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CHRONOLOGY OF THE PALI CANON

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Rhys Davids in his Buddhist India (p. 188) has given a chronological table of Buddhist literature from the time of the Buddha to the time of Asoka which is as follows:

1. The simple statements of Buddhist doctrine now found, in identical words, in paragraphs or verse recurring in all the books.
2. Episodes found, in identical words, in two or more of the existing books.
3. The Silas, the Parayana, the Octades, the Patimokkha.
4. The Digha, Majjhima, Anguttara, and Samyutta Nikayas.
5. The Sutta-Nipata, the Thera-and Theri-Gathas, the Udanas, and the Khuddaka Patha.
6. The Sutta Vibhanga, and Khandhkas.
7. The Jatakas and the Dhammapadas.
8. The Niddesa, the Itivuttakas and the Patisambbhida.
9. The Peta and Vimana-Vatthus, the Apadana, the Cariya-Pitaka, and the Buddha-Vamsa.
10. The Abhidhamma books; the last of which is the Katha-Vatthu, and the earliest probably the Puggala-Pannatti.

This chronological table of early Buddhist literature is too catechetical, too cut and dried, and too general to be accepted in spite of its suggestiveness as a sure guide to determination of the chronology of the Pali canonical texts. The Octades and the Patimokkha are mentioned by Rhys Davids as literary compilations representing the third stage in the order of chronology. The Pali title corresponding to his Octades is Atthakavagga, the Book of Eights. The Book of Eights, as we have it in the Mahaniddesa or in the fourth book of the Suttanipata, is composed of sixteen poetical discourses, only four of which, namely,

(1.) Guhatthaka,
(2) Dutthatthaka.
(3) Suddhatthaka and
(4) Paramatthaka

share the common title of Atthaka and consist each of eight stanzas. That is to say, the four only out of tile sixteen poems fulfil the definition of an Atthaka or octade, while none of the remaining poems consists, as it ought to, of eight stanzas. The present Atthakavagga

composed of sixteen poems may be safely placed anterior to both the Mahaniddesa and Suttanipata. But before cataloguing it as a compilation prior to the four Nikayas and the Vinaya texts, it is necessary to ascertain whether the Atthakavagga presupposed by the four Nikayas was a book of four poems bearing each the title of Atthaka and consisting each of eight stanzas or it was even in its original form an anthology of sixteen poems. Similarly in placing the Patimokkha in the same category with the Silas and Parayanas it would be important to enquire whether the Patimokkha as bare code of monastic rules was then in existence or not, and even if it were then in existence,whether it contained in its original form 227 rules or less than this number. There are clear passages in the Anguttara Nikaya to indicate that the earlier code was composed of one and half hundred rules or little more (sadhikam iyaddhasikkhapadasatam, A. N., Vol. II, p.232) . As Budddhaghosa explains the pali expression, " Sadhikam diyaddhasikkhapadasatain ", it means just 150 rules. According to a more reasonable interpertation the number implied in the expression must be taken more than 150 and less than 200. If the earlier code presupposed by the Anguttara passages was composed of rules near about 150 and even not 200, it may be pertinently asked if the Patimokkha, as we now have it, was the very code that had existed prior to the Anguttara Nikaya. Our doubt as to the antiquity of the Patimokkha as a bare code of rules is intensified by the tradition recorded by Buddhaghosa in the Introduction to his Sumangalavilasini, (pt. I.,p. 17) that the two codes of Patimokkha were to be counted among the books that were not rehearsed in the First Buddhist Council.

The putting of the first four Nikatyas under head No. 4 with the implication that these were anterior to the Suttanipata and the remaining books of the Pali canon are no less open to dispute. With regard to the Dighanikaya it has been directly pointed out by Buddhaghosa that the concluding verses of the Mahaparinibbana Suttanta relating to the redisribution of Buddha's bodily remains were originally composed by the rehearsers of the Third Buddhist Council and added later on by the Buddhist teachers of Ceylon. A material objection to putting the Digha and the Anguttara Nikayas in the same category is that in the Digha Nikaya the story of Mahagovinda (Digha, II., p.173 pp. 220 foll.) has assumed the earlier forms of Jatakas characterised by the concluding identification of Buddha, the narrator of the story, with its hero, while in the Anguttara Nikaya the story is a simple chronicle of seven purohitas without the identification. The four Nikayas are interspersed with a number of legendary materials of the life of the Buddha which appear at once to be inventions of a later age when the Buddha came to be regarded and worshipped as a superhuman personality. (1) Our case is that without discriminating the different strata of literary accretion it will be dangerous to relegate all the four Nikayas to the early stage of the Pali canon.

The Suttainpata figures promniently in the fifth order of the chronology suggested by Rhys Davids.Without disputing that there are numerous instances of archaism in the individual suttas or stanzas composing this anthology, we have sufficient reasons to doubt that the

anthology as a whole was at all anterior to the Niddesa which heads the list of the Pali Canonical texts representing the eighth order.

