *Sagaing Sathintaik's sīmā* consecration), and it contains the author's detailed account of a *sīmā* consecration in 1984 in Yangon. When Bhaddanta Dhammānanda (2002: 24-25) consecrated *sāsanahitika pubba-yonsīmā* at Thuwanna Myone (Thuwanna township), Yangon in 1984, there were three *Yatkwet Kaungsi Lugyi* involved in the *sīmā* consecration. He had invited them to form the *Sīmā* Consecration Committee (ibid). These three councils are: *Ka Yatkwet* Council, *Hna-Say Nga Yatkwet* Council and *Supaong-gyi* Council. *Sagaing Sathintaik* Monastery is found within the *Ka Yatkwet* Council and the next two councils are established next to each other and not far from the *Sagaing Sathintaik* Monastery. During the first meeting, Bhaddanta Dhammānanda, the abbot of the monastery, asked the Secretary of *Ka-Yatkwet Kaungsi Lugyi,* Mr Maung Hla Soe, to explain the differences between his council administration and the administration of a village (*gāma*). He stated this in front of many people in the meeting:

> *"shay ga thugyi tabaing ok-khyok pon nint yakhu kaungsi tabaing ok-khyok pon ha tutu babe phaya"* "the system of a 'village leader' administration in the past and the current administration of one councillor in the present practice are considered to be the same" (Bhaddanta Dhammānanda 2002: 24).

This meeting arrived at the conclusion that the *Ywar* (village) and council are the same in terms of administration, the only difference between the two being that the former is defined by county and only found in the countryside, whereas the latter is defined by the city. In terms of administration each council in the town or city has a representative who is either appointed or selected to look after the people (Bhaddanta Dhammānanda 2002: 24). Many Burmese monks believe, therefore, that such a

governing procedure is no different from that of a village as both have a representative leader *'thugyi tabaing kaungsi tabaing'* ('village leader is the same as a council leader') working on behalf of the local people. Both jurisdictions also have a defined boundary. *Thugyi* means village leader, or the headman of the village, and *Kaungsi tabain* means the area of the person who represents a council of a city.

A *sīmā* consecration in a city requires, however, assiduous determining of the actual borderline. If the defined border of a council is not obvious it would be necessary to include nearby councils so as to avoid uncertainty. For instance, when the *sāsanahitika pubba-yonsīmā* was consecrated by Bhaddanta Dhammānanda, he invited all monks from all three councils to sit in the *hatthapāsa* area and those monks who did not attend at the consecration sent their proxy to the ceremony. There were two reasons why the abbot included three councils: one was that the rail tracks passing through *Ka Yatkwet* Council belonged, on one side of the track, to one council while the other side of the track belonged to another. The two sides of the rail tracks were connected by a single platform. This constituted an unusual borderline of councils for the abbot. The second reason was that the houses on Jeyasukha Road belonged to the *Ka Yatkwet* Council, but when the people cast their votes, some of the houses from this road were registered to vote in *Hna-Say Nga Yatkwet* Council. Similarly, some houses in *Supaong-gyi* Council cast their votes in *Ka Yatkwet* Council (Bhaddanta Dhammānanda 2002:25). It was a difficult situation for the head monk when trying to determine the boundary of the *sīmā* consecration so he included all three councils. This means that the monks from the three councils were considered to be 'under one jurisdiction'.[84]

Some Burmese monks, however, do not agree with this interpretation. The *Kaungsi Lugyi* and *Yayaka Lugyi* may be the same in terms of administration but their argument is that they cannot be the same in terms of monastic practice. According to

---

[84] Another example of a *sīmā* consecration within a council area is recorded by the same author. When the *Pāsādasīmā* was consecrated at Sāsanapāla Sanpya Kyaung in *Cha/Kha Yatkwet* Council, Thingangyun Myone (township) on 18th August 2001, only monks from Cha/Kha Council were invited for the consecration (Bhaddanta Dhammānanda2002:66). The *sīmā* consecration was considered to be successful without any dispute.

Ashin Sīlānanda (2002:188), when we interpret a *gāmasīmā* we include not only the original village (*pakatigāma*) where villagers are residing, but also include *gāmakhetta* (villagers' lands) where the villagers cultivate their crops. What he means by this comparison is that the village boundary is counted not just by the village precincts but also up to the villagers' possessions such as paddy fields or farms. Ashin Sīlānanda stated that a similar theory should be applied in the case of a *nagarasīmā* (city boundary); in that not just a council should be included but also the whole area of the town. The council area is not big enough to define a *nagarasīmā* just as an 'original village' is not adequate enough to define an entire village boundary or *gāmasīmā*. If, for example, we are to define a *gāmasīmā* in terms of monastic purpose, we have to define the whole village areas including villagers' paddy fields, parks or lakes. Similarly, although each council has a *Yatkwet Kaungsi Lugyi*, they are controlled by a town leader, *Myone Kaungsi Lugyi*[85]. Therefore, Ashin Sīlānanda's personal view suggests that a *nagarasīmā* should be defined by the entire town boundary; only then can the concept of *nagarasīmā* be appropriate for monastic purposes (Sīlānanda 2002: 188, 199).

The argument about interpretation will be discussed further in Chapter Seven, but what has been seen so far is that Ashin Sīlānanda has pointed out the risks of council jurisdiction to the consecration of a monastic *sīmā*. The average location of a council is too close to the next council; the houses are packed together and the roads not clearly defined. There is the risk that a monk might be staying undetected or unwittingly in a house belonging to the council where the *sīmā* is being consecrated. If such a monk either does not attend the ceremony or a visiting monk crosses the marginal space, the *sīmā* will be invalid on the ground of *vagga* (disunity of monks during the monastic legal practice).

Ashin Sīlānanda is not alone in rejecting the council area to mean *nagarasīmā*. There are many Burmese monks who interpret *nagarasīmā* to mean the jurisdiction of a

---

[85] There is a new term for *Myone Kaungsi Lugyi*, which is recently adopted by the new government in 2011. This new term calls *myone ok chok yay hmu*, administrator of a town. However, the system that applies in the *sīmā* consecration is the same as the previous administration.

town. U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa, former Rector, State Pariyatti Sāsana University, for example, states that, unlike the local council, the jurisdiction of one township stands apart from that of another township. He pointed out two townships: New North Dagon (Dagon Myothit Myaukpaing) and the New South Dagon (Dagon Myothit Taungpaing). Both settings have many councils and were recently converted into separate townships within Yangon City. The councils within each township are too close to each other, therefore they are not deemed appropriate for a '*nagarasīmā*' boundary; but when comparing the townships' partition, their settings are distant from one another. Two township borderlines are clearer than two councils' borderline. If, however, two towns are too close to each other, the consecration of a monastic *sīmā* within the town can be difficult due to travelling monks inadvertently crossing the defined border at any point during the consecration. U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa, like Ashin Sīlānanda, still insists that the *nagarasīmā* should only be interpreted by the jurisdiction of a town. Here we see the difficulty of applying regulations created at a time when the Saṅgha was relatively simple, undifferentiated and populations were smaller, compared to a period when Buddhism is an embedded component of society with many sub-divisions, and in areas that are highly populated and so relatively anonymous.

To summarise the foregoing discussion, there are two groups of monks who interpret the *nagarasīmā* as derived from the commentarial definition. One group of monks interpret the *nagarasīmā* by taking the 'entire town boundary's administration' within the city boundary, while the other group defines by a smaller boundary, only taking 'one council boundary administration' within a town. In other words, the former group believes that the town boundary alone is correct for the *nagarasīmā*. The latter group, however, re-interpreted the *nagarasīmā* in terms of a village boundary's administration. For this later argument, the early literature in which the village leader is defined for the *gāmasīmā* is also understood to apply to a council boundary in administrative terms. When the *sīmā* is consecrated by the former group, the monks of the entire town are required either to attend at the consecration ceremony or to send their proxy to the ceremony. According to the latter group of monks such a procedure only

includes monks within the council boundary. Although these groups are different in the way they define the feasible *gāmasīmā* within a *nagarasīmā* area, both definitions are intended to avoid *vagga* (division) within the defined boundary area.

5.8. Conclusion:

This chapter has dealt with the fundamental importance of *gāmasīmā* to Burmese *sīmā* tradition, and explained the reasons why Burmese monks place great emphasis on defining what ensures its legality. It has covered the scrutiny of Burmese monks contesting a correct definition by referencing the early canon (*Mahāvagga*), its commentary (*Samantapāsādikā*) and sub-commentary (*Vimativinodanī*) to ensure the avoidance of *vagga* within a *gāmasīmā* when conducting monastic rituals, including *sīmā* consecration, and has explained how accurate definitions arose out of the detailed interpretations made by Burmese monks on even the smallest points found in these works. We have also seen how different interpretations occurred at different times as the wording of the *Mahāvagga* and other *Vinaya* texts was looked at in the light of the administration of territory from the fifth century up to the present time.

This chapter has also covered different interpretations which developed according to different understandings of the canonical, commentarial and sub-commentarial texts on issues connected with reigning kings such as the defining of different village boundaries and the roles and responsibilities of administrators appointed by the king. This took into account matters of taxation, village leadership, who represented the king when defining a *gāmasīmā* and what happened in the absence of the king. It has been shown that in the absence of a king Burmese monks took account of the governing system of modern Burma to define the concept of *gāmasīmā* in a number of ways: for example, some monks adopted the structure of *Oksu* where the village leader collects tax from the villagers, while others argued that such collection of tax was not necessary so long as a single *Ywar* was defined by the map of the government authority. Some monks even employed the ruling system of an *Oksu* or *Ywar* in the countryside and contrasted it with the ruling system of *Yatkwet Kaungsi* in order to establish a new

definition of *gāmasīmā* applicable to the *nagarasīmā* (city boundary). At the same time, monks were contesting the earlier canonical and commentarial texts in an attempt to arrive at a common understanding and definition of *visumgāmasīmā* and *gāmasīmā*, for example, Ashin Aggavaṃsa's interpretation of *visumgāmasīmā* as contrasted with Visudhhāyon Sayadaw's logic when interpreting whether *sāsanamye* (religious properties such as a pagoda) could be considered *gāmasīmā* or *visumgāmasīmā*. In each case the commentary and sub-commentaries were referred to and reason was applied in their efforts to avoid *vagga* during monastic legal activities. The monks who adopted the *Oksu* based their sources on the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* while the single *Ywar* used as its reference the *Vimativinodanī*, thus the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* and the *Vimativinodanī* are considered to be the sources from which the Burmese have defined the *gāmasīmā*. As stated in Chapter One, such different notions and interpretations went back to early canon and its commentaries and sub-commentaries, therefore, this is not exceptional to Burmese monastic scholars/commentators alone.

We can see in this chapter the emphasis that was placed on getting such matters right both in the light of the history of 'authority', 'on 'purity' judged in terms of the details of *Vinaya* practice in Burma, as well as in the light of the longstanding involvement of the government – or the portion of the Saṅgha that represents the government – in the affairs of the Saṅgha. While such representative monastic authority maintains the concepts of 'authority' and 'purity', Burmese monks often seek to fulfil all interpretations in order to avoid any accusation that the *sīmā* and subsequent *saṅghakamma* are invalid. This accusation is a real risk, as we observed by giving the example of U Kesara (in Ratanasiri Yatkwet, Zaykyonaymye, Mawlamyine), whose *sīmā* was declared invalid. As we will see in the next chapter, such a new interpretation and the risk of invalid monastic activities pertaining to the *sīmā* also takes place with non-*gāmasīmā*.

Finally, the most important notion pertaining to the different Burmese monks' argument, re-examination and reinterpretation of the canonical, commentarial and sub-commentarial principles/rules is, as discussed in this chapter, to fit and adapt to the

development of the governing system in the country, both in the countryside and in the city while, at the same time, accommodating such commentarial and sub-commentarial rules as will avoid *vagga* when consecrating a *sīmā*. In order words, the on-going development of literature on the subject of *gāmasīmā* has been to bring the correct monks into the *hatthapāsa* area from the area of an accurately defined *gāmasīmā*.

Chapter Six:

Un-consecrated *sīmā* beyond the village:
the *sattabbhantarasīmā* 'seven intervals boundary' and
the *udakukkhepasīmā* 'water splashing boundary'

6.1. Introduction:

In Chapter Five I explained the use of *gāmasīmā* (village boundary) as an un-consecrated, secular *sīmā* within which the only requirement of monks conducting their *saṅghakamma* is to sit within an arm's length of each other (*hatthapāsa*). I also explained the *visuṃgāmasīmā*, a small sub-village boundary within a village boundary granted by special royal or government dispensation where a particular Saṅgha group can conduct their own ceremonies independent of other members of the Saṅgha who live within the wider village area. I mentioned the issue of non-taxable land in the context of that discussion, a topic which raised the issue of *sīmā* outside the precincts of a village. Here I return to focus more on monastic *sīmā* outside of the village territory.

In this chapter I will, then, examine non-*gāmasīmā*, being types of *sīmā* which exist outside of a village boundary, used for monastic ritual purposes without the need for a consecration ceremony to establish them as 'sacred space.' These are the *sattabbhantarasīmā*, a type of boundary defined in the forest by seven *abbhantara* (a distance, literally, 'intervals'), and the *udakukkhepasīmā*, a boundary made in, or over, the water, defined by the splashing of water. The former is no longer used in current practice so I intend only to provide an outline of the nature of this *sīmā* based on the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* and the scholarly interpretation of this *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* work. The latter *sīmā* is still popularly practised and will be dealt with in more detail here. Chapter Seven will explain how both water and river can be used as *nimitta* (boundary markers) when a *sīmā* is consecrated on land, but here I will cover the differences when a *sīmā* is created in water. Since *udakukkhepasīmā* are established in

naturally created lakes, rivers or in the sea and, given that the first two (lake and river) are affected by monsoon rainfall, particular attention will be given to their formation.

There are two parts in this chapter. Part one will deal with the commentarial definition of *sattabbhantarasīmā* and part two will give a detailed explanation of *udakukkhepasīmā*. Part two is further divided into three sub-sections: the first relates to the early concept of *udakukkhepasīmā* as it is explained in the *Mahāvagga,* followed by a discussion on how this *udakukkhepasīmā* has been re-interpreted in the *Samantapāsādikā*. The second deals with a new concept of *udakukkhepasīmā* affected by the impact of monsoon rain; and, finally, the third sub-section deals with how this *udakukkhepasīmā* should be established in a big river or sea.

6.2. *Sattabbhantarasīmā*

Three combined words make up the term *sattabbhantarasīmā*: *satta (*seven), *abbhantara* (interval/ area within the radius of), and *sīmā* (boundary). The length of one *abbhantara* is specific, namely 28 arms' length. One *abbhantara* (28 arms' length) when multiplied by seven becomes 196 arms' length. These arms' length measures all directions from the outermost monks of the congregation. In other words, this measurement is carried out by extending 196 arms' length from each corner of the outermost monks within the congregation. This perimeter of 196 arms' length must be matched or exceeded in every direction for it to be a valid *sattabbhantarasīmā*. If, in any direction, the 196 arms' length touches or overlaps the village boundary or water boundary, the area cannot be counted as a *sattabbhantarasīmā* (Sīlānanda 2002:207). The greater the number of monks, the greater the space that will extend outwards from the centre, but the minimum 196 arms' length for each direction will remain. If another congregation of monks is meeting in a space near the boundary then an inter-space of seven *abbhantara* must be kept. This means (28x7) = 196 arms' length between the boundaries.

The measurement of 196 arms' length, or its equivalence, has to be precise for each of the cardinal directions. The accurate measurement is, however, dependent on the precise measurement between metres and arms' length. According to Burmese measurement one arm's length is equivalent to 18 inches, so 196 arms' lengths become 3528 inches, i.e. 294 feet. If we convert this into metres, it will become 89 meters. Thanissaro, an American monk who ordained in Thailand and who worked on Pāli literature, notes that Thai and Sri Lankan scholar monks remark different measurements, with the Thai measurement being 98 metres for the seven *abbhantara* while Sri Lanka's is only 80 metres, 18 metres less (Thanissaro 2001:205). The Burmese measurement sits exactly midway between the two. According to the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:333), the Buddha allows monks to conduct their *saṅghakamma* (monastic activities) in a forest provided the forest area meets the criteria as set out in the definition of a *sattabbhantarasīmā*. If it does, then monks can perform their monastic legal activities without consecrating a special space.

According to the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:333, 336), there are two areas which can provide space for a *sattabbhantarasīmā*. One area is measured by a fisherman's trip to an island and the other is defined as the 'deep and big' forest of the countryside where no village houses have been established. Both are indeed far away from human settlement. In section six of Chapter Five an explanation was given on how 'a fisherman's trip to an island' can be measured. It states that if a fisherman cannot get back to his village before darkness or before the end of the day, the island can then be considered a forest. If, however, he is able to get back in a day, the distance he has been through is to be included within a *gāmasīmā* (Sankyaung Sayadaw (1982:217, *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:336). A *sattabbhantarasīmā* cannot, in the latter case, be established. The *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:333) refers to the '*Viñjhā*' forest in northern India as a good example of a forest that is feasible for a *sattabbhanatarasīmā*. However, the idea of the *Viñjhā* forest is vague and unclear. None of the Burmese monks whom I interviewed during my fieldwork, even such *Vinaya* experts as Masoe-yin Sayadaw or U Nandamālābhivaṃsa, are certain how to measure the size of the *Viñjhā*

forest. They are even wary as to whether any forest in Burma would be workable for a *sattabbhantarasīmā*. As far as I have been able to ascertain, this uncertainty means that the issue has not arisen in living memory and I was unable to find any Burmese monks who had experience of a *sattabbhantarasīmā*. Moreover, nowadays forest monasteries and monks are set up near to villages where the laity can come to offer requisites. Forest monasteries are not regarded as suitable for *sattabbhantarasīmā* because of uncertainty about defining the area and because of the risk of undetected traveling monks entering the relatively large and un-surveyable area, leading to the problem of *vagga* (disunity or separate factions), as discussed in Chapter Five. I am, therefore, not in a position to describe any practical aspect of this *sīmā*. We can see that various aspects of modernity as well as the close relationship between even 'forest' monks and settled village or urban life, as well, perhaps, as a fashion for other types of *sīmā* have discontinued the practice. The *udakukkhepasīmā*, used outside a village boundary, is, however, still practised today and I shall turn to that now.

6.3. The definition of *udakukkhepasīmā*

There are three compound words incorporated into the word for this boundary: *udaka* (water), *ukkhepa* (throw up/splash) and *sīmā* (boundary). The first two words (*udaka* and *ukkhepa*) play an important role and work together in defining this boundary. The *sīmā* is automatically created if water is available to splash around the monks during the monastic rituals. In brief: *udakukkhepasīmā* means the water boundary which is created by 'splashed water'. The definition of this *sīmā* is described in the *Mahāvagga* (*Mahāvagga Pāli* 1979:150, Mv ii 12, 7) thus:

> "*nadiyā vā bhikkhave samudde vā jātassare vā yaṃ majjhimassa purisassa samantā udakukkhepā ayaṃ tattha samānasaṃvāso ekuposathāti*": "in a river, O Bhikkhus, in a sea or in a natural lake, the common share/communion (*samānasaṃvāsā*) creates a single *uposatha* as far as an average man can splash water all around".

According to this statement there are three bodies of water (river, lake and sea) where monks can perform their monastic rituals within the boundary of splashed water. To define a boundary a monk who possesses average strength must splash water outwards

from the outermost monk of the congregation. Alternatively, tossing of a handful of sand may be substituted for water for the purpose of defining the method for determining this boundary (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:334). Having splashed or thrown outwards from the outermost monk, the monk may move around all sides (*samantā*) splashing water (or throwing sands) in each of the remaining directions or, alternatively, one monk may perform this for each direction. When the splashing of water (or tossing a handful of sands) in each direction has been completed, the space is automatically considered a water boundary without consecration (Sīlānanda 2002:209-11). According to the *Samantapāsādikā,* this water boundary does not need to be further consecrated even though it compares to a consecrated boundary on land, the reason being that the area of splashed water is considered an automatic boundary by its own nature (*attano sabhāveneva*). It states:

> *"sabbā bhikkhave nadī asīmāti yā kāci nadīlakkhaṇappattā nadī nimittāni kittetvā etaṃ baddhasīmaṃ karomā ti katāpi asīmāva hoti sā pana attano sabhāveneva baddhasīmāsadisā sabbamettha saṅghakammaṃ kātuṃ vaṭṭati"*: "a river, O Bhikkhus, cannot be a boundary. Even though it is consecrated with the required boundary markers, a natural river cannot be a (consecrated) boundary because it is considered as a boundary by its own nature'. So, all *Saṅghakamma* can be conducted in this boundary" (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:333).

This statement provides that monks can conduct all monastic legal activities within an *udakukkhepasīmā* without consecration and, therefore, the function of an *udakukkhepasīmā* can still operate in the same way as that of a consecrated *sīmā* (Sobhitācāra 1968:116, Sīlānanda 2002:211).

A question might be asked about whether the entire river or sea becomes a single boundary. According to the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:334), the boundary is limited to the area of splashed water, and it further states that the monastic activity would be defective if the monks did not sit in the *hatthapāsa* area inside the splashed water boundary. This means that the rule of *hatthapāsa* is only required within the splashed water area. If, however, another *saṅghakamma* is taking place within the same river, or within a nearby area, it is necessary to keep a gap/interspace of one splashed water area between the two water boundaries (ibid.).

I have never seen a quorum of monks directly observing their monastic legal activities by standing in a river, even if that may seem to be implied by the text. Moreover, there is no advice in the canon or commentary relating to this practice in the water either. According to Thanissaro (2001:207), monks may get into water to perform their monastic rituals and they may do this wearing only their rain bathing cloths. As will be explained later, in modern practice the area of an *udakukkhepasīmā* has come to be defined by either a vessel or a container, a boat, a temporary pavilion, even a permanent pavilion, just so long as the pavilion does not connect with the *gāmasīmā* area. If a motor boat or vessel is used as an *udakukkhepasīmā* it must be made stationary to prevent the boat moving away from the splashed water while the liturgy is being recited (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:334-5). The vessel should be made fast by tying it to a post or tree, or alternatively by putting down an anchor. As will be discussed later, if tied to post or tree they should not connect with the bank of the river because the bank may be considered as falling within the secular *gāmasīmā* area and this creates an overlapping *sīmā,* on the important avoidance of which see also Chapter Three, where I mentioned about a dispute between the *udakukkepasīmā* and *gāmasīmā.*

The early canonical description of *udakukkhepasīmā* stated above strictly defines it in terms of *udaka* (water) and *ukkhepa* (splashing or throwing up). The concept of *ukkhepa* (throwing) has, however, been transformed from the practical aspect of action to an ideological aspect of action. As we shall see, the physical throwing of water has been removed from the practice. Burmese monks acknowledge *ukkhepa* (throwing) when they talk about *udakukkhepasīmā,* but they no longer apply it in practice as it is their contention that when establishing an *udakukkhepasīmā* it is not compulsory to splash water. Burmese monks believe that *udakukkhepasīmā* is defined without the necessity of water being thrown (Janakābhivaṃsa 2003: 346, Sīlānanda 2002: 211). In other words it refers to the kind of area thrown water would cover. They hold the view that the activity of throwing water or sand is just a device used to define an area in order to avoid *vagga* (disunity). Even then, it is only required when demarcating the space that separates one water boundary from another. If, for example, another group of monks were to be

conducting a monastic ritual in the same river, it would become crucial to physically separate the two. The splashing of water or throwing a handful of sand then becomes the method for determining these two boundaries. Even in this case, many Burmese monks believe that measurement by the splashing water method is not necessary when the distance between the two groups is equivalent to, or greater than, that reached by utilising the splashing of water (Sīlānanda 2002:210).

Ashin Sīlānanda (ibid) also states that he has never seen an *udakukkhepasīmā* that was created by either the splashing of water or the tossing of a handful of sand. He reports on an interview he conducted with a number of senior monks where none of his interviewees had the experience of throwing water (Ibid). Ashin Sobhitācāra (1968:75) also provides an account of an ordination ceremony held in a river which was led by the *Thathanabaing* (the Head of the Great Saṅgha), Ñeyyadhamma, who was head of the Saṅgha during Mindon's reign (1853-1878). When a monk attempted to splash water in front of him, Ñeyyadhamma immediately stopped him. He then stated that the area of splashed water is automatically counted as a boundary and it is therefore not necessary to splash the water (ibid).

In 2008 I participated in two ordination ceremonies carried out at the *udakukkhepasīmā* in Bangladesh. One took place in November 2008 in Kukimarapara village in Vagga, Rangamati and other in Noapara village, five miles from the Kukimarapara which took place in the same month and in the same river. I have provided two photos below representing Kukimarapara and Noapara *sīmā* respectively.

Figure 4: 6.3. Photo 1 Kukimarapara river *sīmā*

Figure 5: 6.3. Photo 2 Noapara river *sīmā*

I did not witness any throwing activity when the *udakukkhepasīmā* was being defined. However, as we can see in the photos, these *udakukkhepasīmās* are positioned in water although the area is quite small. The stage (in photo one) is to walk into the pavilion by means of two wooden platforms but these platforms then disconnected after everyone has stepped into the pavilion. My own ordination was held in an *udakukkhepasīmā* in the same *Vagga* River, Rangamati, Bangladesh in 1991 but I did not notice any monk splashing water during the ceremony.

Considering current practices both in Burma and in Bangladesh, the concept of splashing water no longer appears to be a physical factor in the determining of an

udakukkhepasīmā but has been transformed purely into a theoretical definition. Thus the early account of *udakukkhepasīmā* is reinterpreted by most Burmese monks and not taken literally, contrary to the great attention paid for following other details, even though the fact that Ñeyyadhamma had to stop a monk from splashing suggests that some monks still practised actual splashing back in the 1870s when the occasion described took place.

6.4. The effects of monsoon rainfall on *udakukkhepasīmā*

As discussed above there are three bodies of waters (river (*nadī*), ocean (*samudda*) and natural lake (*jātassara*) in which an *udakukkhepasīmā* can be established. The characteristics of an ocean generally remain the same without major change, but *nadī* and *jātassara* may shift into different forms in accordance with the rainfall that occurs during the monsoon season. Whilst the Canon did not consider the effect of this seasonal change during the monsoon season, we find that a great deal of attention is given to it in the *Samantapāsādikā*.

Monsoon is one of the main seasons in South and South-East Asian countries, when rain usually falls for a period of about four months. Rainfall generally takes place between May and September, although in some years it may arrive up to one month early or even one month late. Monsoon rainfall affects the environment and river conditions in a region, swelling rivers, even flooding them. Because of heavy monsoon rainfall new rivers may be created which last for only four or five months of a rainy season while, in some low regions particularly affected by flood, small lakes or reservoirs form in hilly or uneven places. We can understand this characteristic of monsoon rain as stated in the *Samantapāsādikā*:

> "*Anto nadiyaṃ pāsāṇovā dīpakovā hoti tassa yattakaṃ padesaṃ 'pubbe vuttappakāre' pakativassakāle vassānassa catūsu māsesu udakaṃ ottharati so nadī samkhyameva gacchati. Ativuṭṭhikāle pana oghena otthaṭokāso na gahetabbo, so hi gāmasīmā saṅkhyameva gacchati*": "there is a rock or an island in the river. If this rock or island is flooded regularly (as usual as every year) during the four months' monsoon rain, the flooded area is counted as river. If the flood exceeds its regularity, this (exceeded area) is counted as *gāmasīmā*" (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965: 335).

Referring to the quotation above, we can define three levels of water in a river. The first level is the normal water level of a river that is likely to exist throughout the year; the second is the monsoon water level which may last about four months or more; and, the third level is the excessive monsoon water level. The first water level is counted as an *udakukkhepasīmā* because the water is contained in the river throughout the year. In response to this the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* also defines what constitutes a feasible river for monastic practice. It states that if a fully dressed *bhikkhunī's* (a female monk) lower robes, which cover her ankles, become wet when she is crossing a river, that river is deemed adequate to be employed as an *udakukkhepasīmā* (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:334). As for the second, the statement suggests that since the level of water dramatically increases throughout the four months of the monsoon season, the flooded area can still be defined as an *udakukkhepasīmā*. The last water level is, however, not counted as a valid area of *udakukkephasīmā* because the flood does not stay long or the area is not regularly flooded throughout the monsoon season. According to this last account, it seems that the flooding depends on the level of rain. When, for example, rainfall is very heavy, flooding can temporarily cause an overflow which lasts for a few hours, even days, but it does not remain for the full four months and the ground will return to dry land. This area is considered a village boundary, as in the statement quoted above.

This was the case in the Chittagong Hill Tract in Bangladesh where I witnessed the occurrence of such changes in the Rangamati, Khagrachri and Bandarban districts, Chittagong Division. After the rainy season, particularly when the summer season approaches, some parts of the river completely dry up and turn into sand-desert. Other parts of the river might be left with a narrow passage of water running along the sand-desert or over rock slabs. Rock slabs are mainly found in the hilly areas though some can be found in the lower area of a valley or in the area of a downhill river. These places are affected by monsoon rainfall, as are monastic practices, which I shall explain below.

According to the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965: 335), the area containing monsoon water can still be used as an *udakukkhepasīmā* even when the water dries out

during the summer or winter season. Even more interestingly, the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* further states that, though there may be years when the monsoon rainfall is not sufficient to flood or overflow the river, provided the sand-desert remains intact as in previous years, the river or sand-desert may still be considered suitable for use as an *udakukkhepasīmā* (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:335). If, however, the sand-deserts are dug for cultivation by the villagers, the efficacy of *udakukkhepasīmā* ceases and it is turned into a *gāmasīmā*. The concept of *ukkhepa* does not work anymore because the land now comes under the terms of *gāmasīmā*. The monks can still define as *udakukkhepasīmā* any other part of the dried river[86] (ibid). With reference to this view, many Burmese monks are convinced that the sanded areas of the Irrawaddy River in Central Burma are perfectly workable for an *udakukkhepasīmā* just so long as these lands are not cultivated during the dry season *(*Janakābhivaṃsa 2003:352, Sobhitācāra 1968:111, Aggamvaṃsa 1983:84, Sīlānanda 2002: 213).

I have never witnessed a monastic activity that was conducted in a sand-desert area but I have experience of a monastic ordination ceremony in Bangladesh where sand-desert was converted into a water passage and created as an *udakukkhepasīmā*. This event took place in November 2007 in a small river near to a hill. There is a river passing through the village. The water level in the river had dropped significantly leaving no room for a platform or a temporary house above the remaining water. However, the body of water extended more than eight metres across during monsoon rainfall. When the event occurred in late November, the river had already contracted down to the size of a stream. Consequently however, no villagers dug or farmed in the area since monsoon season was over.

---

[86] If a small island or section of a big river or a big lake is dried up during the summer, this dried land may be turned into farmland or plantation by the villagers, as stated above. If the area of plantation or farm is connected directly with the village lands, the cultivated lands fall into the *gāmasīmā*. This becomes village boundary, so the entire village monks are required to perform the monastic ritual. If the cultivated/dried land happens to be in the middle of a big river where the land arose as a result of summer heat, such a cultivated area is called *visumgāmasīmā* (small village boundary). The cultivated land must, however, not be connected to the village land. Monks can carry out their monastic ritual on such an island without including monks from the wider village boundary. It does not create division (*vagga*) within the remaining monks of the village; the only requirement being that all the monks on the island sit next to each other within the *hatthapāsa* area (Abhayarama Sayadaw 1973: 8-9).

The head monk, U Ñānavaṃsa, chose a suitable place along the stream. He expressed concern lest the temporary pavilion/house not be established within the monsoon water level. However, he came up with a plan to resolve this dilemma. The plan was that the villagers should block the water by making a temporary dam and creating a bamboo pavilion beneath/below this dam. Once the workers had cleared the land and levelled the surface, the pavilion was built. The dam was then removed and the water successfully flowed over the four legs of the pavilion thus creating the effect of monsoon flooding, which complied with the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* regulations. Timber was provided to step between the pavilion and the land, and as soon as the monks stepped into the pavilion, the timber was removed thus detaching the *udakukkhepasīmā* from the *gāmasīmā*. As will be explained below, these two *sīmās* (water boundary and village boundary) cannot be connected to each other. Though this could have been done without making the water flow, since the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* rule considers the monsoon water area to be a valid *udakukkhepasīmā* even when the water is dried up after the monsoon, U Ñānavaṃsa preferred to see the water running under the pavilion.

In order to illustrate the preceding discussion I have provided below two illustrations showing the difference between the flooded and normal water areas of a river. Illustration one shows land submerged during monsoon rain while Illustration two suggests that the land or shore has been revealed after the monsoon season, mostly in the summer.
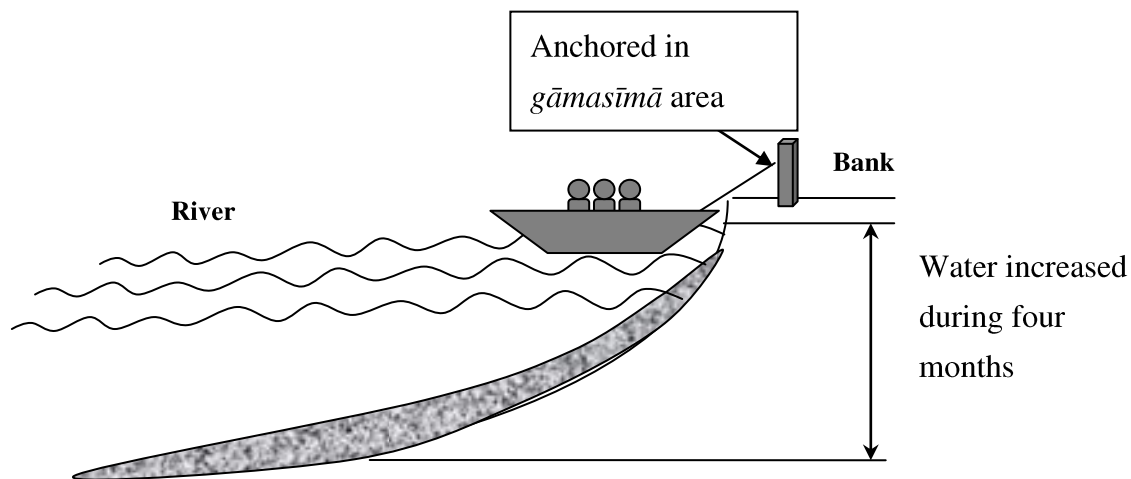
This *sīmā* is invalid because the
anchor touched *gāmasīmā* land

Fifure 6: 6.4. Illustration 1 invalid anchor touched on *gāmasīmā* land
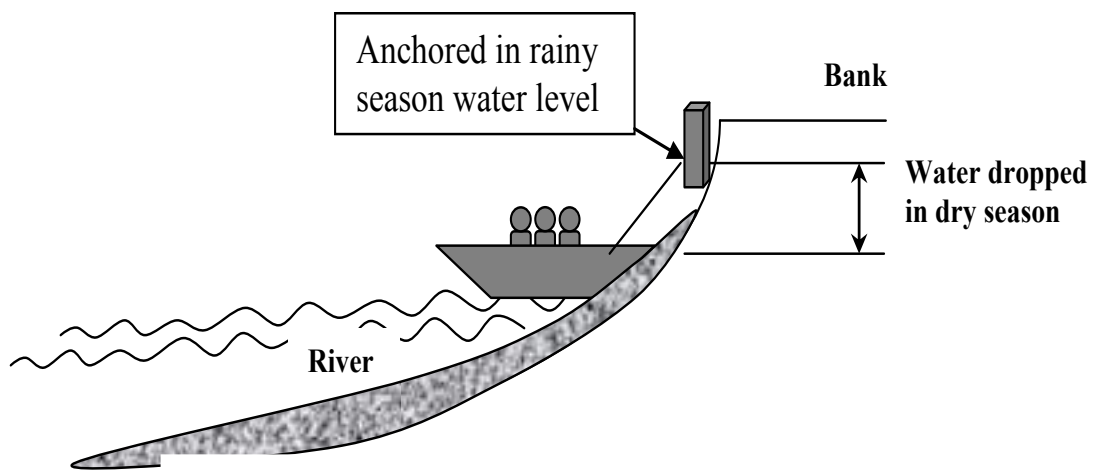
This *sīmā* is valid because the
anchor is posted in the four months
monsoon rainfall area

Figure 7: 6.4. Illustration 2 anchored in four months monsoon rains

If the river fills with water during the monsoon, the anchor of a 'vessel' cannot be dropped at the *gāmasīmā* area. This is because, according to the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:335), *gāmāsīmā* and *udakukkhepasīmā* cannot touch each other. The *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* provides the following explanation: If a tree is positioned in the bank of a river, it is considered to be within a *gāmāsīmā* area. Therefore, a vessel is not allowed to connect with the tree, not even with a branch which is under water when the original body of the tree is located in the *gāmāsīmā* area. If, however, a tree is positioned inside or under the water area, it is considered to be within the *udakukkhepasīmā* area. Consequently, the connection is allowed because the original body of the tree is located in the water. However, the branches of this tree must not connect with the land or *gāmasīmā* area (ibid). According to Ashin Sīlānanda (2002:217-19), this principle is applied to any form of connection whether by cable, rope or anchor between land and river or between *gāmasīmā* and *udakukkhapasīmā*. (For more about this see Chapter Eight under the section of the problem of overlapping boundaries: *khaṇḍasīmā* and *mahāsīmā*).

Ashin Sīlānanda (2002:219) further reported his experience of an ordination ceremony held on the banks of the Irrawaddy River. The invited monks were loaded onto a vessel and the anchor dropped in an un-flooded area of land similar to illustration 'one' above. When it was recognised that the anchor had been dropped into un-flooded land the monk leading the ceremony asked for it to be immediately removed. The reason behind this request is that an un-flooded area is considered to be a *gāmāsīmā* area, which must not touch or overlap with an *udakakkhepasīmā*. However, according to illustration 'two', the anchor was dropped in an area that had previously been flooded during the monsoon. Although water was not present when the vessel was anchored, (see illustration 'two') it was still valid to anchor the vessel there. It is not necessary for an anchor to be dropped under water when an anchored area has been flooded during the monsoon since it is still considered to be a river.

Just as monsoon rainfall transforms the character of a river, the same transformation may also occur in lakes or wells (by well is meant a naturally occurring

reservoir). For monastic practice the commentary can be interpreted as applying to these. A lake must not be one created by human beings (this is the meaning of *jāta* (naturally) in the term *jātassara*). It may be created by sea flooding, by the impact of rain on the low land area of a region, or by any other natural force. According to the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:336), if the water in a lake is not sufficient to drink or to wash hands and legs after rain, it cannot be considered a lake. If water stays in a lake for the full four months of a monsoon season, the lake can be used for *saṅghakamma* even when the water has dried up during the dry season. If, however, the dried area of a lake is cultivated by villagers for plantation, as was the case in the sand-desert, this area is no longer considered a valid lake for *udakukkhepasīmā* but becomes a *gāmasīmā*.

During my fieldwork I came across a 'well boundary' at Shwetaungun Tawya Kyaung, Burma, upon which a *sīmā* had been established as a permanent place for *udakukkhepasīmā*. This is a meditation temple located on the outskirts of Yangon and is also known as Saymaing (ten miles) because of the junction between Yangon and Bago. This example raises the need to clarify two important points. The first is that the concept of well is not different from the concept of lake for monastic purposes. They are only different in terms of size. If they are naturally created, both lake and well come under the term *jātassara* (natural well or lake). The second clarification is, as stated above, that *udakukkhepasīmā* does not have to be a consecrated boundary but can be a permanent place for *udakukkhepasīmā* so long as the 'defined place' meets the conditions and characteristics of a river or lake.

I subsequently interviewed U Paññobhāsa, a former resident monk of the Shwetaungun Tawya Kyaung, in January 2009, who told me that during the rainy season the well is full of natural water but completely dries up afterwards. A very interesting point about this *sīmā* is that a small additional lake has been created by the head monk in order to supply water during summer. When the rainy season is over, the lake supplies water to the well via a created channel or water passage. According to U Paññobhāsa, even though the additional lake is man-made, the original well was naturally created

without human intervention. Importantly, the water in the well is always full during the monsoon season. In other words, even though the water is not supplied during the summer, the well is automatically considered a *sīmā* so long as the water in the well remains full during the four months of monsoon. Therefore, the water supplied from the lake to the well is technically not harmful to the validity of the *sīmā*. To clarify; it is crucial to the validity of this *sīmā* that the well was not created by human beings and that the water had stayed in the well for up to four months from the beginning of the rainy season. Even though the water flows from the lake, the *sīmā* remains valid. Here we can see a new concept of *udakukkhepasīmā*, which is determined by monsoon rainfall. This monsoon rain takes precedence over the entire concept of *udaka* (water) in the definition of *udakukkhepasīmā*.

6.5. *Udakukkhepasīmā* in a large river or in the sea

If a monk wants to establish a permanent pavilion by the bank of a river he can do so provided he removes all points that touch the *gāmasīmā*. As stated above, points of contact include any type of material such as wire, electric cable, bridge, stage or platform. These must be disconnected during the ceremony. Two illustrations are given below (three and four). 'Four' illustrates a pavilion connected by a bridge making it invalid, while 'three' shows the platform removed from the *sīmā* leaving no connection with the *gāmasīmā* making this one a valid *sīmā*.

I have presented these two illustrations based on the model used by Sankyaung Sayadaw (1982:220) and Ashin Sīlānanda (2002:222-4) since they accord with the preceding argument regarding the correct establishment of an *udakukkhepasīmā* in a river. This interpretation is, however, different from that discussed in Chapter Three where I reviewed a controversy that occurred in Sri Lanka in the nineteenth century. This controversy caused the Amarapura Nikāya, one of three Nikāya of Sinhalese monks, to divide into two groups over the issue of an *udakukkhepāsīmā* that was established in the Madu River in 1845 (Dhirasekera 1982:330). This *udakukkhepasīmā* was later enlarged using platforms similar to those illustrated in diagram three below. However, these

extended platforms became part of the controversy because the gap remained too small and water splashed in the *udakukkhepasīmā* reached the river bank, thus invalidating the consecration (Kiefer Pülz 1998:215-6).

This example shows that it is not sufficient to only provide a gap but, to avoid it being designated a mixed boundary it must be large enough to prevent water splashed from the outermost monks sitting in the *hatappasa* of the *udakukkhepasīmā*, to reach the bank. If it does so, it becomes classified as a mixed boundary and is invalid. As seen in Kiefer Pülz's report (1998:214-16) in Chapter Three, the Amarapura Nikāya monks divided into two groups, the Valitara group and the Dadalla group. The Dadalla monks were accused of being faulty on account of the gap being insufficient to provide a valid *udakukk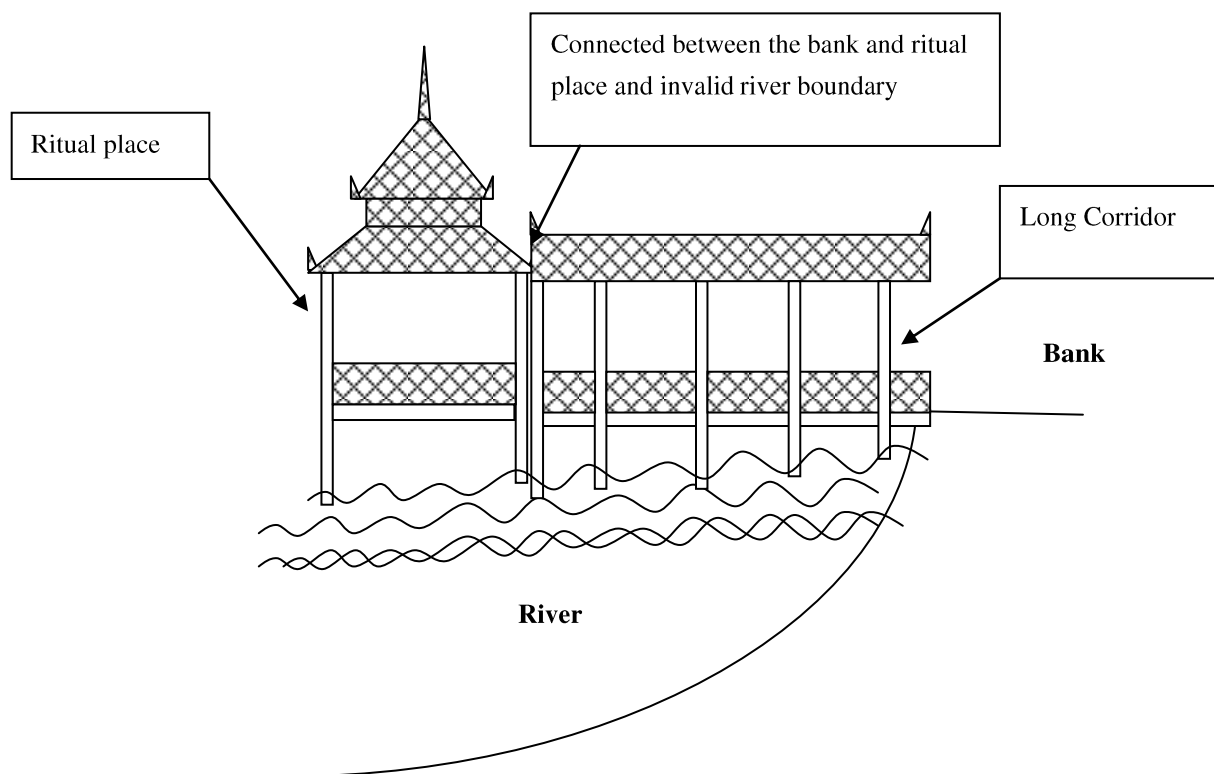hepasīmā*. According to the Valitara monks however, two boundaries can only be considered a mixed boundary when they physically contact each other (as depicted in illustration four) not as a result of splashed water reaching the bank. Also as reported in Chapter Three, this view was rejected by Ñeyyadhamma, the Saṅgharāja of Burma who supported the Dadalla monks. However, if we are to consider the report by Sankyaung Sayadaw and Ashin Sīlānanda, the opinions of Ñeyyadhamma and the Dadalla monks no longer apply in modern *sīmā* practice in Burma, and therefore the views of the Valitara monks are in line with Sankyaung Sayadaw, Ashin Janakābhivaṃsa and Ashin Sīlānanda in believing that the concept of 'throwing water' is only applicable when there is another group of monks conducting their monastic legal activity within the river or sea. All my experiences in the field support to this view.