By the Niddesa we are to understand two separate exegetical works counted among the books of the Khuddaka-Nikaya, (l) the Mahaniddesa being a philological commentary on the poems of the Atthakavagga (forming the fourth book of the Sutta-Nipata) and (2) the Cullaniddesa being a similar commentary on the poems of the Parayanavagga (forming the fifth or the last book of the Sutta-Nipata). The two questions calling for an answer in this connection are (vide B. M. Barua's Atthakavagga and Parayanavagga as two independent Buddhist anthologies -- Proceedings and Transactions of the Fourth Oriental Conference, Allahabad, 1928, pp. 211-219) (1) was the Mahaniddesa composed, being intended as a commentary on the Atthakavagga, the fourth book of the Sutta-Nipata or on the Atthakavagga, then known to the Buddhist Community as a distinct anthology? and (2) was the Cullaniddesa composed, being intended as a colmmentary on the Parayanavagga, the fifth book of the Sutta Nipata or on the Parayanavagga then known to the Buddhist community as a distinct collection of poems? With regard to the second question it may be pointed out that the poems of the Parayana group, as these are found in the Sutta-Nipata, are Prologued by 56 Vattugathas, while the Cullaniddesa is found without these introductory stanzas. The inference as to the exclusion is based upon the fact that in the body of the Cullaniddesa, there is nowhere any gloss on any of the introductory stanzas. We notice, moreover, that the glosses of the Cullaniddesa are not confined to the sixteen poems of the Parayanavagga, the scheme of the Canonical Commentary including an additional sutta, namely, the Khaggavisana, which now forms the second sutta of the first book of the Sutta-Nipata, From the place assigned to this particular sutta in the Cullaniddesa, it is evident that when the Cullaniddesa was composed, it passed as a stray sutta, not belonging to any particular group, such as the Uragavagga. The stray nature of the Khaggavisana Sutta may be taken as conclusive also from its mixed Sanskrit version in the Mahavastu (Senart's edition, Vol. I., pp. 357-359), in which, too, it is not relegated to any group. If any legitimate hypothesis is to be made keeping the above facts in view it should be that the scheme of anthology in the Cullaniddesa rather shows the anthology of the Sutta-Nipata yet in the making than presupposing it as a fait accompli.

Even with regard to the first question concerniug the chronological order of the Mahaniddesa and Sutta-Nipata, a similar hypothesis may be entertained without much fear of contradiction. The Mahaniddesa, according to its internal evidence, is an exegetical treatise which was modelled on an earlier exegesis attempted by Mahakaccana on one of the Suttas of the Atthakavagga, namely, the Magandiya Sutta (Mahaniddesa, pp. 197 ff). The modern exegesis of Mahakaccana forming the corner stone of the Mahaniddesa can be traced as a separate sutta of the Samyutta Nikaya, Vol. III., p.9, where the Sutta commented upon by Mahakaccana is expressly counted as a sutta of the Atthakavsagga (Atthakavaggike Magandiya panhe). Once it is admitted that the Atthaka group of poems had existeed as a distinct anthology even

before the first redaction of the Samyutta Nikaya sand Mahakaccana's model exegesis on one of its suttas and, moreover, that the Mahaniddesa as an exegetical work was entirely based upon that; earlier model, it is far safer to think that the Mahaniddesa presupposes the Atthakavagga itself as a distinct collection of poems rather than the Atthaka- vagga of the Sutta-Nipata. Though the scheme of anthology in the Mahaniddesa includes only the poems of the Atthaka group, there is a collateral evidence to prove that in an earlier stage of Pali Canonical literature two stray poems were associated with those of the Atthaka group just in the same way that the stray poem, Khaggavisana suttta, has been associated in the Culaniddesa with the poems of the Parayana group.

The Divyavadana, (1) for instance, mentions that Purna, an associate of Sthavira Mahakatyayana, recited the Munigatha and Sailagatha along with the poems Munigatha of Arthavarga (Pali Atthakavagga with the implication that the (corresponding to Pali Munisutta) and Sailagatha (corresponding to Pali Selasutta), included respectively in the Uragasutta, the first book and in the Mahavagga, the third book of the Sutta-Nipata, were associated with the poems of the Atthaka group. To put forward another argument the Nalaka Sutta in the third book of the Sutta-Nipata is prologued by twenty Vatthugatha or introductory stanzas which are absent from its mixed Sanskrit version in the Mahavastu (Vol. III pp.386, ff.). Judged by the theme and metre of the Vatthugatha, they stand quite apart from the Sutta proper. The Sutta proper is a moral discourse of the Buddha which is quite on a par with several suttas in the Sutta-Nipata and other texts, while in the Vatthugatha, we come to hit all of a sudden on a highly poetical composition serving as a historical model to the Buddhacarita of Agvaghosa.

The Moneyasute (Moneyya Sutta) is one of the seven tracts recommended by King Asoka in his Bhabru Edict for the constant study of the Buddhists. This Sutta has been rightly identified by Prof. D. Kosambi (Indian Antiquary, 1912, Vol. XLI, pp. 37-40) with the Nalaka Sutta in the Sutta-Nipata which, as pointed out above, has a counterpart in the Mahavastu (Mahavastu Ed. Senart, vol. II., pp.30-43 & Vol.III., pp. 382 ff.) where it does not bear any specific title. Judged by its theme, Moneyya Sutta is more an appropriate title than Nalaka. The importance of its naming as Nalaka arises only when the Vatthugatha or the introductory stanzas are prefixed to the Sutta without any logical connection between the two.

Considered in the light of Asoka's title Moneya-sute and the counterpart in the Mahavastu as well as of the clear anticipation of Asvaghosa's Buddhacarita in the Vatthugatha, it appears that the christening of the Moneyya sutta as Nalaka and the edition of the introductory stanzas took place some time after Asoka's reign and not before. Some stanzas of the Padhana Sutta have been quoted in the Kathavatthu which, according to the Buddhist tradition, was a compilation of Asokan time. The stanzas are quoted without any mention of the Sutta or of the text on which these have been drawn. The Pali version of the Sutta is to be found only in the Sutta-Nipata, Book III. The inference that call legitimately be drawm from the quotation is that the Papdhana Sutta had existed in some form prior to the compilation of the Kathavatthu, leaving the question of the Sutta- Nipata altogether open. The Khuddakapatha figures as the

last book in the fifth order, it being supposed to be earlier than the Sutta Vibhanga, the Khandhakas, the Jatakas, the Dhammapadas, the Peta and Vimanavatthus as well as the Kathavatthu.