In line with the advice given in the *Samantapāsādikā,* Burmese monks believe that the sand-deserts of the Irrawaddy River can become *udakukkhepasīmā* provided the sand-desert areas are flooded throughout the monsoon rains which is in direct opposition to the Sri Lankan controversy, as reported by Kiefer Pülz (1998:214-6), where the concept of splashing water is key. An alternative reason for this division could perhaps have been a politically motivated one, even that the conflict had been differently reported as Kiefer Pülz (1998:214) admitted that her account was only based on one source (as stated in Chapter three) and not the direct account of these two groups.

Ritual takes place here

Bank

River

Pavilion and bank disconnected
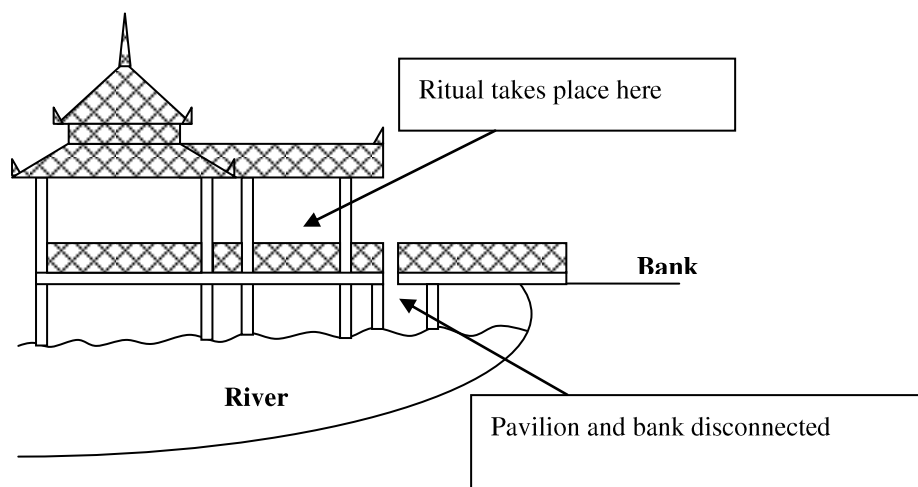
Figure 8: 6.5. Illustration 3, the pavilion and bank of the river disconnected

Connected between the bank and ritual place and invalid river boundary

Ritual place

Long Corridor

Bank

River

Figure 9: 6.5. Illustration 4, the pavilion and river bank connected

Just as a pavilion within a river cannot connect with a village boundary, the same

principle also applies if a bridge connects two banks of a river. Therefore, monks must

not conduct their monastic rituals on a bridge that crosses over a river particularly if the bridge is connected on two sides, because each side of the shore/bank belongs to a *gāmasīmā*. Only if there is a gap or disconnected points on both sides of the bridge can it be included in the *udakukkhepasīmā* and be eligible for monastic practice.

A boat, platform, vessel, ship, craft, ferry, even a container, can be used as a platform during *saṅghakamma* within the *udakukkhepasīmā,* but it must remain stationary. If the platform or vessel is moved during the ceremony, the 'defined boundary' will also be moved, as a result of which the defined boundary or 'the splashed water area' will be flawed and so invalid.[87] U Paṇḍitābhivamsa, whom I interviewed in January 2009, told me of his experience at an ordination ceremony held in the Irrawaddy River in 1993. The number of candidates in this ceremony was more than a hundred, jointly sponsored by the government and lay people. U Paṇḍitābhivamsa described that the boat was moved into the middle of the river and anchored firmly to stop it moving. A similar practice in the river was also described to me by another informant, Ashin Janaka, who had a different experience with regard to the anchoring of a boat. At an ordination ceremony in 1990 at his village Kanasochaung Ywar, Maulmyine khyunmyo, two small vessels were put together and anchored by bamboo trees in four corners. The river was wide but not as deep as the Irrawaddy River. There was no platform to access the boats but a small vessel was provided to bring the monks to the boats. In this example, the anchoring by the bamboo trees stabilised the water boundary.

---

[87]I have participated in an ordination ceremony held on a hired boat in the Thames River, UK. The ceremony was held 2nd Oct 2010 and organized by Venerable Dhammasami, the head monk of the Oxford Buddha Vihāra. The boat transported both monks and lay people but the lay people were separated from the area of the ceremony by more than one *hatthapāsa*. The boat was moving constantly in the river but during the recitation of *kammavācā*, the boat was slowed right down as it is not allowed to move the boat during the recitation. The *sīmā* was established in order to conduct an ordination ceremony. I did not see the practice of splashing water during this ceremony.

6.6. Conclusion

This chapter looked at the two types of monastic boundary that can be performed beyond the village. The *sattabbhantarasīmā* is no longer practised but had been relevant to the debate about untaxed lands in the preceding chapter. Here it was discussed based on the canonical and commentarial passages related to it only. Even though there are forest monasteries in Burma today, they do not conform to the canonical definition, because the example given in the commentary for determining the appropriate distance cannot be satisfactorily measured today. Also, forest monasteries are now set up close to villages because of monastic dependence on lay devotees for provisions. Monks can easily cross the defined boundary and create *vagga* during the ceremony; therefore, *sattabbhantarasīmā* is no longer feasible to follow its rule in modern environment.

The *udakukkhepasīmā* is still popularly practised. However, considering the preceding discussion, we can understand that the concept and practice of *udakukkhepasīmā* is not entirely consistent in two matters. The first inconsistency is that the canon defines *udakukkhepasīmā* by the splashing of water yet, in practice, the Burmese no longer splash water. They believe that *udakukkhepasīmā* automatically exists as an area within a range of theoretically splashed water. The second inconsistency is that, according to the early canon, the place of *udakukkhepasīmā* is on actual water such as river water, lake water or sea water. The commentary suggests, however, that *udakukkhepasīmā* can even be established where there is no water remaining in a river or lake, provided water had existed there during the four months of monsoon rains. In one sense the Burmese and Bangladeshi follow the commentarial interpretation by allowing an *udakukkhepasīmā* in an area that had dried out in the dry season but been flooded during the monsoon. Nevertheless, in the *udakukkhepasīmā* that I witnessed both in Bangladesh and in Burma, the monks liked to bring water into the area, even by artificial means. This does not break the restriction on using only naturally created water, so long as the water provided was produced naturally during the rainy season.

Finally, we note that even when only one *udakukkhepasīmā* is present, effort is made to keep the vessel static during the *saṅghakamma* so as to keep it in what is notionally considered the originally observed *udakukkhepasīmā* (in spite of the water itself flowing), and we have noted several ways of doing this including tying the vessel to a tree and anchoring it in position. Care is taken to ensure that no permanent connection (such as anchoring) is made to dry land that never floods since it would constitute part of a *gāmasīmā*. *Gāmasīmā* and *udakukkhepasīmā* must not overlap, not even via cables, platforms or other means of conveying between them during the *saṅghakamma* because to do so would result in an overlapping *sīmā*.

Once again we find that the Burmese and Burma-influenced Bangladeshis take considerable care to follow *sīmā* practice as outlined in the *Samantapāsādikā*. Yet here we find a case where, even at the highest level, the Burmese dismiss the necessity of actually splashing water. One could say that this is the logic of the commentarial permission for *udakukkhepasīmā* on dry, yet once-flooded, land. Thus Burmese practice conforms to commentarial over canonical statements, as was seen also in the preceding chapter in the case of *visuṃgāmasīmā*.

Chapter Seven:

Procedures for consecrating a *sīmā*

7.1. Introduction

Having now described the main different types of *sīmā*, in this chapter I intend to examine the rules, components and procedures required in a *sīmā* consecration, the correct fulfilment of which make the consecration valid. There are two sources of information for this chapter. The first is the canonical and commentarial textual sources on the subject; the second is my fieldwork examining current practice. In addition to my interview with the *Vinaya* experts, I attended several *sīmā* consecration ceremonies not only in Burma, but also in Bangladesh in two areas: Jagayshala Temple and Mahāmuni Temple, Khagrachari, Chittagong Hill Tracts. I shall examine how the information in the canonical and commentarial sources relates to current *sīmā* consecration procedure. I shall then discuss how the canonical and commentarial sources have variously influenced current *sīmā* consecration. I shall also point to some contrasting elements where current practice diverges from the canonical and commentarial sources and examine why that is so.

Monks consecrating a *sīmā* must clearly understand and adhere to three fundamental components. The *Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī* (1996:88) terms these three components the '*tividhasampatti*' – the three kinds of 'perfections' or 'threefold validity'. They are: the perfection of monks (*parisasampatti)*, the perfection of boundary markers (*nimittasampatti*) and the perfection of litany (*kammavācāsampatti)*. 'Perfection' in this context means accuracy or completeness, in other words 'validity'. When consecration takes place, the validity is assessed in relation to the performance of all the rules that pertain to each of these three areas for each *sīmā* consecration.

In section one I shall look at *parisasampatti* 'perfection of people', in other words, the 'validity of the participants. This aspect concerns the types of monks involved in the ceremony; the unity of monks within a given local council, which is a *gāmasīmā* area;

and the way this unity is managed and applied during the consecration. Here we will see the importance of a precisely defined boundary of a village and how this village boundary is used for the management of monks and indeed for the successfulness of a *sīmā* consecration.

In section two I shall look at the 'perfection' or validity of boundary markers *(nimittasampatti)*. The commentarial definition plays a key role in defining a *nimitta*. Some boundary markers are, however, no longer used in current practice while others are not uniform in terms of practice. I shall look at the types of boundary markers that are used in current practice, and how these markers are connected to each other to create a boundary. In section three I will discuss the perfection of the litany (*kammavācā sampatti)*, examining the importance of how a monk recites the litany and what types of *kammavācā* are used for the consecration.

7.2. *Parisasampatti*: the validity of participating monks

Parisasampatti means the validity of the monks conducting the ceremony. *Parisa* translates as person or persons but here specifically refers to monks. This 'validity' includes how many monks are involved, where these monks come from, and how these monks are selected. The canonical texts, however, do not explain how to deal with the monks during the consecration. Therefore, the sources of our discussion are based on the *Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī*, one of two commentaries dealing with the *Vinaya* rules, (see more about this commentary in chapter one). As will be seen in the quotation below, the management of monks within a *gāmasīmā* is the fundamental factor involved in the *sīmā* consecration. Most importantly, this factor will provide the answer to the question of why a monk must know the precise borderline and delineation of a *gāmasīmā* as already explained in Chapter Five. The *Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī* describes the perfection of monks' involvement. It states:

> "*parisā sampattiyā yuttā nāma sabbantimena paricchedena catūhi bhikkhūhi sannipatitvā yāvatikā tasamiṃ gāmakhette baddhasīmaṃ vā nadisamuddajātassarevā anokkamitvā ṭhitā bhikkhū, te sabbe hatthapāse vā katvā chandaṃ vā āharitvā sammatā*": 'the validity of the people means a group of four monks assembling together (in the village boundary) for the purpose of marking the boundary, while

requiring all village monks either to sit next to each other within the *hatthapāsa* area or to send their proxy to the ceremony except those monks who live in the sea, river or lake''. *(Kankhāvitaraṇī* 1996:89)

According to this quotation there are two important requirements for the consecration of a monastic boundary. The first is the attendance of a full quorum of monks (a quorum being, in this case, a minimum of four). This basic unit of four monks is required for the accomplishment of a consecration and without this quorum a *sīmā* consecration cannot be completed. The second requirement is the attendance of all village monks excepting only those monks who, during the consecration, are living in the sea, a river or lake. So there is the compulsory minimum number of four monks necessary to conduct the consecration and also the compulsory attendance of all monks within a *gāmasīmā*'s jurisdiction. Where a village monastery does not contain the full number of monks required to form a quorum, it becomes necessary to invite monks from outside the village boundary. I shall discuss the management of a village boundary's monks later, but let us first discuss the required quorum of monks during the consecration.

Finding the required quorum is easy but there is a question of how the consecrating monk should choose this quorum. The answer to this question is rather complicated because Burmese monks believe that this quorum should be 'pure' in their *Vinaya* practice. In other word, the ceremony should be conducted with 'pure' Theravada monks, who observe the precepts rigorously and in particular those monks who are highly respected within the community. Burmese monks call pure monks – *pakatat-yahan* – 'monks who are free from offences'. According to Ashin Rājadhammābhivaṃsa, the head of the Masoeyin New Monastic Institute, with whom I conducted an interview during his visit to the UK June in 2009, the Burmese word *pakatat* comes from the Pāli *pakatatta* (good or perfect behaviour), which means that monks whose precepts are 'perfect' and 'clean'. Ashin Rājadhammābhivaṃsa further defines the meaning of *pakatat-yahans*: that they are free, for example, *Pārājika* (defeated) offences and *ukkhepanīya kamma* (literally means 'an act of driving out', i.e. suspension of a monk). The *Pārājika* offences occur when a monk has broken one of the

four *Pārājika* rules. These four rules are; conducting sexual intercourse, stealing, killing a human being and telling a lie about his monastic status for example he tells a lie that he has achieved enlightenment. As we have already discussed in Chapter Four, if he is proved to be guilty of this offence, he will be expelled from the community permanently and he is no longer a member of the *samānasaṃvāsa* (common share/communion). This is the gravest offence for the monks. Even if such a monk has not yet been able to be expelled from the Saṅgha, Burmese monks are still cautious about these monks. Therefore, it is believed that the suspected monks should not be included within the quorum.

As far as the suspension is concerned, a monk can also be temporarily suspended from the community. The procedure of this suspension is called *ukkhepanīya kamma* (driving out by the monastic act or expellant act of the monks). This is a monastic act normally enforced because of three reasons: holding a 'different view' of what Buddha taught, failing to confess one's offence while proven to be wrong, and failing to improve what he has been proved as wrong or confessed (Janakābhivamsa 1982: 9) (see Chapter Four). This means that there are rules that are applied after the confession of one's offence and according to this rule; the monk has to stay under probation. If he fails to do so, it is necessary to suspend him from the community. If a monk is either suspended or is under probation, he is not allowed to become a member of the community until he completes his probation period. These monks, particularly those who are under probation, are, therefore prohibited from the *sīmā* consecration.

It may seem odd to include in this definition monks who are free from *Pārājika* since it is well known that monks should be expelled for such offences, but in fact people are aware that it is very difficult to know whether attending monks are actually *pakatat-yahan*. Some monks may have already broken major rules but if no-one knows of their offences, no formal decision has been given against the wrongdoer. Even if someone knows or suspects the wrongdoing, such monks could still freely associate with other monks in normal procedures within the community if they are not yet charged by the Saṅgha.

According to the *Vinayālaṅkāra* (1993: 360-1), the sub-commentary to the *Vinaya* written by Taunbila Sayadaw around the 16th Century (see Chapter One), there is only one *sīmā* in the whole of Burma that has ever been consecrated by only four monks. This *sīmā* was consecrated five hundred years ago by *Thihoyauk kyi*, a Burmese monk known as 'the one who visited to Sri Lanka'. This *sīmā* is still highly respected by the Burmese devotees. The *Vinayālaṅkāra* praises *Thihoyauk kyi's* confidence in the purity of himself and his fellow monks who participated in the ceremony (Sīlānanda 2002:64). However, the *Vinayālaṅkāra* treats this *sīmā* consecration as an exceptional case and advises against the performance of *sīmā* consecrations with only four monks. *Vinayālaṅkāra's* advice has indeed become embedded in the Burmese attitudes towards *sīmā* consecration. Burmese monks therefore consider it very important not to consecrate a *sīmā* with only a quorum. If, for example, someone consecrates a *sīmā* only with the quorum, if one of the monks within the quorum is not *pakatat yahan*, the consecration will not be successful (Sīlānanda 2002:63-65). In other words, to be absolutely sure that there is a quorum of 'pure' monks, Burmese will invite a higher number of highly regarded monks to participate to allow for some of the number actually being 'lost' from the true count due to invisible impurity of conduct.

Ashin Sobhitācāra (1968: 58), Ashin Sīlānanda (2002:63-4) and many other Burmese scholars, subscribe to this view. Ashin Sobhitācāra suggests that the number of monks in a consecration should be between 24 and 30, while Ashin Sīlānanda suggests between 20 and 100. Where the number of monks in a village jurisdiction is less than this, effort should be made to bring the numbers up to this level by inviting monks from outside a village jurisdiction. These monks should be *pakatat-yahan*, educated, experienced, *Vinayadhara* (expert on *Vinaya*) and even high ranking monks should be included. None of these requirements are found in the early commentaries, where it is assumed that monks are pure, yet it holds true in current practice according to the *sīmā* records which I collected during my fieldwork in early 2009.

The first *sīmā* consecration, for which I have detailed eye-witness information, was conducted on 19th December 2005 at Veluwun monastery, Hmawbhi Town, Yangon

Division. There were forty monks attending this consecration. The second *sīmā*

consecration took place in the same Hmawbhi town, Yangon Division, but on a different

date and at a different monastery. It took place on 22nd March 2005 at Mahāgandayon

Monastery in Leitput Village. Both consecrations took place within the *visuṃgāma* land

(on *visuṃgāma* land see Chapter Five), which meant that it was not necessary to invite

all monks from the *gāmasīmā*. Rather those performing the ceremony on *visuṃgāma*

land can either choose the monks from the *gāmasīmā* or invite monks from outside the

gāmasīmā area. According to Ashin Candasiri, who recorded/reported this consecration

event, the number of attending monks was in excess of 50 and the majority of them were

at least the holders of *Dhammācariya* (teacher in the Dhamma) certificates, highly

educated monks. Since these monasteries belong to the *Shwegyin Nikāya* , the attending

monks were members of the *Shwegyin Nikāya* affiliated to the *Myone Saṅgha Wunsaung*

(Town Saṅgha administration- *Shwegyin Nikāya*), and some especially invited monks

were also included: the Head of the *Shwegyin Nikāya Sayadaw U Agghiya,*

Indobhāsābhivaṃsa and *Shwegyin Nikāya Rattañu Mahānāyaka.*

Here we can see the attending monks exceeded the required number, the majority

of them were highly educated and those invited included special guests who were the

most highly respected and high ranking monks within the *Shwegyin Nikāya.* When I

asked my informant, U Māginda, the abbot of Sukhitārāma Monastic Institute,

Sankyaung, Yangon, about the attendance of high ranking monks in the *sīmā*

consecration, he told me that the high ranking monks are important for the ceremony

especially for both competency and the recognition of the *sīmā* consecration. He

continued to state that, it became part of the Burmese custom to invite high-ranking

monks to the *sīmā* consecration; in many cases the consecrating monks prearranged for a

date with the high ranking monks as their competency could contribute to the

successfulness of the *sīmā* consecration and thus bring more prestige to the ceremony.

Such an arrangement again coincides with a number of favourable days, for example, the

auspicious day according to the astrological calendar and if possible, these days are,

again, selected on Saturday, Sunday or public holidays.

The concept of attendance of high ranking monks is also found within the Burmese diaspora in the EU. There have now been a few occasions of *sīmā* consecration in the EU and high ranking monks were invited for the *sīmā* consecration. At one such consecration, at the Birmingham Buddhist Vihāra in July, 1998, Dr Rewata Dhamma, the founder head of the monastery, even invited the head of the Burmese State Saṅgha. Venerable Sobhitācara, the head of the State Saṅgha and his assistant Venerable Kumāra attended at the consecration ceremony. A few more *sīmās* consecrations held in the UK, Demark and Belgium were also attended by another high ranking Burmese monk, Ashin Rājadhammābhivaṃsa, the head of the Masoe-yin monastic institute, during his visit in June 2009. The participation of such high ranking monks could be considered as bringing three outcomes through a single action: because of their competency, the *sīmā* consecration is conducted successfully; because of their presence, the organisers attract donors and devotees' attention within the Burmese community; and finally, it provides an opportunity for them to visit the West. In this case several monasteries co-operated in the timing of their consecrations in order to share the participation of so prestigious a guest participant. In Burmese *sīmā* consecration, then, requirement of *pakatat yahan* has been reinterpreted to mean or include the highest ranking monks available, and this is not in fact seen as an option but becomes an embedded element of *sīmā* consecration.

7.3. *Hatthapāsa* rule and the monitoring of monks during a consecration

We have just discussed the way in which Burmese monks choose the quorum for a *sīmā* consecration but since it is also compulsory that all monks within the *gāmasīmā* attend, there is another question as to how the consecrating monastery organised or controlled the remaining monks in the *gāmasīmā* area. We have discussed this rule in Chapter Four and Five, where we looked at how all monks within a *samānasaṃvāsasīmā* (boundary for common share/communion) are required to come and sit within a specific distance of each other, the *hatthapāsa* area, especially when conducting a *saṅghakamma* i.e. *sīmā* consecration.

There are in fact further requirements necessary for the management of monks during the consecration, which I shall explain these now with reference to the *Samantapāsādikā*.

The *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:322) states:

> *"Sace ekasamiṃ gāmakhette sīmaṃ bandhitukāmā ye tattha baddhasīmā vihārā tesu bhikkūnaṃ 'mayaṃ ajja sīmaṃ bandhissāma tumhe sakasīmā paricchedato mā nikkhamitthā' ti pesetabbaṃ ye abaddhasīmavihārā tesu bhikkhū ekajjhaṃ sannipātetabbā chandārahānaṃ chando āharāpetabbo"*: "if they want to consecrate a monastic boundary in a village area (boundary), those monks whose monastery has a consecrated boundary should be informed thus: 'today we will consecrate a monastic boundary, those monks who already have a consecrated boundary, do not come out from your consecrated boundary; and those monks who do not have a consecrated boundary should attend and sit within the *hatthapāsa* area; those monks who are eligible to send their proxy should send their proxy to the consecrating area''.

This quotation sets out the complete preconditions of the management of monks for a *sīmā* consecration. While the *Kankhāvitaraṇī* quotation given earlier in the previous section gives us an overall understanding, this quotation breaks down into detail the management of monks in a village jurisdiction. There are three key factors in this quotation and each factor is crucial to the management of monks. The first factor is called *bahikaraṇasīmāvisodhana*, 'purity of the consecration managed by requesting the monks to stay in their consecrated boundary'; the second is *hatthapāsānayana-sīmāvisodhana*, 'the purity of the consecration managed by bringing all the monks within the two cubits length area'; and the third factor is *chandāharaṇa-sīmāvisodhana*, 'purity of the consecration managed by bringing the consent by proxy of any monk too ill to attend' (Ashin Paññā Mahāthera 1999:9).

The first factor states that where temples within the village already have an established *sīmā*, monks may stay inside their consecrated boundary. They are, therefore, not required to attend the ceremony unless they are invited. In normal practice, all village monks are invited to the ceremony if it is affordable to provide the necessary requisites for the invited monks such as food, transport or other logistical requisites. If those sponsoring the consecration cannot afford to invite all of them, the consecrating monks may choose only the *vinayadhara* monks, i.e. the expert on monastic regulations, to attend the ceremony while the remaining monks are requested to stay inside their *sīmā*.

As already discussed in Chapter Four and Five a consecrated *sīmā* possesses its own jurisdiction and is counted as a separate independent jurisdiction even when it is within the village boundary. However, monks must not leave their consecrated boundary during the consecration. If they do then as soon as they step out of the *sīmā*, it is considered *vagga* (division), resulting in an invalid consecration.[88]

The second procedure (*hatthapāsānayana sīmāvisodhana* –consecration managed by *hatthapāsa* rule) plays the most important role for the consecration. All the monks of the village who are not staying within their own consecrated *sīmā* must attend the consecration ceremony and sit together with the consecrating monks within the *hatthapāsa* area. If, for example, a monk comes to the ceremony but fails to sit within the *hatthapāsa* area, it is still considered *vagga* (division). This is not just restricted to the monks within the village jurisdiction, but even visiting monks are included here. As will be explained later, if visiting monks, for example, stay within the village jurisdiction during the consecration, unwittingly or unrecognised, the whole process of consecration is invalidated. In Burmese this is called: '*Ywar hma yahan shi nay yin thein thamok ta pyet lein me*', 'If a monk lives inside the village boundary without attending the consecration ceremony, the consecration ceremony will be defective'. If these monks neither attend the ceremony nor stay inside a consecrated *sīmā*, these monks are considered as having invalidated the consecration by creating *vagga* within the village jurisdiction (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:322).

According to the third procedure, (*chandāharaṇa sīmāvisodhana* - consecration managed by bringing the proxy of a monk), monks who are either sick or busy with Saṅgha activities are exempted from attending the ceremony. This factor makes it clear that when it is stated that all monks from within a village boundary must attend the consecration ceremony there are, in fact, exceptions to the rule, particularly for those

---

[88] If, however, some monks indeed agree to stay inside the consecrated boundary, some lay-devotees may watch to observe whether the monks follow the rules. Technically, a consecration normally takes an hour. During this time, they cannot go out even when they want to do something outside the consecrated boundary. Therefore, the devotees must serve the monks with the required requisites (Sīlānanda 2002:76-7)

monks who are sick and busy with Saṅgha activities. Exempted monks must, however, follow the *chandāharaṇa sīmāvisodhana* rule which Burmese call *chanda pay chin*, meaning 'sending their consent' via a monk who attends the ceremony. When sending their consent the following Pāli statement should be used: *chandaṃ dammi, chandaṃ me hara, chandaṃ me ārocehi (*I declare my consent. Take my consent and proclaim it (before the Saṅgha) (Mv II.22.1). The monk acting as messenger for the absentee monk must then formally inform the Saṅgha. This can also be spoken in the local language provided that the Saṅgha being informed understands. This regulation is still followed in Burma and Bangladesh as I had an opportunity to observe during my fieldwork. I experienced a *sīmā* consecration held at Ramghar Mahāmuni Vihāra, Khagrachari, Bangladesh on 15 December 2008. As we assembled at the consecrating zone a monk stated in his native language –'Venerable Kusala, the abbot of Chawdhuri temple, cannot attend due to his illness but he has sent his consent with me'. Everyone then accepted by saying *sādhu* (well-done) three times.

There is, however, a fourth procedure which is not reported in the *Samantapāsādikā*, but can be found in some Burmese *sīmā* manuals e.g. that written by Ashin Sobhitācāra (1968:41) and Ashin Kavisāra (2006:42). According to these sources monks who, for their own personal reasons, are not willing to attend the ceremony, but do not have their own *sīmā* in which to stay while the other *sīmā* is being consecrated, should leave the entire village jurisdiction. If monks leave the village boundary or are absent during the consecration, technically they are not considered *vagga*. The remaining monks in the village boundary are united by attending the ceremony. Therefore the jurisdictional activity is complete.

My informant, U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa, however does not agree with this procedure. He states that the organising monk may request that the monks stay inside their consecrated boundary if he cannot afford to invite all monks but he should not request any monk to leave the jurisdictional area. According to U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa, this would be the same as forcing monks to leave the council jurisdiction. He adds, however, that if monks wish to leave the defined boundary of their own volition, it is better that they do

so rather than create *vagga* (division) in the boundary by remaining. Ashin Sobhitācāra (1968:41) has also commented on this practice. He states that since leaving the village jurisdiction is not mentioned in the *Samantapāsādikā*, it should not be included as an option when the management of monks is being arranged for a consecration. In my view, this interpretation in the Burmese manuals is a logical extension of the fact that those who are already outside of the village, for example travelling, are already excluded from the requirement to stay in their own *sīmā* or attend.

As will be explained in details below, in actual practice monks do not even request that monks stay inside their consecrated *sīmā*, nor request them to leave the council boundary during the consecration. If we reflect on these four procedures we see that the second (all village monks are to follow the *hatthapāsa* rule) plays the crucial part as it provides the guaranteed attendance of monks, while the third provides an exception for sick or busy monks. The first and last procedures is regarded an alternative to this *hatthapāsa* rule. In brief, these four procedures are intended to manage monks already inside a village jurisdiction.

According to Ashin Sīlānanda (2002:74), these rules are called in Burmese language: '*ne theing hmu*' (jurisdictional control). He then added another phrase: '*ne saung hmu* ' (safeguard*)*, which expands on '*ne theing hmu*'. The first aspect of this explanation deals with 'jurisdictional control, implying 'the whole village jurisdiction' or the whole local council. The latter covers the 'safeguard' that requires stopping incoming monks entering during the consecration. The former and latter are interrelated and if one is performed the other must be included. The combination of these two procedures is called in Burmese '*ne theing thamok chin*, which is interpreted as 'consecration by jurisdictional control'. The crucial point of jurisdictional control is that all monks within the 'village jurisdiction' must participate in the consecration. I shall explain the concept of *ne saung hmu* in more detail later.

Ashin Sīlānanda (2002:73-4) further explains the misconception of '*ne theing hmu*' by some Burmese monks. He states that some Burmese monks do not understand '*ne theing hmu*' (jurisdictional control) in the context of a consecration. They believe

that only the government has the power to use this 'jurisdictional control' (*ne theing hmu*). According to Ashin Sīlānanda, these monks have failed to comprehend the difference between the monastic concept of *ne theing hmu* and the government concept of *ne theing hmu*. The government concept of *ne theing hmu* is an order which applies to and must be obeyed by civilians. An example of this is where villagers are ordered by the government not to plant tobacco within a specified area. Another example would be where the police force orders villagers not to step into an area where they are investigating a criminal case.

The monastic regulation of *ne theing hmu* is, however, different from such government power. Jurisdictional control (*ne theing hmu*) in the monastic context refers only to monks within a village jurisdiction and does not necessitate government involvement. The concept of '*ne theing hmu*' in the monastic context refers to the controlling of the whole village boundary and in this context monks apply the words '*ne theing hmu*. The phrase, *ne theing hmu*, therefore applies to the monks within the defined village jurisdiction.

7.4. Monitoring visitor monks during a consecration

There is, however, a further issue that the four procedures fail to address, namely that of how to deal with visiting or incoming monks entering the village boundary. As stated above, visitor monks are also required to follow the rule of *hatthapāsa* if they arrive before and so are present during the consecration (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:322). This means that despite the village monks within a village boundary being managed or invited for the consecration, there is still the danger of incoming monks (*disācārika-bhikkhu* 'a monk travelling from other directions'). The jurisdiction of a village boundary is defined by all monks and not necessarily limited to the monks who live within the village boundary. This prescription applies particularly during the consecration period in the consecrating village jurisdiction. If two villages are connected to each other during the consecration, the lay leader of each village must define his boundaries. The procedure for defining a village boundary has already been explained in Chapter Five and the importance of precise village boundary plays the key role here. If a

visiting monk enters the boundary prior to the ceremony, he must follow the *hatthapāsa* procedure. This requirement is contained in a currently used monastic phrase in the Burmese language which refers to this procedure as: *'gāmakhet takhulon theing ya-me'* - all village boundary monks have to be controlled. This is interpreted to mean that all monks from local villages and visiting monks must attend.

My informant, Bamaw Sayadaw, the current head of the State *Saṅghamahānāyaka*, considers the assembling of all normally resident monks manageable. It is the organising of visiting monks that is problematic because their arrival might be unexpected and they could cross the boundary during the ceremony. The management of incoming monks is called in Burmese language *'ne saung hmu'* (safeguard) which I have already mentioned the term above, meaning 'to safeguard the area'. Here I shall explain in greater detail. The concept of *'ne saung hmu'* may also be interpreted as the action of safeguarding the village jurisdiction during the consecration. To apply this *ne saung hmu*, civilian or (government in some cases) input is required to ensure that travelling monks do not cross the border of the village boundary. This is done by the following method:

All the crossroads around the village jurisdiction must be guarded. A signal, given by using a drum, bell, gong or classical instrument, is sounded at the start of the ceremony to instruct the guard to commence his patrol of the crossroads. The drum should be hit so loud that it can be heard by the guards at all crossroads. Even a gun may be fired for this purpose, depending on the distance between the place of *ne saung hmu* (safeguarded area) and the consecrating zone. A similar signal is given at the conclusion of the ceremony to indicate to the guards that their duty is over. These are important signals for the men on duty who watch for incoming monks for the duration of the ceremony including those men who are appointed to watch the monks in the consecrated boundary. It is important that the guards stay alert (bear in mind what I have already said about these ceremonies being conducted at night in Burma). While it is not important for the validity of the consecration, it is expected practice that the guards be hospitable to monks expecting to gain entry.

The description of 'jurisdictional control' (*ne theing thamok chin*) of a consecration, as reported above, refers to a *gāmasīmā* (village boundary). A question might then be asked about whether there are different procedures applied when consecrating a *sīmā* within a council boundary of a city boundary. The answer to this question is that the procedures are not restricted only to a village boundary. The same procedure also applies to a *sīmā* consecration in a council boundary of a city but as we have discussed in Chapter Five, *sīmā* consecration in the city area is more difficult than the village boundary. The reason is that the council boundaries in a city are close to each other and densely populated both by people and monks thus it makes them inconvenient for both *ne saung hmu* (safeguarding) and *ne theing hmu* (jurisdictional control) when consecrating a *sīmā*. When, for example, a *sīmā* is consecrated in a council jurisdiction, monks from nearby councils are also required to attend the ceremony. We have, therefore, to consider the challenges that come with managing monks in the council jurisdiction of a city. A more detailed account on the management of monks in a city boundary can be found in Chapter Five.

If a *sīmā* consecration is necessary in a council area where there are many temples and a large number of monks, this could create problems for the organiser. One problem is accommodating all monks from within the council jurisdiction into the *hatthapāsa* area of the ceremony and the second is the financial cost involved in inviting every monk to the ceremony. Still another dilemma for the organiser is that it is not permissible to substitute with proxy those monks who are not sick or busy with Saṅgha activities. Technically therefore, they should come to the *hatthapāsa* area. According to (Sīlānanda 2002:76-77, Sobhitācāra 1968:41-2), the procedure of sending consent by proxy (*chandāharaṇa sīmāvisodhana* – consecration managed by bringing the proxy of a monk) has become common practice in Burma today but they do not discuss or classify the types of monks fufilling the condition for this proxy. The question can be asked: how can the proxy of a healthy monk who is not busy with the Saṅgha activity be qualified? If, however, monks are allowed to send their proxy without any condition, it will be easy to substitute following the *hatthapāsa* rule with representation by proxy. But the

majority of monks are neither sick nor busy with the Saṅgha activities at the time of consecration.

When I discussed this matter with U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa, he stated that the concept of proxy has been reinterpreted in response to modern conditions. The proxy is used by the unattended monks even if they are not sick or busy with the monastic activities. He pointed out that the Buddha instituted the *uposatha* ceremony and indeed all community activities, as a means of creating unity among the monks. According to U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa this unity is reflected with the proxy when a *sīmā* consecration takes place within a council boundary. He is of the opinion that *hatthapāsa* rule cannot work easily where there are densely populated monks in some councils of a city. On the other hand, even though the consecrating monk wanted to invite all monks within the council boundary, it is not easy to look after them all with food, accommodation, transportation or other customary requisites. As a response Burmese monks may have chosen to allow proxy- consent in this wider context to avoid creating *vagga* and by sending consent by proxy they confirm the process of the consecration. According to U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa, this proxy is thus treated as unity of the monks and applicable in the *sīmā* consecration.

Interestingly, he also compared the environment at the time of the Buddha with modern times, which is one of the underlying causes that transforms the use of proxy in the *sīmā* consecration. He stated that it is unlikely that in the lifetime of the Buddha money would have been involved in a consecration or other Saṅgha activity such as *upasampadā* (ordination) ceremony, but at the present time every ceremony requires money, even though handling money is prohibited by the *Vinaya* rule. An organising monk is required to arrange the offering of food to monks as well as other arrangements such as donations for their attendance. By utilising the modern application of the proxy rule expenses are kept down as well as keeping the organising monk's arrangements within manageable limits. U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa used the phrase –'*Yin kyay hmu takhulo phyit nayte*' – 'one of the customs of the current practice' with regard to offering donations to monks attending a ceremony. Where money and management is limited, the number of attending monks will be limited, for example from 100 monks to say 50.

Those who do not attend employ the proxy to avoid *vagga* as stated by Ashin Sīlānanda and Ashin Sobhitācāra.

As far as I have been able to ascertain through my research, which includes my interviews with senior, longstanding *Vinaya* experts and those involved in conducting *sīmā* consecrations in recent years, there has been no need to draw on either of the interpretations of the jurisdictional activity, i.e. staying within a different *sīmā* or leaving the village jurisdiction, since there has been effective and appreciative cooperation by the use of proxy in all the *sīmā* consecrations known of by these informants. Burmese monks have simply adapted to the custom of proxy and they believe that proxy substitutes the *hatthapāsa* rule and is counted as an act of unity for the consecration as stated by U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa, Ashin Sīlānanda and Ashin Sobhitācāra. In other words, in practice, proxy replaces the staying outside of the village or staying within the different *sīmā* for Burmese monks, and allows the non-participating monks to continue with their normal business, regardless of whether or not they are sick.

What I have so far discussed is associated with *ne theing hmu* (jurisdictional control) and *ne saung hmu* (safeguarding) when a *sīmā* is consecrated in a village or a council boundary of a city area. However, these village and councils boundaries are measured as natural boundaries in terms of monastic practice, as the establishment of these boundaries is not intended for monastic purposes. In contrast, there is a specific boundary called *visuṃgāmasīmā* ('special', in fact meaning 'separate' boundary), which is intended for monastic purposes. This is, as already explained in chapter five, normally a small plot of land authorised by the government for the purpose of consecrating a monastic boundary. If a *sīmā* is consecrated in this boundary, the concept of *ne saung hmu* is not important because this boundary is small enough to be managed by monks, only the monks within the *visuṃgāma* are required for jurisdictional control. Therefore, the activity of jurisdictional control is easy if one consecrate a *sīmā* in a *visuṃgāma* land. The consecrating monks can choose the number of monks they wish to attend from either the village boundary or from elsewhere. This land is the easiest way to manage monks during the consecration. Because of the complexity of difficulty of controlling everybody

in the modern city, the majority of *sīmā* consecrations within a city boundary area employ a *visuṃgāmasīmā*. The area is then very small, for example, and it is easy to control the monks within it.

Considering the preceding discussion, we can conclude that it is possible to ensure the perfection of monks with two concepts: one is the concept of unity of monks within a village or council jurisdiction and the other is the 'purity' of monks who attended the ceremony. We have seen that in practice the concept of proxy has been extended in modern Burma, as has the use of *visuṃgāmasīmā* in cities. In terms of purity, there is the risk that if the attending monks are not pure in their precepts, the *sīmā* consecration may not be considered valid. Therefore at least four participating monks are selected for their known purity and more than the quorum of four is always invited in order to make sure of a pure quorum. In line with this, we see a tendency to invite very educated and extremely high ranking monks as a supplementary factor to bring the prestige and additional authority to a *sīmā* consecration. Above all, the correct defined boundary of a village or a council, what we have discussed in Chapter Five, is precisely employed here in order to control the monks or to use the *hatthapāsa* rule when consecrating a *sīmā* within such a defined boundary.

7.5. *Nimitta-sampatti:* the validity of the boundary markers

In this section I shall examine the rules concerning *nimitta*, which is another important factor required during *sīmā* consecration. The word *nimitta* literally means sign, mark or indication, but in the context of *sīmā* it is a boundary marker kept visible after consecration. These *nimittas* are not necessarily to be the same with the original one,

Boundary markers play a crucial role in *sīmā* consecration and without them a consecration cannot be completed. They are used to demarcate the boundary between consecrated and un-consecrated zones. Some Burmese monks call them the 'life of a *sīmā*' because there will be no clear boundary if the *nimitta*s are destroyed and the legitimacy of monastic legal activities performed outside the *nimitta* area will be negated. Therefore, as will be discussed later, the visible or durable objects are

substituted with the original boundary markers, particularly if the original boundary makers are not durable or visible to the defined boundary. According to the *Mahāvagga* (M.V.ii-6) there were eight types of *nimitta* used during the Buddha's lifetime. These are:

1. A mountain *(pabbata),*

2. A rock or stone *(pāsāṇa),*

3. A forest *(vana),*

4. A tree *(rukkha),*

5. A highway *(magga),*

6. An anthill *(vammika),*

7. A river (*nadī*)

8. A body of water *(udaka)*

Each of these *nimittas* would seem to reflect the lifestyle of monks in early monastic practice. During the Buddha's time monks tended to travel from one place to another through forests, by mountains, along roads, and by rivers. According to Dutt (1962:52) such a peripatetic lifestyle was characteristic of the 'primitive Saṅgha of the Buddha's own time', which Dutt perceived to reflect the influence of the spiritual custom of the *paribbājaka* (wandering alms man). According to *Mahāvagga* (Mv I. 11.), the Buddha even encouraged his disciples to walk/wander for the benefit of everyone. According to *Mahāvagga* (Mv III.2), the spiritual community of *paribbājaka* retired in a suitable place during rainy season. In response to criticism that the wandering of the Buddha's disciples throughout the year including the rainy season mean that they crushed green herbs, harmed vegetables and destroyed many small livings things. This eventually led the Buddha to impose the rules of three months rainy retreat on the monks (ibid). Even then, according to Dutt (1962:55-56), the wandering practice of the primitive Saṅgha ceased only during the monsoon season and resumed once it was over.

It appears likely that the choice of *nimitta*s came about because they were naturally occurring objects in close proximity to the area in which the monks resided during the rains retreat. They were abundantly available and easily accessible. If, for example, a group of monks stayed in a forest during the rains retreat, or were staying in the countryside region where they can travel to and from the forest by public road, they might choose the road on which they had travelled, or natural objects such as anthills, trees or stones, as *nimitta*. According to Dutt (1962:57) the limits of these eight *nimittas* was introduced due to the fact that the residential places (*āvāsa*) of monks coincided with natural boundaries such as a mountain, a rock, a path, a tree or a river.

Current practice differs from early practice in that at least six *nimitta* (mountain, forest, tree, road, anthill and river*)* are no longer used as a boundary's *nimitta*. Present day *sīmā* consecrations, both inside Burma and outside where Burmese-influenced Theravada Buddhism is practised, now use only water and stone *nimittas*. When I asked about the reasons for the six *nimitta* being no longer in use, my informants, U Māginda (head of the Sukhitārama temple, Yangon), U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa (former head of the State *Sāsana* University, Yangon) and U Gandhamālālaṅkāra, (also known as Shwezin Tipiṭakadhara Sayadaw, head of the Dhammanāda Monastery, Mingun) responded logically and interestingly. They stated that of the eight *nimitta* available to early wandering monks only two can be moved from one place to another, a necessary requisite for city monks. These are stone and water. The other six are static and immovable. Modern monks generally establish their monasteries in highly populated towns or cities where mountain, river, anthill or forest *nimittas* are not feasible, but stone and water can be transported into the area where the *sīmā* consecration takes place. This has made water and stone the preferred choice of modern monks though, theoretically, the other *nimitta* are not prohibited; they have just fallen into disuse.