Buddhaghosa in the introduction to his Sumangalavilasini, informs us that the Dighabhanaka list of the Pali Canonical texts precluded these four books, namely, the Buddhavamsa, the Cariyapitaka, the Apadana and the huddakapatha while the Majjhimabhanaka list included the first three of them. The preclusion may be explained either as due to sectarian difference of opinion or due to the fact that when the Dighabhanaka list was drawn up these four texts were non-existent. If a comparison be made between the Khuddakapatha and the Khandheakas, it will be noticed that the first short; lesson (saranattayam) of the Khuddakapatha was nothing but a ritualistic elaboration of an earlier refuge formula that can be traced in a passage of the Khandhakas. The second lesson may be regarded as made up of an extract from another passage occurring in the Khandhakas. The same observation holds true also of the fourth lesson, the Kumarapanham. The sources being not mentioned, it is indecisive whether the Khuddakapatha has drawn upon the Khandhakas or on some isolated passages. But if judging by the nature of differences in the common passages we are to pronounce our opinion on the relative chronology of the two texts, the priority must be accorded rather to the Khandhakas than to the Khuddakapatha. The Tirokuddasutta of the Khuddakapatha is the first and the most important sutta of the Petavatthu. The existence of this sutta previous to the reign of king Asoka is clearly proved by certain quotations in the Kathavatthu from it. Here again we are to grope in the dark whether the quotations were from the Tirokudda as an isolated Sutta or from a sutta in the Petavatthu or in the Khuddakapatha. If any inference may be drawn from the high prominence that it enjoys in the Petavatthu our opinion will be rather in favour of priority of the Petavatthu. Now coming to the Kathavatthu, we have already mentioned that it contains certain significant quotations from two suttas, the Tirokudda and the Nidhikanda, both of which are embodied in the Khuddakapatha, but there is nothing to show that when the Kathavatthu was compiled with these quotations the Khuddakapatha itself was then in actual existence, it being quite probable that the quotations were made from the two isolated suttas, we mean when these suttas had not come to be included in the Khuddakapatha.

The Abhidhamma treatises figure as latest compilations in the chronological table of Rhys Davids. Of the seven Abhidhamma books, the Kathavatthu is traditionally known as a compilation of Asokan age. The credibility of the tradition can be proved by a very peculiar dialectical style of composition developed in the all-important book of Buddhist Controversies and the traces of which can also be found to linger in some of the inscriptions of Asoka, namely the Kalsi Shahabazgarhi and Manserahversions of the ninth Rock Edict (Vide B. M. Barua's old Brahmi Inscriptions, p. 284). Another and more convincing piece of evidence may be brought forward to prove the credibility of the tradition.

Prior to the despatch of missionaries by Asoka, Buddhism as a religious movement was confined, more or less, within the territorial limits of what is known in Buddhist literature as the Middle Country (Majjhimadesa) and the Buddhist tradition in Pali is very definite on this point. The Sanci stupas which go back to the date of Asoka enshrine to the relies of the missionaries who were sent out to the Himalayan tracts as also of the " good man " Ogaliputa, aptly identified by Dr. Geiger with Moggaliputta Tissa, the traditional author of the Kathavatthu. Curiously enough, the Kathavatthu contains the account of a controversy, (I.3) in which it has been emphatically pointed out that up till the time of this particular controversy, the Buddhist mode of holy life remained confined to the places within the middle country and had not gained ground in any of the outlying tracts (paccantimesu janapadesu), the representatives of Buddhism whether the monks or the laity having had no access to those regions (B.M. Barua, Old Brahmi Inscriptions, p.284). The account clearly brings out one important historical fact,namely, that so far as out; the outlying tracts are concerned, there were undeniably at that time other modes of Indian holy life. It is interesting to find that the 13th Rock Edict of Asoka is in close agreement with the Kathavatthu regarding this point. For in this important edict issued in about the 13th or 14th regnal year of King Asoka, His Gifted Majesty definitely says that there was at the time no other tract within his empire, and except the Yona region where the different sects of Indian recluses, the Samanas and Brahmanas were not to be found and where the inhabitants had not adhered to the tenets of one or other of those sects.
(Vide Inscriptions of Asoka by Bhandarkar and Majumdar. pp. 49-50- "Nathi cha she janapade yata nathi ime nikaya anamta yenesha bamhmane cha shamane cha nathi cha kuva pi janapadashi (ya) ta nathi manushanam ekatalashi pi pashadashi no nama pashade").
Squaring up the two-fold evidence, it is easy to come to the conclusion that the compilation of the Kathavatthu could not be remote from the reign of Asoka.
In the Kathavatthu, there are quotations the sources of which can now be traced in some of the passages in the Vinaya Pitaka, Digha Nikaya, the Majjhima Nikaya, the Samyutta Nikaya, the Anguttara Nikaya and some of the books of the Khuddaka Nikaya.
A few of the quotations can be traced in the Dhammasangani and the Vibhanga among the Abhidhamma books. As the passages are quoted in the Kathavatthu without any mention of the sources, rather as well known and authoritative words of the Buddha, it cannot be definitely maintained that the quotations were cited from the canonical texts in which the individual passages are traceable. There were suttas in some definite collections but until other definite evidences are forthcoming, it will be risky to identify them with the Nikayas and the Vinaya texts as they are known to us. Even with regard to this point our position remains materially the same if we take our stand on the evidence of the Inscriptions of Asoka, particularly on that of the Bhabru Edict. The Bhabru Edict clearly points back to a well-known collection of Buddha's words, the words which came to be believed as at once final and authoritative (ekemchi bhamte Bhagavata Buddhena bhasite save se subhasite). But here again we are helpless as to by what name this collection was then designated and what were