The rules and dimensions of each *nimitta* are crucial, but before dealing with them I shall elucidate the basic layout of a boundary. The diagram one below is an example of how to lay out the boundary using these *nimitta*s.
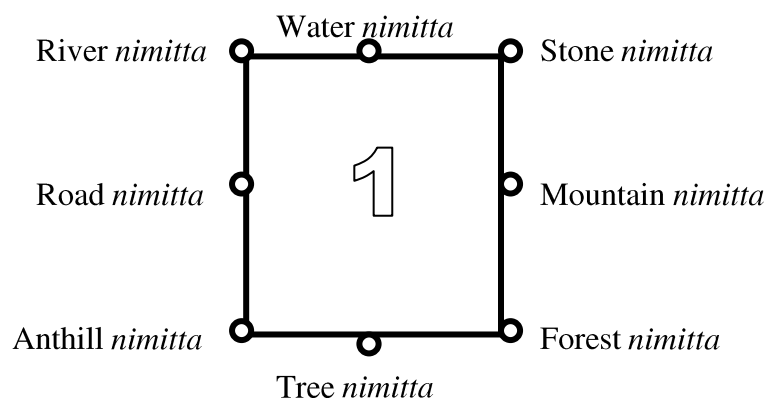
Figure 10:7.5. Diagram 1, sample position of eight types of boundary markers

The circled points in this diagram represent the individual *nimitta,* each being located outside the borderline area. According to this diagram each of the eight represents a direction and the distance between them, while joining them together creates the boundary. To create this diagram I used all eight *nimitta,* however, in actual practice it is not necessary to use them all, as stated above. The consecrating monk will choose one or two types of *nimitta,* preferably water and/or stone, appropriate to the area where the consecration takes place. The *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:322) states:

> *"imehi ca aṭṭhahi nimittehi asammissehipi aññamaññaṃ sammissehipi sīmaṃ sammannituṃ vaṭṭatiyeva"*: "these eight types of *nimitta* can apply either by combining together or using a single type of *nimitta* when consecrating a *sīmā"*.

The *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:322) further states that:

> *"tīṇi pana ādiṃ katvā vuttappakārānaṃ nimittānaṃ satenāpi baddhā hoti"*: "when consecrating with the *nimitta* of the form stated previously, one must use at least three *nimitta*s and up to even a hundred".

According to these quotations, the basic number of markers required is only three, i.e. the number needed to turn the space between them from a straight line into and area. Aside of that, the number of *nimitta* is not restricted; even a hundred or more could be employed provided the boundary is defined by a minimum of three. It does not matter whether this basic number is made up of the same type of *nimitta* (e.g. all stones) or selected from three different types of the eight *nimitta*s. If a consecration uses three

nimitta, the boundary as shown in diagram two below, becomes a triangular boundary. This is a valid monastic boundary *(sīmā),* the fundamental requirement being only that the *nimitta* are connected to create an unbroken triangular shape (as illustrated in diagram three). Such a boundary with three *nimitta* may only be useful, for example, in the corner of a cave or in a narrow place where a large space is not available, but this boundary must be big enough to accommodate at least twenty-one monks (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:323). Information regarding the size of a valid *sīmā* will be included in Chapter Eight.

2

This triangle is a valid *sīmā*
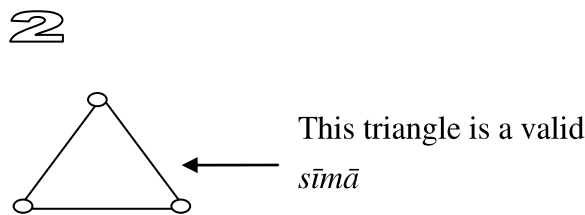
Figure 11:7.5. Diagram 2, sample position of triangle boundary

3

This boundary is not closed. See more about how one should ritually close a boundary in next section.
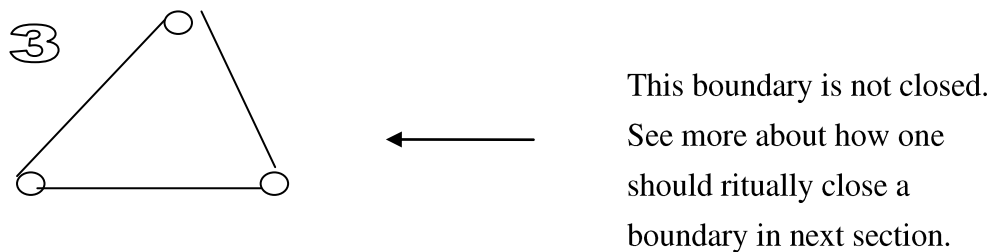
Figure 12:7.5. Diagram 3, unclosed boundary

Because of the distance between one corner and another, monks may use more than three *nimitta* to link between the corners. The number of *nimitta* on each borderline is different as is shown in diagram four below.

B

4

A   C
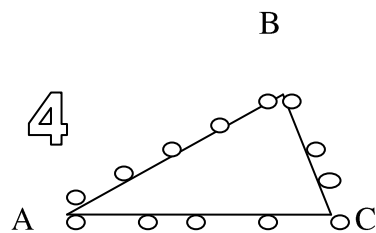
Figure 13: 7.5. Diagram 4, sample usages of many boundary markers

The example in diagram four shows a boundary where sides AB and AC are longer than side BC and use five *nimitta* whereas BC uses only three. In current practice, no *sīmā* has been consecrated in such a triangular shape; it is only mentioned here because it is a feasible boundary as explained by the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (ibid). As will be explained later, all monastic boundaries in Burma are established in the form of a rectangular or square shape similar to a house or modern building. To create a square at least four *nimitta* would be required but, since the number is not restricted, a modern monastic boundary could contain many more.

Below are two diagrams numbered 5 and 6. They illustrate how a different number of *nimitta*s are joined to make different *sīmā*s. Diagram 5 uses four *nimitta* while diagram 6 uses eight. If the number of *nimitta* is increased, monks must ensure that the position and direction of each *nimitta* is correct. The correct direction of the *nimitta* is crucial to the laying out of a boundary. As will be discussed in the next section, monks must identify the direction of each *nimitta* during the consecration. When a *sīmā* is consecrated, either in the form of a triangle using three *nimitta,* or in a square using a minimum of four and up to eight *nimitta*, the monk can select the required *nimitta* from either one type or from a variety of types, his decision depending on the required boundary.

One type of *nimitta* may be used for a consecration and be replaced after the ceremony by a different type chosen for its visibility, such as stones. Both must, however, always be sited outside the consecrated boundary (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965: 318). If, for example, a forest is used as a *nimitta*, the boundary marker must be at the edge of the forest *(vana)* because this *nimitta* has to stay outside the borderline created for the consecration. After the consecration the forest *nimitta* can be replaced by stone *nimitta*. These stones would be installed where the forest *nimitta* is defined; possibly at the edge of the forest. Similarly, when a *sīmā* is consecrated between a river and a public road, the consecrating monk can use both river and public road as *nimitta*s but, again, after the consecration the area can be defined by stone *nimitta* which make the boundary area both durable and visible. As will be explained below, Burmese monks

employ water *nimitta* for the consecration but they replace the water with stones after the consecration.
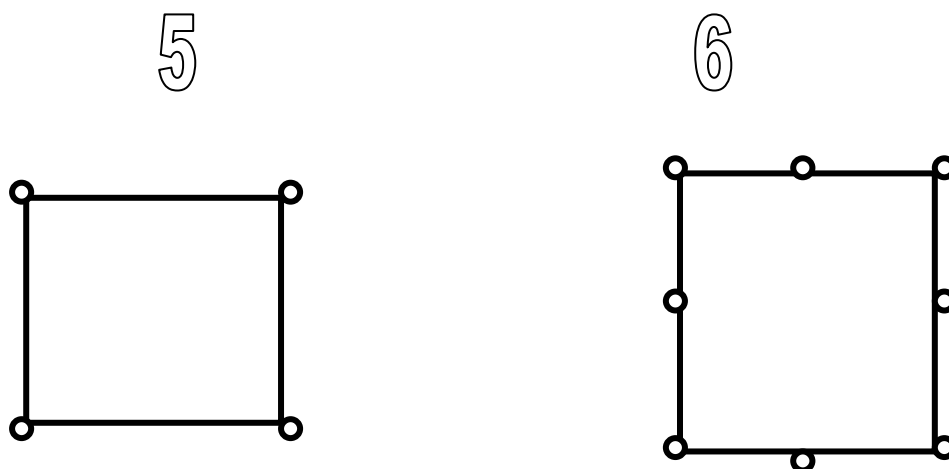
Figure 14:7.5. Diagram 5**,** sample boundary with four *nimittas.*

Figure 15: 7.5. Diagram 6, sample boundary with eight *nimittas*

What I have outlined above is the basic principle of boundary marking regardless of type of *nimitta* used, the only condition being that the size and dimension of each *nimitta* must be in line with the commentarial guidelines. I will outline the rules for each *nimitta* here but, since the current practice of *nimitta* is only concerned with two *nimitta*s (water and stone); I intend to pay particular attention to these with regard to current practice. It is my intention to outline the remaining *nimitta*s merely by referring to the commentarial definitions whereas the water and stone *nimittas* will be analysed through my fieldwork experience and will be dealt with in the last part of this section.

According to the *Samantapāsādikā*, one *nimitta* is different from another in terms of usage, dimension and eligibility. To qualify as a mountain *nimitta*, for example, a mountain must be composed of rocks, firm soil (earth) or a combination of rocks and firm soil (earth) (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:318). It is generally understood that a mountain is a large object but for the purposes of defining a valid mountain *nimitta* its size must be that of an average elephant, i.e. we are talking really of a hummock of some kind. If it is smaller than an elephant the mountain cannot be used as a *nimitta*. In the case of a mountain chain, whether the mountains are connected to each other or not, the

whole of the chain is considered as one *nimitta*. If a *sīmā* is established in the middle of three or four mountains, providing they are separate from each other, each can be used as a *nimitta* (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:319). If a mountain is included within a *sīmā* it cannot be used as a *nimitta* because *nimitta* must remain outside the boundary. In this latter case trees *(rukkha)* or stones *(pāsāṇa)* should be used. The whole mountain then becomes part of a *sīmā* (Sīlānanda 2002:27).

Just as with a mountain, the Buddha permitted a forest to be utilised as a *nimitta*. Our normal perception of a forest is of a large tract of land containing mostly trees, bushes and plants. Interestingly, according to the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:320), even a cluster of four or five trees qualifies as a forest *nimitta*, the only condition being that this forest must contain at least three 'hardwood' *(antosārāna)* trees (ibid). It follows, therefore, that a bush *(tiṇavana)* cannot be considered as a forest *nimitta* if it does not contain the necessary three hardwood trees. An interesting point to note here is that the trees in a forest may be identified as 'hardwood' even if they are saplings and still very small. In contrast, a coconut or palm tree *(tālanāḷika rukkha),* despite its size, is not acceptable, since such trees are not made of hardwood (ibid). Following the same principle as the mountain *nimitta*, (that of a chained mountain), if a *sīmā* is established inside a forest, the entire forest can only be used as one *nimitta* or one direction of the boundary. For the remaining directions the monks may choose from the different *nimitta* listed above, i.e. trees or stones. If separate clusters of trees which might independently constitute a forest under the definition given, are located in distinct directions, each may qualify as a separate forest *nimitta*. Therefore, the location of a *sīmā* must be outside the forest for it to be used as a *nimitta*.

As just stated, many trees and plants are found in a forest *nimitta*. Interestingly though, a single plant or tree in a forest can also become a *nimitta*, but when it is installed the specific term *'(rukkha)* tree *nimitta'* must be used. This provides a convenience for the monks who live inside and outside the forest as they can easily consecrate their monastic boundary using an individual tree as *nimitta*. A tree *nimitta* is easily available in many places, even within a monastery in a modern town or city. It is

necessary, however, that the qualifying tree must be a hardwood (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:320). A palm tree in a monastery is not acceptable but a mango or jackfruit tree can be used. If there is a group of three or four hardwood trees set in a square, or in a triangular layout, each tree can be used as a separate *nimitta* for the consecration. The most interesting point of this is that even a newly planted sapling counts as a tree *nimitta* (ibid). The Commentary allows the use of such a young plant even while it still needs nurturing by being regularly watered *(udakaṃ āsiñcitvā)* (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:320). The tree must not, however, be smaller than eight fingerbreadths *(aṭṭhaṅgula)* high and must be growing in the ground. Potted plants are excluded from this *nimitta* category (ibid).

If monks happen to establish a *sīmā* next to a public road, the road can be defined as a *nimitta*. Public roads between villages, or trade roads that have been used by carts or chariots *(sakaṭamaggo),* qualify as *nimitta*. If, however, they are no longer being used *(avaḷaṃjā)* by the public, they cannot be used as *nimitta*s (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:320). A modern definition of 'public roads' would include highways or metropolitan roads, and these are suitable for use as *nimitta*. The *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:320) states, however, that a road which crosses a garden, field or forest, or passes by a reservoir or a river, is not appropriate. Even though a temple is on a road, and part of the road is going to the temple and another part leaves it, the road is taken to be continuous and not two separate roads, (see diagram 7a below). It can only be counted as one *nimitta* because it is considered to be the same road. As is always the case, a *nimitta* must be outside the boundary so the road cannot cross it or enter. Diagram 7b shows a road which is inside a *sīmā* and therefore, an invalid *nimitta*. However, monks can use different *nimitta* in such a case. Two intersecting roads can be counted as two separate *nimitta*s if the two public roads pass in two different directions, as demonstrated in diagram 7c.

7a

Public road sīmā A Public road

7b

Direct road B sīmā Direct road

7c

Road

sīmā C
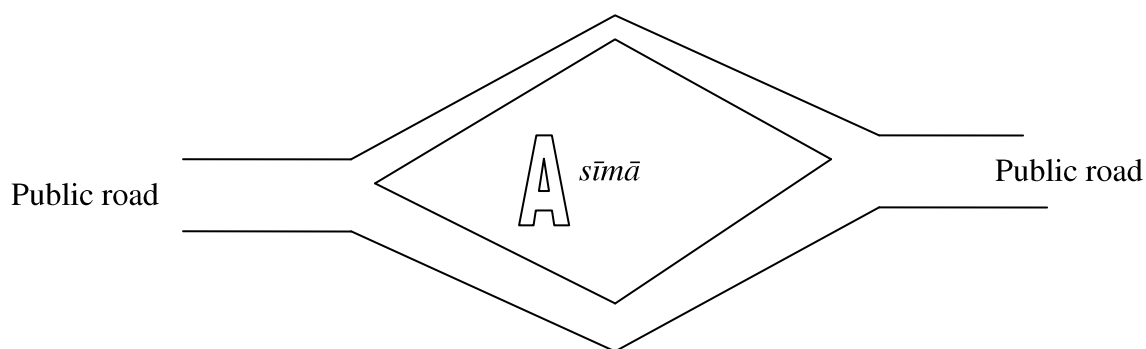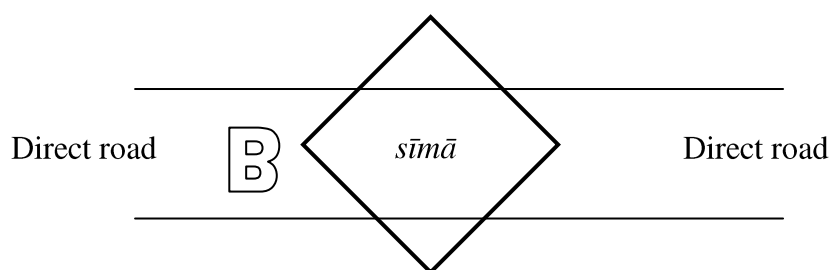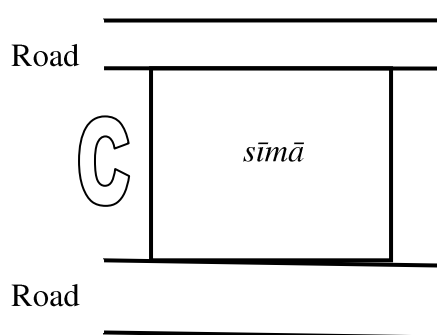
Road

Figure 16: 7.5. Diagram 7a, 7b, 7c, sample position of road *nimittas*

Not much has been written about the sixth *nimitta* listed in the Canon, the *vammika* (hillock or anthill). The *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:321) only states that to qualify as a *nimitta* an anthill must be a hillock that has been formed by nesting ants or by any other natural cause. It must, however, be at least eight fingerbreadths high to qualify as a *nimitta.*

As stated above, forest and tree can be two different *nimitta*. Interestingly, river *(nadī)* and water *(udaka)* can also be used as two separate *nimitta*. Similar to a forest, road or mountain a river is unmovable and is only useful when a *sīmā* is established near to a river. Water, however, is easily moved by container and can be brought into the consecrated area. As will be explained below, water is one of the most popular *nimitta* in Burmese tradition. In my discussion of *udakukkhepasīmā* in Chapter Six I explained how a natural river can be a boundary on its own. Interestingly, it can also be used as a *nimitta* for *sīmā* consecration but to qualify as a river *nimitta* the water must flow naturally. As described in Chapter Six, the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:321) defines how a river qualifies by referring to a *bhikkhunī's* (Buddhist nun) lower robe. If the water in a river is deep enough to wet the lower robe of a *bhikkhunī* (Buddhist nun), this river can be used as a river *nimitta*. A dam would not qualify as the flow can be controlled, but a canal can qualify if the water flows naturally. If there are four rivers passing a monastery each river can be a *nimitta*. If, however, these rivers connect to each other in any way they can only be used as one *nimitta*. If, however, a *sīmā* is consecrated between two long parallel rivers, provided they do not join up in any place, both rivers can be used as *nimitta*s (ibid).

Water is the most easily available *nimitta*. It can be obtained from a river or a pond, even from a house. The only condition is that when water is used as a *nimitta* it must lie directly on the land as with a pool of rainwater, even if it is, in fact brought in artificially. However, pots and containers are prohibited (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:322). The Commentary defines the smallest 'well' possible by comparing it to a puddle dug by a pig or by children playing in their playground, or even created by a small hole (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:322) (see photos 8a and 8b below). However, water cannot be added during the recitation of liturgy; it must be in place from the start and stay in the well until the ceremony is over. If the well dries up it is counted as invalid (ibid). In standard practice in Burma, where water is brought in for this purpose, it is kept in a specially arranged 'well' or reservoir. These wells are usually dug five to seven days before the ceremony and each well is filled with water every day to replace

evaporation and soakage. By this daily refilling of the well the consecrating monks are able to determine whether the water will stay in the well for at least the one hour required for the consecration ceremony to be completed. As soon as a consecration using water *nimitta* is over, stones are normally erected in its place. Water *nimitta*s are used only for the convenience of the consecrating monks but, since the *nimitta* area must be clearly defined, the replacement of stone *nimitta*s makes the consecrated area visible.

Photo 8a below was taken at *sīmā* consecration (named Sīlavisodhanīsīmā) held in a Burmese monastery in Indiana State, USA, in September 2006. Photo 8b was taken when another *sīmā* (called as Muniratanāsīmā) was consecrated at Thei In-gu Vipassana Meditation Centre in Aunglan Myo, lower Burma, on 29 September 2007.

8a

⑧**b**

The position of the water *nimitta*s as shown in both photos is common in Burma. Both of these *nimitta*s are filled with stones after the consecration. The stones are normally pre-arranged before the consecration even though they are not used as *nimitta* during the consecration. Photo 8c was taken while preparing the stone for the Sīlavisodhanīsīmā consecration, USA.

⑧c

Figure 17:7.5. Photos 8a and 8ba are two types of water *nimitta* while 8c is preparing to replace with 8a and 8b after consecration

The commentary describes the size and dimension of a stone *nimitta* as follows:

> *"pamāṇato pana hatthippamāṇo pabbatasaṅkhyaṃ gato tasmā so na vaṭṭati mahāgoṇamahāmahiṃsappamāṇo pana vaṭṭati heṭṭhimaparicchedena dvattiṃsapalaguḷapiṇḍaparimāṇo vaṭṭati"* : "an elephant sized stone has already been defined as a mountain *nimitta*, so it cannot be used here, but one measuring up to the size of a large bullock or buffalo does qualify as does one weighing greater than 32 *pala*" (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:319).

Pala was a weight in use at the time the Commentary was written. There is no agreed modern equivalent. Thai tradition gives 32 *palas* as being roughly equivalent to three kilograms (Thanissaro 2001:210) but in Burma each *Vinaya* expert interprets the *pala* in his own way. Many Burmese *sīmā* scholars admit to not being sure of a modern equivalence. Ashin Aggavaṃsa (1983:100ff), Maingkhaing Sayadaw (1971:520ff), Ashin Sobhitācara (1968:45) and Ashin Sīlānanda (2002:29ff) have reported different estimates for 32 *palas* made by some Burmese monks. These ranges from as high as 52.24 kilograms to as little as 2.08 kilograms while others have given 20.88 kilograms and 5.22 kilograms respectively as equivalent to 32 *palas*. These four *Vinaya* experts comment, however, that the modern equivalence of 2.08 kilograms is popularly accepted by the majority of Burmese monks. Therefore, the weight of a stone *nimitta* should never be less than 2.08 kilogram[89] (Sīlānanda 2002:31, Kalyāṇa 2008:13-14).

The *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:319) also gives a couple of examples regarding the different appearance of the stones. Some stones may emerge from the earth similar to an anthill, while others may be in the form of vertical slabs similar to a flat stone lying on the ground. The Commentary states:

> *"bhūmisamo khalamaṇḍalasadiso piṭhipāsāṇo vā bhūmito khāṇuko viya uṭhitapāsāṇo vā hoti so pi pamāṇupago ce vaṭṭati"* : "a stone can be used as *pāsāṇa nimitta* whether it emerges from the earth either as a flat slab similar to a threshing floor or as a vertical slab similar to the stump of a tree" (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:319).

---

[89] In modern Thai tradition, the *nimitta* is called *luk nimit* which is one of the crucial parts of a *sīmā* consecration ceremony. According to Murphy (2010:101), these *Luk nimit* are round stones, approximately 30 cm in diameter. They use them during the ceremony but are buried directly under *sema*. The sema is visible object.

Below are four diagrams showing the use of a natural flat stone *nimitta*. Diagram 9a illustrates a flat stone which lies outside the boundary. This is a valid *nimitta* regardless of its size because such a stone is found lying naturally on the ground and is immovable. The equivalence of a buffalo or bullock does not apply in this case. 9b shows a flat stone *nimitta* which overlaps the boundary. Since the boundary area cannot exceed the *nimitta*, 9b is considered invalid. 9c demonstrates a stone which is partly buried inside the boundary. This is also invalid. The small standing stone presented in diagram 9d is a permitted *nimitta* only if the size of such a stone is no bigger than the size of a buffalo nor smaller than 32 *palas* (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:319).

DIAGRAM 9
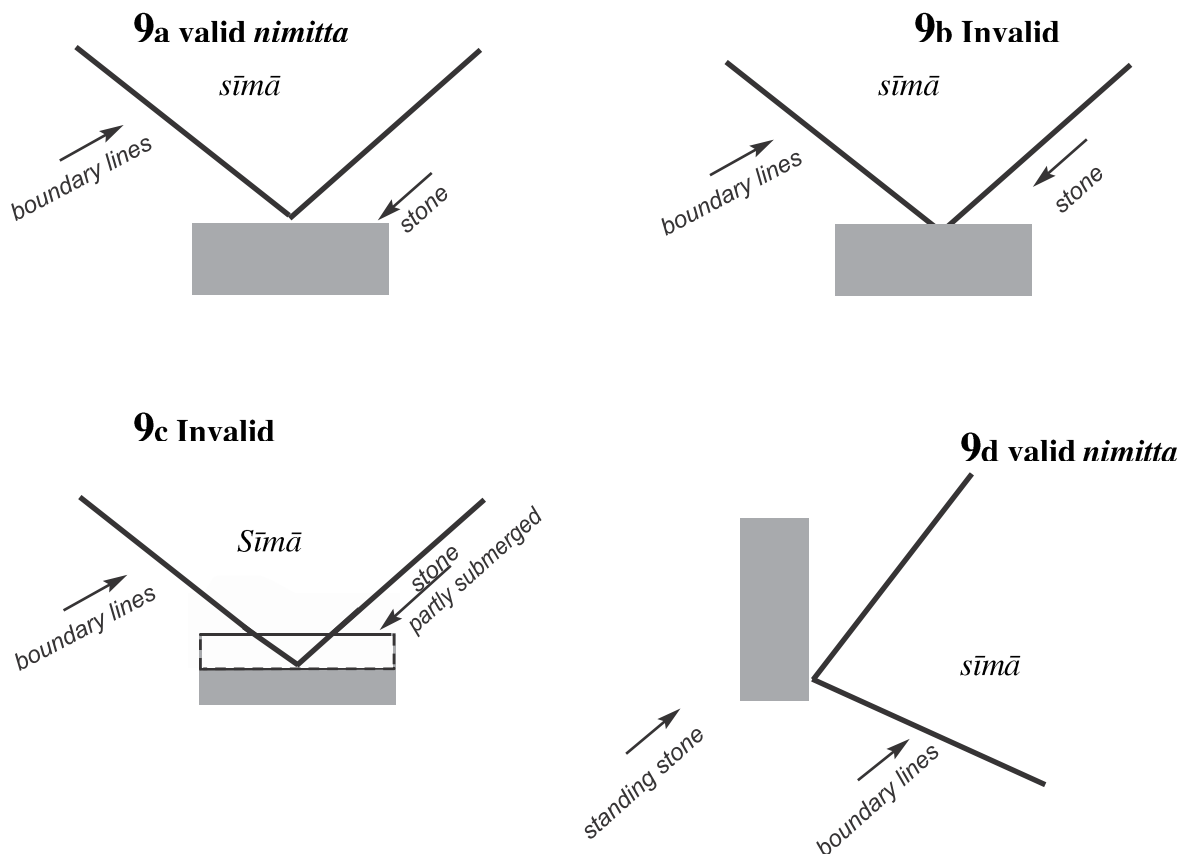
Figure 18:7.5. Sample of diagram 9a, 9c are valid stone *nimitta* but 9b, 9d are not valid

There may be flat stone slabs large enough for a *sīmā* to be established on top. The Commentary states that, in this case, the flat stone cannot be used as a *nimitta* because its position is now inside the *sīmā* (ibid). A different *nimitta* must be employed.

In current practice, however, stones are not necessarily or naturally found in the ground. All *sīmā* stones I saw during my fieldwork in 2009 were either bought from a shop or collected from other areas. I saw sixteen purpose-made stones lying at Wezayanta Temple, Maymyo, Upper Burma, in preparation for a consecration. Each stone was around fifty inches long and twenty inches wide. The weight of each stone was approximately ten kilograms. According to U Nandaka, a Wezayanta monk I interviewed in January 2009, two stones would be used for each of the eight cardinal directions: one as an inside *nimitta* and the other as *sīmāntarika* (interspace). This totals sixteen stones and is, according to U Nandaka, popular in *sīmā* consecration in Burma. The eight outermost stones, sited in each cardinal direction, are not *nimitta* but *sīmantarika* (interspace), there solely to separate one *sīmā* from another. *Sīmantarikas* are specially required if there is a *mahāsīmā* (big boundary) encompassing a *khaṇḍasīmā* (small boundary). Though *mahāsīmā* is no longer practised in modern *sīmā* consecration (see my discussion of these two *sīmās* in Chapter Eight), according to U Nandaka all Burmese *sīmās* still follow the old tradition of installing one *sīmantarika* along with a *nimitta*. Since the concepts of these terms (*mahāsīmā, khaṇḍasīmā* and *sīmantarika*) are complex, we will deal these terms in separate chapter, which is due to be discussed in Chapter Fight.

U Nandaka told me that he bought the stones for this consecration from the market. I went to see the shop in Mandalay where he had purchased them and saw many decorated stones, carved with a lotus sculpture, ready for use. There were others lying around without decoration. All were made from real stone; were consistent in size; well-designed and considerably bigger than 2.08 kilograms, the smallest stone defined by Burmese monks. Many *sīmās* in rural areas are consecrated with natural stones which are without decoration and may differ in shape and size.

Stones made of concrete are not considered natural *nimittas* since concrete is essentially a mix of cement and sand. My informant, Bamaw Sayadaw, strongly opposes the use of any stone made with concrete. When I visited him in February 2009, he took me Kaba Aye, Yangon where the Sixth Saṅgha Council had been held. He showed me the *nimittas* installed in one of three *sīmās* consecrated during the Sixth Saṅgha Convention in 1955. There were sixteen in total, similar to the Wezayanta Temple, but these were made from concrete, bigger and longer than the normal standard available in the market, almost five feet long. Bamaw Sayadaw stated that though stone *nimitta*s may be of different shapes and may be decorated, they should always be natural stone but never be concrete. He told me he did not like the use of concrete *nimitta*s in this *sīmā*. Bamaw Sayadaw was unable to answer my question about whether this *sīmā* had, in fact, been consecrated using water *nimitta* and subsequently replaced with visible concrete stones. My attempt to find out the consecration history of this *sīmā* was not successful so I was unable to determine whether these concrete stones were the original *nimitta* used in the consecration of this *sīmā* or whether they were a replacement for water *nimitta,* as described and illustrated above.

Interestingly, the number of stones used in *sīmā* consecration in Burma seems to have changed over time. Many old *sīmās* in Yangon, for example the Kyaik-kasan Paya Thein and the Shin Arahan Thein, were consecrated using only two stones in each of four cardinal directions making a total of eight stones, as illustrated in diagram 10a. Two further diagrams (10b and 10c) illustrate the use of sixteen and twenty four *nimittas.* The sixteen stones in diagram 10b are laid out in eight cardinal directions with two stones in each, whereas in diagram 10c twenty four stones correspond to eight cardinal directions with three stones in each direction.

As shown by the examples given of the *sīmā* stones in Wezayanta Temple and the *sīmā* consecration which took place during the Sixth Saṅgha Council in Kaba Aye, the boundaries of the majority of modern Burmese *sīmā* are now laid out using sixteen stones. I also personally saw the practice of using sixteen stones when I was in Bangladesh in 2008 and had the opportunity to participate in two *sīmā* consecrations, one

in Ramgarh town and the other in Jagayshala, both located in Khagrachari District, Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The use of twenty four *nimitta,* as illustrated in diagram 10c, is not found in Bangladesh. I did, however, come across two places in Maundaw (a border town situated between Burma and Bangladesh, in western Burma) where it had been used. One was in Myoma monastery and the other in Cakkinda monastery[90]. According to my interview with U Nandasiri at Myoma monastery in February 2008 the reason for using three *nimitta* in each cardinal direction was in order to mark the area where an old *sīmā* had previously been consecrated and subsequently revoked. The innermost stone is considered to be the real *nimitta* (as applies also to the two *sīmā* in diagrams 10a and 10b) while the second innermost stone served to define the extra space already reserved during the revocation of the old *sīmā*. As will be explained in the next chapter, the revocation of an old *sīmā* is an essential for the consecration of a new one. According to U Nandasiri, the entire boundary including the area of middle stones had been revoked and the land purified. In the future, when the number of monks resident in the monastery increased, the boundary could be increased up to the middle stones without further revocation of the reserved area. According to U Nandasiri, the second innermost stones are installed to mark the area that has been revoked.

---

[90] According to Murphy (2010:95-5), there were large number of *sīmā* stones excavated from the Central and North-east Thailand, which could be dated back to Dvāravadī periods (700th -12th century). These stones excavated not only from the ancient monastery area but also from the ancient pagodas and other religious buildings. (See Introduction)

10a 10b

10c
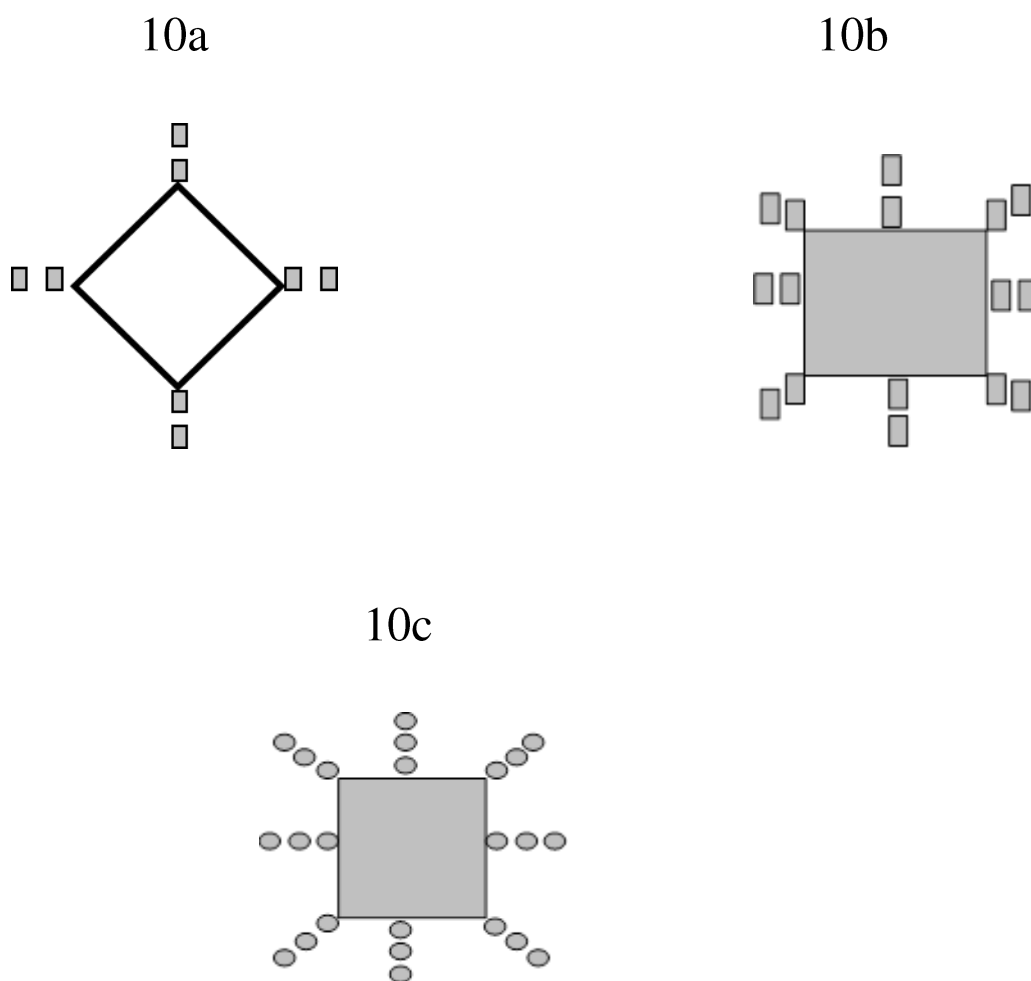
Figure 19:7.5. Diagram 10a, 10b and 10c are different position of stone *nimittas*

7.6. The procedure for the connection of each *nimitta*

In the preceding sections of this chapter I have explored the types of *nimitta* allowed by the Buddha, including how these *nimitta* are selected in line with the commentarial guidelines. In this section, I shall look at how the selected *nimittas* are connected to each other to create a perfect monastic boundary.

Before a *sīmā* consecration can take place the officiating monks must undertake various tasks, one being to mark out the borderline. This is done using boundary markers. It is important for the consecration that the selected area for consecration and the monastery compound within which *sīmā* will be consecrated are separated. These borderline markers are not considered *nimitta* but are solely the markers for an exclusive

zone where no laity may enter during the recitation of liturgy. In some places this borderline marker is defined by rope, string or by a line of 'white lime powder'. In other places the consecrating monks prefer to use both a temporary fence and white lime powder to make the area more exclusive. If the consecrating monks create a fence it must be kept outside the *nimitta*, whereas the borderline marker stays inside the fence. Monks' seats are provided inside this borderline, normally in the centre of the bounded area where they must sit together within the *hattaphāsa* area. The laity are prohibited from crossing the borderline marker during the consecration.

Below are five photos numbered 11a, 11b, 11c, 11d and 11e illustrating the use of a fence to demarcate the *sīmā* boundary. 11a was taken when a group of Burmese monks conducted a *sīmā* consecration at a Burmese temple in Indiana State, USA in September 2006. The consecration was led by a *Vinaya* expert from Burma, popularly known as Pakokku Sayadaw, who was invited to attend this *sīmā* consecration by the head monk. The *sīmā* consecration in photo 11e was held when Muniratanasīmā was consecrated at Thei In-gu Vipassana Meditation Centre in Aunglan Myo, lower Burma. 11b, 11c and 11d were taken during a *sīmā* consecration held at Jagayshala monastery, Khagrachari, Bangladesh in November 2008. The consecration of the Jagayshala monastery interestingly took place at midnight as they wanted to avoid travelling monks entering during the ceremony (see previous section for more on this subject). Photos 11c and 11d are dark due to lack of light during the night time consecration. 11b was taken during the day and shows an ordination ceremony which took place after the overnight consecration. The fence and water channel are still in position.

In both 11a and 11b we can observe the laity outside the white fence with the monks sitting inside the boundary within the *hatthāpāsa* area. In 11c, there is an additional practice: a water canal around the boundary similar to that of an ancient moated fence. We can also see (in 11d) a laywoman pouring water into the waterway to fill it. I saw this same practice in Ramgarh *sīmā* consecration twenty miles from Jagayshala temple. Members of the laity would constantly add water to the canal fence during the consecration. Interestingly, this water channel is not used as a *nimitta*. Instead,

stone *nimittas* are used and these can be observed in photo 11c where two stones lie to the side of the water channel. Despite the photos being taken at night we can still observe the white borderline along the stone *nimitta* in photos 11c and 11d. If, for some reason, someone crosses the fence during the consecration it does not affect the validity of the ceremony since the fence lies outside the *nimitta.* However, no-one must cross the borderline of the inner *nimitta* shown with white lime powder in 11d and 11e.

11a

11b

11c
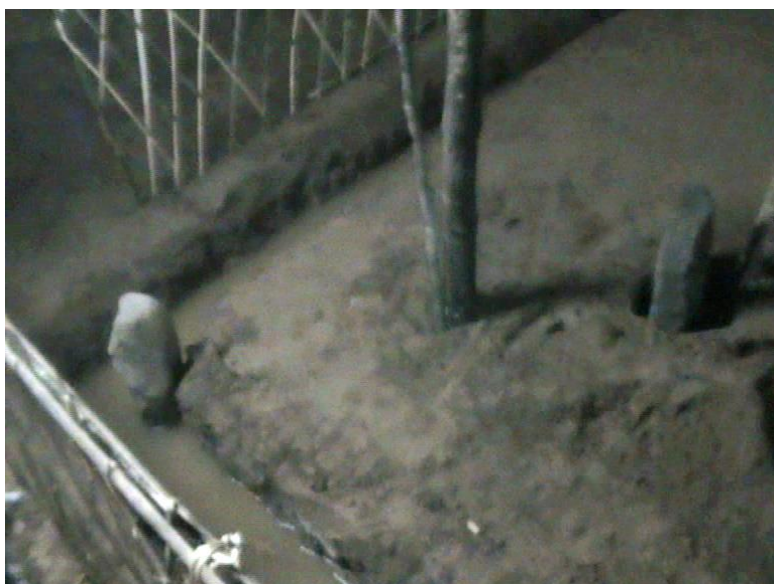
11d

11e

Having carefully prepared and set the boundary markers in place, the *sīmā* consecration starts with a set formula where all *nimitta*s are connected to each other by the *Vinayadharas* (*Vinaya* experts). This connecting of *nimitta*s takes the form of a series of questions between the *Vinayadhara* (*Vinaya* expert) and a layman or monk who stands by the *nimitta* and answers the *Vinayadhara* when he asks for the type of *nimitta* to be named.

According to the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:318), there are three stages to follow when connecting one *nimitta* with another. Firstly, the *Vinayadhara* asks the following question:

''*puratthimāya disāya kiṃ nimittaṃ?*'': ''what is the *nimitta* in the eastern direction?'' Secondly, the lay person, novice or monk replies:

''*udakaṃ bhante*'': ''the water, Venerable Sir''. Thirdly, the same *Vinayadhara* then states:

''*idaṃ udakaṃ nimittaṃ*'': ''this is a water *nimitta*''.

Fourthly, ''*āma bhante*'': ''yes, Venerable Sir''. If the *Vinayadhara* is far away from the *nimitta*, he should point his finger at the *nimitta* whilst stating:

"etaṃ udakaṃ nimittaṃ": *"*that is a water *nimitta"*.

According to the preceding procedure, there are four stages but only the first three are found in the commentary. Since the *Vinayadhara* has already been confirmed in the third stage of the procedure, the fourth stage is not necessary. In my opinion, this last stage is used not because of the acknowledgement of the *Vinayadhara's* confirmation but out of respect to the *Vinayadhara*. In Jagayshala monastery, Khagrachari, Bangladesh in November 2008, I observed the last stage (fourth stage) being used during consecration, even though this last statement is not important for the success of the consecration. What is most important is the answer to the question because it must not be answered using distorted words or inappropriate tenses. According to the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (*ibid.*) there are a number of wrong answers: *karoma* – "we do"; *karissāma* – "we will do"; *kato* – "we did"; *hotu* – "let it be"; *hoti* – "let him be"; *bhavissati* – "it will be". For example, when a stone *nimitta* is being identified, the *Vinayadhara* will point his finger at it and ask the question "What is the *nimitta* in the northern direction?" The answer cannot be any of the following: *eso pāsāṇaṃ nimittaṃ bhavissati* - "this may be the stone *nimitta"*, *etaṃ pāsāṇaṃ nimittam karoma* – "we do this stone *nimitta"*; *etaṃ pāsāṇaṃ nimittaṃ karissāma* – "we will make this be the stone *nimitta"; eso pāsāṇaṃ nimittaṃ kato* – "we did this as the stone *nimitta"*; and, *eso pāsāṇaṃ nimittaṃ hotu* – "let this stone be as *nimitta"*. According to *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā*, these phrases are confusing, not being clearly defined as to the current activity. Therefore, the phrase has to be simple, clear and in the present tense as stated in the second stage above.

This answer is very short but it is a valid answer. The important factors here are that the correct questions are asked by the *Vinayadhara*; that they elicit the correct response by whoever is waiting to answer; and finally, that the *Vinayadhara* makes the correct confirmation of the *nimitta*. The attending monks bear witness to these three factors. When a *Vinayadhara* has completed these three factors for one direction he, or another chosen *Vinayadhara*, moves on in a clockwise direction to the next *nimitta* and repeats the procedure for each *nimitta* until he returns to the starting *nimitta*, thus completing the boundary. It is crucial for the validity of the boundary that the final

question and answer sequence is repeated at the first *nimitta* thus closing the boundary (Ashin Aggavaṃsa 1983:257). In normal practice in Burma and Bangladesh, the beginning point of this connection starts from the eastern direction, which is easy to identify, but according to Ashin Sīlānanda (2002:71), it is not necessary to choose the eastern direction; the monk can start from any direction provided the question and answer sequence is completed in the direction where it began.

During the question and answer sequence it is not necessary that the answer be given by a monk. The only criterion is that the question is correctly answered. In Burma the answering person is called *nimeiksaung pokgo* – 'the person who answers the questions concerning the *nimitta'*. If a layman or novice is selected to be the *nimeiksaung pokgo* he must leave the boundary area after answering the question because he is not allowed to stay inside the *nimitta* during the recitation of liturgy. Normally, the *Vinayadhara* will go near to the *nimitta* and the *nimeiksaung pokgo* can then stay outside the *nimitta*. As is seen in the photo 11f below, the monk and *nimeiksaung pokgo* are facing to each other while the water *nimitta* itself is in the middle. This way is preferred by monks as it is easy to hear the question and answer sequence. However, both questions and answers can also be given from a distance (e.g. from the centre where monks are sitting) so long as the words can be heard and the question and answer sequence is correctly performed (Sobhitācāra 1968:52).

11f

Figure 20:7.6. Photos 11a, 11b are example of separation between laity and monks while photos 11c, 11d and11e are preparing for water *nimitta*. Final photo 11f is demonstrated how a monk enquires the *nimitta*

In order to avoid error, many Burmese monks ask the questions and answers in both Pāli and Burmese. According to the commentarial definition, answering the questions accurately and naming the correct *nimitta* are both crucial to the defining of a *nimitta*. According to Ashin Ashin Aggavaṃsa (1983:258) and Ashin Sīlānanda (2002:71), there are differences in terms of the number of the rounds when connecting *nimitta*. They both state that, although the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* does not comment on the number of rounds, many Burmese monks use at least three. There are many cases where five, seven, even nine, rounds are used, according to the desire of the *Vinayadhara*. Ashin Aggavaṃsa reported his experience of a consecration where the consecrating monks conducted nine rounds of the question and answer sequence in each of the directions. He supported this as being important for *daḷhīkamma* ('repetition for the sake of certainty'). This means that by this repetition the *nimitta* are firmly connected to each other to create a boundary. When all rules connecting the *nimittas* have been correctly observed and performed, they are formally fixed or stabilised by the final part

of the consecration, the recitation of the consecration *kammavācā* (liturgy). I will explain the *kammavācā* in the following section.

7.7. *Kammavācā-sampatti:* the validity of the liturgy

Kammavācā means liturgy or transaction statement, i.e. the formal statements that form the core of the ceremony. It is one of three components required for the consecration of a *sīmā*. The first two, (monks and boundary markers) have already been explained in the previous sections. Here, I shall look at the importance of the *kammavācā* and how it is applied in the consecration of a *sīmā*. The *kammavācā* (liturgy) is recited in the Pāli language at the end of the entire consecration process. There are four sets of *kammavācā* recited during the consecration. They are as follow: (1) *Ti-cīvara avippavāsa sīmāsamūhanana kammavācā* (liturgy for the revoking of the (previous) authorisation as not being without one's triple robe). (2) *Samānasaṃvāsa sīmāsamūhanana kammavācā* (liturgy for revoking of the common/shared affiliation). (3) *samānasaṃvāsa-sīmāsamutti-kammavācā* (liturgy for the consecration of common/shared affiliation) and (4) *Ti-cīvara-avippavāsa-sīmāsamutti-kammavācā* (liturgy for the consecration as not being without one's triple robes). These become a total of four sets of liturgies that are required to complete the ceremony. When a *sīmā* is established, the boundary of the old *sīmā* must be withdrawn in order to avoid the overlapping of the other *sīmā,* even if the place of consecration may never have been consecrated as a *sīmā* before, as I shall explain in the next chapter. The liturgies are thus classified into two for the consecration and two for revoking the (previous) boundary.

The order of recitation is different among these four *kammavācā*. When a *sīmā* is revoked, *ti-cīvara avippavāsa sīmā-samūhanana kammavācā* (liturgy for the revoking of the (previous) authorisation as not being without one's triple robe) is followed by *samānasaṃvāsa sīmā-samūhanana kammavācā* (liturgy for revoking of the common/shared affiliation). However, when a *sīmā* is consecrated the order is opposite, they first recite *samānasaṃvāsa sīma-samutti kammavācā* (liturgy for the consecration

of common affiliation) and then they immediately recite *ti-cīvara avippavāsa sīmā-samutti kammavācā* (liturgy for the consecration as not being without one's triple robes).

There are two key stages in the formations of each *kammavācā,* one of which is called *ñatti* (motion) and other is *anussāvanā* (proclamation). The former is to inform the Saṅgha on the proposed subject of the *sīmā* i.e. revocation or consecration and latter is to consult with the Saṅgha as to whether the proposed subject is agreeable to the Saṅgha. If there is full agreement, the Saṅgha should remain silent. The whole process of this latter part i.e. consultation and silence, is called *anussāvanā* because it is ended with the proclamation. If the motion and proclamation are included in the format of a liturgy, this format is called *ñattidutiyakamma* (a motion with one proclamation). Given that a *sīmā* consecration requires the Saṅgha be consulted and a public proclamation made as a group, *ñattidutiyākamma* needs to be used. (See more about formation of kammavācā in Chapter One). I will fully report each of these four liturgies below: two for the revocation and two for the consecration. Although the subject matter used in the liturgy may be slightly different from each other, we can find that the standardised liturgy *(kammavācā)* for consultation and proclamation is the same as A and B follow:

(A) To Remove a *Ti-cīvara-avippavāsa:* (Mv II.12.5)[91]

1. "*Suṇātu me bhante saṅgho. Yo so saṅghena ti-cīvarena avippavāso sammato, yadi saṅghassa pattakallaṃ, saṅgho taṃ ti-cīvarena avippavāsaṃ samūhaneyya. Esā ñatti.*
2. *Suṇātu me bhante saṅgho. Yo so saṅghena ti-cīvarena avippavāso sammato, saṅgho taṃ ti-cīvarena avippavāsaṃ samūhanati. Yass'āyasmato khamati, etassa ti-cīvarena avippavāsassa samugghāto, so tuṇh'assa. Yassa nakkhamati, so bhāseyya.*
3. *Samūhato so saṅghena ti-cīvarena avippavāso. Khamati saṅghassa, tasmā tuṇhī. Evam-etaṃ dhārayāmi*":
1. "Venerable sirs, may the Community listen to me. If the Community is ready, it should revoke what was authorized as not being without one's triple robe. This is the motion (*ñatti*).
2. Venerable sirs, may the Community listen to me. The Community is revoking the not being without one's triple robe. He to whom the revoking of the not being without one's triple robe is agreeable should remain silent. He to whom it is not agreeable should speak.

---

[91] The reference here is derived from the Pāli Text Society's *Vinaya* Texts but the Pāli texts are translated by Thanissaro (2001:467).

3. The authority of not being without one's triple robe has been revoked by the Community. This is agreeable to the Community, therefore it is silent. Thus do I hold it''.

To Remove a Territory of Common Community: (Mv II.12.6)

1. *"Suṇātu me bhante saṅgho. Yā sā saṅghena sīmā sammatā samāna-saṃvāsā ek'uposathā, yadi saṅghassa pattakallaṃ, saṅgho taṃ sīmaṃ samūhaneyya. Esā ñatti.*
2. *Suṇātu me bhante saṅgho. Yā sā saṅghena sīmā sammatā samāna-saṃvāsā ek'uposathā, saṅgho taṃ sīmaṃ samūhanati. Yass'āyasmato khamati, etissā sīmāya samāna-saṃvāsāya ek'uposathāya samugghāto, so tuṇh'assa. Yassa nakkhamati, so bhāseyya.*
3. *Samūhatā sā sīmā saṅghena samāna-saṃvāsā ek'uposathā. Khamati saṅghassa, tasmā tuṇhī. Evam-etaṃ dhārayāmi'':*
1. ''Venerable sirs, may the Community listen to me. If the Community is ready, it should revoke the territory authorized as one of common affiliation, of a single *Uposatha*. This is the motion (*ñatti*).
2. Venerable sirs, may the Community listen to me. The Community is revoking the territory authorized as one of common affiliation, of a single *Uposatha*. He to whom the revoking of the territory of common affiliation, of a single *Uposatha*, is agreeable should remain silent. He to whom it is not agreeable should speak.
3. The territory of common affiliation, of a single *Uposatha*, has been revoked by the Community. This is agreeable to the Community, therefore it is silent. Thus do I hold it''.

(B) Authorizing the Territory: (Mv II.6.2)

1. *"Suṇātu me bhante saṅgho. Yāvatā samantā nimittā kittitā, yadi saṅghassa pattakallaṃ, saṅgho etehi nimittehi sīmaṃ sammanneyya samāna-saṃvāsaṃ ek'uposathaṃ. Esā ñatti.*
2. *Suṇātu me bhante saṅgho. Yāvatā samantā nimittā kittitā, saṅgho etehi nimittehi sīmaṃ sammannati samāna-saṃvāsaṃ ek'uposathaṃ. Yass'āyasmato khamati, etehi nimittehi sīmāya sammati samāna-saṃvāsāya ek'uposathāya, so tuṇh'assa. Yassa nakkhamati, so bhāseyya.*
3. *Sammatā sīmā saṅghena etehi nimittehi, samāna-saṃvāsā ek'uposathā. Khamati saṅghassa, tasmā tuṇhī. Evam-etaṃ dhārayāmi'':*
1. ''Venerable sirs, may the Community listen to me. If the Community is ready, then — as far as those markers that have been determined all around — it should authorize a territory of common affiliation, of a single *Uposatha*. This is the motion (*ñatti*).
2. Venerable sirs, may the Community listen to me. As far as those markers that have been determined all around, the Community authorizes a territory of common affiliation, of a single *Uposatha*. He to whom the authorization of the territory as far as those markers as one of common affiliation, of a single *Uposatha*, is agreeable, should remain silent. He to whom it is not agreeable should speak.
3. The territory as far as those markers has been authorized by the Community as one of common affiliation, of a single *Uposatha*. This is agreeable to the Community, therefore it is silent. Thus do I hold it''.

Determining a *Ti-cīvara-avippavāsa*: (Mv II.12.4)

1. *"Suṇātu me bhante saṅgho. Yā sā saṅghena sīmā sammatā samāna-saṃvāsā ek'uposathā, yadi saṅghassa pattakallaṃ, saṅgho taṃ sīmaṃ ti-cīvarena-avippavāsaṃ sammanneyya ṭhapetvā gāmañca gāmūpacārañca. Esā ñatti.*
2. *Suṇātu me bhante saṅgho. Yā sā saṅghena sīmā sammatā samāna-saṃvāsā ek'uposathā, saṅgho taṃ sīmaṃ ti-cīvarena- avippavāsaṃ sammannati, ṭhapetvā gāmañca gāmūpacārañca. Yass'āyasmato khamati, etissā sīmāya ti-cīvarena-avippavāsassa sammati, ṭhapetvā gāmañca gāmūpacārañca, so tuṇh'assa. Yassa nakkhamati, so bhāseyya.*
3. *Sammatā sā sīmā saṅghena ti-cīvarena-avippavāso, ṭhapetvā gāmañca gāmūpacārañca. Khamati saṅghassa, tasmā tuṇhī. Evam-etaṃ dhārayāmi":*

1. "Venerable sirs, may the Community listen to me. If the Community is ready, it should authorize the territory — (already) authorized as one of common affiliation, of a single *Uposatha* — except for any village or village area, as a (territory) of not being without one's triple robe. This is the motion (*ñatti*).
2. Venerable sirs, may the Community listen to me. The Community is authorizing the territory — (already) authorized as one of common affiliation, of a single *Uposatha* — except for any village or village area, as a (territory) of not being without one's triple robe. He to whom the authorization of the territory, except for any village or village area, as one of not being without one's triple robe is agreeable should remain silent. He to whom it is not agreeable should speak.
3. The territory, except for any village or village area, has been authorized by the Community as one of not being without one's triple robe. This is agreeable to the Community, therefore it is silent. Thus do I hold it".

The order of the first two liturgies is intended for the revocation of an old boundary. This is, according to the *Samantapāsādikā*, only necessary when the previous boundary area has been identified. If the area has never been consecrated as a *sīmā* before, the order of the last two liturgies could be used for a new *sīmā* consecration. However, according to the current practice, the first two liturgies occurred before the recitation of the last two. As we will discuss in Chapter Eight, they follow this procedure even if there is no previous *sīmā* detected in the area. Therefore, the order of the recitation, as enumerated above, is the same as the current practice within Burmese tradition.

We can further analyse each recitation with the fact that (1) is the motion while (2) and (3) are consultation and proclamation respectively. The *kammavācā* starts with the motion: 'Venerable Sirs, may the Community listen to me' (*suṇātu me bhante saṅgho*). This statement is called *ñatti* because it 'makes known' the topic or focus of the

ritual for which the monks are gathered. In procedure (2), there is consultation with the Saṅgha, while in (3), the matter concludes with an announcement, for example: ''this is agreeable to the Community, therefore it is silent; thus do I hold it'' (*khamati saṅghassa tasmā tuhṇī evametaṃ dhārayāmi).* As we have discussed in Chapter One, the liturgy must follow the pattern provided for the specific requirements of the *saṅghakamma.* If, for example, the pattern calls for *ñattidutiyākamma* (also see in Chapter One), it is invalid to use the *ñatticatutthakamma* (Thanissaro 2001: 179). Similarly, if the statement of consultation occurs earlier than the motion, then the *kammavācā* is considered an error (Vajirañaṇavarorasa 1983:10).

The standard rule, according to the preceding liturgy, is that the Saṅgha congregates and two or three the competent monks recite the *kammavācā* (liturgy), while the rest of the Saṅgha shows their consent by remaining silent. If a monk speaks out with the intention of protest, the *kammavācā* recitation is considered invalid (Thanissaro 2001:177). To avoid the protest during the recitation, if required, the monks may interrogate or examine the case prior to the recitation of the liturgy; in the case of *sīmā* consecration, for example, this is why the Saṅgha investigate the *nimitta* (boundary markers) before the final recitation of the liturgy or carefully invited the monks within a defined village boundary, as stated in previous section. This prearrangement is crucial for the motion without which a proclamation cannot be decided. Thus there is a distinction between investigating and discussion, on the one hand; and formally pronouncing, on the other.[92] Once it is recited it is considered to have been formally agreed by the Saṅgha. In actual practice, the 'master of ceremonies', i.e. the competent monk formally names the monks and their specific jobs in the ceremony. The competent monk organises the groupings of the monks to perform the various chanting sequences during the ceremony.

According to the *avippavāsasīmā* liturgy just cited above, the consecration of *avippavāsasīmā* is considered as a 'boundary of not being without one's triple robe'. This

---

[92] This distinction is found at all levels of *Vinaya* ritual. On the distinction in relation to the use of the verbs *ācikh* and *uddis,* see Crosby 2000.

is a special boundary where monks can leave one of their triple robes anywhere within the boundary. In other word, they can stay away from one of their triple robes. However, there is a condition in which monks are not allowed to use *avippavāsasīmā* liturgy if they consecrate a *sīmā* covering one or two villages or village areas because these areas are excluded in the liturgy. However, the present *sīmā* consecrations take place within the village, town or city. Theoretically, it is, therefore, not allowed to consecrate *avippavāsasīmā* in the village, town or city areas but in practice, the consecration is still carried out by the monks.

The question then should be asked: why do they still consecrate this boundary in the village areas in spite of this being excluded in the liturgy? The answer to this question is not straightforward. As just mentioned above, the *avippavāsa* liturgy is initially recited to gain the benefit of robes, especially by a monk who undertakes the ascetic practice of keeping three robes (the upper, lower and double robe). Because of this liturgy, this monk can keep double robes anywhere within the *avippavāsasīmā* boundary. As shall be discussed in Chapter Eight, this boundary may have included many villages during Buddha's time and it was convenient for the monks to store their robes within such a large boundary. But problems occurred if when monks left their robes in the villages, these robes were stolen by a thief, damaged by fire or spoiled by rats. When this was reported to the Buddha, he then amended the *avippavāsasīmā* in which the village and village areas were to be exempted in the consecration. However, the Buddha allows a monk to keep this robe within a monastery fence and if there is no fence in a monastery, they can still keep one of their robes apart within the monastery building. Thus the benefit of robe can still be achieved without having to have a consecrated *avippavāsasīmā*.

If we consider the benefit of the robe, the consecration of *avippavāsasīmā* is no longer important as monks can get this benefit within their monastery. Since the current *sīmā* consecration takes place within the area of a village or town boundaries, the liturgy of *avippavāsasīmā* cannot be applicable either; so why then is *avippavāsasīmā* still consecrated in the village areas? While not referring to this problem, the *Pācittiyādi*

Aṭṭhakathā (1965:324) refers to the reason of *daḷhīkamma*, which means 'reassurance' or 'strengthening' of the boundary, in relation to enemy monks.[93] *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (ibid) argues that the enemy monks may find it difficult to revoke this boundary because they may not know whether or not the *sīmā* has been consecrated as *avippavāsasīmā*. According to Ashin Sīlānanda (2002:86), this explanation is not satisfactory because *Mahāvagga* has already advised on the way of how one should revoke both *samānasamvāsasīmā* and *avippavāsasīmā*. Ashin Sīlānanda asks the same question why, in spite of it being unimportant to consecrate this boundary, is it still consecrated by the Burmese monks and indeed it is recommended to do so by the *Vinaya* Commentary. He quoted *Vajīrabuddhi ṭīka* to answer it, which he thought represented the voice or opinion of the current practice. According to the *Vajīrabuddhi ṭīka*, the consecration of *avippavāsasīmā* still takes place not because of a benefit but because of its custom/tradition, since the custom/tradition has existed from the ancient time and maintained from one generation to another. According to Ashin Sīlānanda (2002:87), this is the only answer we can provide, which also indeed represents the opinion or the voice of Burmese monks. Since the consecration of this boundary does not cause problem and is not prohibited in the canon, commentary and sub-commentaries, therefore, Burmese monks follow the tradition as stated in *Vajīrabuddhi ṭīka*.

I have just explained some of the components of the recitation of *avippavāsa* liturgy, and the reason for its continued use. Now I shall demonstrate how this all fits together by reporting on the programme of actual *sīmā* consecration. This programme was used when the Sāsanavisuddhi Sīmā consecration took place at Mahāgandhāyon Kyaungtaik (Mahāgandhāyon monastery), Leikpot Kye-Ywar (village), Hmawbhi, Yangon Division, Burma. The *sīmā* consecration took place on 22nd March 2005. Following is the translation of this programme:

---

[93] The commentary does not explain the specific meaning of the 'enemy monk' but as far as the the context relevant to this enemy stated in the commentary is concerned, the enemy monk seems to mean those who do not want to see the successfulness of a *sīmā* consecration or who wanted to invalidate the successfully consecrated *sīmā*.

1. Opening of the consecration ceremony by recitation of *'namotassa'* stanza three times to pay respect to the the Buddha

2. To recite *Mettasutta* (discourse on loving kindness) together by the attending monks

3. To listen an exhortation (Dhamma talk) from the Venerable Bhaddanta Agghiya Mahāthera, *Shwegyin Nikāya Mahānāyaka* (the Head of the *Shwegyin Nikāya), Mahāvisuddhārāma* monastery

4. To report the formal proxy of the un-attending monks within *Leikpot Kye-Ywar* (village)

5. To achieve the *daḷhīkamma* (strengthening), three especially invited *Sayadaws* (venerable) lead the final revocation procedure followed by all attending monks:

    i.   The Venerable Bhaddanta Agghiya Mahā Nāyaka Thera, the Head of the *Shwegyin Nikāya (Mahāvisuddhārāma* monastery)

    ii. Myo O Sayadaw Phayargyi, *Shwegyin Nikāya Rattañu Mahānāyaka*

    iii. The Venerable Bhaddanta Indobhāsābhivaṃsa *Aggamahāpaṇḍita*, (Head of *Mahāgandāyon* monastery)

6. To provide *nimittapālaka* (duty to respond when questioning the *nimitta* by the *Vinayadhara*)

    i.   Eastern direction response to be given by Ashin Khamosadha, *gaṇavācaka* (lecturer) from *Sāsanawunsaung* monastery

    ii. South-eastern direction response to be given by Ashin Ñāṇa *Dhammācariya* (teacher in the Dhamma), *Sāsanawunsaung* monastery

    iii. Southern direction response to be given by Ashin Vāyāminda, *gaṇavācaka* (lecturer), *Sāsanawunsaung* monastery

iv. South-western direction response to be given by Ashin Nandamālā, *Sāsanawunsaung* monastery

v. Western direction response to be given by Ashin Paññāvaṃsa *Dhammācaryia* (lecturer) *Sāsanawunsaung* monastery

vi. North-western direction response to be given by Ashin Revata, *Sāsanawunsaung* monastery

vii. Northern direction response to be given by Ashin Suvaṇṇa, *Sāsanawunsaung* monastery

viii. North–eastern direction response to be given by Ashin Ādiccavaṃsa, *Sāsanawunsaung* monastery

7. The following three *Vinayadhara* to investigate the *nimitta*:

i. Sayadaw Bhaddanta Medhāsāra, Head of Town *Saṅghamahānāyaka* , *Hmawbhi* Town (*Shwegyin Nikāya*)

ii. Sayadaw Bhaddanta Paññājota Head of Town *Saṅghamahānāyaka*, *Ayataw* Town *(Shwegyin Nikāya)*

iii. Sayadaw Bhaddanta Dhammikālankārābhivaṃsa, *Sāmanekyaw, Sakyasīha, Dhammācariya*

8. To bring *nimittapālaka* monks back into the *hatthapāsa* area

9. To make the last investigation of the *nimitta* by Venerable Bhaddanta Indobhāsābhivaṃsa, (*Aggamahāpaṇḍita*) and response to be given by Bhaddanta Indaka, *Dhammācariya*

10. To offer recitation *samānasaṃvāsa sīmāsamuttikammavācā* (liturgy for the consecration of common communion) by the following monks

(A) The monks who will recite for the first time:

i. The Venerable Bhaddanta Agghiya Mahā Nāyaka Thera, the Head of the *Shwegyin Nikāya (Mahāvisuddhārāma* monastery)

ii.   Myo O Sayadaw Phayargyi, (*Shwegyin Nikāya Rattañū Mahānāyaka*)

iii.   The Venerable Bhaddanta Indobhāsābhivaṃsa (*Aggamahāpaṇḍita*), Head of *Mahāgandāyon* monastery

(B)   The monks who will recite for the second time

i.   Sayadaw Bhaddanta Medhāsāra, Head of the Town *Saṅghamahānāyaka* , Hmawbhi Town (*Shwegyin Nikāya*)

ii.   Sayadaw Bhaddanta Pañājota Head of the Town *Saṅghamahānāyaka*, Ayataw Town (*Shwegyin Nikāya*)

iii.   Sayadaw Bhaddanta Dhammikālankārābhivaṃsa, *Sāmanekyaw Sakyasīha Dhammācariya,*

(C)   The monks who will recite for the third time

i.   Sayadaw Bhaddanta Paṇḍitārāma (*Shwe Taung Gon Sāsana Yeiktha*, Yangon)

ii.   Sayadaw Bhaddanta Odātasirībhivaṃsa (*Averārāma* Monastery, Mandalay)

iii.   Sayadaw Bhaddanta Paññāvaṃsa (*Sāsanawunsaung* Monastery, Hmawbhi)

(D)   The monks who will recite for the fourth time

i.   Sayadaw Bhaddanta Indaka (*Chanmyay Yeiktha Kyaung, Mingaladon*, Yangon)

ii.   Sayadaw Bhaddanta Muninda (*Cittasukha Kyaung, Paleik* Town, Mandalay)

iii.   Sayadaw Bhaddanta Ñāṇavara (*Cittasukharatanā Man- aung Kyaung, Ayadaw* Town)

(E)   The monks who will recite for the fifth time

i.   Ashin Paññābala (*Sāsanawunsaung* Monastery, Hmawbhi)

ii.   Ashin Ñāṇa (*Sāsanawunsaung* monastery, Hmawbhi)

iii.   Ashin Vāyāminda (*Sāsanawunsaung* Monastery, Hmawbhi)

(F)   The monks who will recite for the sixth time

i.   Ashin Paññādīpa (*Sāsanawunsaung* Monastery, Hmawbhi)

ii.   Ashin Khamosadha (*Sāsanawunsaung* Monastery, Hmawbhi)

iii.   Ashin Paññāvaṃsa (*Sāsanawunsaung* Monastery, Hmawbhi)

11. To determine *ti-civara vippavāsa sīmāsamutti kammavācā* (liturgy for the consecration that is authorised for being without one's triple robe within the boundary) by the same monks listed for *samānasaṃvāsa sīmāsamuttikammavācā*

12. To recite *Jayanto bodhiyāmule gāthā* (victory verses of the Buddha under the Bodhi tree) three times

13. To read the *Thein Aung Obhā Sar* (accomplishment statement of the consecration) by Bhaddanta Candasirī, Division Member of *Saṅghamahānāyaka* (*Shwegin Nikāya*), (*Sāsanawunsaung* Monastery, Hmawbhi)

14. To conclude the *sīmā* consecration ceremony by reciting *Buddhasāsanaṃ ciraṃtiṭṭhatu* (Live Long the Buddha's doctrine)

I have fully reported this programme as an example to understand the sequence of the consecration in full. However, I only relate the programme with some relevant aspects of the liturgy used for both *ñatti* (motion) and *anussāvanā* (proclamation). There are four key significances within this long programme: one is to report the proxy of un-attending monks, the second is to recite the revocation liturgy while the third and fourth

is to investigate the boundary makers and to recite the consecration liturgy respectively. They are shown in sequence and are required to be completed one after the other. In normal standard, all monks within the village boundary must attend but the proxy is regarded an option for those monks who are unable to attend and sit at the *hatthapāsa* area of the ceremony. This proxy should be reported to the community. According to the order of the programme, the report of the proxy of non-attending monks is placed before the revocation which, as I have already explained in the previous section, suggests that the process of revocation should be conducted with the full attendance of monks. If someone cannot attend during the revocation, they can use the proxy. According to my informant, Bhaddanta Candāsirī, Division Member of *Saṅghamahānāyaka* (*Shwegin Nikāya*), who recorded this *sīmā* programme, the revocation has already been completed. As always the case in Burmese practice, the revocation liturgy is recited with the fully attending Saṅgha, at least one time just before the consecration. Therefore, this is, according to the agenda, called *daḷhīkamma* (strengthening), which means to reconfirm the completion of revocation and make the previous revocation strengthened. The word thus *daḷhīkamma* means the 'reassurance' of the revocation which has already been completed previously.

The last two items are explicit and carefully itemised in the programme. The individual monks who are to investigate the boundary markers are named while the respondent monks are appointed for each cardinal direction. These respondent monks are ready to answer the question as the boundary markers have already been prearranged. The next item is followed by the list of monks who may perform the successive recitation for the consecration. While one group is chanting the remaining monks stay silent as a gesture of approval to the consecration. We saw the list of six groups that recited the consecration liturgy and each group consisted of three monks. In fact only one recitation is needed to complete the consecration but according to my informant, Bhaddanta Candāsirī, such numbers of monks and the rounds of recitation are important to ensure the correct recitation. As we shall look at the belief in the pronunciation below, it is a belief that at least one of the six recitations will be correct in their tune, accent

and/or the correct pronunciation of the Pāli stanzas. According to Ashin Sīlānanda, in order to overcome the problem of incorrect recitation, the majority of Burmese *Vinaya* experts recommend the recitation even as many as nine times using nine different groups of monks.

In addition to the correct pronunciation in the recitation, Bhaddanta Candāsirī, interestingly, commented on the Burmese concept of *pakatat-yahan* (monks who are free from offences) in a way similar to the explanation I gave earlier in relation to *Pārājika* monks. He stated that there may be some monks, who have broken fundamental rules, especially, one of the four rules of *Pārājika* while with regard to other monks; it may even be possible that their ordination was not successful or they may never have been successfully ordained in line with the *Vinaya* rules when their ordination took place in the *sīmā*. If such monks are involved in the chanting, the consecration would not be effective. Burmese monks have thus adapted the recitation practice so that even though they have no suspicion regarding any of the involved Saṅgha, they still prefer to recite the liturgy as many times and with as many monks as possible. As mentioned in the list, the monks who carried out these six recitions are selected from the high ranking monks. Here we can observe the practical aspect of *pakatat-yahan* stated in section-one of this chapter.

As just stated regarding the accurate accent in the recitation, the experience and skill in such recitation is highly valued, to the extent that the pre-arrangements for a consecration may well include training for younger or less experienced monks in order to improve the quality of their recitation. For such training, Burmese monks follow the method of pronunciation as described in the *Parivāra Aṭṭhakathā* (*Cullavaggādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1992: 247-8). There are ten types of pronunciation rule found in *Parivāra Aṭṭhakathā.* These rules are also called *byañjanabuddhi,* literally 'understanding of the the letters', in other words clear and correct expression of meaning through correct pronunciation. They are (1) *sithila* – non-aspirate 'consonant' (2) *dhanita* – aspirate 'consonant' (3) *dīgha-* long (4) *rassa-* short (5) *garuka-* stressed, (6) *lahuka-* unstressed

(7) *niggahita* – nasal, (8) *vimutta-* open (9) *sambandha* – connected (or euphonic, with *sandhi*) and (10) *vavatthita* – separated.

There are ten consonants for *sithila* and ten consonants for *dhanita* enumerated in Pāli grammar. The former are *k, g; c, j; ṭ, ḍ; t, d; p, b* while the latter are *kh, gh; ch, jh; ṭh, ḍh; th, dh; ph, bh*. The pronunciation of the *dhanita* is accompanied by a strong breath-pulse from the chest, as when uttering English consonants very emphatically but *sithila* is accompanied by a much weaker breath-pulse than any English consonants (Warder 1974:1). *Dīgha* and *rassa* represent two types of vowels: long vowels are i.e. *ā, ī, ū, e, o* and short are i.e. *a, i, u* respectively. Neither *sithila* nor *dhanita* consonants produce distinctive sounds without the combination of vowels; for example, when we pronounce *suṇātu* (listen), the consonant *ṇ* is combined with the long vowel- *ā* and if we add the consonant *ṇ* to a short vowel –*a*, it becomes *ṇa*. The pronunciation of *ṇa* and *ṇā* should therefore be clearly differentiated during the *kammavācā* recitation. When we pronounce *ṇa*, we do not need to open up our mouth fully, as a slightly open mouth can create its sound but when we produce the sound *ṇā*, it is necessary to open up the mouth fully.

Garuka (stressed) and *lahuka* (unstressed) are another two important rules required to articulate correctly. These rules are particularly applied when two consonants are connected between two words, for example, *Buddharakkhitattherassa na**kkh**amati*. There are two of the same type of consonants in the preceding phrase: one is *sithila* and other is *dhanita*, which can be seen in bold type as two *t, th* and two *k, kh*. They must be stressed correctly when producing the sound of the immediate consonants *ta* or *na*. The sound with the correct stress should thus be as follows: *Buddharakkhita**t** +**th**erassa na**k**+**kh**amati*. As for the unstressed sound, the *sithila* consonant is removed, which means that one *t* and one *k* are removed from the phrase as we can see in the same phrase: *Buddharakhita **th**erassa na**kh**amati*. There then remains only the *dhanita* consonants i.e. one *th* and one *kh* after *ta* and *na* respectively as the *sithila* consonants

i.e. *t* and *k* have already been removed from the phrase. So the preceding word i.e. *ta* and *na* does not need to be stressed and is therefore called an unstressed sound.

Niggahita does not carry a consonant sound on its own. According to *Parivāra Aṭṭhakathā* (*Cullavaggādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1992: 247-8), it is a kind of stress that is made by closing the mouth and lips together and forcing the sound through the nose, for example, in *saṅghaṃ* or *upasampadaṃ.* The last sound of *saṅghaṃ* and *upasampadaṃ* (*ṃ* in bold) is normally produced with the mouth closed while opening the nose to make the last sound. Hence it is called *nāsika* as the sound has ended with the nose as the area of stress. The sound of *vimutta* (open) is the opposite of the *nāsika* (nasal sound). It is a sound that is created by the combination of long vowels and consonants. Therefore the mouth needs to be opened up fully, for example, su**ṇā**tu me or es**āñ**atti. The mouth should open up clearly when reciting the sounds *ṇā* and *sā* in the words of *suṇātu* and *esāñatti. Sambandha*, which means joined together, is another important rule in the *kammavācā* recitation, mainly due to the euphony or the 'combination between consonants and vowels', for example, *tuṇha' ssa*, which is formed by joining together the two words *tuṇhi* and *assa*. These words should not be pronounced separately. *Vavatthita* (separated) words, on the other hand, are separated from their usual combination, for example, *tuṇhi* and *assa*. This separation is used only for the purpose of the understanding of the phrase but during the recitation, they are pronounced as *tuṇhassa* or *tuṇhissa* without separating them.

The purpose of these ten rules is to understand the pronunciation rule required in the recitation of the *kammavācā*. According to *Parivāra Aṭṭhakathā* (ibid) *sithila* consonants should not be pronounced as *dhanita,* for example, *suṇātu me* should not be pronounced as *suṇāthu me*. Similarly, **bhante saṅgha** is a *dhanita*, so should not be pronounced as *sithila* i.e. **bante saṅgo**. The same procedure is followed for the remaining rules, for example, *pattakallaṃ* is required to sound in accordance to the *nasika*, which should not be used in the *vimutta* i.e. *pattakallā* or vice-versa. If a pronunciation problem occurs during a recitation then that cycle should be repeated (Aggavamsa-

1983:128). For example, *'suṇātu me bhante saṅgho'*; *Bhante* and *Saṅgho* may be mispronounced as *Bante* and *Saṅgo*. Sīlānanda (2002: 66) mentions a recitation in Yangon during which a monk mispronounced the long and short vowels of *sīmā* and *sima*. He also reported another monk, who recited *gaminca* instead of *gāmanca*. Both of these errors were noted by the other participants and they were asked to re-recite the liturgy.

A problem might also occur on account of some regional variation in pronunciation. When I attended a Jagayshala temple *sīmā* consecration in November 2007, three monks recited *'thunātu'* at the beginning of a liturgy instead of *'suṇātu'* and had to repeat their recitation another two times. The monk who was leading the consecration, U Ñāṇa, a Marma monk, after the consecration told me that this pronunciation was incorrect as *'thuṇātu'* is that which is favoured in the Burmese tradition, rather than that of Bangladesh. In normal Burmese pronunciation, the Pāli sound S is pronounced as 'TH' and R is pronounced as Y. Variation is also found in Thailand. As I was six years in Thailand, I also noticed that some Thai traditional Pāli pronunciations are different from Burmese pronunciations. They, for example, pronounce voiced consonants as unvoiced, as in *'Bhante'* as *'Phante'*, *'Dhamma'* as *'Thamma'* and *'Saṅgha'* as *'Saṅkha'* during the recitation of the liturgy. As far as my knowledge is concerned, however, I have never seen any report that criticizes the inappropriate pronunciation of *kammavācā* in Thailand. They take it for granted as they recite in their own tongue. Such concerns are in fact limited to the Burmese tradition in which, uniquely, the accuracy of pronunciation is seen as a measure of its validity. So although there could, in theory, be some disagreement between different traditions, for example between Thailand and Burma, as to the validity of a *sīmā* consecration on the basis of accuracy in pronunciation, in fact this has, to my knowledge, never been a problem. However, there is an unverified report of an accusation in Burma relating to incorrect *kammavācā* recitation. According to U Paṇḍitābhiṃsa, Nyaung Yan Taw-ya Sayadaw believed that the recitation of *kammavācā* by 'Mon' or 'Shan' monks is not correct. Nyaung Yan Taw-ya Sayadaw wrote about this recitation in one of his books

called *Nyaung Yan Sayadaw Vinicchaya Paungkhyot.* The account, however, cannot be verified because U Paṇḍitābhiṃsa got this account from Myaungmya Sayadaw, the Head of the Shwegyin Nikāya, when he was about 24 years old, around 1967. U Paṇḍitābhiṃsa told me about this in my interview conducted on 15th March 2013. He stated that Myaungmya Sayadaw was talking about Nyaung Yan Taw-ya Sayadaw's views on the correct *kammavācā* recitation in his book called *Nyaung Yan Sayadaw Vinicchaya Paungkhyot.* He continued to tell me what he had heard from Myaungmya Sayadaw, more than forty years ago; stating that Mon monks even wanted to take him to court for this accusation. However, the first volume of *Nyaung Yan Sayadaw Vinicchaya Paungkhyot,* which I have retained with me, does not contain this allegation. But U Paṇḍitābhiṃsa never read this book either and my attempts to find the second volume of *Nyaung Yan Sayadaw Vinicchaya Paungkhyot* have not been successful. Therefore, the account I have received from my informant, U Paṇḍitābhiṃsa, requires further scrutiny.

7.8. Conclusion

In this chapter we have looked at the three aspects in which *sampatti,* 'perfection' or 'validity' is required for the overall validity of the *sīmā* consecration ritual. These three *sampattis* are: the validity of participating monks, validity of boundary markers and the correct recitation of liturgy. They are the essential parts of a *sīmā* consecration, without which no consecration can be conducted. There are other matters necessary for validity, which we have already described in relation to defining the lay boundary within which the monastic boundary to be created (see Chapter Five). We will also look at some further requirements concerning the avoidance of overlapping *sīmā* next, in Chapter Eight.

As we observe in this chapter, Burmese practice follows, once more, commentarial over canonical practice, for example, when a *sīma* consecrates within a *gāmasīmā*, guards are provided to stop the incoming monks which is not found in the canonical text. What is very striking in the Burmese case is the lengths gone to ensure that the ritual is valid by, for example, having liturgies recited several times by several

groups of monks, by training monks in recitation before the ceremony and having any below standard recitation performed again, by inviting more than the quorum to ensure that there will be, amongst all those invited, a quorum of sufficiently pure monks, and the invitation of high ranking monks to add prestige, power, competence and even purity to the *sīmā,* the conducting of *sīmā* ceremony at night to avoid accidental *vagga.*

We nonetheless also noticed variations in practice between the commentarial and current periods. For example, we observed the reduction from a range of *sīmā nimitta* to just two, the extension of the use of proxy by monks who are not ill, and possibly – although this is unclear – the use of concrete in place of stone *nimitta* markers. Finally, we were able to explain the pattern of having multiple layers of markers, by which I mean a *sīmā* layout where it seems that there is an inner *nimitta* arrangement, reflected by an outer *nimitta* arrangement, and even a third *nimitta* arrangement. These are not, as it turns out, all *nimitta.* Only the inner level consists of *nimitta.* The outer markers are not marking the *sīmā* but the extent of confirmed old-*sīmā*-free land, and the intervening marker the extent to which the *sīmā* can be expanded if larger capacity is needed. In the next chapter we will explore further examples of the Burmese close adherence to the commentaries and their attempts to make extra sure that the *sīmā* is pure. We shall also see how heated discussions continue to arise in relation to uncertainties that are brought about by developments in the modern world that are beyond the coverage of the commentaries.

Chapter Eight:

The risk of overlap between boundaries (*sīmāsaṅkara*)

and the revocation procedure

8.1. Introduction:

In Chapter Seven the crucial aspects of *sīmā* consecration were dealt with in some detail. In this chapter I will look at the problems that arise when a new *sīmā* is consecrated in an area where an old *sīmā* already exists, or might have existed. According to the *Mahāvagga* (Mv ii.13.2), a new *sīmā* must not overlap an existing *sīmā*. An overlapping *sīmā* is considered invalid. Therefore two things must be ensured. Firstly, a new *sīmā* must always be consecrated away from an existing *sīmā* that is in use. Secondly, the area on which a new *sīmā* is to be consecrated must be 'dug up', or – translating less literally - 'revoked' – i.e. any pre-existing *sīmā* must be revoked before the new consecration can be performed (Mv ii.12.5-6). This is done whether the new *sīmā* is to replace an old *sīmā* known to already exist or not. In fact the revocation ritual is done in the detailed way that it is (see below) specifically to protect against the possibility of an unknown *sīmā* already existing on the site on the new one. Obviously, this situation is a reflection of the fact that since Buddhism has been in existence for a very long time, Buddhists in the past might have consecrated a *sīmā* which has since been forgotten and left unrecorded. The *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* mentions this problem with reference to two consecrated *sīmās* that can co-exist within a monastery. One is a *khaṇḍasīmā*, which literally means a 'cut' portion of land consecrated within a larger consecrated area or monastery compound; and, the other is a *mahāsīmā*, a large consecrated boundary (see below). These two must never overlap. To avoid overlap the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* advises that an interspace (*sīmantarika*) be kept between them during consecration but, if these *sīmās* are to be enlarged or contracted in the future, they must first be revoked to avoid an overlapping area.

I shall divide this chapter into three sections. In section one I will set out how the *Samantapāsādikā's* rule is involved in the establishment of *khaṇḍasīmā* and *mahāsīmā* within a monastery. These two *sīmās* are technically related by their terms and dimensions; for example, a *khaṇḍasīmā* is so called because, according to the *Samantapāsādikā,* it has been established within a *mahāsīmā* but, according to the current practice, the *khaṇḍasīmā* is not established within a *mahāsīmā.* As shall be explained, even then the rule of the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* remains active and influential to current Burmese *sīmā* tradition. I shall examine especially focusing on how this rule is treated as a model to avoid the overlapping of the two *sīmās.* In the section two, I shall continue to examine how this model also gives rise to a new theory prohibiting even the connection of two *sīmās* via an electric cable.

In section three, I shall look at the advice given in the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* on the revocation procedure to be used when either an existing *khaṇḍasīmā* or *mahāsīmā* needs to be expanded or contracted. This advice is particularly intended to avoid overlapping a new *sīmā* over another *sīmā* already consecrated in a monastery compound. The *Samāntapāsādikā* warns that one cannot revoke an old *sīmā* without knowing its existing site. Interestingly, however, there are two sub-commentaries (*Vimativinodanī* and *Vinayālaṅkāra*) that insist this is not so since they believe old *sīmās* can indeed be revoked using a special technique. These sub-commentarial rules, as I shall explain, have been adopted by Burmese monks even when contraction or expansion is not an issue, and monks always incorporate them into the ceremony for the consecration of a new *sīmā.* The concept of revocation and the sub-commentarial rules have, therefore, become both complex and difficult, especially when revoking an unknown location. I shall examine here how Burmese monks have responded to these complex and difficult rules and how these rules have been further revolutionised by Burmese monks to accommodate them within Burmese belief in the *sīmā* practice.

8.2. Technical problems of *khaṇḍasīmā* and *mahāsīmā*

Khaṇḍasīmā and *mahāsīmā* are both forms of 'consecrated boundary' (in Pāli *baddhasīmā*). Both are introduced in the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* as a further categorisation of what was known as *samānasaṃvāsasīmā* (boundary for common/shared communion). We have already seen this term, as found in the canon in the relevant section of the *Mahāvagga* in Chapter Four. The definition of *samānasaṃvāsasīmā* is attributed to the Buddha as the earliest form of *sīmā* allowed by him and within which all *saṅghakamma* (monastic legal activities) should be conducted. We noted, during the time of the Buddha, the possible adaptation of the *samānasaṃvāsasīmā* into another more specific type of boundary called *ticīvara avippavāsasīmā* (the boundary for being without one of the triple robes) or *avippavāsasīmā*, for short. A *ticīvara avippavāsasīmā* can only be consecrated on the basis of a previously consecrated *samānasaṃvāsasīmā*, which is then transformed into an *avippavāsasīmā*. *Khaṇḍasīmā* and *mahāsīmā*, on the other hand, only differ from *samānasaṃvāsasīmā* in 'technical' terms and by size and dimensions. This will be explained in more detail later, but they do not differ in terms of consecration and purpose of use and can, therefore, also be re-consecrated or transformed into *ticīvara avippavāsasīmā*. Indeed, all Burmese *sīmās* are consecrated following this rule and all *samānasaṃvāsasīmā* are further consecrated as *avippavāsasīmā*.

A question should be asked for clarity: why is it necessary to upgrade or transform the *khaṇḍasīmā* and *mahāsīmā* when these *sīmās* are already sufficient for all monastic legal activities? In other words, what is the benefit of upgrading to *avippavāsasīmā*? The answer relates to the wearing of robes of a fully ordained monk, especially those monks who determine to wear three robes. These robes are the upper, lower and double robe. The first two robes are normally worn by all monks but the double robe is especially worn by a *ticīvara-dhutaṅga-bhikkhu*, 'a monk who undertakes the ascetic practice of keeping three robes. *Ticīvara avippavāsasīmā* is not a new *sīmā*, as the story of this boundary started from the time of the Buddha. As already stated in

Chapter Four, the origination narrative for this *sīmā* attributes its beginnings to a time when Mahākassapa, who was undertaking the *ticīvara-dhutaṅga,* the ascetic practice of keeping three robes, got wet on his way to an *uposatha* ceremony. See Chapter Four.

In practice, the consecration of the *ticīvara-avippavāsasīmā* boundary is easy. It only needs to be determined by the additional recitation of the *ticīvara- avippavāsasīmā kammavācā* (liturgy for being without one's triple robe within the boundary) over the existing boundary. If, for example, this liturgy is recited by the monks either in a *khaṇḍasīmā* or in a *mahāsīmā,* these boundaries become automatically *avippavāsasīmā* without any additional procedure being necessary. According to Paññā Mahāthera (1999:3), if this *avippavāsasīmā* is consecrated over a *khaṇḍasīmā* the benefit is not significant because, as will be explained below, a *khaṇḍasīmā* is small and monks do not live in the *khaṇḍasīmā*. If, however, the whole monastery is consecrated as an *avippavāsasīmā*, and the monastery is therefore the *mahāsīmā,* the monks can stay anywhere in the monastery without worrying about the rule concerning the double robe (ibid). Therefore, the consecration of *avippavāsasīmā* is only of significant benefit when a *mahāsīmā* is consecrated which takes in the whole monastery. This is true according to our discussion below.