its divisions? If such be the state of thing, it will be difficult to regard all the Abhidhamma books in the lump as the latest productions among the books of the Pali Pitakas. As for the chronology of the Pali canonical texts, the safer course will be to fix first of all the upper and lower limits and then to ascertain how the time may be apportioned between them in conceiving their chronological order. As regards the upperlimit certain it is that we cannot think of any text on Buddhism before the enlightenment of the Buddha.

Whatever be the actual date of the individual texts, it is certainly posterior to the great event of Buddha's enlightenment, nay, posterior even to the subsequent incident of the first public statement or promulgation of the fundamental truth of the new religion. The upper limit may be shifted on even to the demise of the Buddha, even to the demise of the Buddha, the first formal collection of the teachings of the Buddha having taken place, according to the unanimity of the Buddhist tradition, after that memorable event.

Looked at from this point of view, the period covered by the career of 45 years of Buddha's active missionary work may be regarded just as the formative period which saw the fashioning of the early materials of the Buddhist Canon.

With regard to the lower limit we need not bring it so far down as the time of the Pali scholiasts, Buddhadatta, Buddhaghosa and Dhammapala, that is to say, to the fifth century A. D.

Going by the tradition, the Buddhist canon became finally closed when it was committed to writing for the first time during the reign of King Vattagamani of Ceylon (Circa 29-17 B.C.). The truth of this tradition can be substantiated by the clear internal evidence of the text of the Milinda Panha which was a compilation of about the first century A. D. As is well-known, in several passages, the author of the Milinda Panha has referred to the Pali books or to some chapters of them by name and the number of books mentioned by name is sufficiently large to exhaust almost the traditional list. Further, it is evident from references in this text that when it was compiled the division of the canon into three Pitakas and five Nikayas was well established.

The Dhammasangani, the Vibhanga, the Dhatukatha, and the rest were precisely the seven books which composed the Abhidhamma Pitaka and the Digha, Majjhima, Samyutta, Ekuttara (Anguttara) and Khuddaka were the five Nikayas which composed the Sutta Pitaka.

The Simhalese commentaries, the Mahaatthakatatha, the Mahapaccariya, the Mahakurundiya, the Andhaka and the rest, presupposed by the commentaries of Buddhadatta, Buddhaghusa and Dhammapala point to the same fact, namely, that the canon became finally closed sometime before the begining of the Christian era. Thus we can safely fix the fast quarter of the first century B. C. as the lower limit.

The interval of time between these two limits covers not less than four centuries during which there had been convened as many as six orthodox councils, three in India and three in Ceylon, the first during the reign of King Ajatasattu, the second in the reign of King Kalasoka (Kakavarni of the Puranas), the third in the reign of Asoka, the fourth in the reign of King

Devanam Piyatissa of Ceylon, the fifth in the reign of King Dutthagamani and the sixth or the last in the reign of King Vattagamani. The Pali accounts of these councils make it clear that the purpose of each of them was the recital and settling of the canonical texts. If these councils can be regarded as certain definite landmarks in the process of the development of Pali canonical literature, we can say that during the first four centuries after the Buddha's demise, Pali literature underwent as many as six successive redactions. Going by the dates assigned to these councils, we may divide the interval into such shorter periods of Pali literary history as shown below:

First period ---(483--383 B.C.)
Second " ---(383--265 B.C.)
Third " ---(265--230 B.C.)
Fourth " ---(230--80 B.C.)
Fifth " ---(80-20 B.C.)

Keeping these periods in view, we can easily dispose of some of the Pali books. We may take, for instances, the Parivarapatha which is the last treatise to be included in the Vinayapitaka. This treatise, as early stated in the Colophon (nigamana) was written in Ceylon by Dipa, evidently a learned Buddhist scholar of Ceylon as a help to his pupils to the study of the contents of the Vinaya.

(Parivarapatha, p.226, "Pubbacariyamaggan ca pucchitva'va tahim tahim Dipanamo mahapanno sutadharo vicakkhano imam vitthara samkhepam sajjhamaggena majjhime cintayitva likhapesi sissakanam sukhavaham Parivaran ti yam vuttam sabbam vatthum salakkhanam attham attena saddhamme dhammam dhammena pannatte ").

As such the Parivarapatha was composed as a digest of the subject-matter of Vinaya or Buddhist discipline.

We say that this treatise was composed in Ceylon because there are references within the text itself that it had been written after the Vinayapitaka was promulgated by Thera Mahinda and a number of his disciples and by their disciples in Ceylon. The succession of his disciples from the time of Thera Mahinda as set forth in the Parivarapatha (pp. 2-3) may suffice to show that the date of its composition could not be much earlier than the reign of Vattagamani. Even we may go so far as to suggest that the Parivarapatha was the Vinaya treatise which was canonised at the council held during the reign of Vattagamani. For it is clearly stated in that the author caused the treatise to be written (likhapesi), a mode of preserving the scriptures which would be inconceivable before the reign of Vattagamani. The reference to the island of Tambapanni or Ceylon is not only in the verses which one might set aside as interpolation but in the prose portions which form the integral parts of the text.

Now if we fix our attention on the traditional verses embodied in the Parivarapatha (pp.2-3) edited by Oldenberg) we have to infer therefrom that the five Nikayes, the seven treatises of the Abhidhammapitaka and all the older texts of the Vinayapitaka were made known to the

people of Ceylon by the wise Mahinda who arrived in Ceylon from Jambbudipa (India) after the third Buddhist council had been over.
(Parivarapathapp. 2-3, "Upali Dasako, c'eva Sonako Siggavo tatha, Moggaliputtena Pancama ete Jambusirivhaye tato Mahindo Ittiyo Uttiyo Sambalo tatha Bhaddanamo ca pandito, ete naga mahapanna Jambudipaidhagata, Vinayam te vacayimsu pitakam Tambapan niya nikaye panca vacesum satta c'eva pakarane").
The Mahavagga and the Cullavagga are two among the earlier and important texts of the Vinayapitaka. Twenty two Khandhakas or stock fragments are distributed into the two texts, ten into the Mahavagga and the remaining twelve into the Cullavagga. These fragments constituting the separate divisions are arranged in a chronological order, and they are intended to present a connected account of the ecclesiastical history of the Buddhists from the time of the enlightenment of the Buddha down to that of the second Buddhist council which was convened, according to the Cullavagga account, a century after the demise of the Buddha (Vassasataparinibbute Bhagavati). The growth of the two texts may be sought to be accounted for by these two hypotheses:
(1) that the Khandhakas were being added as they came into existence from time to time, or
(2) that they were arranged all at the same time according to a set plan.
Whatever be the actual merit of these hypotheses, none of them prevents us from maintaining that the series of the Khandhakas was closed with the inclusion of the account of the second Buddhist council and that nothing material was added after that, nothing, we mean to say, except the Uddanas or mnemonics in doggerel verses appended to each of the Khandhakas. Had the compilation of the Khandhakas remained open after the second Buddhist council, it would have included an account of the later councils, particularly of one held during the reign of Asoka. This line of argument is sufficientiy strong to establish that the compilation of the twenty two Khandhakas as we find them embodied in the Mahavagga and Cullavagga was anterior to the reign of Asoka, as well as that its history is primarily associated with the tradition of the second Buddhist council. Assuming then that the closing of the collection of the Khandhakas in the shape of the Mahavagga and the Cullavagga could not be removed from the first century of the Buddha era, we may briefly examine what inferences can be drawn from the Cullavagga accounts of the first and second Buddhist councils regarding the development of the Canonical texts. First with regard to the earlier Vinaya texts, the Cullavagga account of the second Buddhist council (Chap. 12) has referred to the followillg authorities by name, namely (1) Savatthiya Suttvibhanga
(2) Rajagahe "
(3) Savatthiys "
(4) Savatthiya sutta
(5) Kosambiys "
(6) Savatthiya "
(7) Rajagahe "

(8) Rajagahe uposathasamyutte
(9) Campeyyake Vinaya Vatthusmin.

The Suttavibhanga passages referred to in the Cullavagga account have been all found out by Prof. Oldenberg in the Suttavibhanga and what is more, the identified passages have satisfied the context supplied (Savatthiya, Rajagahe Kosambiya). Keeping this fact in view can it be doubted that the Suttavibhanga of the Vinayapitaka was current as an authoritative text on Vinaya when the Cullavagga account referring to its passages was written? Now with regard to the remaining two references, namely, Rajagahe Uposathasamyutte and Campeyyake Vinayavatthusmin traced respectively in the Mahavagga (II., 8. 3) and Mahavagga (IX. 3.5), it is curious that the first reference is to a Samyutta passage and the second to a Vinayavatthu. Although the Samyutta passage has found its place in the Mahavagga, so long as the fact remains that the reference is to a passage in the Sutta collection, our inference must be that the Mahavagga in its extant form was not yet in existence. The second reference is important as pointing back to the existence of certain Vinayavatthus serving as materials for a compilation like the Mahavagga.

Turning at last to the Cullavagga account of the first Buddhist council, it will be a mistake to suppose that the account as we have it in the Cullavagga is as old as the time of the counci1 itself. The account must have been posterior to the time when the scriptural authorities of the Buddhist community comprised (1) Ubhato Vinaya-the disciplinary code of the bhikkhunis, and (2) Panca-Nikaya-the five Nikayas, Digha, Majjhima and the rest. Some of the Burmese manuscripts read Ubhato Vibhanga in lieu of Ubhato Vinaya. That may be a mistake. But the contents mentioned in the Cullavagga account are undoubtedly the contents oh the two vibhangas, the Bhikkhu and the Bhikkhuni. The list of the Sikkhapadas codified as bare rules in the two Patimokkhas is important as showing that the author of the Cullavagga account kept in his mind nothing but the Suttavibhanga with its two divisions: the Bhikkhu-Vibhanga and the Bhikkhuni-Vibhanga. Further, when this account was written, the five Nikayas were well-known. But the contents mentioned are found to be only those of the first two suttas of the Digha Nikaya, Vol. I., we mean the Brahmajala and the Samannaphala-Suttantas. In the absence of the remaining details and of the names of the separate texts it is impossible to say that the Digha-Nikaya as presupposed was completed in all the three volumes as we now get or the five Nikayas as presupposed contained all the fourteen suttanta texts as we now have them. One thing is, however, certain that there is yet no reference to the Abhidhamma treatises. For the reference to the Abhidhamma-Pitaka we have to look into the Uddanagathas in which there is mention of the three pitakas (Pitakam tini). But nothing should be built upon it with regard to the development of canonical texts in so early a period as this on the strength of these uddana gathas which are apparently later additions.