By the commentarial time the whole monastery could be consecrated as *avippavāsasīmā* but since this *avippavāsasīmā* could only be consecrated after the consecration of *mahāsīmā*, the whole monastery must first be consecrated as a *mahāsīmā.* I shall explain how *mahāsīmā* and *khaṇḍasīmā* are consecrated below. This *mahāsīmā* (a monastic boundary that incorporates most of the monastic grounds) would then be upgraded into, or determined as, *avippavāsasīmā* so that the monks could get the benefit of relinquishing the wearing of the double robe, as explained earlier. Therefore, during the course of practice, the *mahāsīmā* could be called *avippavāsasīmā* or *avippavāsasīmā* could be called *mahāsīmā*. However, when this *sīmā* is revoked, as will be explained in the next section, only the term *avippavāsasīmā* is used because, as

discussed in chapter seven, the revocation must be recited in reverse order. (This is covered in more detail in the next section).

We have just discussed the benefit of *avippavāsasīmā* and its relationship with *mahāsīmā* when consecrating the whole monastery. Below, I shall look at the commentarial description between the consecration of a *khaṇḍasīmā* and its relationship with a *mahāsīmā.* The reason for this description is to understand the later section of this chapter on how these two *sīmās* affect modern Burmese monastic practice, as Burmese monks are particularly cautious about an overlapping boundary between *khaṇḍasīmā* and *mahāsīmā* both of which may exist in a single monastery. As will be seen later, the rules for these *khaṇḍasīmā* and *mahāsīmā* are set to avoid any connection between them even via an electric cable. Burmese monks take this rule literally and apply it to all consecrated boundaries, not just between *khaṇḍasīmā* and *mahāsīmā,* as I shall explain.

Let us look at the term *khaṇḍasīmā* first. The technical term for a *khaṇḍasīmā* is complicated because of its literal meaning. The term *khaṇḍa* literally means 'cut'. If this word (*khaṇḍa*) combines with the term *sīmā*, it becomes *khaṇḍasīmā*, which means 'cut boundary'. According to this literal meaning, a *khaṇḍasīmā* must be cut out from a large boundary; only then is the term appropriate to its literal meaning. The majority of Burmese monasteries contain a *khaṇḍasīmā* which is quite small area or a building, usually found in a corner of the monastery compound, but which has not been consecrated by cutting from a large boundary (*mahāsīmā*). Therefore, the concept of 'cut' is not necessarily applied in current practice. According to Ashin Aggavaṃsa (1983:90) and Ashin Sobhitācāra (1968:78), it is not necessary to cut a *khaṇḍasīmā* only from a *mahāsīmā,* as it can also be cut from a *vihāra* (monastery) compound because a *khaṇḍasīmā* is normally established within a *vihāra* (monastery) compound. So, according to these two definitions, a *khaṇḍasīmā* may be established by cutting either from a *mahāsīmā* or from a *vihāra* compound. In either case, the meaning of a *khaṇḍasīmā* is appropriate but it must be smaller than a *vihāra* compound or a *mahāsīmā* (large boundary). Therefore, according to the preceding discussion, a consecrated

boundary, which is smaller than a *vihāra* compound or a *mahāsīmā* is called a *khaṇḍasīmā*.

Let us now look at the term *mahāsīmā*. The term *mahāsīmā* simply means large boundary but, according to the *Mahāvagga* (Mv ii.71) and *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:327) it cannot be larger than three *yojana* (one *yojana* = about six miles). The area of three *yojana* is too big to control the monks within the boundary during the monastic ritual. As we have already discussed in Chapter Four and Five, all monks living within the same boundary must attend in the *hatthapāsa* area during monastic activities. Technically, therefore, it is not workable, because the bigger the size the greater the problems relating to following the *hatthapāsa* rule. It is for this reason that such a large boundary is no longer practised in modern times; even from ancient times there are only three large *sīmās* known of today**.** The oldest of these was consecrated by Sāriputta, the chief disciple of the Buddha, and covered eighteen monasteries in the city of Rājagaha (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:330), then the capital of Magadha, now in the Bihar State of modern India. The second one existed in Sri Lanka during the third century BC, and covered the entire city of Anuradhapura. The consecration of this *sīmā* was led by the Venerable Mahinda (Sobhitācāra 1968:12). According to Kieffer Pülz (1997:151) there was also one *mahāsīmā* in Thailand. The whole city of Chiang Mai, the northern division of Thailand, is reported to have been consecrated.

The size of a city is large and if we consider the gradual increase in the number of monasteries and monks in a city over time, *vagga* (division) when conducting monastic legal activities could easily be created. In fact, it would be almost impossible to bring all monks from the entire city into the *hatthapāsa* area for every monastic legal activity. Even though it is permitted to consecrate an area as large as three *yojana* the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* itself mentions only one *mahāsīmā* of this size**.** This was the one consecrated during the time of the Buddha in Rājagaha city. If we, however, consider the description in the *Samantapāsādikā*, (as will be explained below) this concept of *mahāsīmā* was transformed during the commentarial times from the bigger area (i.e.

Rājagaha) down to an ordinary monastery compound. We can understand this from the way the *Samantapāsādīkā* introduces the consecration of both *mahāsīmā* and *khaṇḍasīmā* within a monastery. Consequently, according to this commentary, a *mahāsīmā* does not necessarily have to be as large as a city boundary but it can even co-exist within a monastery. Here, the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* states that if *khaṇḍasīmā* and *mahāsīmā* are pre-arranged within a monastery compound both can be consecrated at the same time or monks can choose to consecrate one of them first before consecrating the other (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:324). To do this, the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* suggests they choose the area for a *khaṇḍasīmā* in a quiet corner of the monastery (*vihārapacchante vivittokāse*) (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:323) and then continue to choose the area of *mahāsīmā* while keeping *sīmantarika* (inter-space) between them. The *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:324) states:

> "*Sace pana khaṇḍasīmāya nimittāni kittetvā tato sīmantarikāya nimittāni kittetvā mahāsīmāya nimittāni kittenti evaṃ tīsu ṭhānesu nimittāni kittetvā yaṃ sīmaṃ icchanti taṃ paṭhamaṃ bandhituṃ vaṭṭati*": 'if the boundary markers of a *khaṇḍasīmā* are first defined, then the *sīmantarika* (inter-space) and finally the boundary markers of a *mahāsīmā* are defined, then once these three boundaries' markers are outlined, it is permitted to consecrate whichever *sīmā* they want first".

According to this quotation, monks can choose to consecrate either of these boundaries first provided that each boundary area is outlined properly. The location of a *khaṇḍasīmā* should be chosen in the quiet corner of the monastery; next the outline of the *sīmantarika* (inter-space); and, finally, the location of the *mahāsīmā* which is considerably larger, perhaps marking out the entire *āvāsa* boundary (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:324). Here, with the comparison of these two *sīmās,* it is suggested that these two *sīmās* existed next to each other but a *mahāsīmā* is larger than a *khaṇḍasīmā,* being perhaps the whole monastery compound with the exception of the corner for the *khaṇḍasīmā,* whereas the *khaṇḍasīmā* is only a corner of the monastery. It might seem from this that the *khaṇḍasīmā* would be within the *mahāsīmā,* so a part of it, but such is not the case, as I shall explain below – the two *sīmā* are separate.

The existence of two *sīmās* within a monastery compound is also supported by another report which was discussed in Chapter Four. Before the introduction of a *samānasaṃvāsasīmā*, it was compulsory that the *uposatha* ceremony be observed by all monks within an *avāsa* (residence). This *uposatha* ceremony is paramount for the unity of monks within an *āvāsa* (residence) and all monks within the *āvāsa* must attend. Here, the entire monks of an *āvāsa* become participants of one *sīmā* corresponding to one *uposatha* (*ekasīmā ekuposathā*). The concept of one 'residence boundary' is related to the *uposatha* ceremony but this concept of *uposatha* that was required the unity of the whole monastery was, again, replaced with *khaṇḍasīmā* during the commentarial times because it is considered that if the *uposatha* ceremony is observed within a *khaṇḍasīmā,* the resident monks are united similar to that of unity of whole monastery. (See more on this in Chapter Four). Therefore, when a *khaṇḍasīmā* is introduced within an *āvāsa,* the original *āvāsa* boundary becomes *mahāsīmā.* As a result, the *āvāsa* boundary is considered a large boundary where the *ticīvara dhutaṅga* monks can benefit, while the *khaṇḍasīmā* becomes a small boundary where the resident monks can conduct their monastic legal activities including *uposatha* ceremony. For these separate purposes *mahāsīmā* and *khaṇḍasīmā* came into existence. First came the *āvāsa sīmā* which was the consecration of the whole *āvāsa,* which later came to be known as *mahāsīmā,* then the smaller *sīmā* (*khaṇḍasīmā*) was introduced. Both co-existed during commentarial times, one smaller and the other bigger, each to facilitate different monastic requirements.

A question could be asked as to why it is necessary to consecrate these two *sīmās* when one *sīmā* is sufficient for the purpose of monastic ritual. Interestingly, both *sīmās* have their own purpose within a monastery. I have already explained the reason for a *mahāsīmā,* namely to specify the territory – whether a single *āvāsa* or eighteen *āvāsa* as in the case of Rājagaha – within which monks all belong to a single *uposatha.* According to the *Samantapāsādikā*, the establishment of a *khaṇḍasīmā* provides greater benefit to the monks of an individual *āvāsa.* The *Samantapāsādikā* states the reason below:

"Pabbajjupasampadā dīnaṃ saṅghakammānaṃ sukhakaraṇatthaṃ paṭhamaṃ khaṇḍasīmā bandhitabbā': "for the convenience of monastic activities such as novice and monk's ordination, a *khaṇḍasīmā* should first be established" (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:323).

If a *khaṇḍasīmā* is consecrated within a monastery the problem of *vagga* (disunity) will not occur when conducting monastic legal activity. If, for example, an ordination ceremony takes place within a *khaṇḍasīmā*, the monks who are required to attend can be selected or invited without requiring the attendance of all the resident monks. However, if there is a *mahāsīmā* but without a *khaṇḍasīmā* in an *āvāsa* all monks within the *mahāsīmā* i.e. the entire monastery monks must attend every monastic legal activity. If there is neither a *khaṇḍasīmā* nor a *mahāsīmā* consecrated within an *āvāsa*, according to *Mahāvagga* (Mv ii.12.7), the *āvāsa* monks are required to follow the 'assembly of a *gāmasīmā'* as discussed in the Chapter Five. Since all monks within the village/secular boundary must attend within the *hatthapāsa* area, it will indeed be difficult to manage the monks. In the event of them not attending it will create *vagga* which invalidates the ceremony. Therefore, in terms of convenience for the *hatthapāsa* rule, a *khaṇḍasīmā* is easier to organize the monks than a *mahāsīmā* and a *mahāsīmā* i.e. the entire monastery, is easier to organize the monks than the *gāmāsīmā* (village boundary). See more details in diagram (A) below. Considering this difficulty, when monastic activities take place in a *khaṇḍasīmā,* only the monks within the *khaṇḍasīmā* are required to sit within the *hatthapāsa* area. This provision thus allows for the complex activities of the monastery to continue, with only the select few participating needing to be present within the *khaṇḍasīmā*. Then *saṅghakamma* are less disruptive and require less organization.

Since the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* suggests consecrating a *khaṇḍasīmā* in the corner of a monastery or residence, this raises the question of how big this *sīmā* should be. According to the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:323), the size of a *khaṇḍasīmā* cannot be smaller than twenty-one seats but can be large enough to accommodate up to one thousand seats. In current Burmese traditional practice this is true as the majority of *khaṇḍasīmā* are quite small, just about the size of a building. In the West however; the area can be even smaller, in some cases confined to the size of a single living room. For

example, Santisukhavihāra, a Burmese monastery in the Hounslow area of West London, has only one room which is probably just enough to provide space for twenty-one monks if necessary.

The attendance of twenty-one monks has particular significance under the *Vinaya* rules. It is the largest size of all *saṅghakammas* that may be conducted in any consecrated boundary. This *saṅghakamma* rule is associated with the *Vinaya* rule that applies to a monk who is undertaking probation. For example, when a monk breaks his monastic vows by committing a *saṅghādisesa* offence (an offence resolved by the community of monks, see Chapter Four), he is placed on probation for a period of time. On completion of his probationary period, the monk attends a ceremony called *abbhāna* 'returning' or ('re-approaching'). When he is called back into the Saṅgha there must be at least twenty monks to approve his being called back (or his return). Together with the offending monk this becomes twenty-one. It is necessary, therefore, for the smallest *khaṇḍasīmā* to have twenty-one seats; any less than this number would invalidate the *khaṇḍasīmā* (Sīlānanda 2002:13, 90). The majority of Burmese *khaṇḍasīmā* are thus consecrated in a space that will accommodate many more than twenty-one seats.

There is no maximum sized *khaṇḍasīmā* (small boundary) defined in the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā*. As discussed above, if a boundary is consecrated within a *mahāsīmā* (large boundary) or a *vihāra* (monastery) boundary it is still called *khaṇḍasīmā,* even though the size of this boundary may be bigger than a thousand seats. This means that the 'bigger' size is not the issue for a *khaṇḍasīmā,* rather it is its relative size in relation to a *mahāsīmā,* i.e. as long as it has been consecrated within a *mahāsīmā* it is a *khaṇḍasīmā*. Similarly, there is no smallest size for a *mahāsīmā* reported in the canon. There is a limit to its size. It is stated that it should not be enlarged by more than three *yojana* (one *yojana* is a distance of about six miles) (Mv II.7) as mentioned above. If we consider this definition, Mahāpāsāṇa Cave in Yangon can be considered, as already named, a *mahāsīmā* for two reasons: firstly this boundary is not qualified to be called a *khaṇḍasīmā* because it was not consecrated within a *mahāsīmā* and secondly it can

contain more than two thousand monks within the cave. Moreover, if monks are sat outside the cave as far as the boundary markers provided, it may be able to accommodate more than three thousands monks. Therefore, Mahāpāsāṇa Cave is considered to be a *mahāsīmā* in contrast to a *khaṇḍasīmā*.

The *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:323) warns against overlapping or mixing between the *khaṇḍasīmā* and *mahīsīmā* during and after consecration. It makes clear that the *khaṇḍasīmā* is not a smaller *sīmā* within the *mahāsīmā*, but a separate space, perhaps alongside a *mahāsīmā* but not within it. It makes this explicit by stating:

> "*Na khaṇḍasīmāya ṭhitehi mahāsīmā bandhitabbā, na mahāsīmāya ṭhitehi khaṇḍasīmā bandhitabbā*": "*a mahāsīmā* should not be consecrated by those standing within a *khaṇḍasīmā* and a *khaṇḍasīmā* should not be consecrated by those standing within a *mahāsīmā*" (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:323).

In order to avoid a mixing point between these two boundaries, a *sīmantarika* (inter-space) is used to separate them. The *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:324) points out two different versions of *sīmantarika*: one is according to the *Kurundi* and the other is in a version of the *Mahāpacchariya* or *Mahāpaccari*[94]. Both are considered to be old commentaries on the *Vinaya* but the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* does not explain the background of these commentaries except for this: 'according to the former the distance between two *sīmā*s should be kept to at least one *vidatthippamāṇa* (one span, which is equivalent to the space between the first and middle fingers) while, according to the latter, it is four fingerbreadths (*caturaṅgulappamāṇa*)'.

These two boundaries are contrasted during the consecration but this contrast is not required when only a *khaṇḍasīmā* is established within a monastery, the remaining area of the *vihāra* being left unconsecrated (see diagram B below). If a *khaṇḍasīmā* is consecrated within such an un-consecrated *vihāra* compound, an inter-space (*sīmantarika*) between the *vihāra* compound and the *khaṇḍasīmā* is not necessary. However, if a *khaṇḍasīmā* is consecrated inside a consecrated *vihāra* compound, as it is

---

[94] These two commentaries are no longer available but the account of these commentaries is, however, reported in the *Samantapāsādikā*. On these two no longer extant commentaries, see Chapter One.

designed in diagram (A), the inter-space is essential because the *khaṇḍasīmā* and the *vihārasīmā/mahāsīmā* must not overlap.

Referring to diagram (A) below: the blue colour represents the village boundary. Within this village boundary there are three separate zones: 1, 2 and 3. Each zone is defined by a square boundary. Zone 1 represents a *khaṇḍasīmā*, which can be seen right in the middle of the whole diagram. Zone 2 represents the *sīmantarika* (inter-space) while zone 3 represents the *mahāsīmā/vihārasīmā*. There are eight boundary markers posted outside zone 3. These markers are necessary to separate from the village boundary. There is also one section of markers posted outside zone 2 which is called *sīmantarika*. This zone 2 is considered to be the crucial area for both *khaṇḍasīmā* and *mahāsīmā* because this area is marked out to separate the *mahāsīmā* (which is zone 3) and the *khaṇḍasīmā* (which is zone 1). Without this inter-space these two *sīmās* would overlap, in which case the consecration would be invalid. As these two *sīmās* (*khaṇḍasīmā* and *mahāsīmā*) are separated they are called *nānāsīmā* (different boundary) yet exist within the same monastery.

There are two sections of boundary markers posted: one outside boundary 1 and the other outside boundary 3. They are all displayed outside their respective boundaries to identify the boundary area. However, the stones outside zone 2 are not considered as boundary markers. They are *sīmantarikas* that separate the *khaṇḍasīmā* and the *mahāsīmā*. As already stated, if both *khaṇḍasīmā* and *mahāsīmā* are consecrated at the same time, the boundary markers for the *khaṇḍasīmā* should first be defined, followed by the *sīmantarika* and, finally, the boundary markers for the *mahāsīmā*. This *mahāsīmā* boundary can encompass the entire monastery boundary unless the monastery is expanded after the consecration. The area outside the *mahāsīmā*, including the *sīmantarika* area, belongs to the village boundary as marked out in blue.
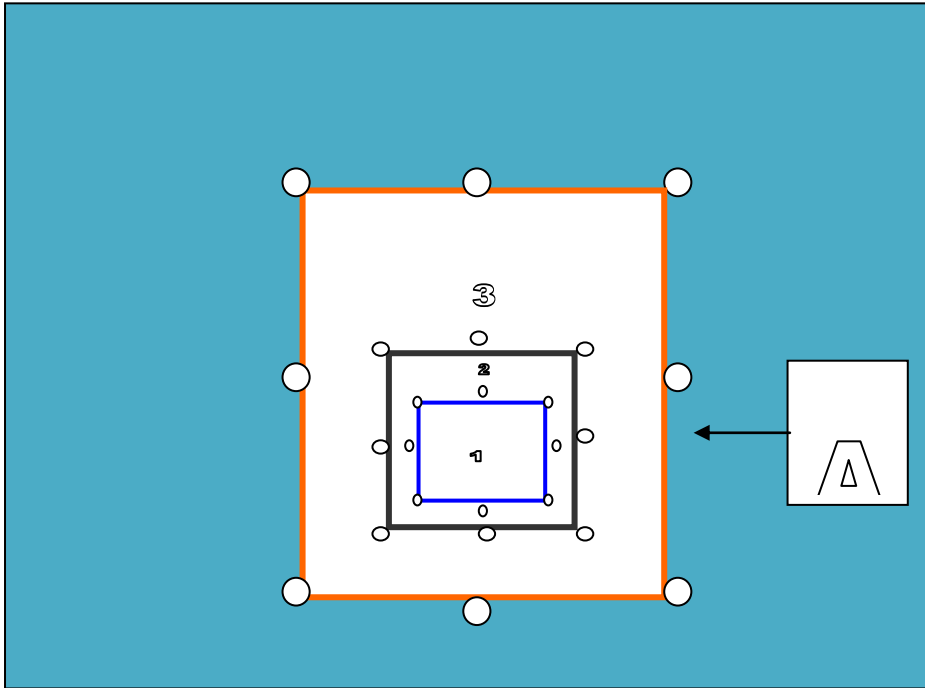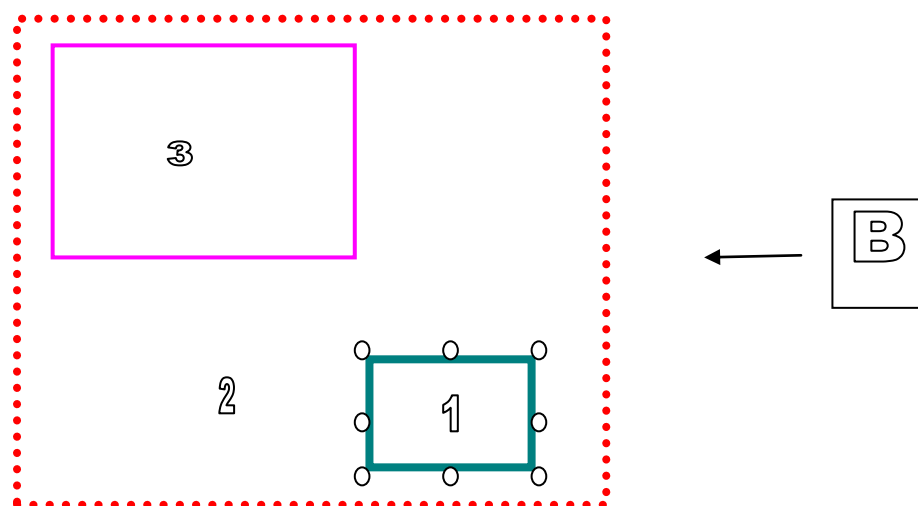
1 = khaṇḍasīmā – small boundary

2 = sīmāntarika- inter-space

3 = mahāsīmā- big boundary

If we consecrate a *khaṇḍasīmā* without having a *mahāsīmā*, we do not need to have the *sīmantarika*. I have designed diagram B to explain this.

Figure 21: 8.2. Diagram A and B represent two different types of consecrated boundary within a monastery compound

1 = khaṇḍasīmā – small boundary

2 = vihāra compound or monastery boundary

3 = vihāra – temple

There are also three zones in this diagram. Zone 1 represents the *khaṇḍasīmā,* while zone 3 represents an ordinary *vihāra* building. Zone 2 represents the entire monastery boundary. Although zone 3 looks like a boundary it is not a consecrated *vihāra* boundary. There are, therefore, no boundary markers outside zone 3. By the same token no boundary markers are provided outside the zone 2 areas. The reason is the same: the entire monastery compound is not consecrated as a *sīmā.* As a result, no *sīmantarika* is required to separate the *khaṇḍasīmā* and the *vihāra* building, nor indeed, the entire *vihāra* boundary as indicated in diagram B. In contrast, there are two *sīmā*s and two sets of boundary markers in diagram A. We can now see the consecrated zone and un-consecrated zone between these two diagrams. The un-consecrated zone in diagram A is only a small space which is used for the *sīmantarika.* This contrasts with diagram B where we can observe that the whole monastery compound, except Zone 1, is an un-consecrated area. This area becomes part of the *gāmasīmā* (as discussed in chapter five).

If there are two consecrated boundaries in a monastery, similar to those illustrated in diagram A, there is no *vagga* (division) when monastic legal activities are being performed. They are called *nānāsīmā* (two different boundaries), with neither of them invalidating the other *sīmā*; for example, when a group of monks attend a *khaṇḍasīmā* (no, 1 in diagram (A), it does not create division (*vagga*) for those monks who live inside the *mahāsīmā* (zone 3 in the same diagram). Similarly, if a group of monks perform their monastic legal activity inside the *mahāsīmā* it does not harm or create division for those monks who live inside the *khaṇḍasīmā,* since these two *sīmās* are defined as two separate legal boundaries (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:324). The model in diagram A is no longer consecrated in Burma but we can still find the one illustrated in diagram B, i.e. where the monastic building and *khaṇḍasīmā* are two separate entities within an overall '*vihārasīmā*', (monastery boundary) but without having consecrated as *mahāsīmā.*

8.3. The problem of overlapping boundaries: *khaṇḍasīmā* and *mahāsīmā*

As will be discuss in the section on revocation, if a *khaṇḍasīmā* is consecrated over a pre-existing *mahāsīmā,* the *khaṇḍasīmā* will be invalid. By the same token, if a *mahāsīmā* is consecrated over a pre-existing *khaṇḍasīmā*, the *mahāsīmā* is also considered to be invalid. According to Abhayārāma Sayadaw (1973:3), these two *sīmās* must not touch each other by even a single hair's breadth. If, for example, a monk consecrates a *khaṇḍasīmā* overlapping an old *mahāsīmā*, this *khaṇḍasīmā* is not valid but the old *mahāsīmā* will remain valid even though the consecrating monk does not know of its existence (ibid). When monks conduct their monastic legal activity in this new *sīmā*, technically it will not be successful. My informant Bamaw Sayadaw describes the danger of such a scenario in the following example: because of not knowing the presence of an old *sīmā* everyone believes that the consecration is successful. In fact it is not, because boundaries overlapped. Monks ordained in such a *sīmā* will not have had a successful ordination and should they offer ordination to the next generation, they will

unknowingly be doing harm to the *Buddhasāsana* (religion of the Buddha) because these monks will also not technically be successful in their ordination.[95] That means they are not monks.[96] According to Bamaw Sayadaw, to avoid such a scenario there are two measures observed within Burmese practice: one is the creation of an 'inter-space' in every new *sīmā* consecration (as illustrated in diagram A above) and the other is to revoke an old *sīmā* before a new one is established. This latter will be discussed in the next section.

As discussed in Chapter Seven, Burmese *sīmās* install two *sīmantarikas* in each cardinal direction; sometimes even three. These are provided even when there are no plans to establish a parallel *sīmā* in the future. This is distinctive to Burmese tradition and differs from Thai tradition. Although *sīmantarikas* are installed in Thai *sīmās*, it is difficult to define the area because the original *nimittas* are buried under the earth. The duplicate *nimittas* and *sīmantarikas* posted above the ground are, therefore, too close to each other. A Thai traditional *nimitta*, see photo below.

---

[95] Similar to Bamaw Sayadaw's view, Ashin Sīlānanda (2002: 9) gives a scenario: if the monastic legal activity happens to be inside the old *sīmā* area, it counts as valid. It is because the old *sīmā* is still valid even though the new *khaṇḍasīmā* is not successfully consecrated. If, however, the new *khaṇḍasīmā* overlaps only the marginal area of the old *sīmā*, the monks conducting the monastic legal activities will not be fully accommodated if they are inside this marginal area. Therefore, this monastic legal activity will not be valid. If the overlapping area of old *sīmā* (marginal area) is large enough to sit the quorum for the ordination ceremony, the ordination ceremony will be valid since this old *sīmā* is still valid. If this overlapping area cannot provide a quorum, the benefit of a new *khaṇḍasīmā* is neither effective nor is the old *mahāsīmā*, especially the marginal area, as it cannot provide the right accommodation for the required number of monks.

[96] In Burmese ordination history, especially referring to 15th-century King Dhammacetī, the successful consecration of a *sīmā* is very important for the purity of the monastic order. For historical examples of doubts of this sort leading to the purification for the Saṅgha by the king, see Chapter Two.

Figure 22:8.3. Thai traditional *nimitta*

According to Bamaw Sayadaw, the reason for the Burmese *sīmantarika* is to indicate the boundary area when a new *sīmā* is to be consecrated in the future. It is believed that even when the boundary markers are damaged due to adverse weather conditions or over a long period of time, the *sīmantarika* would still indicate the presence of an old boundary and provide a clue as to the presence of an old consecration.

While overlap between two *sīmā*s is considered an error or invalidation, the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* further tightens the rule by even prohibiting physical contact between two *sīmā*s after consecration. This is called *sīmāsaṅkara*, i.e. 'mixed' or 'overlapping of the boundary.' The *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* points to this problem with the example of a tree lying between two *sīmās;* for example, a branch or limb of a tree growing in a *māhāsīmā* connecting to a *khaṇḍasīmā,* or where a branch/limb of a tree bridges the gap between the two *sīmā*s (as depicted in diagram C below)**.** In diagram C you can see the branch of a tree which has grown up from the *mahāsīmā* touching the *khaṇḍasīmā.* If the branches of a tree connect two *sīmās,* or a tree from a *mahāsīmā*, (as depicted in diagram C below), connects with a neighbouring *sīmā*, they must be removed or disconnected before monastic legal activity can take place (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:327) (see also the Chapter One). If this connection is not dealt with, they are no longer called *nānāsīmā* (different boundaries) due to this connection. These two *sīmās* would, therefore, be considered a single *sīmā* making it necessary for monks from both

sīmās to attend monastic legal activity either by being present in the *hatthapāsa* area or by sending their consent by proxy.
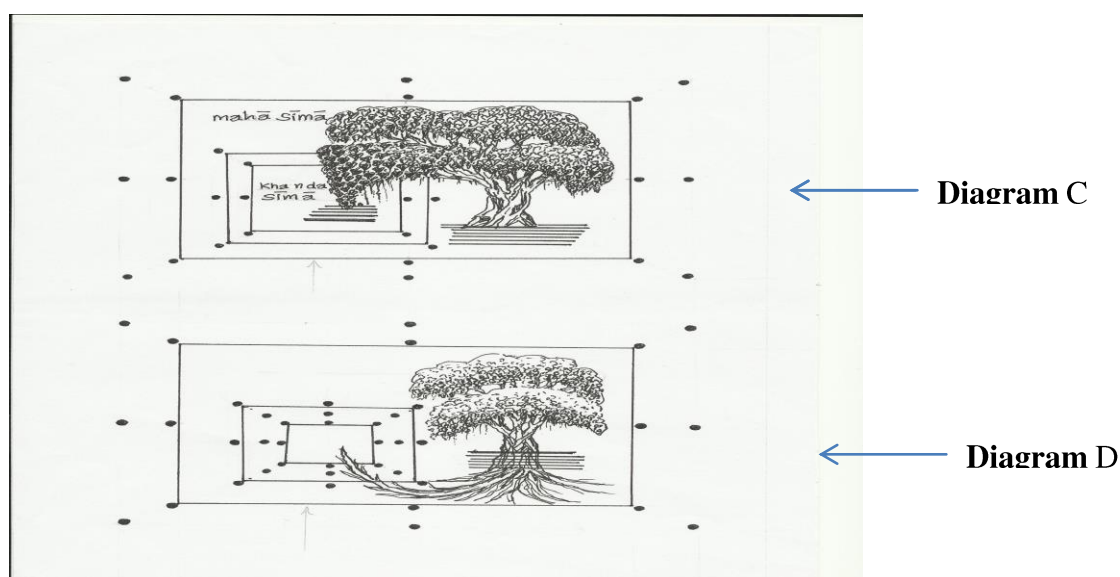
Figure 23: 8.3. Diagram C and D demonstrated connections between roots of a tree and branches of a tree

However, if the roots of a tree overlap two *sīmās* they will not harm monastic practice (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:327). Burmese monks call this *bhūmigatika* (akin to the soil or land) and consider the roots to be part of the land or soil. The roots of a tree normally remain underground (as illustrated in diagram D above) but should they break through to the surface and connect two *sīmās* they then invalidate the monastic legal activity just as when a tree branch overlaps, as shown in diagram C. In other words, the concept of *bhūmigatika* only applies when the roots remain underground and are invisible (see diagram D).

Present-day monastic practice has other problems to deal with: electric cables, ropes or wire, all of which should also be counted as *sīmāsaṅkara* (physical contact between two *sīmā*s). According to Ashin Sīlānanda (2002:95), Burmese monks are aware of such connections. Therefore, when *sīmās* are consecrated today any connecting cables will be disconnected or removed. However, when these *sīmās* are used after the

consecration the practice will differ depending on the monks and on the types of monastic legal activities. According to Ashin Sīlānanda (ibid), all of the monastic legal ceremonies that take place within a *sīmā,* the validity or perfection of the consecration of the *sīmā* is of the foremost and critical importance to ensuring the legality of monks' ordination. If, for example, a monastic legal ceremony such as *uposatha* or *kaṭhina* is carried out in an invalid *sīmā* the attending monks would incur only a minor offence of wrongdoing. If, however, the ordination of a monk is not successful due to the invalidity of the *sīmā,* the next generation of his disciples, to whom he offers ordination, will not be successful. This can cause great harm to the purity of Theravada monasticism. It is of critical importance, therefore, that monks ensure items such as electric cables, overlapping branches, etc. are dealt with before they perform their monastic legal activities, particularly when monk's ordination is being offered (ibid).

According to my informant, Ashin Rājadhammābhivaṃsa, Head of the Masoe-yin Monastic Institute, electric cables should not connect between consecrated and un-consecrated zones during consecration as it is possible these cables could traverse and connect many *sīmās* across a region, even across the entire country. The rules concerning the overlapping branch of a tree or exposed root would also apply in this situation. This opinion, given by Ashin Rājadhammābhivaṃsa, is also reported in a booklet called *Sīmāsaṅkaravinicchaya Sadan* (Exposition concerning Overlapping Boundaries 2008: 20) produced by the State *Saṅghamahānāyaka* and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Myanmar. The guidelines in this booklet state that the overlap of a tree between two *sīmās* would be easy enough to deal with, but in the case of connecting cables it would be very difficult to know how many *sīmās* the cable passed through, making the *hatthapāsa* rule impossible to comply with.

The same view was offered by from my informant, Ashin Rājadhammābhivaṃsa. He stated that although remaining legally valid, all *sīmās* connected by such a cable would constitute a single *sīmā* and cause logistical difficulties when undertaking monastic legal activities. If, for example, there were monks residing in any of these

connected boundaries, they would be deemed resident in one boundary in terms of the principle just stated above in the *Sīmāsaṅkaravinicchaya Sadan* (2008:17). Were a monastic legal activity to be held in one *sīmā*, those monks (wherever they were across region or country) would be required either to attend or to send their consent to the ceremony by proxy. Should they not follow this rule, the monastic legal activity could be deemed ineffective due to *vagga* (division), even though the monks were unaware of the existence of the *sīmā* where monastic legal activity was to be carried out. If we are to accept the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* rules, therefore, electric cables should be removed from a *sīmā*, especially during monastic legal activities (ibid).

In order to avoid such a problem, the *Sīmāsaṅkaravinicchaya Sadan* (Exposition concerning Overlapping Boundaries 2008: 20) reported that some Burmese monks have adapted it to the rule of *bhūmigatika,* while others have provided an electrical plug outside the *sīmā*. As for the rule of *bhūmigatika*, it allows electric cables into the *sīmā* area via an underground channel. I saw a few *sīmās* in Upper Burma during my field in January 2009, where the rule of *bhūmigatika* is applied, one of which is in the Abhyārāma monastery, Mandalay. The head monk, U Candobhāsa, confirmed to me that an electrical cable is installed inside the *sīmā* but it is transported via an underpass channel which he called *bhūmigatika.* He also told me that all previous Head monks had followed the same rule since the establishment of the *sīmā* more than a hundred years ago. In the same month stated above, I also experienced a contrasting practice, as stated in the *Sīmāsaṅkaravinicchaya Sadan,* where the electric cables are kept in a corner of the *sīmā* entrance. An example of such a practice was found in *Kalyāṇīsīmā* in Bago. Two electric wires between the consecrated and un-consecrated zones were disconnected during monastic legal activities inside the *sīmā* as shown in the photo below:

Figure 24:8.3. *Kalyāṇī sīmā* photo demonstrated how electricable should be kept to separate between village boundary and consecrated boundary

Interestingly, though, I came across a few *sīmās* where neither of these rules applied. One of these is in the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University (ITBMU). This *sīmā* does not have a facility to disconnect by electric plug, such as at *Kalyāṇīsīmā*, nor does it use an underground cable to light the *sīmā*. Rather, the electric cable is directly transported into the *sīmā*. Very curiously, a young monk, who is a student at this university, informed me that one of the professors has expressed his dislike of the way the electric cable is transported into the *sīmā*. He reported the professor's opinion as follows:

> ''If an ordination ceremony is held in this *sīmā* without disconnecting the cable, the validity of the ordination is questionable due to the presence of the electric cable. Even though we do not know how many *sīmās* are connected by this cable, or even though we do not know whether there are monks inside other *sīmās* during the ordination, it is better to overcome such an unknown connection (linkage) by disconnecting the cable, especially during the ordination ceremony, because the validity of a *sīmā* is very important for the success of an ordination''.

If an electric cable is to be treated in the same way as an overlapping tree branch, then the *sīmā* at ITBMU cannot be considered legal and those who permitted the cable to

be laid in this way, or who use this *sīmā* knowingly, are in breach of the commentarial rule. If we consider the report of *Sīmāsaṅkaravinicchaya Sadan* (2008:17), as described above, the practice of direct cable connection is not acceptable. The *Sīmāsaṅkaravinicchaya Sadan* (2008:18) even warns that using the rule of *bhūmigatika*, by burying the cable in an underground passage, is not an alternative to the solution of linkage problems between *sīmās*. Even though the cable is transported into the *sīmā* using an underground channel it remains similar to the branch of a tree, because the entry point of the cable into the ground can be seen, whereas the root of a tree growing in a *mahāsīmā* is not visible unless it emerges above ground inside a *khaṇḍasīmā* (*Sīmāsaṅkaravinicchaya Sadan* (2008:19) as illustrated in diagram D. According to the *Sīmāsaṅkaravinicchaya Sadan* (2008:18-19), therefore, if we consider the way a root is transported between *sīmās*, electric cables would not qualify as *bhūmigatika*.

The *Sīmāsaṅkaravinicchaya Sadan* provides another commentarial principle to support its argument; a principle that is applied when differentiating a *gāmasīmā* from an *udakukkhepasīmā*. As already discussed in Chapter Six, an *udukukkhepasīmā* cannot touch or be connected to a *gāmasīmā*. The *Sīmāsaṅkaravinicchaya Sadan* explains the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:335) rule with the following scenario: suppose a boat is made an *udakukkhepasīmā* (boundary created by splashing water), were it be tethered to a limb/branch of a tree which is rooted in the bank of a river, this vessel would be considered to be still mixing with the *gāmasīmā*. As a result, the *gāmasīmā* and *udakukkhepasīmā* would be considered a single *sīmā* because of this linkage and monks from the *gāmasīmā* would require to be present in the *hatthapāsa* area, or to send their consent by proxy when a monastic legal activity is to be conducted in the vessel. Even if this vessel is tied to the branch of a tree which is down in deep water, the vessel would still be considered *sīmāsaṅkara* (mixing boundary) with *gāmasīmā* (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965:335). In other words, even if the limb/branch of this tree is under the surface of the water, the main body of the tree is standing in the *gāmasīmā* area. It makes no difference, therefore, whether the connection with the tree is above or under water so long as the body of the tree is situated in the *gāmasīmā*.

Because of this rule Burmese monks do not transport electric cables to the vessel nor do they tie the vessel to the bank of a river. If they need to tie the vessel, the hook or tree must be completely detached from the *gāmasīmā* in order to avoid the *sīmāsaṅkara*. This is shown in the photo below where the boat is completely detached from the shore.

Figure: 25. 8.3. The vessel is detached from the bank of river. Monks can consider it as *udakukkhepasīmā.*

Despite the electric cable system not having been invented during the commentarial period, according to *Sīmāsaṅkaravinicchaya Sadan* (2008:17) the principle which applies to overlapping tree branches should also apply to cables. Buried underground cable enter the earth at the surface and cannot, therefore, be considered *bhūmigatika*, in the same way that branches of a tree cause *sīmāsaṅkara* (mixing boundary) with a *gāmasīmā*, even when under the surface of the water. Here we observe the concept of *sīmāsaṅkara* as applied in Burmese Buddhist tradition.

8.4. Procedure for revocation of an old *sīmā*

Connection via the branch of a tree or cable has its effect only after a consecrated boundary or connected boundary has been successfully consecrated during consecration. If, however, a *sīmā* was not successfully consecrated during consecration, connection via cables or branches makes no difference since the boundary was invalid from the beginning. Such an error occurs when one *sīmā* is consecrated over another consecrated

sīmā, or when a *sīmā* is consecrated overlapping an old *sīmā.* I already mentioned above the pains taken by Burmese monks to avoid any possibility of this happening. Here I shall examine the processes undertaken to avoid the overlapping of an old *sīmā* when a new *sīmā* consecration takes place.

According to the *Mahāvagga,* revocation (*samūhana,* literally, 'uprooting') is a procedure for invalidating an old *sīmā* to enable a new *sīmā* to be consecrated. Burmese tradition gives two reasons for revocation of an old *sīmā.* The first, which is reported in the *Mahāvagga*, is that the Buddha prohibited one *sīmā* being consecrated over another. To comply with the Buddha's prohibition an existing boundary must, therefore, always be revoked before another boundary can be consecrated. The second reason for revocation is to overcome any suspicion of the presence of an old *sīmā.* In the first case an old *sīmā* is revoked because the consecrating monks know of the existence of an old *sīmā* which could overlap or invalidate the new. In the latter case, and despite there being no canonical reference, revocation negates any concern regarding the legitimacy of a new *sīmā* where there is any suspicion of the presence of an older one. Psychologically therefore, revocation of the area where a new *sīmā* is to be consecrated overcomes doubt as to the legitimacy of the new *sīmā,* particularly where there may be uncertainty as to the existence of a previously consecrated boundary.

Before the consecration procedure starts, Burmese monks, speaking in Burmese, utter the following two statements regarding the act of revocation: *Phyu-sin-aung loke-chin,* meaning 'to act for the sake of purity', and *ne-ya go phyu-sin-aung loke-yame,* which translates as 'the area should be purified'. This purification before the consecration of a new *sīmā* removes or cancels the old *sīmā* thus ensuring the efficacy of the new. *Ne-ya go phyu-sin- aung loke-yame* means the same as revocation of the area, the only difference being that, in the Burmese language, this concept of *phyu-sin-chin* 'purity' is used to mean the act of revocation. In Pāli this is called *sīmāsamūhanana kamma* – 'the act for the revocation of the boundary'.

Interestingly though, the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* warns that one cannot revoke an old *sīmā* where there is doubt as to its correct location. Even though an area is revoked

because the presence of a pre-existing boundary is suspected, according to the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* it will be worthless, particularly when no pre-existing boundary had actually existed. Even when the presence of an old *sīmā* is known, its size is still required. If any section of an old boundary is missed there is the risk that the quorum of monks involved in the revocation process might not be sitting in the *hatthapāsa* area (within one arm's length area of each other). This would create *vagga* (division) (more on this later). Proceeding whilst not knowing the size and actual location can, therefore, defeat the purpose of revocation.

The purpose of revocation, according to the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:322), is for two reasons: one is to expand or enlarge (*mahatiṃ vā kātuṃ*) an existing boundary; and, the other is to contract it (*khuddakaṃ vā kātuṃ*). In order to explain this, the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* identifies two types of common boundary; one is a *khaṇḍasīmā* ('small' boundary) (see the previous section) and the other is *ti-cīvara avippavāsasīmā* (the boundary for being without one's third robe), also known in the shortened form *avippavāsasīmā*. As already discussed in the previous section, this latter *sīmā* is defined for the benefit of those monks who determine to observe the strict practice of keeping three robes with them. However, the benefit of *ti-cīvara avippavāsasīmā* can only be achieved when the *mahāsīmā* is rewritten, upgraded or re-consecrated as an *avippavāsasīmā*. Once this is done, the same *mahāsīmā* becomes an *avippavāsasīmā*, as stated in the previous section.

When, again, these same *sīmās* are revoked, the monks must revoke in reverse order, as already discussed in Chapter Seven under the section on liturgy. For example, when consecrating a *khaṇḍasīmā* or a *mahāsīmā* recitation of the liturgy of *samānasaṃvāsasīmā* comes first followed by recitation of the liturgy of *avippavāsasīmā*, but the sequence of these two liturgies is reversed when the same *sīmās* are revoked: recitation of the liturgy of *avippavāsasīmā* comes before the liturgy of *samānasaṃvāsasīmā* because the same *sīmās* (either *khaṇḍasīmā* or *mahāsīmā*) have already become *avippavāsasīmā* during the consecration, although these *sīmās* may still be called *khaṇḍasīmā* or *mahāsīmā* depending on their size. Therefore, in the revocation

process *khaṇḍasīmā* is contrasted with *avippavāsasīmā* instead of *mahāsīmā*, because this *mahāsīmā* has already been upgraded to *avippavāsasīmā*.