The line of investigation hitherto followed has compelled us to conclude that the Suttavibhanga with its two great divisions, e.g., the Bhikkhu and the Bhikkhuni Vibhangas were extant as authoritative texts on the questions of Vinaya previous to the compilation of the

Mahavagga and the Cullavagga. The historical references that may be traced in the Suttavibhanga appertain an to earlier times and cannot, therefore, justify us in assigning the text to a period far removed from the demise of the Buddha. but we have still to enquire whether or not the Suttavibhanga can be regarded us the first or the earliest landmark of the Vinaya tracts. It may be sound to premise that the first landmark of the Vinayapitaka is not the landmark of the Vinaya tracts. The point at issue really is whether or not the text of the Sutta Vibhanga forming the first landmark of the Vinayapitaka presupposes certain earlier literary developments and if so, where can this be traced? This is to seriously ask what; was the earlier and more probable denotation of the term ubhato-vinaya, the two-fold Vinaya. If we decline to interpret it in the sense of two-fold Vibhanga, we must be raising this important issue just to remove an anomaly arising from the two-fold signification of the Pancanikaya divisions of the Pa1i canon.

Buddhaghosa, the great Pali scholiast, says that in their narrower signification the five nikayas denoted the five divisions of the texts of the Suttapitaka, and that in their wider signification the five nikayas included also the texts of the remaining two pitakas, namely, the Vinaya and the Abhidhamma, the Vinaya and Abhidhamma treatises being supposed to be included in the Khuddakanikaya:

[Sumangalavilasini, pt. I., p.23, cf., Atthasalini, p.26; Katamo Khaddakanikayo? Sakalam Vinayapitakam Abhidhammapitakam Khuddakapathadayo ca pubbe-nidassita-pancadasa bheda (pubbe dassitacuddasa pabheda iti pathantaram), thapetva cattaronikaye avasesam Buddhavacanam].

Buddhaghosa also informs us that the Anumana Sutta of the Majjhima Nikaya was known to the ancients as bhikkhuvinaya and the Singalavada sutta of the Digha Nikaya was venerated as gihi Vinaya.(1) It such terms as bhikkhuvinaya and gihivinaya had been current among the Buddhists of olden times, it is pertinent to enquire whether the expression "the two-fold vinaya. "was originally used to denote the Bhikkhuvinaya and bhikkhunivinaya or the bhikkhuvinaya and gihivinaya. If we examine the contents of the Anguttara or the Ekuttara Nikaya, we need not be surprised to find that Anguttara abounds in the Vinaya passages. In each nipata of this Nikaya we come across passages relating to the two-fold Vinaya namely the Bhikkhu and Gihi. Looked at from this point of view, the Anguttara Nikaya may justly be regarded as a sutta store-house of distinct Vinaya tracts. In this very nikaya we hit upon a vinaya tract (A. N., I., pp 98-100) which sets forth a rough sketch (matika) not of any particular vinaya treatise but of the whole of the Vinaya pitaka. The list of Vinaya topics furnished in this particular tract cannot be construed as a table of contents of any particular text of the Vinaya pitaka. Similar Vinaya tracts are scattered also in the suttas of other nikayas.

The consideration of all these facts cannot but lead one to surmise that the treatises of the Vinaya pitaka point to a sutta background in the vinaya materials traceable in the Nikayas particularly in the Anguttara.

The Sutta background of the Vinaya texts is clearly hinted at in the concluding words of the Patimokkha. " So much of the words of the Blessed One handed down in the Suttas, embraced in the suttas, comes into recitation every half-month" (Vinaya texts, S. B. E., Vol. I. p. 69). As for the date of the composition of the two Patimokkha codes, one for the bhikkhus (monks) and other for the bhikkhunis (nuns), it is important to bear in mind that according to an ancient Buddhist tradition cited by Buddhaghosa, the Patimokkha codes as they are handed down to us are two among the Vinaya texts which were not rehearsed in the first Buddhist council (SumangalavilasinI, pt. I., p. 17). It may he readily granted that the codification of the Patimokkha rules in the extant shape was not accomplished immediately after the demise of the Buddha. It is one thing to sa this and it is quite another that the rules themselves in a classified form had not been in existence from the earlier times. The Cullavagga account of the first Buddhist council throws some clear light on the process of codification. It is said that the utterance of the dying Buddha authorising his followers to do away with the minor rules of conduct (Khuddanu-Khuddakani sikkhapadani), if they so desired, formed a bone of contention among the bhikkhus who took part in the proceedings of the first Buddhist Council (See Milinda Panha, pp.142-144). They were unable to decide which were precisely the minor rules they were authorised to dispense with.

- Some suggested all but the four Parajika rules,
- some, all but the four Parajika and thirteen Samghadisesa rules,
- some, all but the four Parajika, 13 Samghadisesa and two Aniyata rules and thirty Nissaggiya rules;
- some, all but the four Parajika, 13 Samghadisesa, two Aniyata, thirty Nissaggiya and ninety-two Pacittiya rules and
- some suggested all but 4 Parajika, 13 Samghadisesa, 2 Aniyata, 30 Nissaggiya, 92 Pacittiya and 4 Patidesaniya rules.

The suggestion stopped with the 4 Patidesaniya rules and did not proceed beyond them, leaving us in the dark as to what the bhikkhus meant by all but 11 all these " (counted by names). The Patimokkas code in its final form includes two hundred and twenty-seven rules, that is to say, the seven adhikarana samathas and seventy-five sekhiya rules in addition to those mentioned in the Cullavagga account. Omitting the 75 sekhiya rules the total of the Patimokkha precepts of conduct would come up to 152,

If the theras of the first Buddhist Council had in their view a Patimokkha code in which the 75 Sekhiya rules had no place, the total of precepts in the code ecognised by them was 152. Now we have to enquire if there is any definite literary evidence to prove that in an earlier stage of codification, the total of the Patimokkha precepts was fixed at 152. Happily the evidence is not far to seek. The Anguttara Nikaysa, as we have seen above, contains two passages to indicate that the earlier Patimokkha code contained one and half hundred rules or little more (Sadhikam diyaddhasikkhapadasatam). The earlier Patimokkha code with its total of 152 rules may be shown to have been earlier than the Suttavibhanga on the ground that the Sutta-

Vibhanga scheme makes room for the 75 Sekhiya rules, thereby rocognising the Patimokkha total to be 227 which was possible only in the second or final stage of codification of the Patimokkha rules.

In dealing with the chronology of the seven treatises of the Abhidhammapitaka, we can only maintain that the order in which these treatises are enumerated can be interpreted as the order of the chronology. Any attempt at establishing such an interpretation would be vitiated by the fact that the order of enumeration is not in all cases the same.

The order in which these are mentioned in the Milinda Panha (p.12) and which has since become classical is as follows:

(1) Dhammasangani (Dhammasamgaha as Buddhaghosa calls it-vide Sumangalvilasini),
(2) Vibhanga,
(3) Dhatukatha,
(4) Puggalapannatti,
(5) Kathavatthu,
(6) Yamakra and
(7) Patthana.

A somewhat different order is evident from a gatha occurring in Buddaghosa's Sumangalavilasini,
Pt. I., p. 15. " Dhammasamgani-Vibhanganca Kathavatthunca Puggalam Dhatu-Yamaka-Patthanam Abhidhammoti vuccati."

It be noticed that in the gatha order the Kathavatthu stands third instead of fifth and the Dhatukatha stands fifth instead of third. We have already noted that according to general interpretsaion of the five nikaya divisions of the Pali canon, the Ahhidhamma treatises come under the Khuddaka Nikaya. This is apparently an anomaly which cannot be removed save by a liberal interpretation making it signify a suttanta background of the Abhidhammapitaka. Thus an enquiry into the suttanta background becomes a desideratum and we may lay down a general canon of chronology in these terms. The closer connection with the Sutta materials, the earlier is the date of composition.

Among the seven Abhidhamma treatises, tho Puggalapannatti and the Vibhanga stand out prominently as the two texts which bear a clear evidence of emergence from a Sutta background.

The Puggala classifications in the Digha, Samyutta and Anguttara Nikayas are seen to constitute at once the sutta background and the stereotyped Vibhangas or Niddesas, mostly contained in the Majjhima Nikaya may be take to represent the Sutta background of the Vibhanga. The exact position of the Puggalapannatti in relation to the Suttanta collections has been properly examined by Dr. Morris in his edition of the Puggala Pannatti published for the P. T. S. London, Introduction, pp X-XI.

We have just one remark to add, namely, that compared with the Suttanta materials utilised in it, the Puggalapannatti is the least original treatise of the Abhidhammapitaka and its inclusion

in the Abhidhamma Pitaka would have been utterly unjustifiable but for the Pannatti classifications in the matika No. 1. Whatever be the actual date of its compilation in respect of subject matter and treatment, it deserves to be considered as the earliest of the Abhidhamma books. In the opinion of Mrs. Rhys Davids, the Vihhanga is "anticipated" by the Dhammasangani, although " it is by no means covered by the latter work either in method or in matter" (Vibhanga, P. T. S., Preface XIV). "In other words, the present book (the Vibhanga) seems by Buddhists to have ranked second in the seven of its Pitaka not accidentally, but as a sequel to the Dhammasangani requiring, in those who came to the study of it, a familiarity categories and formulas of the latter work; that is with the first book of the Abhidhamma ", (Ibid, XIII). Thus whether the Vibbanga is anticipated by the Dhammasangani or the latter is anticipated by the former is the point at issue.

Examining most of the chapters of the Vibhanga we find that each of them has a Abhidhamma superstructure (Abhidharmma-bhajaniya) built upon and kept distinct from a Suttanta exegesis (Suttantabhajaniya) the counterpart of which is to be found in the first four nikayas and mostly in the Majjhima, as it will appear from the following table:

Saccavibhanga (Suttantabhajaniya)-Saccavibhanga sutta (Majjhims, Vol. III., No. 141);
Satipatthanavibhanga (Suttantabhajaniya) = Sati patthanasutta (M.N.I., No.10),
Dhatuvibhanga (Suttantabhajaniya)--Dhatuvibhanga sutta of the Majjhima, Vol. III.. No. 140.