The *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* offers a feasible method of revocation for when one section of a *sīmā* has been identified, but this applies solely to the location of a previous old monastery and may not apply anywhere outside the monastery because, according to the quotation below, the commentarial rule is especially designed for a monastery compound where two *sīmās* appear to have existed next to each other. The *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* (1965:332) states:

> *"khaṇḍasīmaṃ ajānantā avippavāsaṃ yeva jānantā cetiyaṅgaṇabodhiyaṅgaṇa uposathāgārādīsu nirāsaṅkaṭhānesu ṭhatvā appeva nāma samūhanituṃ sakkhissanti":*
> "if they do not know the location of the *khaṇḍasīmā*, nonetheless know the location of the *avippavāsasīmā* they will be able to revoke by standing inside undoubted areas such as the area of Bodhi tree, pagoda, *uposatha* hall".

This quotation suggests that, since the Bodhi tree, pagoda or *uposatha* hall are normally included within a monastery boundary *(vihāra),* they should be within the boundary of an *avippavāsasīmā*. The remaining area, particularly the quiet corner of a monastery (as discussed in the previous section), is considered to be a *khaṇḍasīmā*. The quotation can be understood to mean, therefore, that the whole monastery contains two *sīmās*: one a *khaṇḍasīmā,* the other an *avippavāsasīmā*. When the area of *khaṇḍasīmā* has been lost, the *avippavāsasīmā* still exists and can be detected by the monks. The effective way to revoke, therefore, is to start from the area of the Bodhi tree, pagoda or *uposatha* hall, as these places are identified as being within the *avippavāsasīmā*.

The question then to be asked is: why do monks need to revoke starting from such places? As will be explained later, the revocation process would be ineffective if monks unknowingly stepped into two boundaries during the revocation ceremony. Monks should therefore start their revocation process from an identifiable area which, according to the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā*, can safely be the site of a Bodhi tree or pagoda. These are the places frequented by the laity which will undoubtedly have been consecrated as *avippavāsasīmā*. Even though the site of the *khaṇḍasīmā* cannot be identified; it is likely that it would not have been established in the place where people

frequently visit for their worship or prayer, such as a Bodhi tree. Therefore, if the revocation starts from the area of the Bodhi tree, it will not overlap with the area of *khaṇḍasīmā*. In this way it is ensured that the monks involved in the revocation will not, be in danger of stepping into the *khaṇḍasīmā*. Once the *avippavāsasīmā* is completely revoked, the remaining area of the monastery should be the area of *khaṇḍasīmā* and, when that area has been revoked, monks would not need to worry about stepping into a neighbouring *sīmā*, because it has already been removed.

We can understand the comparable existence of these two *sīmās* by looking at another statement in the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* where it is advised that an unknown *avippavāsasīmā* can be revoked if the *khaṇḍasīmā* is known. It states:

> *"khaṇḍasīmaṃ pana jānantā avippavāsaṃ ajānantāpi samūhanituṅceva bandhituṅca sakkhissanti"*: "although they may not know the location of *avippavāsasīmā*, knowing that of the *khaṇḍasīmā* they will be able to revoke and consecrate" [the land] (ibid).

According to this quotation, a *khaṇḍasīmā* should be revoked in order to revoke an *avippavāsasīmā (mahāsīmā)*, which again suggests that these two *sīmās* existed together within a monastery. Since the monks know the place of *khaṇḍasīmā*, they can avoid stepping in the *avippavāsasīmā*. As stated above, it is not allowed to step into both *sīmās* during revocation. Therefore, they only need to follow the *hatthapāsa* rule for the monks who stay in the area of *khaṇḍasīmā*. They can continue to revoke the *avippavāsasīmā* once the *khaṇḍasīmā* has already been revoked. The preceding two quotations advocate not only the different sizes and co-existence of a *khaṇḍasīmā* and *avippavāsasīmā* but also the procedure for their revocation, particularly when the location of one of the boundaries is lost. They make it explicit how difficult it is to both avoid *vagga* and to follow the *hatthapāsa* rule when the site of previously consecrated land is not known. The advice given in the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* is useful only when the location of one of these two boundaries is detected, for it further states that 'if the location of both *khaṇḍasīmā* and *avippavāsasīmā* are not known or not recognised, revocation is not possible' (*Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* 1965: 332). The rest of this section deals with how one should overcome such problems.

According to the current rules for *sīmā* consecration, neither the extension of a *khaṇḍasīmā* nor the contraction of a *mahāsīmā* applies, since consecration only relates to a new boundary within a new monastery. The *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* does not discuss the process for revocation of a new *sīmā*. If monks are considering consecrating a new *sīmā*, questions should first be asked regarding whether revocation is necessary; even whether it will, in this particular case, be effective. The answer is not easy because nobody knows whether there is an existing *sīmā* in the same area. According to Sīlānanda (2002:7) if one could be sure a *sīmā* had not previously been established, consecration without revocation could go ahead. He, states, however, that since Buddhism and the community of monks have been in existence for more than two thousand five hundred years, it would be difficult to confirm the absence of a previous boundary (Sīlānanda 2002:7). One should, therefore, revoke the land even though there is no record of an old *sīmā* at the time of consecration. Though the first of Ashin Sīlānanda's statements states that it is possible to consecrate a new *sīmā* without revocation, his latter statement supports revocation on the basis that the community of monks has existed for so long it may not be possible to have absolute certainty that no *sīmā* had ever existed there in the past. Indeed, Ashin Sīlānanda's view represents the concept of Burmese *sīmā* consecration as a whole, as all Burmese monks, I interviewed shared the same belief. Moreover, all *sīmās* consecrations reported in this thesis have involved the revocation process even though these *sīmās* were not related to the contraction or expansion of land as suggested in the Commentary.

Ashin Sīlānanda provides two important reasons for the revocation of a new *sīmā* area: one is to remove an overlapping boundary if there had previously been a *sīmā* consecrated in the area; and the other is, that by conducting the revocation ceremony doubt is removed even though no previous boundary ever previously existed. This overcoming of doubt is the most important part of Burmese *sīmā* revocation. To be effectively revoked, Burmese monks believe that there are two preconditions to follow during the revocation process: the presence of four monks in the old *sīmā* and the aspiration of each monk to revoke the old *sīmā* (Kavisāra 2006:11, Sīlānanda 2002:7).

The presence of four monks is the prescribed quorum necessary for the carrying out of this monastic activity while the aspiration of the monks provides belief and confidence in the power of the liturgy that purifies the old boundary.

Even though the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* does not provide guidance on how to proceed when the location of an old *sīmā* is unknown, a very curious development is that two sub-commentaries: the *Vimativinodanī* (Volume ii 1992:155) and the *Vinayālaṅkāra* (Volume i 1993: 325,356ff), have gone a step further by offering a new procedure which effectively revokes even an unknown location. Burmese monastics retain a strong commitment to the principle of revocation, perhaps due to the influence of these two sub-commentaries which offer a practical method for revocation when a previous boundary is not clearly defined, even when it is completely unknown. To carry out revocation the *Vimativinodanī* (Volume ii 1992: 155) and the *Vinayālaṅkāra* (Volume i 1993: 325, 356ff) both suggest dividing the entire boundary into a number of small sectors. These are described as being similar to a 'sitting bench' (*mañcappamāṇe*) or rectangular table (see diagram one below). Burmese monks call this *nyaunsaungkwet* (small fragment of boundary as a sitting bench). All diagrams of *nyaunsaungkwet* below, except four to seven, are created by me using the descriptions reported in Ashin Sobhitācāra, Ashin Sīlānanda, Maingkhaing Sayadaw and *Vinayālaṅkāra*.

Diagram 1
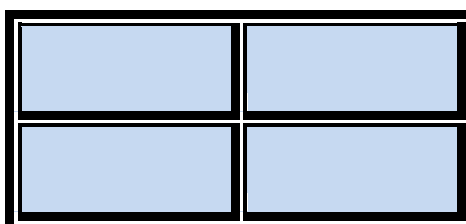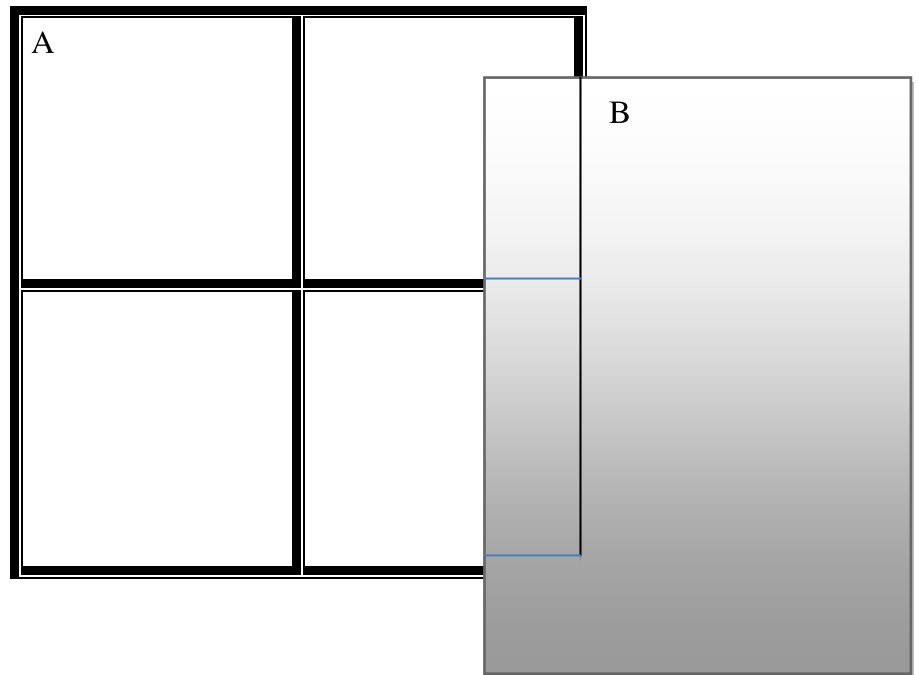

Figure 26:8.4. Diagram 1, a basic *nyaunsaungkwet*

The number of *nyaunsaungkwet* (sectors) may differ depending on the size of the boundary, also on the number of monks to be seated in each sector. The monks organising the revocation can determine the size of each sector according to whether it is

to accommodate from one up to four to ten monks. According to the *Vimativinodanī* and the *Vinayālankāra*, each *nyaunsaungkwet* should be four cubits long and two cubits wide (Sankyuang Sayadaw 1940: 140). They specify this size as it is large enough to facilitate at least a quorum of four monks being seated within one *nyaunsaungkwet* whilst being spacious enough for the monks to comply with the *hatthapāsa* rule (seated one arm's length from each other). In current practice, however, it is not considered necessary for four or more monks to sit in the same *nyaunsaungkwet*. It is only necessary that four monks sit in a position that touches the old boundary. If, for example, two monks sit in each of two *nyaunsaungkwets* it is still a quorum. Indeed, even if one monk sits in each of four small *nyaunsaungkwet,* it also constitutes a quorum. It is only necessary that they sit within one *hatthapāsa* distance of each other and that the seats touch the old *sīmā* to be revoked. The *Vimativinodanī's* and *Vinayālankāra's* suggestion for the size of a *nyaunsaungkwet* is, therefore, just a reminder that a valid revocation requires the presence of a quorum of monks. It is not a compulsory rule.

I have designed two overlapping boundaries (see diagram two) to illustrate how an unknown *sīmā* can overlap and to show how revocation of one boundary depends on revocation of the other. Section A represents the new *sīmā* and B the old. Boundary B must be revoked in order to validate the consecration of boundary A. The boundary of A contains four *nyaunsaungkwets* - two on the left and two on the right, with the two on the right overlapping B.

Diagram 2

Figure 27:8.4. Diagram 2 demonstrated two overlapping *sīmā*

Should four monks recite the revocation liturgy sitting in the two left-hand *nyaunsaungkwets*, the recitation will be ineffective, because they do not connect in anyway with the *sīmā* to be revoked (area B diagram). However, when four monks recite the liturgy while sitting in the two *nyaunsaungkwets* on the right, they are in touch with the overlapping or intersected area and the entire boundary B becomes immediately revoked. Once the overlapping has been removed, boundary A can be expanded, but if boundary B is not properly revoked, boundary A will not be successful due to its interception with B.

There are, however, other problems relating to the overlapping area and its role in revocation. Should only one or two monks actually be sitting within the overlapping area, no matter how many times the recitation is carried out the old *sīmā* will remain un-revoked. To solve this problem the *Vinayālaṅkāra* (Vol i 1993: 362) suggests that monks create extended *nyaunsaungkwets*, maybe one or two extra, outside the boundary area. I have designed diagram 3 with two extended *nyaunsaungkwets*.

Diagram 3
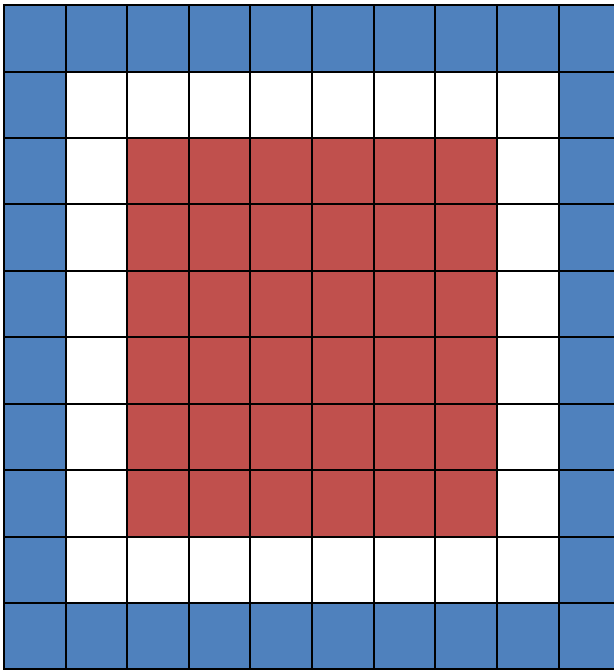
Figure 28: 8.4. Diagram 3, advice to undertake an extensive revocation

The white and blue rectangles are the extended *nyaunsaungkwets* which extend the overlapping area. The red *nyaunsaungkwets* in the middle are marked out for the consecration. By revoking the whole of boundary three, including the extended *nyaunsaungkwets,* the overlapping area will be completely revoked. When consecrating the new *sīmā* the outermost *nyaunsaungkwets* should be excluded. We can observe this in diagram three where only the red *nyaunsaungkwets* are designed for the consecration. The excluded *nyaunsaungkwets* can become *sīmantarika* (inter-space) if another boundary is consecrated nearby but, as a result of the revocation, this *sīmantarika* too becomes part of the revoked area.[97] It is particularly advisable to keep *sīmantarika* for when a monastery establishes two *sīmās* within its compound, as stated above.

According to Ashin Sobhitācāra (1968:9) as many as sixteen different revocation *nyaunsaungkwet* have been developed by Burmese *sīmā* experts. Some are small with just enough space for a single seat, while others are large enough to seat between four to

---

[97]This is the example of what U Nandasiri pointed out in my previous section about the reason for three parallel *nimittas.* The second innermost *nimitta* is erected in some *sīmās* to show that the area has already been revoked.

ten monks. If a boundary is 50 metres long x 30 metres wide, the number of

nyaunsaungkwet may be decided in relation to the number of attending monks. If, for

example, it is decided that eight monks should sit in each *nyaunsaungkwet,* its size would

be within the measurement of six cubits long and four cubits wide. The greater the

number of seats the fewer and bigger the *nyaunsaungkwet* and, by the same token, if the

number of *nyaunsaungkwet* is increased, the number of seats may be reduced to only

one.

Below are four diagrams (numbered diagram 4-7) each representing a classic

method of using *nyaunsaungkwet* in the revocation process. The model in diagram four

derives from the *Kalyāṇī* inscription (see Chapter Two) while the *nyaunsaungkwet*

models in diagrams five and six refer to the *Vinayālaṅkāra* and Maingkhaing Sayadaw

respectively. When the *Kalyāṇī sīmā* was consecrated in the fifteen century by the monks

whose re-ordination in Sri Lanka had been sponsored by Dhammacetī, each

nyaunsaungkwet is said to have measured five cubits square (see diagram four)

(Sīlānanda 2002:159-161). According to the *Vinayālaṅkāra* method, the *nyaunsaungkwet*

are slightly different, being rectangular rather than square (see diagram five).

Diagram 4

1	2	3	4
8	7	6	5
9	10	11	12
16	15	14	13

Diagram 5

1	2	3	4
8	7	6	5
9	10	11	12
16	15	14	13
17	18	19	20
24	23	22	21
25	26	27	28
32	31	30	29

Although these two diagrams above differ in that the *nyaunsaungkwet* are square in one and rectangular in the other, the serial numbers lead in the same direction starting from left to right and left again. As will be seen in diagram six below, which illustrates Maingkhaing Sayadaw's method, the direction is substantially different as the serial numbers start from the middle and go round in a clockwise direction, while in diagram seven the direction of *nyaunsaungkwet* starts from the top left corner to its opposite direction bottom right as shown by the serial numbers.

Diagram 6
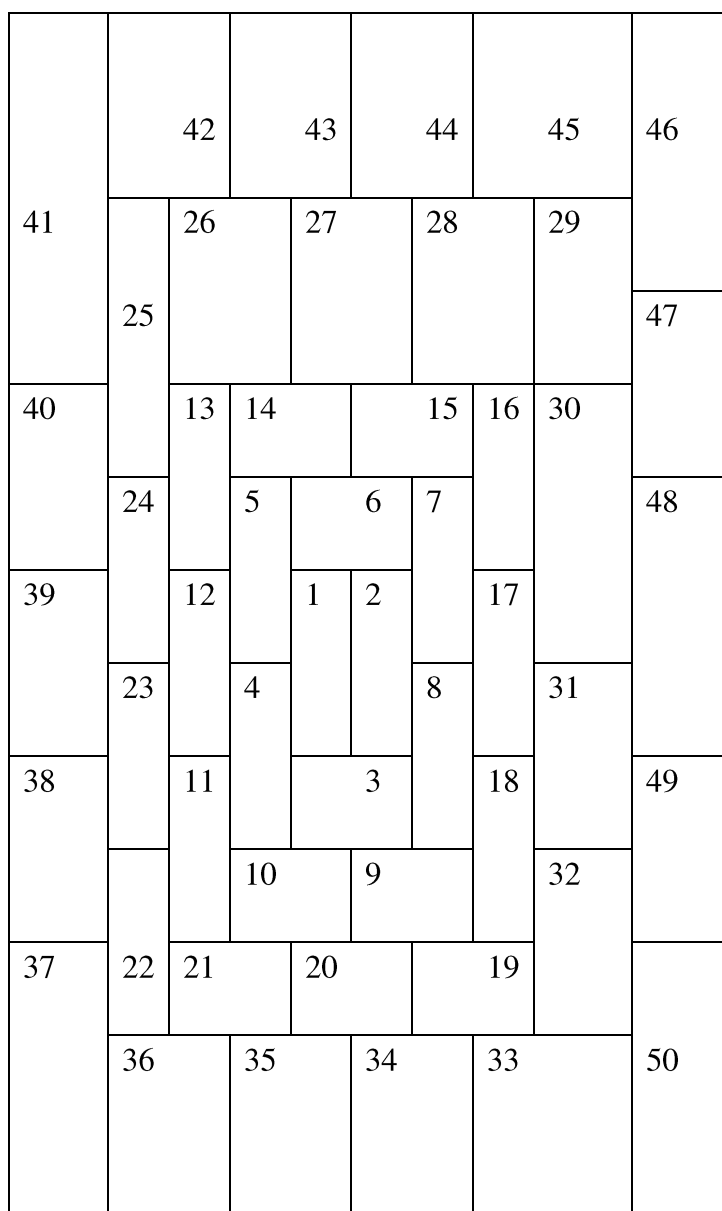
Diagram 7

1	3	6	10	15	20	25
2	5	9	14	19	24	29
4	8	13	18	23	28	32
7	12	17	22	27	31	34
11	16	21	26	30	33	35

Figure 29: 8.4. Diagram 4, 5, 6 and 7 demonstrated a few types of *nyaunsaungkwets* to revoke the old *sīmā*

After each method has been completed the *nyaunsaungkwet* are erased and another design marked out. We can observe this in photos one and two (below) where we see a layman cleaning up old lines while another is redrawing new ones. These photos were taken during the *Muniratana sīmā* consecration at Thei-in-gu Vipassana Meditation Centre on 27 September 2007. White lime powder was used and the monks instructed the laymen how to create the *nyaunsaungkwet*. The use of lime powder makes erasure of the lines both quick and easy so that new *nyaunsaungkwet* can be drawn up immediately the first layout has been used.

Photo 1

Photo 2

Figure 30:8.4.Photos 1 and 2 are demonstrated how different methods of new *nyaunsaungkwet* are created

Application of the various methods may vary dependent on the choice of the consecrating monks. Some monks employ only one or two methods, while others employ three, four or five different methods; some even more than ten. The size of *nyaunsaungkwet* in each of these methods will also depend on the choice of the leader of the ceremony who will take into account the number of monks available for the recitation. According to Dhammānanda (2002: 12, 20) when the *Sāsanaṭhita Pubbayonsīmā* was established in May 1984 at the Sagaing Taung Monastic Institute

(monastery) in Thuwanna Township, Thingaingyun, Yangon, there were thirteen different revocation procedures used during revocation. The size of *nyaunsaungkwet* was also reported to be diverse starting from three seats in one method and more than five seats in others. It took a week to complete the ceremony. According to Dhammānanda, the abbot of the temple, it was not necessary to perform thirteen different types but Bogale Sayadaw, who led the revocation, wanted to take the opportunity to provide teaching for the new generation.

A similar practice is also recorded in a recent *sīmā* revocation ceremony in Burma. According to photo three (below) which was taken at the *Muniratana sīmā* consecration (2007), different sizes of *nyaunsaungkwet* and different numbers of monks were employed during the revocation ceremony. In photo three we see ten monks accommodated in each *nyaunsaungkwet,* whereas in photos four and five the number has been reduced to six and three respectively. In photo six we see the monks facing both forward and backward while in photo seven the monks are divided into different *nyaunsaungkwet* and are facing each other while reciting the liturgy.

The example of my descriptions of the positions of *nyaunsaungkwet* in diagrams four to seven above are visually depicted below:

Photo 3

Photo 4

Photo 5

Photo 6

Photo 7

Figure 31:8.4. Monks are recited revocation chanting in different *nyaunsaungkwets as* seen in photos 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

While in Bangladesh I attended two revocations where the size and type of *nyaunsaungkwet* were quite different to those I have reported on above. Both revocations took place just before the consecration ceremony. The first was a revocation ceremony held at Mahāmuni Temple, Ramgarh, Khagrachari in November 2007 and the other took

place at Jagayshala Temple, Manicchari, Khangrachari in the following month (December). The consecrating monks employed two different methods, as shown in diagrams four and five, but there was only one attending monk in each *nyaunsaungkwet* due to lack of monks. The size of each *nyaunsaungkwet* was small, just appropriate for one monk. Only fifteen monks participated. They moved three times from one *nyaunsaungkwet* to another, forward and back. Theoretically, when the presence of an old boundary is suspected, provided the recitation takes place in each *nyaunsaungkwet,* the revocation is considered to be valid regardless of the size of each *nyaunsaungkwet.* According to Sankyaung Sayadaw (1982:183), it is even better to use only one monk in each *nyaunsaungkwet* because monks then have no need to say to the other monks: 'move a bit more', 'you are too close me', etc.; because such statements are not allowed during recitation. The possibility of contact is greater when four or five monks sit together in one *nyaunsaungkwet* and, as will be shown below, should they make contact during recitation the revocation could be defective.

We have so far described the procedure for revoking an old *sīmā.* As noted earlier, Burmese monks have attempted to overcome the problem of overlap or intersection between boundaries by developing some revolutionary methods. In spite of their endeavours, the question of whether such efforts are, in fact, worthwhile, still remains. One is faced with two difficulties when seeking to resolve the problem of an overlapping *sīmā*: how to remove an old *sīmā* without knowing the entire boundary's exact location and, when one does not, how to be sure that the *hatthapāsa* rule has been followed during revocation.

According to the *Vinaya* rule, whenever a *saṅghakamma* (monastic legal procedure) takes place within a *sīmā,* all monks must enter and remain within the *hatthapāsa* regardless of the size of *sīmā* (see *hatthapāsa* rule in Chapter Four and Five). Not to do so would create *vagga* (division/disunity). Revocation, however, presents different problems. Since it is still one of the *saṅghakammas,* the rule that all monks who live within the boundary must attend, still applies. Yet, revocation may take place without knowing either the position of the old *sīmā* boundary or its size, even whether

one actually existed in the first place. This raises a number of questions: Will the method of *nyaunsaungkwet* be successful without knowing the area and its size? If monks do not know the exact location and its size how can they follow the *hatthapāsa* rule? This question is important because it is not necessary to bring the monks into the *hatthapāsa* area from outside the boundary and, if they cannot, how do they avoid *vagga*? Will the revocation be valid without the correct performance of the *hatthapāsa* rule? Answers to these questions are not straightforward.

With the intention of assisting monks to avoid *vagga* during revocation, Burmese monks have developed another theory to add to the practice of revocation. According to the *hatthapāsa* rule physical contact during consecration is perfectly valid. In fact monks sit within the range of physical contact, practically touching each other, as can be observed in photo 8 below taken during the *Muniratanā sīmā* consecration (2007).

Photo 8

Figure 32: 8.4.Photo 8 is an example of how monks are sat in *hatthapāsa* area during *sīmā* consecration

Despite this being permitted during *sīmā* consecration, Burmese monks continue to believe that monks should not physically touch or contact each other during revocation. The reason for this is that the revocation could easily be invalidated should physical overlap or intersection occur. See, for example, diagram 8 below, which

illustrates two *sīmās*: A) is a *khaṇḍasīmā* and (B) a *mahāsīmā*. Y represents one monk in *sīmā* (A) and X another monk in *sīmā* (B). The two *sīmās* are nearly touching each other and there is no interspace between them.
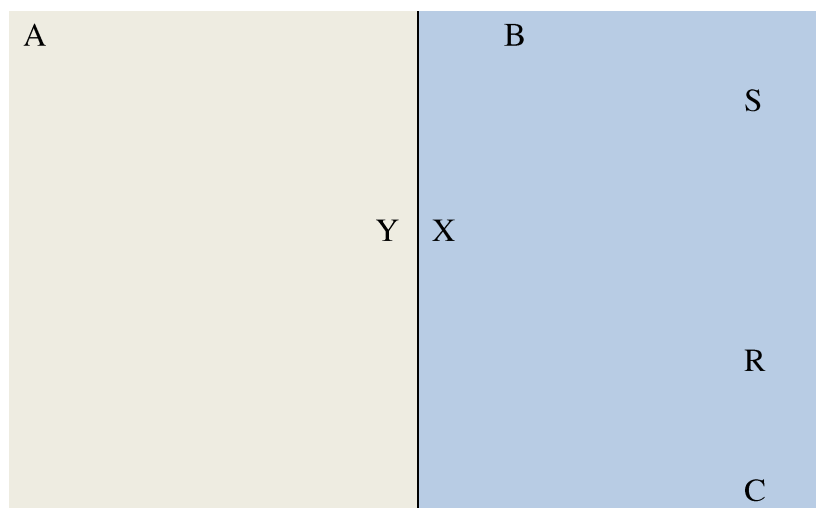
Figure 33: 8.4. Diagrams A and B are demonstrated how *khaṇḍasīmā* and *mahāsīmā* could be overlapped

The boundaries are valid because they do not overlap, but they are so close that should a monk sit at the edge of *sīmā* A (*khaṇḍasīmā*) he would overlap with *sīmā* B (*mahāsīmā*). If it should happen that monks Y and X make physical contact with each other during recitation of the liturgy, even to the extent that their robes touch, it would result in these two *sīmā* becoming one, as was discussed in the previous section when referring to electric cable. Theoretically therefore, monks from both boundaries must either come into *hatthapāsa* or send their proxy in order to validate the ceremony. Suppose, monks C, R, S stay inside boundary (B) at the time of revocation, they would all be required to come into the *hatthapāsa* area, but if boundary (B) happens to be a *mahāsīmā* extending to one village, all village monks must come into the *hatthapāsa* area. If, however, this *mahāsīmā* was consecrated over the entire monastery compound, all monks within the monastery must attend and remain within the *hatthapāsa* area. This scenario applies because the monks who revoke the old *sīmā* touch two boundaries (Y and X). If they did not touch, the *hatthapāsa* rule would not be necessary.

Since revocation is carried out without knowing the location of such boundaries, Burmese monks are cautious, to the extent that they will not even use a mat or carpet during revocation (Sobhitācāra 1968:37, Sīlānanda 2002:177). Here is another problem within the developed theory of *nyaunsaungkwet*. On the one hand, monks within a boundary must attend in the *hatthapāsa* area yet, on the other hand, they cannot touch each other. This later rule was developed to avoid the scenario of X and Y just explained, but without knowing whether their action would be effective or not.

While monks do not touch each other during revocation in an attempt to avoid *vagga,* they follow the concept of *hatthapāsa* wherever possible. In the light of this Ashin Sīlānanda (2002:176) suggests that the two procedures contained in the *Vinayālaṅkāra* both be used: a) that one invites the whole monastery monks into *hatthapāsa,* and b) that the boundary be defined by the process of throwing two stones. One stone is thrown from each corner of the revoking boundary, followed by another stone being thrown from the area where the first lands. Monks within the area of the thrown stones, including the entire monastery, are considered to be within a 'jurisdictional boundary' or 'imaginary boundary'. These areas should be defined as a 'no access zone' by outside monks, while monks who are already inside this zone should sit either within the *hatthapāsa* area during revocation, or send their proxy (Sīlānanda 2002:176). While this advice is useful during the revocation of a *sīmā*, Ashin Sīlānanda also offers another suggestion to be carried out during *sīmā* consecration; that monks recite the revocation liturgy at least three times just before they recite the liturgy of consecration. In my experience, as stated above, this happens. Even after previously revoking the area, all *sīmā* consecrations revoke at least one or more times before consecration of the *sīmā* take place.

From the foregoing we get a measure of the efforts made to overcome doubt concerning the existence of a previous old *sīmā* when no recorded details are available. The theories and practices of revocation show the care Burmese monks take to ensure the success of a *sīmā* consecration despite this lack of information. Even when it is theoretically impossible to detect the existence of a previous *sīmā*, every effort will be

made to ensure the validity of the new *sīmā*. According to my informant, Ashin Rājadhammābhivaṃsa, peace of mind is at the heart of all this effort. Here we can conclude this section with Ashin Rājadhammābhivaṃsa's comment on how Burmese monks perceive the success of a *sīmā*. Should there be doubt as to the proper consecration of a *sīmā*, any monk ordained there would be without peace of mind regarding the authenticity of his ordination and would be subject to other monks' doubts.

8.5. Conclusion

We can briefly summarise here that the whole intention of this chapter has been to deal with how one can overcome *sīmāsaṅkara* (mixing boundary) during and after consecration. The mixing boundary, as discussed above, can occur in two ways: one is by means of overlap between old and new *sīmā* during consecration; and, the other is by means of a branch of a tree or any other form of physical connection between *sīmās* after the consecration, particularly during monastic legal activities. The connection via branches of a tree or electric cable can, however, be avoided, as discussed in this chapter, whereas the overlapping problem between two boundaries during the consecration is the most important issue because if two *sīmās* are consecrated over one another or one over another, the *sīmā* is considered invalid. In this chapter I have carefully analysed methods of overcoming this overlapping problem but the logical point of each analysis is 'somewhat' contradicted with the *Samantapāsādika*. According to the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā*, this problem can be resolved by the act of revocation with one condition: the old area must be known or defined. If the revocation carries out without knowing the area, the problem may occur with the rule of *vagga* by not being presenting in the *hatthapāsa* area.

To deal with this problem, Burmese monks have developed numerous revocation procedures to revoke the old *sīmā*, procedures that are beyond those required in the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* but found in the later Burmese sub-commentaries, the *Vinayālaṅkāra* (17th Century CE) and *Vimativinodanī* (written in12th Century CE) (see also Chapter one). We see then that while the authority of the canon through the lens of the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* is of the highest authority to Burmese monks both in theory

and in much practice, the angst about correct *Vinaya* and *sīmā* conduct has led the sub-commentaries and modern practitioners to develop complex procedures that are in fact beyond the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā's* stipulation. The reason behind the rule of these later sub-commentaries is, as we have discussed, justified with the Burmese knowledge that Buddhism has been in existence more than two thousand years. Therefore, Buddhist in the past might had consecrated a *sīmā* in the newly consecrating area but left no record. With such a prognosis or presumption, Burmese monks consider the theory of *Vimativinodanī* and *Vinayālaṅkāra* as an alternative procedure to revoke the unknown location and thus take them for granted.

Thesis conclusion:

The key concept of this thesis is the authority and purity of modern Burmese Theravada Buddhist practice in its relationship to *sīmā* and monastic legal procedures. In order to explain the care and attention given to correct *sīmā* performance I have provided the historical and contemporary context indicating its on-going role in monastic politics and in the involvement of secular authorities in defining monastic authority and purity. The main theme then considers how the unity and purity of monastic practice has been defined and adopted by Burmese monks as they sought to establish authority in monastic legal procedures. These two themes reveal a series, indeed a network, of causal relationships in the establishment of a *sīmā* and the acceptance of its validity. A difficulty in presenting the work is the complexity of this picture, including the fact that a *sīmā* cannot be defined by a single rule but by a combination of the many rules and processes. I am aware of the fact that since there are many rules involved any generalisations may cause 'confusion' while not answering the question of the thesis. In addition, if I define the conclusion in one area other areas may be ignored. If, again, I bring every rule involved in this thesis into the conclusion it will become unwieldy and thus not provide an answer to the main theme. Therefore, in this conclusion I concentrate only on how the main theme of this thesis developed through the many and diverse causal relationships which defined the authority and purity of *sīmā* practice.

Four main questions are answered in this thesis. The first relates to *sīmā* establishment and the rules that apply. The second deals with the reasons why Buddhism in the Union of Burma placed such emphasis on *sīmā* and how it developed expertise beyond that of other forms of Theravada. The third addresses the question of which textual authorities have been maintained and which have developed in response to the importance of *sīmā* in Burma. Finally, the fourth deals with current *sīmā* practice in Burma, addressing the need to follow canonical and commentarial tradition while adapting to a political and geographical landscape far removed from that in which the rules for *sīmā* were originally compiled.

In Chapter One I addressed the canonical and early commentarial material on *sīmā*, noting the brevity of instructions in the canon coupled with the crucial function of *sīmā* to the validity of the monastic lineage and its legal actions, e.g. ordination. Such legal actions led to an expansion within the commentarial literature of detailed information for *sīmā* practice. I observed that the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* and two sub-commentaries on it, namely *Sāratthadīpanī* and *Vimativinodanī,* were the crucial sources for monastic practice, particularly *sīmā* practice, and indicated the nature of discussions in Burmese *sīmā* practice that are based on the interpretation of them. I pointed out that the Burmese tradition was far more concerned to accommodate the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* than, for example, modern Thai practice, which was more able to let go of commentarial direction in favour of 'common sense'.

In Chapter Two, by giving a history of the Saṅgha and its relations with royalty and government in Burma, I showed how the Saṅgha has consistently maintained its authority with reference to correct *Vinaya* performance, lineage and royal/political favour and that the *sīmā* has repeatedly figured prominently in the definition of purity. Decisions that *sīmās* were invalid led to re-ordination in valid *sīmās* as was discussed in Dhammacetī's monastic reform where using the correct *sīmā* was at the heart of the reform while linking it to the *Mahāvihāra* tradition of Sri Lanka. The relationship of correct textual knowledge and *Vinaya* observance with *nikāya* (monastic lineage) survival led to a rigorous monastic education in the canon and commentaries unparalleled elsewhere in the Theravada world. The combination of these historical emphases with changing political powers, in particular the division of the Burmese cultural region between that ruled by the British and that ruled by the Burmese kings, led to the development of different *nikāya* (Burmese *gaing*), again with reference to and implications for *sīmā* practice and monastic purity.

I showed how the rhetoric of purity was, in some cases, inspired by political interests, yet also by an anxiety about the continuation of the Dhamma in a period of crisis. Most monks may not be conscious of how this overall political context is related to the maintenance of *Vinaya* and Dhamma purity, and specific decisions regarding

correct practice. The motivation of monastic politics is rather concerned with the purity of *Vinaya* and Dhamma during periods of social and political crisis. Their motivation may be genuine, not cynical, yet this chapter allowed us to see specific factors in Burmese history that enhance this specific concern.

In Chapter Three I have discussed the literature that arose out of the pre-existing Pāli canon and commentarial materials in response to this concern over monastic purity and new momentum of Buddhism undertaking to purify the teaching, particularly in the context of British rule and then nationalism and nation building. We saw that this led to two types of *sīmā* literature: '*sīmā* manuals' more generally, both free-standing and contained within discussions of *Vinaya*; and, 'dispute manuals', a response to specific disputes about the validity of a *sīmā*, which arose both in Burma and in the Burmese-derived ordination lineages of Sri Lanka. We saw, however, that such literature was always concerned with the wording of the canon and commentary, especially, the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā,* seeking to resolve apparent discrepancies between them and the sub-commentaries. In the subsequent chapters of the thesis I turned my attention to the practical implications of these concerns for *sīmā* purity within the textual transmission and, more specifically, the Burmese context.

We saw in Chapter Four such practical implications on the *sīmā* practice fundamentally placed on the unity and purity of the Saṅgha and how this required further definitions of such terms as *samānasaṃvāsaka* ('membership of common communion') and *āvāsa* (area of residence). These terms are interrelated in terms of *hatthapāsa* rules as all monks who are members of a common communion, whether living in a different residence or living in the same residence, must sit within *hatthapāsa* when conducting monastic legal practice. I pointed out how the unity and purity of the Saṅgha, and their participation in the *hatthapāsa* area is assessed by means of those monks who follow the same *Vinaya* precepts and by those who carry out *saṅghakamma* on behalf of the Saṅgha, yet with the condition of *hatthapāsa* rule in its central practice.

In Chapter Five we grapple with the detail of *gāmasīmā* interpretation in the light of the textual authorities already identified, royal/governmental involvement in Saṅgha affairs and changing ways in which land is taxed and governed. We showed that the basic concept of monastic *sīmā* consecration is based on the secular village boundary. This led to the emphasis on such matters as all monks coming into the *hatthāpāsa* within the place where the village monks observed their monastic rituals. In dealing with the changing aspects of government and the management of land, different monks used different commentarial and sub-commentarial authorities and interpretation to justify their understanding. We therefore find different interpretations of *sīmā* consecration in Burma. The influences on these different interpretations include changing definitions of a village, of taxed and tax-free land, versus the validity of using maps. A discussion followed on who, i.e. which secular authority, is 'king' when it comes to granting a separate piece of land, *visuṃgāmasīmā* to avoid the complexities of a large secular area.

I have pointed out how to understand what a village is in the context of a modern city when the term *nagarasīmā* 'city boundary' is not used in the early canon. The intention behind these concerns is identified in Chapter Four, i.e. ensuring the unity of the Saṅgha. Here in Chapter Five, we focused on the notion of *vagga* '(separate) group, i.e. division' and how it can be avoided when conducting monastic rituals in a village boundary. The example of this was the establishment of a *visuṃgāmasīmā* that allowed a group resident within a village to consecrate a *sīmā* without requiring the participation of other Saṅgha groups from the same village. It thus provides a form of independence, so avoids *vagga* through a different method.

In Chapter Six I looked at types of un-consecrated *sīmā* that can be established outside of a secular village boundary, noting that only one of these is still performed in Burma. I observed the practice of *udakukkhepasīmā* 'water-splashing boundary' in Burma and Bangladesh during my fieldwork and drew attention to differences in practice between the commentarial stipulations and how this is done today, in such a way that more is in fact made of the *udakukkhepasīmā* than is required in the authoritative texts; for example the concept of 'splashing of water' is no longer applied in modern practice,

including the bringing of water to make it visible in the area of four months monsoon rain even when the *Pācittiyādi Aṭṭhakathā* does not require this in the dry season. *Udakukkepasīmā,* like *visuṃgāmasīmā,* allows a single group to act independently of the other Saṅgha groups within a 'village.' However, care is taken to ensure that there is no overlap between the village boundary and the water boundary, an issue we returned to in Chapter Eight. We noticed here, then, the taking of extra precautions, even beyond commentarial requirements to ensure correct practice, but also perhaps to create a sense of occasion.

Chapter Seven looked in close detail at the factors that had to be 'perfect' or 'valid' in the consecration of the *sīmā,* i.e. in the creation of a permanently 'bound' (*baddha*) *sīmā.* I observed the great emphasis placed on the purity of the monks involved, such that monks additional to the minimum required are used in the hope of ensuring the presence of four pure monks, i.e. monks that have not committed one of the *pārājika* offences, that would made them a non-monk. In terms of the markers, I observed that the identification of the boundary marker through a question and answer ceremony is repeated multiple times, again to doubly ensure their validity. In this context I also explained the use of boundary markers above the ground even in the case of water-markers and how these should not be confused with the boundary markers (*nimitta*) proper. We noticed that some old *sīmā* use a number of layers of such boundary markers, i.e. an inner set, an intermediary set and an outer set. I explained this in terms of ensuring the 'purity' i.e. revocation of the ground being used, even in the event of the need to expand the *sīmā* at a later date.

In terms of the purity of the liturgies used, *kammavācā,* I observed that the Burmese preoccupation with purity is expressed through a number of precautions. These include performing the recitation as many as nine times (in contrast to the required one), in the aim of ensuring that at least one of them is pure. Also, special training is undertaken to ensure a traditional pronunciation is used. There are even further additions to the process to ensure the purity of the *sīmā.* For example, high ranking monks are invited to add to the *sīmā's* status and purity, and guards are stationed at the village

entrances to ensure no monk enters the village during the consecration as this would create *vagga*. Some consecrations are even undertaken in the middle of the night when travelling monks are considered less likely.

On the other hand, in response to the complexities of modern life, both in terms of the number of monks that may be resident in an area and the duties placed on them, we noted a development not in line with the original intent of the commentarial prescriptions, namely the extension of the use of proxy so that monks who are not ill but just wish to prioritise another occupation can send their consent rather than attend. We also noticed a narrowing of the commentarial options such that the range of *nimitta* permitted in the canon and commentary had been reduced to just two, namely stone and water, and also that the more varied shapes permitted in the textual authorities were not now used. Only square and rectangular *sīmās* are consecrated.

In the final chapter, we looked at practical interpretations of *sīmā* practice that are all about avoiding the overlap of *sīmā,* an eventuality proscribed in the canon and commentaries. We looked at the extensive revocation rituals used to ensure that no previous *sīmā* was located in the area chosen for a new one, even when there is no indication whatsoever of a previous *sīmā* on the site. I examined using the concept of *khaṇḍasīmā* and *mahāsīmā* in which their overlapping points are interpreted beyond the canonical stipulation i.e. interpretations of overlapping trees and even overlapping wires – interpreted as trees – today.

Throughout the thesis I included examples to show how, both in Burmese history and in the modern period, the judgement that one's *sīmā* is not valid has serious consequences for one's monastic career and that of those ordained in the *sīmā* as well as those ordained by them in turn. I have demonstrated that the *sīmā* is the focal point of considerations of monastic purity and validity interpreted through close attention to the canonical and commentarial authorities, as well as the purity in relation to the correct identity of the space, objects or issue of the monastic act, monks, motion and liturgy involved. *Sīmā* validity and the correct definition of canonical terms and commentarial

prescriptions in the light of modern developments, such as changing secular space, management, government and utilities, have remained hotly contested issues in Burma. One advantage of this from the point of view of those who believe that societal wellbeing relies on the continuation of the Dhamma and *Vinaya,* as well as from the point of view of scholars seeking access to the Theravada textual tradition, is that Burma is home to considerable expertise in this area, maintaining a level of familiarity with the Theravada textual authorities unparalleled elsewhere in the Theravada world.

We have examined how such monastic practices developed in Burma under influences such as textual authority as the ultimate source for the authority of monastic practice and the involvement of politics and the political context in judging the validity of both textual authority and monastic practice. The perception of Theravada monastic practice is directly connected with textual authority descended from the word of the Buddha. It follows, therefore, that whatever these scriptures report is considered the ultimate authority. This is particularly true in the case of *sīmā* and monastic lineage, it being believed by the Burmese that no-one can add a new concept to these doctrinally sacred texts, nor can changes be made or a new monastic line introduced, the only true line being the one directly descended from the Buddha. Texts are used both to validate the correct monastic lineage and to define proper practice within the Theravada tradition. As a result, the concept of authority has been established through monks' practice being seen to be in line with recognized scriptures. This has led to the detailed textual and practical knowledge we have outlined.

Nonetheless, this has not prevented varied interpretation nor the development of new Saṅgha lineages. However, those who have proposed their particular interpretations or created new *gaing* (sect) have done so in the belief that their interpretation or lineage is the one that is in conformity with these textual authorities or *Vinaya* purity. On occasion, these differences of interpretation come before the centralised Saṅgha authorities, and it then becomes a combination of debating the textual sources and political support that wins the day. I therefore conclude that in Burma it is a unique

combination of detailed textual authority, political authority and perceived purity that determines the validity of a particular *sīmā* or its associated Saṅgha lineage.

Glossary:

Abaddhasīmā- un-consecrated boundary

Abaddhasīmāvihārā - un-consecrated monastery boundary

Abbhāna- calling back or returning

Abbhantara - one interval/ area within the radius of

Abhayārāma Sayadaw -(အဘယာရာမဆရာတော်), a *sīmā* author during the 'early middle' of 20th century

Abhidhamma yojanā (အဘိဓမ္မယောဇနာ)- an exegesis on Abhidhamma scriptures

Abhidhammapiṭaka (အဘိဓမ္မပိဋက)- one section of three baskets taught on the nature of mind and philosophy

Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha (အဘိဓမ္မတ္ထသင်္ဟ)- comprehensive compendium or manual of Abhidhamma

Abhidhammatthasaṅgahabhāsāṭīkā (အဘိဓမ္မတ္ထသင်္ဟဘာသာဋီကာ)- a sub-commentary on the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*

Abhidhānappadīpikāṭīkā -(အဘိဓာနပ္ပဒီပိကာဋီကာ)- a Pāli dictionary developed during Pinya dynasty (1310–1364)

Ācariyavāda - teacher's opinion

Addhayoga - a barrel-vaulted building

Adhikaraṇa-samatha - legal settlement of dispute or the settling of issues

Agamanapathe - a journey that cannot come back home on the same day

Aggamahāpaṇḍita (အဂ္ဂမဟာပဏ္ဍိတ)-a great scholar or knowledgeable person

Akhuntha thi ywe nemathi ya (အခွန်သာသီး၍ နယ်မသီးရာ) – only the collection of taxation but without the recognition of the defined border area (*gāma*)

A-khun thi hmu (အခွန်သီးမှု) –the 'area' of taxation

Akkharavisodhanī (အက္ခရဝိသောဓနီ) - a work on Pāli orthography

Alajjīdhammavinicchaya (အလဇ္ဇီဓမ္မဝိနိစ္ဆယ)- an exposition on 'shameless Vinaya' rules

Amarapūra - An old city in upper Burma

Amarapūra Nikāya (အမရပူရနိကာယ)- one of the monastic sects in modern Sri Lanka descended from Burma

Amyo-bhāthā–thāthanā (အမျိုးဘာသာ သာသနာ)- race or ethnic-'language' and religion

Anagat thathana-yay (အနာဂတ်သာသနာရေး)- future religious issues

Anauk khyaung dvāra (အနောက်ချောင်းဒွါရ)- one of three sections of dvāra nikāyas in modern Burmese monastic sects

Andhaka-aṭṭhakathā (အန္ဓကအဋ္ဌကထာ)- one of the Vinaya commentaries in existence before the composition of the 5th-century CE *Samantapāsādikā*

Aniyata - two indefinite rules in *pātimokkha* rules

Anomadassī (အနောမဒဿီ)- an ancient Burmese monk in the Soṇa and Uttara tradition

Anupaññatti -'subsequent ruling(s)', i.e. the rules and supplementary rules.

Anuradhapura-ancient city of Sri Lanka

Anussāvanā - proclamation and consultation

Āpattivinicchaya (အာပတ္တိဝိနိစ္ဆယ)- exposition of offences

Apyit ko say kyaw ya thana (အပြစ်ကို ဆေးကြောရာဌာန)- a place, especially 'monastic boundary' where the impurities were washed away

Araññasīmā - forest boundary

Araññavāsī (အရညဝါသီ)- the monks who live in the forest

Arimetteya - future Buddha's name

Ariṭṭha- a monk during Buddha's time

Ariyālaṅkāra (အရိယာလင်္ကာရ), a famous Burmese monk during 17th century

Ariyavaṃsa (အရိယဝံသ)- name of a monk in 18th century and author of *Maṇisāramañjūsāṭīkā*

Ariyavaṃsalaṅkāra (အရိယဝံသလင်္ကာရ) – name of a monk in 18th century

Asaṃvāsa- different communion or the monk who is not companionable

Asaṅkaravādī - unmixed opinion or belief that is not mixed boundary

Ashay Ywar Oksu (အရှေ့ရွာအုပ်စု)- eastern section of a village

Ashin Ñāṇakitti (အရှင်ဉာဏကိတ္တိ)- name of a monk and author of *Pārājikakandha yojanā* written during 15th century

Ashin Saddhammapāla (အရှင်သဒ္ဓမ္မပါလ) –name of a monk and author of the *Nettivibhāvinī ṭīkā*

Ashin Tilokaguru (အရှင်တိလောကဂုရု) – name of a monk and author of the *Dhātukathā ṭīkā* composed during 17th century

Aṭṭhakathā (အဋ္ဌကထာ)- commentary

Aṭṭhaṅgula - eight fingerbreadths

Aṭṭhasālinī (အဋ္ဌသာလိနီ)- a commentary on the Dhammasaṅgani, one of the Abhidhamma scriptures

Oksu (အုပ်စု)- a section

Aung Mye Shwebon Sayadaw (အောင်မြေရွှေဘုံ ဆရာတော်), name of a monk

Aunglan Myo (အောင်လံမြို့) -a town in lower Burma

Āvāsa - residential place

Atha-wo taya konkhan pyi thaw thu (အာသဝေါတရား ကုန်ခန်းပြီးသော သူ) - ['whose mind is free from mental obsessions'].

Avippavāsakammavācā (အဝိပ္ပဝါသကမ္မဝါစာ) - liturgy for not being separated from the three robes

Avippavāsasīmā - the boundary for being without one's third robe

Baddhasīmā - consecrated boundary

Bago Division (ပဲခူးတိုင်း) - name of a division in lower Burma

Bahikaraṇa-sīmāvisodhana (ဗဟိကရဏသီမာဝိသောဓန) - purity of the consecration managed by requesting the monks to stay in their consecrated boundary'

Bamaw Sayadaw (ဗန်းမော်ဆရာတော်)- name of a monk, who is current head of the State Saṅghamahānāyaka

Bannya Ran (ဗညားရံ)- name of a king in lower Burma during Hanthavaddy Dynasty (1287 to 1539);

Bagaya Sayadaw (ဘားကရာဆရာတော်)- a famous monk during 19th century

Bhāthāthway (ဘာသာသွေး) - the doctrine of life-force

Bhikkhunī - female monks or fully ordained nun

Bhikkhunī pātimokkha- disciplinary rules for fully ordained nun

Bhikkhuvibaṅga - section or division of Vinaya texts dealing with monks rules

Bhojakā - tax collectors

Bhūmibhāga - Allotment of land

Bhūmigatika - akin to the soil or land; the idea is used to explain the error between the monastic

boundaries comparing roots of a tree normally remain underground

Bimbisāra (ဗိမ္ဗိသာရမင်း)- a king during Buddha's time

Bodawpaya (ဘိုးတော်ဘုရား)- a Burmese king on the throne between 1782 and1819

Bodhiyāmūle gāthā (ဗောဓိယာမူလေ ဂါထာ)- victory verse under the Bodhi tree

Bodhiyaṅgaṇa - the area of Bodhi tree

Boglay Sayadaw (ဘိုကလေးဆရာတော်)- name of a monk

Buddhagaya - enlightened place of the Buddha in Bihar State in modern India

Buddhaghosa - a well-known commentator of the Pāli canon during 5th century

Buddhasāsana (ဗုဒ္ဓသာသန) - religion of the Buddha

Catuddissā-Saṅgha (စတုဒိသာ သံဃ) - four quarter monks

Caturaṅgabala (စတုရင်္ဂဗလ) - a minister of the Pinya dynasty (1310–1364)

Caturaṅgulappamāṇa - akin to four fingerbreaths i.e.the measurement of four fingerbreaths

Cetiyaṅgaṇa (စေတီယင်္ကဏ) - area of pagoda or pagoda lands

Cetiyaṅgaṇa Pariyatti Dhammānuggaha Aphwe (စေတီယင်္ကဏ ပရိယတ္တိ ဓမ္မာနုဂ္ဂဟ အဖွဲ့) - Pagoda's Doctrinal Welfare and Scholarship Association

Cha/kha Yat Kwet (ဆ/ခ ရပ်ကွက်) - an area (a council) name in Yangon

Chabaggī bhikkhu - a group of six monks (who are said to have distorted the Buddha's teaching)

Chan Mye Myint Yeikthā Kyaung (ချမ်းမြေ့မြင့်ရိပ်သာကျောင်း)- monastery name

Chanda Pay chin (ဆန္ဒပေးခြင်း) -offering consent by a monk who cannot attend the ceremony

Chandāharaṇa-sīmāvisodhana (ဆန္ဒာဟရဏ သီမာဝိသောဓန) - 'purity of the consecration managed by bringing the consent by proxy of any monk too ill to attend'

Cittasukharatanā Man Aung Kyaung (စိတ္တသုခရတနာ မာန်အောင်ကျောင်း)- name of a monastery

Cūḷapaccarī-aṭṭhakathā (စူဠပစ္စရီ အဋ္ဌကထာ)- one of the commentaries in existence prior to the composition of *Samantapāsādikā*

Cūlavaggādi-aṭṭhakathā (စူဠဝဂ္ဂါဒိ အဋ္ဌကထာ)- one section of the Vinaya commentaries

Dagon Myothit Myaukpaing
(ဒဂုံမြို့သစ်မြောက်ပိုင်း)- name of a new town in Yangon City

Dagon Myothit Taungpaing (ဒဂုံမြို့သစ်တောင်ပိုင်း)- name of a town in Yangon City

Daḷhīkamma- an act of reassurance or strengthening act

Danuphyu (ဓနုဖြူ)-name of a place in lower Burma

Dawei (ထားဝယ်)- name of a region in Tanintharyi Division, modern Burma

Desanā - teaching

Dhammacakka - - the wheel of the Dhamma

Dhammācariya (ဓမ္မာစရိယ) - Teacher in Dhamma, i.e. this is a title of Monastic Education Certificate equivalent to master degree

Dhammacetī (ဓမ္မစေတီ)- a well-known king of Hanthavaddy dynasty on the throne between 1472 and 1492

Dhammakathika (ဓမ္မကထိက) – preacher of the doctrine

Dhammānudhamma Mahādvāra Nikāya (ဓမ္မာနုဓမ္မ မဟာဒွါရနိကာယ)- earlier and later teaching of the great *Dvāra Gaing,* also known in the shortened form *Mahādvāra Gaing*

Dhamma Vinayānuloma Mūladvāra Nikāya
(ဓမ္မဝိနယာနုလောမ မဟာဒွါရနိကာယ)- the Original *Dvāra Gaing* in accordance with the Dhamma and *Vinaya,* also known in the shortened form *Mūla Dvāra Gaing*

Dhammayutti Nikāya (ဓမ္မယုတ္တိနိကာယ) – a sect of rationality or a sect based on reality

Dhātukathāṭikā (ဓာတုကထာဋီကာ) - sub-commentary on elements

Dhutaṅga (ဓုတင်) - austerity practice or ascetic practice

Dīpako - island

Dīpavaṃsa -chronicle of Sri Lanka

Disācārika bhikkhu- traveler monks

Dosa- anger

Dubbhāsita - wrong speech

Dukkaṭa - wrongdoing

Dvāra gaing (ဒွါရဂိုက်း)- name of a monastic sect

Dvāra Nikāya (ဒွါရနိကာယ) - Dvāra sect

Dvāravadī (ဒွါရဝတီ)- name of a kingdom of ancient Thailand between 6th and 11th centuries

Ekakamma - a single monastic act carried out within a single monastic community

Ekaṃsika - one shoulder wearing robe i.e. *atin* in Burmese

Ekuddesa saṃvāsa - one uposatha obervance within a co-residence

Ekuposatha - one uposatha ceremony

Gahira Village (ဂဟိရရွာ)- name of a village in Chittagong, Bangladesh

Gaing Gyoke (ဂိုဏ်းချုပ်)- leader of a section of monastic sect in Burma

Gaing Dauk (ဂိုဏ်းထောက်)- assistant to a section of monastic sect in Burma

Gāmakhet (ဂါမခေတ်)- area of a village boundary

Gāmakhet takhulon theing ya-me (ဂါမခေတ် တစ်ခုလုံးသိမ်းရမယ်), 'monks' within a village boundary should be collectively attended

Gāmakhetta - the whole area of a village where villagers farm or work

Gāmapariccheda- a defined limit of a village

Gāmappadesa –a village location or area

Gāmasīmā –a village boundary

Gāmavāsī - village dwellers

Gāmūpacāra- a village precinct

Gaṇavācaka (ဂဏဝါစက)- lecturer

Gaṇavimutti (ဂဏဝိမုတ္တိ)- free from gaing or monastic sect

Gaṇṭhipada - manual of glossary terms

Gavaṃpati (ဂဝံပတိ)- a monk from the middle country (india), who had a connection with Suvaṇṇabhūmi.

Hanthavaddy (ဟံသာဝတီ)- a kingdom historically related to Mon State in lower Burma in existence between 1287 and 1539

Hatthapāsa – a distance of two and half cubits length within which monks participating in specific rituals must sit from each other during the ceremony

Hatthapāsanaya- 'bringing' of the monks into the area created by the *hatthapāsa* measurement

Hatthapāsanayana-sīmāvisodhana (ဟတ္တပါသနယန သီမာဝိသောဓန): *Sīmā* consecration managed by *hatthapāsa* rule

Hatthippamāṇo - similar to size of an elephant

Henzada (ဟင်္သာတ) - name of a region in lower Burma

Hmawbhi (မှော်ဘီ)-name of a town near Yangon

Hna-Say Nga Yatkwet Kaungsi (နှစ်ဆယ့်ငါးရပ်ကွက်ကောင်စီ)- name of a council in Yangon City

Hngettwin gaing (ငှက်တွင်းဂိုဏ်း)-Hngettwin sect

Hngettwin Sayadaw (ငှက်တွင်းဆရာတော်)- nick name of the founder of Hngettwin sect

Hnapa zon ma-thi ya (နှစ်ပါးစုံမသီးရာ)- not capable of using the place in both sides; this means that neither the recognition of the defined border area (*gāma*) nor the collection of taxation is allowable for the consecration

Hnapa zon thi ya (နှစ်ပါးစုံ သီးရာ)- defined border areas of a village, which can be used for both the recognition of the defined border area (*gāma*) and the collection of taxation for the consecration

Hsanbon theinbon kyan (ဆန်းပုံ သိမ်ပုံ ကျမ်း)- a text illustrating different types of boundary

Indakhīla -God's door

Irrawaddy (ဧရာဝတီ)- name of a 'Division' in modern Burma

Jagayshala- name of a village in Khagrachari, Chittagong, Bangladesh

Jambhudhaja (ဇမ္ဗုဓဇ)- name of a monk, who translated the whole *Vinaya Piṭaka* into Burmese during 17th century

Jātaka aṭṭhakathā (ဇာတကအဋ္ဌကထာ)- commentary on the former births of the Buddha

Jātassara- reservoir or lake

Jeyasukha Road (ဇေယျသုခလမ်း)- name of a road in Yangon

Ka yatkwet Kaungsi (က/ ရပ်ကွက် ကောင်စီး)- name of a council in Yangon

Kabar Aye (ကမ္ဘာအေး) -world peace, a place name after sixth saṅgha convention

Kadau/Kado (ကူးတို့)- a village name in Burma

Kalayāṇamitta Athin (ကလျာဏမိတ္တအသင်း)- 'well-disposed friends', an organisation active in Burma in the early 20th centruty

Kammavācā - litany or liturgy used during monastic legal practice

Kammavācāsampatti - validity or perfection in the recitation of liturgy

Kanasochaung Ywar (ကနစိုချောင်းရွာ)- name of a village in lower Burma

Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī-abhinavaṭīkā (ကင်္ခါဝိတရဏီ အဘိနဝဋီကာ)- new sub-commentary on Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī, a sub-commentary on Vinaya

Kaṅkhāvitaraṇīporāṇaṭīkā (ကင်္ခါဝိတရဏီ ပေါရာဏဋီကာ)- old sub-commentary on Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī, a commentary on Vinaya

Kaṅkhāyojanāmahāṭīkā (ကင်္ခါယောဇနာ မဟာဋီကာ)- a sub-commentary to Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī, composed by Thitseing Sayadaw

Kassaci - something

Kaṭhina - a monastic ritual associated with monastic robe offering

Kaungsi Lugyi (ကောင်စီလူကြီး) -leader of a council

Kāya dvāra, vacī dvāra mano dvāra phyint pyithmar khay the shi thaw (ကာယဒွါရ၊ ဝစီဒွါရ၊ မနောဒွါရဖြင့် ပြစ်မှားခဲ့သည်ရှိသော်) [if I have committed wrong 'action' with my bodily door, my verbal door, mental door] – a liturgical formula

Kāyadvāra - physical door

Kāyakan (ကာယကံ)-physical action

Kāyakan, vacīkan, manokan phyint pyit hmar khay the shi thaw (ကာယကံ၊ ဝစီကံ၊ မနောကံဖြင့် ပြစ်မှားခဲ့သည်ရှိသော်) [if I have committed wrong action with my body, my speech, or my mind] – a liturgical formula

Kecivāda (ကေစိဝါဒ)- some views

Khagrachari, a district name, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh

Khaṇḍasīmā - monastic boundary consecrated by cutting a section of mahāsīmā or monastery boundary

Khīṇāsava (ခီဏာသဝ)- an enlightened one who overcomes the defilements completely

King Alaungpaya (အလောင်းဘုရားမင်း)- the founder of the Konbaung dynasty (1752-1885)

King Anawratha (အနော်ရထာမင်း) – a famous Burmese king who reigned between 1044 and 1077 and the founder of Theravada Buddhism in upper Burma

King Devānaṃpiyatissa (ဒေဝါန်ပိယတိဿမင်း)- a Sri Lankan king who reigned between 247 and 207 BCE and who welcomed the first Buddhist missionary from India

King Minkhaung (မင်းခေါင်မင်း)- a Burmese king who ruled between1401 and 1422

King Monkut (မွန်ကုတ်မင်း)- 19th century Thai King who reigned between 1851 and 1868

King Thalun (သာလွန်မင်း)- a Burmese king of Taungoo dynasty who ruled between 1629 and1648

King Thibaw (သီပေါမင်း)- the last King of the Konbaung dynasty who ruled only seven years before British occupation in 1885

King Uzana (ဥဇနာမင်း)- name of a king during Pinya dynasty 1313-1364

King Vaṭṭagāmaṇi (ဝဋ္ဋဂါမဏိမင်း)- a Sri Lankan King, who held fourth Saṅgha Council during 1st century

King Vijayabāhu (ဝိဇယ�’တဟုမင်း)- a Sri Lankan king, reigning 1056 to 1111, who invited monks from Thaton to offer re-ordination to Sri Lankan monks

Konbaung (ကုန်းဘောင်)- a Burmese dynasty in power between 1752 and 1885

Kosambī (ကောသမ္ဘီ)- an ancient kingdom of India during the Buddha's time

Kukimarapara- name of a village in Bangladesh

Kurundī-aṭṭhakathā (ကုရုန္ဒီ အဋ္ဌကထာ)- a Vinaya commentary in existence prior to the *Samantapāsādikā*

Kwe-pya-chin (ကွဲပြားခြင်း) - disunity or division

Kyaikkasan Paya Thein (ကျိုက္ကဆံဘုရားသိမ်), a monastic boundary attached with Kyaik-kasan paya pagoda, Yangon

Kyay ywar ok chok yay hmu (ကျေးရွာအုပ်ချုပ်ရေးမှူး)- administrator of a village

Kyanzitthar (ကျန်စစ်သား)- name of a king who reigned between 1084 and 1113 during the Pagan dynasty

Kyargaing Ywar (ကြာခိုင်ရွာ) - name of a village in upper Burma

Kyarnigan Ywar (ကြာနီကန်ရွာ) - name of a village in upper Burma

Kyaung mye phayar mye myar ko kyanoke- taw ma paing mapay naing (ကျောင်းမြေ ဘုရားမြေများကို ကျွန်ုပ်တော့ မပိုင်၊ မပေးနိုင်) [we are not eligible to possess or grant on a religious or pagoda's property]

Kyiwan Sayadaw (ကျီဝန်ဆရာတော်) - name of a monk

Kyun Ywar Sayadaw (ကျွန်းရွာဆရာတော်) - name of a monk, also known as Aggavaṃsa

Kyundawzu (ကျွန်းတောစု) -name of a place in lower Burma

Laddhinānāsaṃvāsaka - (member of different communion on account of different view)

Laṅkāsāsanavisuddhikathā (လင်္ကာသာသန ဝိသုဒ္ဓိကထာ)-the verses on purity of Sri Lankan Buddhism, name of a book written Shwegyin Sayadaw

Leikpot Kye-Ywar (လိပ်ပုတ်ကျေးရွာ)- a village name in Hmawbhi, near Yangon

Luk nimit - boundary marker in Thai language

Madu River- name of a river in Sri Lanka

Madhusāratthadīpanīṭīkā (မဓုသာရတ္ထဒီပနီဋီကာ) - a sub-commentary to the *Mūlaṭīkā* which is one of the works of Buddhaghosa on the *Abhidhamma* commentary

Mahā-aṭṭhakathā (မဟာအဋ္ဌကထာ) – a commentary written before the *Samantapāsādikā*

Mahādanwan (မဟာဒါန်ဝန်) - a royal ''minister charged with overseeing the monarch's charitable functions'', as well as monitoring the monks' adherence to the Vinaya rules.

Mahādvāra – name of a sect of modern Burmese Saṅgha

Mahāgandhāyon Kyaung Taik (မဟာဂန္ဓာရုံကျောင်းတိုက်) – name of a monastery founded by Ashin Jānakābhivaṃsa near Mandalay

Mahāmuni (မဟာမုနိ)- name of a Buddha's shrine in Bangladesh, which is a replica of Mandalay Mahāmuni image

Mahāpaccarī-aṭṭhakathā (မဟာပစ္စရီ အဋ္ဌကထာ) - name of a commentary in existence before the *Samantapāsādikā*

Mahāsaṅghika (မဟာသံဃိက)- Great Saṅgha, one of the well-known groups of Saṅgha during and after third Saṅgha Council around 3rd century BCE

Mahāsīmā -large boundary

Mahāsirijeyyasu (မဟာသီရိဇေယျသူ)- the author of piṭakat- taw thamaing, written during 20th century

Mahāthera (မဟာထေရ)-elder monk

Mahāthera Chapada (မဟာထေရ ဆပဒ) – name of a Mon who introduced Sri Lanka sect in 11th century,

Mahāthera Uttarājīva (မဟာထေရ ဥတ္တရာဇီဝ) – teacher of Chapada (see previous)

Mahāvagga Aṭṭhakathā (မဟာဝဂ္ဂအဋ္ဌကထာ)- a commentary on the *Mahāvagga* section of the *Vinaya Piṭaka*

Mahāvaṃsa (မဟာဝံသ) –a Pāli chronicle book written in Sri Lanka

Mahāvibhaṅga (မဟာဝိဘင်္), one of the two sections of the *Vinaya Piṭaka* relevant to monks' rules

Mahāvisuddhāyon Sayadaw (မဟာဝိသုဒ္ဓါရုံ ဆရာတော်)- the founder of Visuddhāyon monastery and author of Visuddhāyon 'ason apyat'

Mahāyin Nikāya (မဟာယင်နိကာယ)- name of a gaing (ordination lineage) in the modern Burmese Saṅgha

Mahāyin Sayadaw (မဟာယင်ဆရာတော်)- name used to refer to the founder of Mahāyin Nikāya

Maingkhaing Sayadaw (မိုင်းခိုင်းဆရာတော်)- name of a 20th-century monk and author on sīmā

Māmaka (မာမက), name of an author who wrote on the nine main *nikāyas* of Burma

Mānatta- penance

Maṇisāramañjūsāṭīkā (မဏိသာရမဥ္ဇူသာဋီကာ) - a work on the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* (Manual of *Abhidhamma*) composed by Ariyavaṃsa

Manle Sayadaw (မာန်လည်ဆရာတော်)- nick name of a prominent monk during 20th century

Manuha (မနူဟာ)- a Mon King of Thaton origin who ruled during 11th century and was defeated by Anawratha (1044-1077)

Marammadesa - an alternative name to 18th/19th century Burma known to the foreigners

Maso-yein (မစိုးရိမ်), a monastery name in Mandalay

Maso-yein Sayadaw (မစိုးရိမ်ဆရာတော်- nick name of the abbot of Moso-yein monastery

Mātikatthadīpanī (မာတိကတ္ထဒီပနီ)- a manual of 'threefold' section of Dhammasaṅgaṇī, the first of book of Abhidhammā

Maundaw (မောင်းတော)- name of a town near the border in Western Burma

Mawlamyine (မော်လမြိုင်)- the capital city of Mon State in modern Burma

Maymyo (မေမြို့)- a town near Mandalay, upper Burma

Mayogun Ywar (မရိုးကုန်းရွာ), a village name in Mying Gyan region, upper Burma

Mehtee Sayadaw (မဲထီးဆရာတော်)- name of the 19th century monk who composed the *Vaṃsadīpanī*

Meikthila (မိတ္ထီလာ)- a town near Mandalay

Miliṅdapañhā (မိလိန္ဒပဉ္ဟာ)- an important philosophical text composed in the form of questions and answers between Nagasena and King Milinda

Min Kyaung Sayadaw (မင်းကျောင်းဆရာတော်) – nick name of a monk during 20th century

Mingaladon (မင်္ဂလာဒုံ) - name of an area and also name of Yangon airport

Moggaliputtathera (မောဂ္ဂလိပုတ္တထေရ)- an ancient Indian monk who was the leader during third Saṅgha Council around 350 BCE

Mūladvāra (မူလဒွါရ)- one main section of Dvāra sect and a sect in modern Burmese Saṅgha

Mūlaṭīkā (မူလဋီကာ)-main sub-commentary

Muniratanasīmā (မုနိရတနသီမာ)- name of a sīmā near Yangon

Myatheindan Sayadaw (မြသိန်းတန်ဆရာတော်) – nick name of a monk in 20th century

Myat Myat Htun (မြတ်မြတ်ထွန်း) - a Burmese name and author of *Chaṭṭhasaṅghayanā Mahādhammathabin*

Myingyan Myone (မြင်းခြံမြို့နယ်) – name of a district town in upper Burma

Myo Oo Sayadaw (မြို့ဦးဆရာတော်)-name used to refer to a monk who attended a sīmā consecration in Hmawbhi in 2005

Myoma (မြို့မ)- main town or main city

Myone Kaungsi Lugyi (မြို့နယ်ကောင်စီလူကြီး)- town leader

Myone ok chok yay hmu- (မြို့နယ်အုပ်ချုပ်ရေးမှူး) - administrator of a town

Myone Saṅgha wunsaung (မြို့နယ်သံဃဝန်ဆောင်)- member of town Saṅgha administration

Nagarasīmā - city boundary

Naing-ngandaw Saṅghamahānāyaka Aphwe (နိုင်ငံတော် သံဃမဟာ နာယကအဖွဲ့) -the organisation of the State Saṅgha in Burma

Naing-ngandaw Vinicchaya Aphwe (နိုင်ငံတော်ဝိနိစ္ဆယအဖွဲ့) -State Vinicchaya Committee

Naing-ngandaw Vinicchaya Letswe (နိုင်ငံတော်ဝိနိစ္ဆယလက်စွဲ) - State Vinicchaya guides

Nānāsaṃvāsaka (နာနာသံဝါသက) - member of different communion

Nānāsaṃvāsasīmā (နာနာသံဝါသသီမာ) – a boundary for separate communion

Nānāsīmā (နာနာသီမာ)- different boundary

Ñāṇavimalatissa (ဉာဏဝိမလတိဿ)- a Sri Lankan monk who led a group of monks to ordain in Burma during early 19th century

Nandicakka (နန္ဒိစက္က)- a 15th-century Arakanese monk who led a group of monks to Sri Lanka for monastic reform

Narapatisithu (နရပတိစည်သူ)- a King during Pagan dynasty (r.1173 and 1210) who introduced the Sri Lankan monastic tradition into Pagan Kingdom

Narindābhidhaja (နရိန္ဒာဘိဓဇ), one of the leaders involved in the fifth Saṅgha Council held in Mandalay during 1868s

Ñatti - motion

Ñatticatutthakamma - monastic act of a motion with three proclamations

Ñattidutiyakamma - monastic act of a motion with one proclamation

Ñattikamma - monastic act with a motion

Ne saung hmu (နယ်စောင့်မှု)- safeguard, an activity required to prevent monks from entering the restricted area during sīmā consecration

Ne theing hmu (နယ်သိမ်းမှု)-jurisdictional control, an activity uses to control the area of the whole village during sīmā consecration

Ne theing thamok chin (နယ်သိမ်းသမုတ်ခြင်း) -sīmā consecration conducted by a 'jurisdictional control'

Netha thi ywe akhun mathi ya (နယ်သာသီး၍ အခွန်မသီးရာ)- [only the recognition of the defined border area (*gāma*) but without the collection of taxation]

ne-thi-hmu (နယ်သီးမှု)-defined border area i.e. village boundary in the case of sīmā consecration

Ne-ya go phyu-sin- aung loke-yame (နေရာကို ဖြူစင်အောင်လုပ်ရမယ်)- the place should be purified

Nettipakaraṇa (နေတ္တိပကရဏာ)- a section of khuddaka nikāya, one of the five nikāyas

Nettivibhāvinīṭīkā (နေတ္တိဝိဘာဝိနီဋီကာ)- a sub-commentary on the *Nettipakaraṇa* composed by Ashin Saddhammapāla

Ngakhone Sayadaw (ငါးခုံဆရာတော်), name of a monk and also author of *Khuddakapāṭhaṭīkā*

Nigama- market town

Nigamasīmā - market town boundary

Nigrodha (နိဂြောဓ), name of a novice, who converted the King Asoka to Buddhism

Nikāya - monastic sect or gaing in Burmese language

Nimeiksaung pokgo (နိမိတ်စောင့် ပုဂ္ဂိုလ်)- the person who answers the questions concerning the *nimitta*

Nimitta - boundary marker

Nimittapālaka –the person appointed to respond to questions by the Vinayadhara about the nimitta

Nimittasampatti - validity or perfection of *nimitta*

Nirayakathādīpaka (နိရယကထာဒီပက)- A text concerning hell

Niruttibhedasaṅgaha (နိရုတ္တိဘေဒသင်္ဟ) - name of a Pāli grammar book composed by Sayadaw U Bok

Nissaggiya Pācittiya -offence entailing forfeiture and confession

Nissaya (နိဿယ) - literally means dependence or support. This is a method of translation from Pāli into Burmese, so called because monks depend on this method when translating a Pāli term

Nyaung Lun Sayadaw (ညောင်လွန့် ဆရာတော်) - name of a monk and also known as Sobhitācāra who wrote the Thein myozon bhāsāṭīkā

Nyaung Yan Taw Ya Sayadaw
(ညောင်ရမ်းတောရဆရာတော်) - nick name of a monk who was the leader of Sixth Saṅgha Convention

Nyaung Yan Taw-ya vinicchaya Baungkhyot
(ညောင်ရမ်းတောရ ဝိနိစ္ဆယ ပေါင်းချုပ်) - name of a book written by Nyaung Yan Taw Ya Sayadaw

Nyaunsaungkwet (ညောင်စောင်းကွက်)- a seating place of monk used during sīmā revocation; this is similar to small rectangular bench drawn on the floor with white lime powder where monks sit and recite liturgy during sīmā revocation

Pacchimavaṃsa - western lineage

Padabhājanīya (ပဒဘာဇနီယ) - word by word explanation

Padhāna - main

Pakatat (ပကတတ်)- free from offence

Pakatatta -being pure i.e. good behavior

Pakatat-yahan: (ပကတတ်ရဟန်း)- a monk who is free from offences

Pakatigāma - original village

Pakatigāmasīmā - orginal village boundary

Pakatigāmasīmāvinicchaya (ပကတိဂါမသီမာဝိနိစ္ဆယ) - an exposition of main village boundary

Pakativassakāle - normal rainy season time

Pakokku Sayadaw (ပခုက္ကူဆရာတော်)-name used to refer to an abbot by using the name of the place where he lived; Pakokku monastery in Pakokku, upper Burma

Pala - weight measurement used during commentarial period

Paleik Town (ပလိပ်မြို့) - a town in Mandalay Division

Pāḷimuttakavinayavinicchayasaṃgha (ပါဠိမုတ္တက ဂိနယဝိနိစ္ဆယသင်္ဟ) -[Summary of *Vinaya* decisions extracted or freed from the (order of) the canonical text]

Paññatti - making known', i.e. making known the judgement

Pārājika - defeated i.e. a monk who has broken one of the four *pātimokkha* rules that mean he should be expelled from the Saṅgha

Pārājika kaṇḍa yojanā (ပါရာဇိကကဏ္ဍ ယောဇနာ)- a sub-commentary on the Commentary to the *Pārājika* section of the *Vinaya)*

Parakkamabāhu (ပရက္ကမဗာဟု) - a Sri Lankan King (1153-1186)

Paramattha-dīpanī (ပရမတ္ထဒီပနီ) - name of a book written by Ledi Sayadaw

Paribbājaka - wandering alms man

Parisa - person or audience

Parisasampatti -validity of assembly or perfection of monks

Parivāsa - probation

Pārupana- wearing monastic robe

Pāsāṇa nimitta - stone boundary marker

Pathamagyi (ပထမကြီး) – a third stage of monastic education, 'equivalent to BA'

Pathamalat (ပထမလတ်) – a second stage of monastic education, 'equivalent to A/L'

Pathamange (ပထမငယ်)- a first stage of monastic education, 'equivalent to O/L'

Pāṭidesanīya (ပါဋိဒေသနီယ) - offence entailing acknowledgement

Pātimokkha (ပါတိမောက္ခ) –Theravada monastic codes

Pattanikujjana (ပတ္တနိကုဇ္ဇန) – overturning bowl. A procedure whereby monks formally refuse food from someone

Paṭṭhāna - causal relationship

Paungte Myo (ပေါင်းတည်မြို့) -name of a town in Bago Division, Lower Burma

Pavāraṇā - invitation i.e. a monastic ritual held on the same day of the end of the rainy season retreat

Pazin:gan (ပဇင်းခံ) - ordination

Peṭakālaṅkāra (ပေဠကာလင်္ကာရ) - a sub-commentary on the *Nettipakaraṇa* of the *Khuddaka Nikāya*

Phongyi (ဘုန်းကြီး)- a Burmese term for monk, literally means 'high in meritorious field of respect or donation'

Pinlebu Town (ပင်လည်ဘူးမြို့)- a town in upper Burma

Pinya (ပင်းယ)- a dynasty in power 1313-1364

Piṭakat-Taw-Thamaing (ပိဠကတ်တော်သမိုင်း)- a historical book on canonical, commentarial and sub-commentarial literature composed by Mahāsirijeyyasu during the 20th century

Prome (ပြည်)- an ancient kingdom, lower Burma

Pubbārāma (ပုဗ္ဗာရာမ)- name of a monastery during Buddha's time

Pugāma - Pagan, the ancient city of tenth century Burma

Purimavaṃsa (ပုရိမဝံသ) - Eastern lineage

Pwekyaung Phongyi (ပွဲကျောင်းဘုန်းကြီး) - monks who engage in social and healing activities

Pyu (ပျူ) - one of the earliest Burmese ethnic groups said to have lived in Burma

Pyu Kingdom (ပျူနေ့ပြည်တော်) –a kingdom which flourished in northern and central Burma 1st-9th century CE

Phyu-sin-aung loke-chin (ဖြူစင်အောင်လုပ်ခြင်း) – purifying

Phyu-sin-chin (ဖြူစင်ခြင်း) purification

Rāhula (ရာဟုလာ) –name of a Sri Lanka monk who accompanied Chapada when he returned from Sri Lanka during 11th century

Rājapaṇṇesu - on map of the king

Rāmañña Nikāya (ရာမညနိကာယ)- one of the three Buddhist sects in Sri Lanka established by those monks who ordained Mon lineage

Rāmaññadesa (ရာမညဒေသ) - an ancient town of the Mon Kingdom

Rangamati - a district in Bangladesh

Ratanapura (ရတနာပူရ)- the Pali name of the 14th century kingdom of Ava in upper Burma

Ratanasiri Yatkwet (ရတနာသီရိရပ်ကွက်)- name of a council in Mawlamyine, Mon State

Saccavādī (သစ္စဝါဒီ) - name of a Burmese nun who first attempted to re-introduce the bhikkhunī order into the modern Burmese Saṅgha

Sādhujanavilāsinī (သာဓုဇနဝိလာသိနီ) - a ṭīkā on Dīghanikāya

Sagaing Sathintaik (စစ်ကိုင်းစာသင်တိုက်)- name of monastery in Yangon

Sagaing Sathintaik Thein Thamaing (စစ်ကိုင်းစာသင်တိုက်သိမ်သမိုင်း)-a history of the monastic boundary in Sagaing Sathintaik

Sakyasīha (သက်ျသီဟ)- name of monastic exam board

Sakyasīha dhammācariya (သက်ျသီဟ ဓမ္မစရိယ), a dhammācariya (teacher in Dhamma) certificate offered by the exam of Sakyasīha

Salin Sayadaw (စလင်းဆရာတော်)- name of a monk in 20th century

Sāmaggī- unity

Samānasaṃvāsaka -member of shared/common communion

Samānasaṃvāsasīmā - boundary for shared/common communion

Sāmanaykyaw (သာမဏကျော်) – a novice who has passed dhammācariya before his higher ordination

Samasikkhā - equal precepts i.e. monks who observe the same precepts

Sambhandha - connection

Sammohakārinī (သမ္မောဟကာရိနီ) – an act of confusion

Sammohavinodanī (သမ္မောဟဝိနောဒနီ)- commentary on Vibhaṅgha of Abhidhammā

Sampatti - perfection

Samūhanana - revocation or withdrawal of an old boundary

Saṃvaṇṇanānayadīpanī (သဝဏ္ဏနာနယဒီပနီ) - name of a text on Pāli grammar and philology

Saṃvāsa – communion (living and performing monastic activities together within a residence)

Sanay Min (စနေမင်း) – name of a Burmese king during Taungoo dynasty (r.1698-1714)

Saṅghamahānāyaka (သံဃမဟာနာယက)- Saṅghamahānāyaka (name of the State Saṅgha organisation of Burma)

Saṅghamahānāyaka hnyunkya hlwa (သံဃမဟာနာယက ညွှန်ကြားလွှာ) -State Saṅghamahānāyaka Directives

Saṅghakamma - monastic legal action

Saṅgharājā- head of the Saṅgha

Saṅkhepa-aṭṭhakathā (သခေံပအဋ္ဌကထာ)- a Vinaya commentary in existence before the *Samantapāsādikā*

Saṅkhepavaṇṇanā (သခေံပဝဏ္ဏနာ)- a brief description (this is a sub-commentary on the commentary to the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*)

Santisukhavihāra (သန္တိသုခဝိဟာရ)- a Burmese monastery in West London

Sāsana - religion or doctrine of the Buddha

Sāsana wunsaung (သာသနာ့ဝန်ဆောင်), name of a monastery in Hmawbhi, near Yangon

Saddattha (သဒ္ဒတ္ထ)- grammatical meaning

Sāsanahitika Pubbā-yon sīmā (သာသနဟိတိက ပုဗ္ဗာရုံ သီမာ)- a name of a sīmā hall in Yangon

Sāsanālaṅkāra Sadan (သာသနာလင်္ကာရစာတမ်း)- decorator of religion or doctrinal literature (a book written by Ñāṇabhivaṃsa in 19th century

Sāsanamye (သာသနာ့မြေ) – religious property

Sāsanapāla Sanpya Kyaung (သာသနပါလစံပြကျောင်း)- name of a monastery in Yangon

Sāsanavaṃsa - treatise on the history of Buddhism

Sāsanavaṃsadīpanī (သာသနဝံသဒီပနီ)-manual of doctrinal lineage

Sāsanavaṃsadīpikā (သာသနဝံသဒီပိကာ) – commentary on the *Sāsanavaṃsa*

Sattabbhantarasīmā - a boundary defined in an uninhabited forest or open space by seven *abbhantara* 'intervals. The length of one *abbhantara* is specific, namely 28 arms' length. One *abbhantara* when multiplied by seven becomes 196 arms' length

Sayadaw U Bok (ဆရာတော်ဦးဘုဒ်) - a famous monastic scholar during 19th century

Sema – term of boundary marker as Romanised from Thai language

Shankalaykyun Sayadaw (ရှမ်းကလေးကျွန်းဆရာတော်) - name of a monk who wrote *Alajjīdhammavinicchaya viniccha* during Mindon reign

''shay ga thugyi tabaing ok-khyok pon nint yakhu kaungsi tabaing ok-khyok pon ha tutu babe phaya'' (ရှေးကသူကြီးတစ်ပိုင်အုပ်ချုပ်ပုံနဲ့ ယခု ကောင်စီ တစ်ပိုင်အုပ်ချုပ်ပုံဟာ တူတူပါပဲဘုရား) - [the system of a 'village leader' administration in the past and the current administration of one councillor in the present practice are considered to be the same]

Shin Parakkama (ရှင်ပရက္ကမ) -name of a monk who moved away from the seven wooden temples during Pinya dynasty

Shin Sāradassī (ရှင်သရဒဿီ) - name of a monk during 17th century

Shin Sāsanadhara (ရှင်သာသနဓရ) -name of a monk who moved away from the seven wooden temples during Pinya dynasty

Shin Sawbu (ရှင်စောပု) –name of a king of 14th century Mon Kingdom, lower Burma

Shwedagon Pagoda (ရွှေတိဂုံဘုရား) –world famous pagoda in Yangon

Shwegyin Nikāya Mahānāyaka (ရွှေကျင်နိကာယမဟာနာယက) - head of the Shwegyin sect

Shwegyin Sayadaw (ရွှေကျင်ဆရာတော်) – the founder of the Shwegyin sect

Shwewamyint Kyaung (ရွှေဝါမြင့်ကျောင်း) - name of a monastery in Mawlamyine, Mon state

Sīlakkhandhavagga-abhinavaṭīkā (သီလက္ခန္ဓဝဂ္ဂအဘိနဝဋီကာ) - new sub-commentary of the *Sīlakkhandavagga* of the *Dīghanikāya*

Sīmālakkhaṇadīpanī (သီမာလက္ခဏာဒီပနီ)- a manual of the boundary characteristics

Sīmālaṅkārapakaraṇa (သီမာလင်္ကာရ ပကရဏာ)- decoration and performance of a boundary

Sīmānayadappana (သီမာနယဒပ္ပန) –mirror of the boundary consecration method

Sīmantarika - interspace, interval

Sīmāsambheda - connection between boundaries

Sīmāsambhedavinicchaya (သီမာသမ္ဘေဒ ဝိနိစ္ဆယ) – an exposition on mixed boundaries

Sīmāsampatti -perfection of monastic boundary

Sīmāsaṅkara - mixed boundary

Sīmāsaṅkaravinicchaya Sadan (သီမာသင်္ကရ ဝိနိစ္ဆယစာတမ်း) - 'exposition concerning overlapping boundaries'; a book published in 2008 by the Ministry of Religious Affairs

Sīmaṭṭhaka -'situated within the boundary'

Sīmāvīmaṃsanakathā (သီမာဝီမံသနကထာ)- an exposition on boundaries in verses

Sīmāvinicchaya kyan (သီမာဝိနိစ္ဆယကျမ်း) –an exposition on boundaries

Sīmāvinicchayādi kyan (သီမာဝိနိစ္ဆယာဒိကျမ်း) - treatise about expositions on boundaries

Sīmāvivādavinicchayakathā (သီမာဝိဝါဒ ဝိနိစ္ဆယကထာ) - an exposition on controversy concerning monastic boundaries

Sodhetvā- having cleared [the monks from the consecrated boundary]

Suddhama Zayat (သုဓမ္မာဇရပ်) - a pavilion called sudhamma (righteousness) or righteousness pavilion

Sudhamma apwe (သုဓမ္မာအဖွဲ့)- a royal monastic council used throughout Konbaung dynasty

Suttavibhaṅga (သုတ္တဝိဘင်)- rules analysis

Suvaṇṇabhūmi (သုဝဏ္ဏဘူမိ)- land of gold, an ancient name for modern Burma and Thailand

Suvaṇṇadīpa (သုဝဏ္ဏဒီပ)- an island of gold,

Tantee Pagoda (တန်တီးဘုရား)- name of a pagoda in upper Burma

Tapussa (တပုဿ)- name of a merchant from Suvaṇṇabhūmi, who met the Buddha after his enlightenment

Taunbila Sayadaw (တောင်ဗီလာဆရာတော်)- a well-known monk in 17th century and author Vinayālaṅkāra ṭikā

Taungoo (တောင်ငူ)- an ancient capital city during Taungoo dynasty 1510-1752)

Thanthaya kin-yakin kyaung (သံသယကင်းရာ ကင်းကြောင်း)- for overcoming of doubt

Thathanabaing (သာသနာပိုင်)-head of the religious order in Burma

Thathana-daw thant shin ti dant pyant pwa yay (သာသနာတော်သန့်ရှင်း တည်တံ့ ပြန့်ပွားရေး)- purification, perpetuation and propagation of the doctrine

Thathana yei athet (သာသနာရဲ့အသက်)- life-force of Buddha's teaching or doctrine of the Buddha

Thathana yei mwe phwa ya thana (သာသနာရဲ့ မွေးဖွားရာဌာန)- birthplace of Buddha's teaching or doctrine of the Buddha

Thaton (သထုံ)- an ancient Mon kingdom

Thi Lon Sayadaw (သီးလုံးဆရာတော်)- name of a monk during 19th century

Thei-in-gu Vipassana (သဲအင်းဂူဝိပဿနာ)- name of a meditation centre near Yangon

Thein (သိမ်)- a monastic boundary or ordination hall

Thein Aung Obhā (သိမ်အောင်သြဘာ)- victory statement in sīmā consecration

Thein Lan-hnun (သိမ်လမ်းညွှန်)- a guide to monastic boundary

Thein myozon bhāsāṭīkā (သိမ်မျိုးစုံဘာသာဋီကာ)-a sub-commentary to a text on various types of boundaries

Thein myozon Mahāṭīkā (သိမ်မျိုးစုံမဟာဋီကာ) - a sub-commentary to a text on various types of boundaries

Thein Thindan (သိမ်သင်တန်း) - sīmā training

Thein Ywar (သိမ် ရွာ) -a village name

Thigyamin (သိကြားမင်း)-name of a god, also known as Indra

Thiho-yauk kyi (သီဟိုဠ်ရောက်ကြီး)- 'returnee from Sri Lanka', this is a nick name of a monk, who had been to Sri Lanka

Thingankyun (သင်္ဃန်းကျွန်း)- name of a town in Yangon City

Thingaza Sayadaw (သဂ်ဇာဆရာတော်)- a famous monk during 19th/20th century

Thitseint Sayadaw (သစ်ဆိမ့်ဆရာတော်)- nick name of a monk

Thugyi (သူကြီး) -village representative or leader

Thugyi tabaing kaungsi tabaing (သူကြီးတစ်ပိုင် ကောင်စီတစ်ပိုင်)- [a phrase that expresses or interprets: 'a village leader of country region (countryside) is equivalent to a council leader of a city']

Thullaccaya- grave offence

Thuwanna Myone (သုဝဏ္ဏမြို့နယ်)- name of a town in Yangon

Tipiṭaka Pāli (တိပိဋကပါဠိ) - 'three baskets' of Pāli scriptures

Tipiṭakālaṅkāra (တိပိဋကာလင်္ကာရ)- title of a monk, who wrote Vinayālaṅkāra during 17th century monk

Tipiṭakavinicchaya kyan -(တိပိဋကဝိနိစ္ဆယကျမ်း)- an exposition of the Pāli canon

Tividhasampatti - three types of validity or perfection

Tonebala Ywar (တုံးဖလားရွာ)- a village name in upper Burma

Tu-thaw paung phaw chin shi thaw yahan (တူသောပေါင်း ဖေါ်ခြင်းရှိသော ရဟန်း)- [monks who have a mutual right to associate with each other in conducting monastic rituals]

U Paṇḍava (ဦးပဏ္ဍဝ)- name of a monk, who was the founder of Hngettwin Gaing

Ubhatovibhaṅga (ဥဘာတောဝိဘင်္)- a collective term, comprehending the Bhikkhu-vibhaṅga and the Bhikkhuṇī-vibhaṅga of the Vinaya Piṭaka

Udaka nimitta - water boundary marker

Udakukkhepasīmā- a water boundary created by splashing of water

Ukkhepa - throwing or splashing

Ukkhepanīyakamma - formal act of suspension or driving out by monastic act

Upanissaya (ဥပနိဿယ) – dependence

Upari pāsādasīmā - a monastic boundary established on the upper floor of a building

Upasampadā - monk's ordination

Upasampadākamma - act of monastic ordination

Upasena Mahāthera (ဥပသေန မဟာထေရ)- name of a 20th-century Sri Lankan monk

Uposatha - fortnightly monastic service

Uposatha vinicchaya (ဥပေါသထ ဝိနိစ္ဆယ)-an exposition on uposatha ceremony

Uposathagāra - a place for Uposatha

Uttarājīvamahāthera (ဥတ္တရာဇီဝမဟာထေရ) – a well-known monk in 11th century who came to Pagan city from Thaton after Shin Arahan

Uzana (ဥဇနာ)- name of a king during Pinya dynasty (1313-1364)

Vacīkan (ဝစီကံ)- verbal action

Vagga- group, division i.e. disunity

Vajirañāṇavarorāsa (ဝဇိရဉာဏဝရောရာသ)- name of a Thai vinaya expert during early 20th century

Vaṃsadīpanī (ဝံသဒီပနီ) - manual of monastic lineage

Vatthukamma - literally meaning the 'object generated by a conduct', i.e. the property donated by the king as meritorious conduct or sāsanamye (religious property)

Veḷuwun Nikāya (ဝေဠုဝန်နိကာယ), one of the nine monastic sects in Burma

Veḷuwun Sayadaw (ဗေဠုဝန်ဆရာတော်)- the founder of Veḷuwun sect

Vidatthippamāṇa - one span measurement, which is equivalent to the space between the first and middle fingers

Vihāra - monastery

Vihārasīmā - monastery boundary

Vimutti - freedom

Vinayadhara - an expert in Vinaya-related matters

Vinayālaṅkāraṭīkā (ဝိနယာလင်္ကာရဋီကာ)- decorator to Vinaya, a sub-commentary to Vinaya Saṅgaha,

Vinayamukha (ဝိနယမုခ) - Access to Vinaya

Vinayasamuṭṭhānadīpanī (ဝိနယသမုဋ္ဌာနဒီပနီ)- manual of the origin of Vinaya

Vinayasaṅgahaaṭṭhakathā (ဝိနယသင်္ဟအဋ္ဌကထာ), summary of Vinaya, a sub-commentary to the Vinaya

Vinayasaṅgahaṭīkā (ဝိနယသင်္ဟဋီကာ)- a sub-commentary to Vinayasaṅgha

Vinayavinicchaya (ဝိနယဝိနိစ္ဆယ), an exposition of Vinaya

Visuddhāyon ason apyat (ဝိသုဒ္ဓိရုံ့အဆုံးအဖြတ်), Visuddhāyon solution, a book written by Visuddhāyon Sayadaw

Visuddhāyon Sayadaw (ဝိသုဒ္ဓိရုံ့ဆရာတော်)- a well-known Sayadaw of the early 20th century

Visuddhimaggagaṇṭhipadattha (ဝိသုဒ္ဓိမဂ္ဂဂဏ္ဌိပဒတ္ထ)- a sub-commentary on the philosophical terminology of the *Visuddhimagga*

Visuṃgāmasīmā- small separate village boundary

Visuṃgāmasīmāvinicchaya (ဝိသုံဂါမသီမာဝိနိစ္ဆယ) - an exposition of a 'separate village boundary'

Vivādavinicchaya -an exposition on controversy [in relation to monastic discipline]

Vohārattha (ဝေါဟာရတ္ထ)- general meaning/common meaning

Wezayantā (ဝေဇယန္တာ) - name of a monastery, Maymyo, Upper Burma

Yatkwet Kaungsi Lugyi (ရပ်ကွက်ကောင်စီလူကြီး) – leader of a council area in a town or city

Yayaka Lugyi (ယယက လူကြီး)-leader of an area, either a single village or covering many small villages in countryside. An acronym for '*yat kwet aykhyan tha-ya yay hnint hpwan hpyo yay kaungsi*'(local peace and development council)

Yin kyay hmu takhulo phyit nayte
(ယဉ်ကျေးမှု တစ်ခုလိုဖြစ်နေတယ်) – 'one of the customs of the current practice'

Yojana- a distance of approximately 6 miles

Ywar (ရွာ) - village

Ywar Oksu (ရွာအုပ်စု) – many small villages together

Ywar hma yahan shi nay yin thein thamok ta pyet lein me (ရွာမှာရဟန်းရှိနေရင် သိမ်သမုတ်တာ ပျက်လိမ့်မယ်) – 'If a monk lives inside the village boundary [without attending the consecration ceremony], the consecration ceremony will be defective'

Yahanda (ရဟန္တာ)- enlightened one

Yanthu do go that phyat pyi thaw pokgo (ရန်သူတို့ကို သတ်ဖြတ်ပြီးသော ပုဂ္ဂိုလ်) - ['those who have defeated (killed or rooted out) their enemy'].

Ywar Kyaung (ရွာကျောင်း) - Village Monastery

Ywar Thar (ရွာသား) -villagers

Ywar Thaya Oksu (ရွာသာယာအုပ်စု)- name of a group of villages

Ywar Thugyi (ရွာသူကြီး)- village leader

Zeygyinemye (ဈေးကြီး နယ်မြေ)- an area of a market in Mon stat

Bibliography

Canonical and Commentarial Sources in Burmese Editions

Aṅguttara Aṭṭhakathā Vol. (iii) (1991), Ministry of Religious Affairs Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Cullavagga Pāli (1991), Ministry of Religious Affairs Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Cullavaggādi aṭṭhakathā (1992), Ministry of Religious Affairs Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Dhammasaṅgaṇī aṭṭhakathā (1990), Ministry of Religious Affairs Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Kankhāvitaraṇī aṭṭhakathā (1996), Ministry of Religious Affairs Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Kankhāvitaraṇī-purāṇa-abhinavaṭīkā (1996), Ministry of Religious Affairs Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Mahāvagga Pāli (1979), Ministry of Religious Affairs Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Mullapaṇṇāsa Aṭṭhakathā Vol. (ii) (1993), Ministry of Religious Affairs Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Pācittiya Pāli (1993)**,** Ministry of Religious Affairs Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Pācityyādi aṭṭhakathā (1965)**,** Ministry of Religious Affairs Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Pārājika aṭṭhakathā (1993), Ministry of Religious Affairs Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Pārājika Pāli (1993), Ministry of Religious Affairs Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Parivāra Pāli (1991), Ministry of Religious Affairs Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Sārathadīpanīṭīkā vol. (ii) (1992), *Buddhasāsana* Organization Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Sārathadīpanīṭīkā vol. (iii) (1992), *Buddhasāsana* Organisation Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Vajīrabuddhiṭīkā (1977), Ministry of Religious Affairs Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Vimativinodanīṭīkā vol. (ii) (1992), Ministry of Religious Affairs Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Vinayālaṅkāraṭīkā vol. (i) (1993), Ministry of Religious Affairs Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Vinayasaṅgaha aṭṭhākathā (1970), Ministry of Religious Affairs Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Vinayasaṅgha aṭṭhakathā (1970), *Buddhasāsana* Organization Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Canonical Sources in European Editions/English Translations

Dipavaṃsa: An Ancient Buddhist Historical Record (1879), edited by Oldenberg H. Luzac and Company LTD, London, UK.

The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya-Pitaka) Vol. (vi) (1966), Translated by I.B. Honour, Luzac and Company LTD, London, UK.

The Mahāvaṃsa or the Great Chronicle of Ceylon (1912), translated by Geiger, Welhelm, Buddhist Cultural Centre Press, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

*Vinaya Texts Part (i) (*1982), translated by Rhys Davids T.W and Oldenberg H. Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, India.

*Vinaya Texts Part (ii) (*1982), translated by Rhys Davids T.W and Oldenberg H. Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, India.

*Vinaya Texts Part (iii) (*1982), translated by Rhys Davids T.W and Oldenberg H. Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, India.

Burmese Traditional Sources

Abayārāma, Sayadaw (1961), *Visumgāma sīmāvinicchaya,* U Myint Oo publication, Mandalay, Myanmar.

Aggavaṃsa (1983), *Thein myozon Mahāṭīkā,* Religious affairs Publication, Yangon, Myanmar.

Candasirī, Ashin (2005), *Sīmā consecration record,* Sāsanawunsaung Kyantaik, Hmawbi, Yangon Division, Myanmar.

Candhobhāsa, U (1979), *Pathama Abhayārāma Sayadaw Phayargyi Ahnit tayapyit Sadan,* Abhayārāma Sayadaw Monastery, Mandalay, Myanmar.

Candimāsirī, Bhaddanta (2007), *Vinaydo Kyemun: Vinaya Nayūpadesa Kyan,* Ma O Pin Myo Pariyatti Mingkyaung, Ma O Pin Myo, Myanmar.

Dhammaghosaka, U Maung Maung (1981), *Sangha Ar Pha-yar Yonkhayte,* Thihamin Publication, Yangon, Myanmar.

Dhammānanda, Bhaddanta (2002**)**, *Sagain Sathintaik Thein Thamain,* Ministry of Religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar.

Janakābhivaṃsa, Ashin (1982**)**, *Pātimokkhabhāsāṭīkā,* Daw Khinthi family press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Janakābhivaṃsa, Ashin (2003**)**, *Mahāvābhāsāṭīkā,* U Maung Maung Publication, Amarapura, Burma.

Jotālaṅkara, Sayadaw, Ashin (2002**)**, *Piṭakat taw hnait sat hmaitsu-thwaylā thikaung sa-yya,* U Thuthun U publication, Yangon, Burma.

Jotālaṅkāra, U (2008**)**, *Theravada Buddhist Novice Ordination and Monk Ordination,* U San Oo Publisher, Yangon, Myanmar.

Kalyāṇa, Baddanta (2008**)**, *Pakiṇṇakatthapakāsanī Kyan,* Ministry of Religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar.

Kavisāra, U (2006**)**, *Thein Lang Nyuan,* U Kyaw San and Yee Aung Sape, Yangon, Burma.

Kelāsa, Ashin (1973)**,** *Pinya Sāsanāwin*, Sāsanajotipāla Kyaung, Mahāvisudhāyama Taik (computer printing) Pakhukku, Myanmar.

Kelāsa, Ashin (2009)**,** *Inva Sāsanāwin*, Ministry of Religious Affairs Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Khin Maung Nyunt (1997)**,** *Hagiography of Mahā Thera Shin Arahan and an Account of the Reconstruction of Shin Arahan's Brick Monastery,* Ministry of Culture, Yangon, Myanmar.

Kovida, Bhaddanta (2007)**,** *Sīmāvinicchayādi Kyan,* Shwemi Ein Sapay, Yangon, Myanmar.

Kumāra, Bhaddanta (2000)**,** *Kammākamma,* Mahāthein Dawgyi Pariyatti Monastic Institute (computer printing), Yangon, Burma.

Kumāra, Bhaddanta (2000)**,** *Theindawgyi Thamaing Hmat-taing,* Mahathein Mahāthein Dawgyi Pariyatti Monastic Institute (computer printing), Yangon, Burma.

Kumāra, Bhaddanta (2001)**,** *Vihārānumodanakathā,* Mahāthein Dawgyi Pariyatti Monastic Institute (computer printing), Yangon, Burma.

Mahāsirijeyyasu, Mingyi (2000)**,** *Piṭakat-tawthamain,* Ministry of Religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar.

Maingkhaing, Sayadaw (1971), *Sanbun theinbun kyan (*different boundaries illustrations), Kāyasukha Priting, Yangon, Myanmar.

Maingkhaing, Sayadaw (1971), *Tipeṭakavinicchaya kyan (*manual of three baskets), Kāyasukha Printing, Yangon, Myanmar.

Māmaka (2002), *Gaing Gyi Ko Gaing,* U Theing Ming Publisher, Yangon, Myanmar.

Maung Suta (Bohmu Ba Thaung) (2002), *Sasodaw Myar Atthupatti*, Yapyit Sa-oak Taik, Yangon, Myanmar.

Mehtee, Sayadaw (1966)**,** *Vaṃsadīpanī,* Yapyit Sa-oak Taik, Yangon, Myanmar.

Myat Myat Thun (2007)**,** *Chaṭṭhasaṅghayanā Mahādhammathabin,* U Thunmyat Aung Printing, Yangon, Myanmar.

Ñāṇābhivaṃsa (Mahādhamma Thingyan) (1956), *Sāsanālaṅkāra Sadan,* Hanthawaddy Piṭaka Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Ñānuttara and Sīlānanda (2004), *Tipiṭaka Pāli –Myanmar Dictionary,* Ministry of Religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar.

Nāyaka, Ashin (1991)**,** *Kyaungthaingbhongyi-yay-yar padaytha,* Myanmar sapay pyhant chyi-yay publication, Yangon, Myanmar.

Nyaun Yan, Sayadaw (1982)**,** *Nyaung Yan Vinicchaya Baungkhyot* (the comprehensive solution of Nyaung Yan Taw-ya Sayadaw), Icchasaya Tipitaka Publication, Yangon, Myanmar.

Paññā, Mahāthera, Ashin (1999), *Sīmāvinicchaya Kyan,* Ministry of Religious Affairs Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Paññājota, Dhammadūta, Ashin (1985)**,** *Dhamma Pyathanā Myar (9),* U Hlapaing Printing Ltd, Yangon, Myanmar.

San Htun Hmat Win (1986), *The initiation of Novice-hood and the Ordination of Monkhood In the Burmese Buddhist Culture,* Department of Religious Affairs Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Sankyaung, Sayadaw (1982), *Parivāsa Mānattādi Vinicchaya Kyant,* Nelin Printing Ltd, Yangon, Myanmar.

Sāsanābhivaṃsa (1994), *Myataung sāsanā nhitayāpyit thamaing (*hundred years history of Myataung Sāsanā institute), Dawtinwin printing, Mandalay, Myanmar.

Saya Theint (1969), *Thingazapaungkhyot,* Ledimandain printing corporation, Yangon, Burma.

Shwegyin, Sayadaw (1979), *Laṅkāsāsana visuddhikathā,* published by Ministry of Religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar.

Silānanda, Ashin (2002), *Theinthindan,* Sweesandathun Publication, Yangon, Myanmar.

Sīlavaṃsa, Mahā (1965)**,** *Yazawinkyaw,* Hanthawaddy Piṭaka Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Sirī Sobhana, Ashin (1974), *Mahā Dvāra Nikāya- Sāsanavamsadīpanī,* Ledimandain Printing Company, Yangon, Myanmar.

Sobhitācāra, Ashin (1968)**,** *Thein myozon bhāsāṭīkā,* U Tin Aung Publisher, Yangon, Myanmar.

Sobhitācāra, Ashin (Nyaung Lunt) (1994)**,** *kammavācābhaṇopadesa kyan,* U Tin Aung Publication, Sankhyan, Yangon, Myanmar.

Sudhammācārābhivaṃsa (2009)**,** *Gāmasīmādivinicchaya (*U Win Aung and Family) Ratana Printing, Yangon, Myanmar.

Taung Twing Gyi Sayadaw (1977)**,** *Kalyāṇī Kyauksa (Kalyāṇī Inscription Burmese*), Piṭkabyuhā Aphwe, Ministry of Religious Affairs Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Than Tun (1988), *Essay on the History and Buddhism of Burma*, Kiscadale Publication, Whitting Bay, Scotland, UK.

Than Tun [ed. & intro] (1983-1991), *Royal Order of Burma, Ten Volumes*, Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan.

Thihaswe and Maung Htee Lwin (1995), *Thein akyaung thigaung saya myar hnat thamainwin theindaw gyi myar,* U Thaung Shwepingu Publisher, Yangon, Myanmar.

*U Kalar Yazawin khyot (*1965), Hanthawaddy Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Vannitābhivaṃsa, Bhaddanta (2003), *sīmāvimaṃsana kathā,* Ministry of Religious Affairs Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Visudhāyon, Sayadaw (1985)**,** *Visudhāyon Asun-apyat,* Shwegyin Nikāya Sarpay Theingtheing Ye Aphwe, Mandalay, Burma.

Organization Publication Sources

*Bhikkhunībhāvābhāva Vinicchaya (*2006), State Supreme Saṅgha Organization, Religious Affairs Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

*Bhikkhunīvinicchaya Sadan (*2006), State Supreme Saṅgha Organization, Religious Affairs Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Chattha Saṅghayanā 2500th Buddha Jayanti Celebrations (1955), issued by Publicity sub-committee of Chattha Sanghayana and 2500th Buddha Jayanti Celebration Central Committee, Burma.

Dhammanītivāda Vinicchaya (6) (2006), Ministry of Religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar.

Gaing Paung zon Saṅgha Ase-awe Pwegyi hmatain (1985), Ministry of religious affairs, Yangon, Myanmar.

Hnyunkya-hlwa-mya (1-93 codes) (2008), Ministry of religious affairs press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Luthay lupyit vādānuvāda vinicchaya (**1981**), *Naing-ngandaw Thichya Vinaydo Aphwe,* Ministry of religious affairs press, Yangon, Burma.

Naing-ngandaw Sangha Mahānāyaka, Letswe (2008), Ministry of religious affairs press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Naing-ngandaw Saṅghamahānāyaka Vinicchayalatswe (2008), Ministry of religious affairs press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Ne-theing Thein Thamot Sain Ya Vinicchaya (2006), Ne-theing Thein Thamot Sain Ya Vinicchaya Apwe, Naing-ngandaw Theekhyar Vinaydo Aphwe (10), Ministry of Religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar.

Report on the situation of 'Buddhism in Burma' (January 1955-1956), paper submitted at World Fellowship of Buddhist, Kathmandu, Nepal by Ministry of Religious Affairs, Burma.

Saṅgha Aphwe Ase Sain Ya Upade (1990), Ministry of religious affairs press, Yangon, Burma.

Sīmāsaṅkaravinicchaya Sadan (2008), Ministry of religious affairs press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Sīmāsaṅkaravinicchaya Sadan (2008), Saṅghamahānāyaka (edit), Ministry of Religious Affairs Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Theravada Buddhabhāsā Sīlashin Aphwe Asay-away akhye-khan si-myin (2002), Ministry of religious affairs, Yangon, Myanmar.

*Thuntunglatkyan Uthinvāda vinicchaya (*2006)**,** Ministry of religious affairs press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Modern Sources

Ahsan, Selina (1995), *The Marma of Bangladesh*, Ahsan Publishers, Dhaka**,** Bangladesh.

Allen, Jane (2004), 'Sema Stones and a Small Brick Structure: Results of the 1965 Excavations at Ban Makkh Changswat Kalasin, Northeast Thailand'*, Southeast Asian Archaeology. Wilhelm G. Solheim II Festchrift*, edited by Victor Paz, Quezon City: The University of the Philippines Press Diliman: 522-530.

Arunatilaka, A. and Abhayasundara, P. (1999), *the Golden Links: Myanmar – Sri Lanka*, S. Godage and Brothers – Publisher, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Assavavirulhakarn, Prapod (2010), *The Ascendancy of Theravada Buddhism in Southeast Asia,* Silkworm Books, Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Bapat, P.V. (General Editor) (1956)**,** *2500 Years of Buddhism*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Government of India, Patna, India.

Bechert, H. (1968), 'Contemporary Buddhism in Bengal and Tripura' *Educational Miscellany Vol. IV Nos 3 and 4.*

Bechert, H. (1974), '*Sāsana*-Reform in Theravada Buddhism', *50 Jahre Buddhistisches Haus, Berlin, 19-34*, Berlin- New York & Com.

Bechert, H., (1970), 'Theravada Buddhist Sangha: Some General Observations on Historical and Political Factors in its Development', *Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. 29,*

Bechert, Heinz & Richard Gombrich [eds] (1984), *The World of Buddhism*, Thames and Hudson Ltd. London.

Bhagavat, Durga N. (1939), *Early Buddhist Jurisprudence,* Oriental Book Agency Poona, India.

Bischoff, Roger (1995), *Buddhism in Myanmar: A Short History,* Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka.

Bizot, François (1988), *Les traditions de la pabbajja en Asie du Su-Est* (Recherches sur le bouddhisme khmer, iv, Gottingen) (Abhanandlungen der Akademie der Wissenscharften in Gottingen, Phil-hist. Kl., Folge, Nr. 169).

Bode, Mabel (1909)**,** *The Pāli Literature of Burma,* The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, Luzac and Co. Ltd, London, UK.

Bode, Mabel (edited) (1897)**,** *Sāsanavaṃsa***,** Pāli Text Society, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK.

Bonnet, Cristina (2008) 'Brave Daughters of the Buddha: The Feminisms of the Burmese Buddhist Nuns' *Orientalia Parthenopea* VIII: 201-222.

Boulbet, J. & Dagens, B. (1973), 'Les sites archaeologiques de la region de Bhnam Gulen' *Arts Asiastiques*, xxvii.

Boulbet, J. & Dagens, B. (1973), 'Les sites archéologiques de la région du Bhnam Gulen', *Arts Asiatiques* XXVII: 1-130.

Bradley, W. L. (1966), 'Prince Mongkut and Jesse Caswell', *Journal of the Siam Society 54*.

Brown, Robert (1996), *The Dvaravati Wheels of the Law and the Indianization of Southeast Asia*, Leiden: E.J. Brill.

Buragohain, Jaya (2007), 'The Concept and History of *Sīmā* in Theravada Buddhist Monasteries in North East of India, Thailand, Myanmar and Sri Lanka' *The Indian International Journal of Buddhist Studies* No.8: 23-51.

Cady, John, F. (1958), *A History of Modern Burma*, Cornell University, Ithaca, USA.

Carrithers, Michael (1983), *The forest monks of Sri Lanka,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK.

Chakma, Jiban Ratana (1984), 'A Brief Account of Buddhism in Chittagong Hill Tracts', *the Journal of Heritage*, Ananda Vihāra publication, Rangamati, Bangladesh:12-20

Chakma, Raj Kumar (1983)**, '**A Brief Account of the Tribal Buddhists in Chittagong Hill Tracts'*, the Journal of Heritage*, Ananda Vihāra Publication, Rangamati, Bangladesh:20-26

Charles Keyes (1987) *Thailand: Buddhist Kingdom as Modern Nation- State.* Boulder and London: Westview Press.

Charney, Michael (2006), *Powerful Learning: Buddhist Literati and the Throne in Burma's Last Dynasty, 1752-1885,* Centre for South and Southeast Asian Studies, the University of Michigan, Michigan, USA.

Charney, Michael (2009), *A history of Modern Burma,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.

Choompolpaisal, Phibul (2011) *Reassessing modern Thai political Buddhism: a critical study of sociological literature from Weber to Keyes,* PhD Thesis, SOAS (University of London), UK.

Crosby, Kate (2000)**,** '*uddis* and ā*cikh*: the inclusion of the *sikkhāpada* in the *pabbajjā* liturgy according to the *Samantapāsādikā*' *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 28: 461-477.

Crosby, Kate (2006)**,** '*Sāriputta's Three Works on the *Samantapāsādikā*',* The Journal of the Pāli Text Society,* Vol. XXVIII: 49-59.

Crosby, Kate (2008)**,** 'Changing the Landscape of Theravada Studies' *Editorial Contemporary Buddhism,* Vol.9, No.1: 1-6.

De, Gokuldas (1955), *Democracy in Early Buddhist Saṅgha,* Calcutta University press, Calcutta, India.

Deegalle, Mahinda (2004), 'Politics of the Jathika Hela Urumaya Monks: Buddhism and Ethnicity in Contemporary Sri Lanka,' *Contemporary Buddhism* 5 (2): 83-103.

Deegalle, Mahinda (2006)**,** *Buddhism, Conflict and Violence in modern Sri Lanka* Routledge Taylor and Fracis Group, London and New York.

Dhammasāmi, Khammai (2004), *Between Idealism and Pragmatism - A Study of Monastic Education in Burma and Thailand from the Seventeen Century to the Present,* PhD Thesis, Faculty of Oriental Studies, St. Ann's College, Oxford University, UK.

Dhammavihari Thera (2003), *Critical Studies on the History of Buddhism in Sri Lanka,* Buddhist Culture Centre Press, Dehiwela, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Dhirasekera, Jothiya (1970), 'A Historical Introduction to the Sāmālaṅkārasaṅgaha of Vacissara Thera', *Buddhist Studies/ Bukkyu* 1, 76-73.

Dhirasekera, Jothiya (1982), *Buddhist Monastic Discipline,* Buddhist Cultural Centre Press, Dehiwala, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Diskul, Subhadradis (1956), 'Mueng Fa Daed, an Ancient Town in Northeast Thailand', in *Artibus Asiae,* Vol.19 No.3/4: 362-367.

Dutt, Nalinaksha (1941), *Early Monastic Buddhism Vol (i),* Calcutta Oriental Book Agency, Calcutta, India.

Dutt, Sukumar (1960), *Early Buddhist Monarchism*, Asia Publishing House, London, UK.

Dutt, Sukumar (1962), *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, India.

Eliade, Mircea (1959), *The sacred and the profane –the nature of religion,* A Harvest book, Harcourt, Inc. printed in the united states of America.

Godakumbura, C. E. (1966), 'Relationship Between Burma and Ceylon' *Journal of Burma Research Society*, vol 49, Rangoon: 145-162

Gombrich, Richard (2001), *Theravada Buddhism,* Rutledge, London and New York.

Guruge, W. Ananda (1984), *From the Living Fountains of Buddhism,* the ministry of cultural affairs, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Hall, D. G. E. (1928), *Early English Intercourse with Burma*, Longmans, Green and Co., London.

Hall, D. G. E. (1950), *Burma*, Hutchinson University Library, London.

Hall, D. G. E. (1987), *A History of Southeast Asia*, Macmillan Education, London.

Harris, Ian (Editor) (2007), *Buddhism, Power and Political Order,* Routledge, London and New York.

Hazra, Kanai Lal (1982), *History of Theravada Buddhism in South-East Asia*, Munshiram and Manoharlal Press, India.

Hazra, Kanai Lal (1988), *Constitution of the Buddhist Saṅgha,* B.R Publishing Corporation, Delhi, India.

Hazra, Kanai Lal (1994), *Pāli Language and Literature vol. (1 &2)* D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd, New Delhi, India.

Hazra, Kanai Lal (2011), *Buddhism and Pāli literature of Myanmar,* Buddhist World Press, Delhi, India.

von Hinüber, **Oskar** (1996), *A Handbook of Pāli Literature,* Walter de Gruyter and Co., Berlin, Germany.

Holt, John Clifford (1981), *Discipline: The Canonical Buddhism of the Vinayapiṭaka,* Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, India.

Htin Aung, Maung (1967), *A History of Burma¸* Columbia University Press (New York and London) USA.

Huxley, Andrew (2001), 'Positivists and Buddhists: The Rise and Fall of Anglo-Burmese Ecclesiastical Law' *American Bar Foundation:113-142.*

Ishii, Yoneo (1986), *Saṅgha, State and Society: Thai Buddhism in History***,** University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu.

Jayawickrama, N.A. (1971), *The Chronicle of the Thupa and the Thupavamsa, Being a Translation and Edition of Vacissara Thera's Thupavamsa,* London: Luzac & Co.UK.

Kalupahana, David (editor) (1991), *Buddhist Thought and Ritual,* A New ERA Book, Paragon House, New York, USA.

Kelasa, Ashin (1980), *Gaing Baungson Saṅgha Asi-awaygyi Thamaing,* Ministry of religious affairs press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Khin Maung Nyunt (1997), *Hagiography of Maha Thera Shin Arahan and an account of the reconstruction of Shin Arahan's Brick Monastery*, Ministry of Culture, Yangon, Myanmar.

Kiefer-Pülz, Petra (1992), *Die Sima,* Dietrich Reimer Verlag, Berlin, Germany.

Kiefer-Pülz, Petra (1995) 'Ceremonial Boundaries in the Buddhist monastic tradition in Sri Lanka' *Wilhelm Geiger and the Study of the History and Culture of*

Sri Lanka, Goethe Institute and Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, Colombo, Sri Lanka: 43-90.

Kiefer-Pülz, Petra (1996), 'The meaning of *māḷa* (ka)/ *māla* (ka) in Pāli', in Nalini Balbir et al. *Langue, Style et Structure dans le monde indien,* Bibliothèque de l'école des hautes études sciences historiques et philologiques, Paris: 285-325.

Kiefer-Pülz, Petra (1997a), '*Nāgas* Ordained and *Sīmās* Connected: The Importance of the *Vimativinodanīṭīkā* for Vinaya Studies', *Untersuchunggen zur buddhistischen Literatur* (SWTF, Beiheft 8): 239-*253.*

Kiefer-Pülz, Petra (1997b), 'The Rule for the *sīmā* Regulation in the *Vinaya* and its Commentaries and their Application in Thailand', *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies,* 20:141-153.

Kiefer-Pülz, Petra (1997c), 'The *karmavācanās* for the determination of *sīmā* and *ticīvareṇa avippavāsa',* in Bhikkhu Tampalawela Dhammaratana and Bhikkhu Pāsādika eds., *Dharmadūta Melanges offerts au Venerable Thich Huyen-Vi, Editions You –Feng,* Paris: 13-55.

Kiefer-Pülz, Petra (1998), 'A Legal Judgment Regarding a *sīmā* Controversy: Ñeyyadhamma's sīmāvivādavinicchayakathā', *Facets of Indian Culture, Gustave Roth Felicitation Volume,* Bihara Puravid Parishad, Patna, India: 210-218.

Kiefer-Pülz, Petra (2011) *Sīmāvicāraṇa: A Pāli letter on monastic boundaries by King Rāma IV of Siam,* Fragile Palm Leaves Foundation, Lumbini International Research Institute, Bangkok and Lubini, Thailand.

Kirichenko, Alexey (2011), 'The Making of the Culprit: Atula Hsayadaw Shin Yasa and the Politics of Monastic Reform in Eighteen Century Burma', *The Journal of Burma Studies,* 15 No.2:189-225.

Ko Lay, U (2003), *Guide to Tipiṭaka,* Ministry of Religious Affairs Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Krairiksh, Piriya (1974a), 'Semas with Scenes from the Mahānipāta-Jātakas in the National Museum at Khon Kaen' *Art and Archaeology in Thailand,* Bangkok: FAD: 35-100.

Law, Bimala. C. (1952), *The History of the Buddhist Religion (Sāsanavaṃsa),* Luzac and Co. LTD, London, UK.

Ling, Trevor (1979**)**, *Buddhism, Imperialism and War*, George Allen and Unwin, London, UK

Luce, G. H. (1969), *Old Burma-Early Pagan*, J.J. Augustin, Locust Valley, New York, USA.

Lwin, Tin (1961), *A Study of Pāli –Burmese Nissaya with Special Reference to the Mahāparinibbāna –Sutta*, A Master Thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

Lynch, Gorden (editor) (2007**)**, *Between Sacred and Profane – Researching Religion and Popular Culture,* I. B. Tauris London and New York.

Malalgoda, Kitsiri (1976), *Buddhism in Sinhalese society, 1750-1900: a study of religious revival and change,* Berkeley (USA and London), University of California Press, California, USA.

Malasekara, G.P. (1994), *the Pāli Literature of Ceylon*, Buddhist Publication, Kandy, Sri Lank.

Maung UShang (editor) (1987), *The Voice of Rakhine,* Rakhine Student Organisation of Bangladesh, Dhaka.

McCarthy Stephen (2008), 'Overturning the alms bowl: the price of survival and the consequences for political legitimacy in Burma' *Australian Journal of International Affairs* Vol. 62, No. 3, pp. 298_314

Mendelson, Michael, E. (1975), *Saṅgha and State in Burma*, Cornell University Press, USA.

Misra, G.S.P (1972), *The Age of Vinaya,* Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, India.

Moore, Elizabeth, H. (1999), *Shwedagon: Golden Pagoda of Myanmar / Hansjörg Mayer and U-Win Pe*, London: Thames & Hudson, UK.

Moore, Elizabeth, H. (2007), *Early Landscapes of Myanmar.* Bangkok: River Books, Bangkok, Thailand.

Mudar, Karen (1999), 'How Many *Dvaravati* Kingdoms? Locational Analysis of First Millenium A.D. Moated Settlements in Central Thailand', *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 18 (1):1-28.

Naidu, Sushil, K. (2008), *Buddhism in Myanmar*, Kalinga Publications, Delhi, India.

Ñāṇamoli, Thera (1969), *The Pātimokkha*, King Maha Makuta's Academy, Bangkok, Thailand.

Nyunt, Peter (Translated) (2012), *The Pitakat Samuin, or Pitakatthamain*, Pāli Text Society, Bristol, UK.

Okell, John (1967), 'Nissaya Burmese: a case of systematic adaptation to a foreign grammar and syntax', *Journal of Burmese Research Society L, i: 95-123.*

Okell, John (1971), *The Romanization of Burmese,* Royal Asiastic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, Luzac and Company Ltd, London, UK.

Paknam, No Na (1981), *The Buddhist Boundary Markers of Thailand*, Bangkok: Muang Boran Publishing House (in Thai and English), Thailand.

Pamaree Surakiat (2006), *The Changing Nature of Conflict Between Burma and Siam as seen from the Growth and Development of Burmese state from the 16th to 19th Centuries,* Asian Research institute, National University, Singapore.

Pe Maung Tin and Luce G.H. (translators) (1960), *The Glass Palace Chronicle of the King of Burma,* Rangoon, University Press, Rangoon, Burma.

Phayre, A. P, Sir (Arthur Purves) (1967), *History of Burma: Including Burma proper, Pegu, Taungu, Tenassarim and Arakan, from the earliest time,* London : Susil Gupta, India.

Pranke, Patrick (2008) 'Bodawpaya's Madness': Monastic Accounts of King Bodawpaya's Conflict with the Burmese Saṅgha, Part One,' *The Journal of Burma Studies,* Vol. 12:1-27.

Pruitt, William (1986), *Etude linguistique de nissaya birmans : traduction commentée de textes bouddhiques*, Paris : l'Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, France.

Pruitt, William (1994), *Etude linguistique de nissaya birmans : traduction commentée de textes bouddhiques,* Publications de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient; v. 174 Monographies, École française d'Extrême-Orient; no. 174 Published; Paris: Presses de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient, France.

Ray, Niharranjam (1946), *Theravada Buddhism in Burma*, Orchid Press, Bangkok, Thailand (first published in 1946 by La Bibliotheca Orientalist**).**

Reynolds, Craig, J (1973), *The Buddhist Monkhood in Nineteenth Century Thailand,* Cornell University, Ph.D Thesis, USA

Reynolds, Craig, J (1979), *Autobiography: The Life of Prince-Patriarch Vajirañāṇa of Siam, 1860-1921,*Ohio University, Press, Athens, Ohio, USA

Royal collection of Pali articles by King Mongkut vol. 2 (1972) (Prachum Phra Rajaniphon Bhasa Bali nai Rajakanti 4 Bhag 2) Khana Dhammayut printed as a souvenir on occasion of Royal cremation of the Supreme Patriarch Uhayi. Bangkok, Mahamakut Press.

Royal collection of Thai articles by King Mongkut vol. 1 (1968) (Prachum Phra Rajaniphon Bhasa Thai nai Rajakanti 4 Bhag 1) Khana Dhammayut and Mahamakut Foundation printed as a Royal Souvenir on the occasion of 100 years of King Mongkut's death, Bangkok, Mahamakut Press.

Sarkisyanz, E. (1965)**,** *Buddhist Backgrounds of the Burmese Revolution,* Hague/ Martinus Nijhoff, Netherlands.

Schober, Juliane (2011), *Modern Buddhist Conjunctures in Myanmar,* University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, USA.

Seidenfaden, E. (1954), 'Kanok Nakhon, an Ancient Mon Settlement in Northeast Siam (Thailand) and its Treasures of Art', *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d' Extrême-Orient 44:643-648.*

Spiro, Melford (1970), *Buddhism and Society: A Great Tradition and Its Burmese Vicissitudes)*, University of California Press, USA.

Srisuro, Wiroj (2003), 'Isan Sims: Ordination Halls in Northeast Thailand' in Pierre Pichard and Fransois Lagirarde, eds. *The Buddhist Monastery Across-cultural Survey, l'EFEO:,* Ecole Francaise D'Extreme- Orient, Paris, France: 131-148.

Stargardt, Janice (1995), 'The Oldest Known Pāli Texts, 5th-6th century; Results of the Cambridge Symposium on the Pyu Golden Pāli Text from Śrī Kṣetra, 18-19 April 1995', *Journal of the Pāli Text Society*, XXI: 199-213.

Strong S. John (2004), *Relics of the Buddha*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, USA.

Swear, Donald K (1995), *The Buddhist World of Southeast Asia*, State University of New York Press, USA.

Thanissaro Bhikkhu (1994), *The Buddhist Monastic Code Vol. (i),* Metta forest Monastery, California, USA.

Thanissaro Bhikkhu (2001), *The Buddhist Monastic Code Vol. (ii),* Metta forest Monastery, California, USA.

Thant Myint-U (2001), *The Making of Modern Burma*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.

Tin Maung Maung Than (1995), 'Saṅgha Reforms and Renewal of *Sasana* in Myanmar: Historical Trends and Contemporary Practice' *Buddhist World of Southeast Asia,* Edited by Swear, Donald, K. State University of NY Press.

Upasak, C.S (1975), *Dictionary of Early Buddhist Monastic Terms*, Bharati Prakshan, Varanasi, India.

Vajirañāṇavarorasa (1969), *Vinayamukkha vol. (i),* King Maha Makut's Academy Press, Bangkok, Thailand.

Vajirañāṇavarorasa (1973), *Ordination Procedure*, King Maha Makut's Academy Press, Bangkok, Thailand.

Vajirañāṇavarorasa (1973), *Vinayamukkha Vol. (ii),* King Maha Makut's Academy Press, Bangkok, Thailand.

Vajirañāṇavarorasa (1983), *Vinayamukkha Vol. (iii),* King Mahamakut Rajavidyalaya Press, Bangkok, Thailand.

Vallibhotama, Srisakra (1985), 'Sema Stone Boundary Markers from the Northeast: Survey and the Study on the Continuation of Megalithic Culture in the Region/Sema Hin Isan: Gahnsamruat lair sueksah gahn suknueang kong brapaynee bok hin tang nai sangkom pahk dawan orkchiangnuea', *Muang Boran* 11 (4): 6-33 (in Thai).

Van Schendel, Willem; May, Wolfgang and Dewan Aditya Kumar (editors) (2001**),** *The Chittagong Hill Tracts: Living in the Borderland,* the University Press Limited, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Wales, H. G. Quaritch (1969), *Dvāravati: The Earliest Kingdom of Siam (6th to 11th century A.D.)* London: Bernard Quaritch Ltd, UK.

Wales, H. G. Quaritch (1980), 'Recent Dvāravati Discoveries, and some KhmerComparisons', *Journal of the Siam Society* 68: 43-54.

Wijayaratna, Mohan (1990), *Buddhist Monastic Life,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.

Wyatt, David K., (1969), *The Politics of Reform in Thailand: education in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn*, New Heaven and London, Yale University Press, USA.