It is evident from the juxtaposition of the Suttanta and the Abhidhamma exegesis in its different chapters that the Vibhanga marks that stage of the developmet of the Abhidhamas pitaka when the Abhidhamma or Transcendental method of exegesis had not yet gained an independent foothold, when, in other words, it remained combined with the Suttanta or earlier method. The predilection is as yet for attempting the exegesis of the formulations in the Suttas. An independent treatment of pure topics of Psychological ethics, such as we find in the Dhammasangani is far beyond the scheme of the Vibhanga.

In the progressive working out of exegetical schemes, the Niddesa or detailed specification of meanings of terms comes second to the uddesa or matika. Now if we compare the treatment of Rupakkhandha in the Vibhanga (pp. 12-14) with that in the Dhammasangani (pp. 124 ff.), we cannot but observe that all that the Vibhanga has to present is merely the uddesa or matika of the Rupakkhandha section of the Dhammasangani. The Niddesa of the rupa-matika is to be found in no other Abhidhamma books than the Dhammasasangani.

Mrs. Rhys Davids admits (in a way arguing in our favour) that the contents of the Vibhanga are by no means covered by the Dhammasangani. The Vibhanga has, for instance, a section entited Paccayakaravibhanga, an exegesis on the causal relations.

The paccayas fall outside the scope of the Dhammasangani and they form the subject matters of the great Abhidhamma treatise, the Patthana or the Mahapatthana; but compared with the Patthana, the Vibhanga treatment of the subject is crude and vague, which is to say earlier. Considered in this light, the Vibhanga seems to stand out as a common presupposition of both the Dhammasangani and the Patthana.

It is much easier to proceed from the contents of the Vibhanga to the two highly systematic treatises of the Dhammasangani and the Patthana than to proceed from the latter to the former.

The Dhatukatha being nothing but a supplement to the text of the Dhammassangani may he briefly disposed of as a Abhidhamma treatise dependent; on and necessarily later than the Dhammasangani.

It is not only with regard to the Dhammasangani (with its supplement, the Dhatukatha and the Patthana that the Vibhanga represents the immediate background; it appears equally to have been the background of the Yamaka. It is easy to account for the dialectical method of the study of the Abhidhamma matters by keeping the Panhapucchakas appended to the different chapters of the Vibhanga.

All these considerations lead us to conclude that strictly speaking the Vibhanga making " an extended application of (the) organum or vehicle for the cultivation of the moral intellect " is the first and the earliest of the Abhidhamma books.

1. Puggala Pannatti
2. Vibhanga
(a) Dhammasangani Dhatukatha
(b) Yamaka
(c) Patthana
3. Kathavatthu

Although one can conceive in this manner the chronological succession of the five Abhidhamma books (leaving out the Puggalapannatti which is rather a suttanta text and the Kathavatthu which forms a class by itself), it is difficult to determine the actual dates of their composition. One thing is certain that the seven books of the Abhidhammapitaka were well-known and very carefully read especially in the Himalayan monastery when the Milinda panha was composed in about the first century A. D. There is no reason for doubt that the Pali canon when committed to writing during the reign of king Vattagamani in Ceylon, it included all these books in it. We have shown that when the Uddanagathas of the Cullavagga (Chap. II) of the Vinayapitaka were added, the three pitakas of the Pali canon had already come into existence. The question, however, is how far the date of the books of the Abhidhammapitaka can be pushed back. Here the only anchor-sheet is the Kathavatthu, the third or the fifth Abhidamma book which according to tradition, was a compilation of the Asokan age. We have already adduced certain proofs in support of this tradition and have sought to show that when certain controversies which find a place in the Kathavatthu took place, Buddhism as a religion had not overstepped the territorial limits of the middle country. But according to Buddhaghosa's commentary, the Kathavatthu contains discussion of doctrines held by some of the Buddhist schools, e. g., the Hemavata, the Andhaka, the Pubbaseliya and the Aparaseliya, which could not be possible if the Kathavatthu had been closed in the time of Asoka.

If it was a growing compilation, we have necessarily to suppose that although it commenced in Asokan time, it was not brought to a close till the rise of the later Buddhist schools mentioned above.

Turning at last to the Suttapitaka comprising the live nikayas, we can definitely say that it had reached its final shape before the composition of the Milinda Panha in which authoritative passages are quoted from the texts of this pitaka, in certain instances by a mention of the name of the sources. We can go further and maintain that the Suttapitaka was closed along with the entire Pali canon and when the canon was finally rehearsed in Ceylon and committed to writing during the reign of King Vattagamani. The tradition says that previous to the reign of Vattagamani the texts were handed down by an oral tradition (mukhapathavasena) from teacher to teacher (acariyaparamparaya) the process of transmission being compared to the carrying of earth in baskets from head to head. Buddhaghosa says (Sumangalavilasini, pt. I, pp. 12 foll.) that immediately after the demise of the Buddha and after the session of the first Buddhist Council, the task of transmitting and preserving each of the five nikayas to an individual thera and his followers, which ultimatly gave rise to some schools of bhanakas or chanters. The existence of the distinct schools of reciters of the five nikayas is clearly proved (as shown by Dr B. M. Barua, Barhut Inscriptions, pp. 9-10), by the Milinda Panha where we have mention of the Jatakabhanakas (the repeaters of the Jatakas) in addition to the Dighabhanake, the Majjhimabhanaka, Samyuttabhanaka, Anguttarabhanaka and Khuddakabhanaka, (Milinda Panha, pp. 341 foll.). The terms pancanekayika (one well versed in the five nikayas) and bhanaka as well, occur as distinctive epithets of some of the Buddhist donors in the Sanci and Barhut inscriptions which may be dated in the lump in the middle of the second century B. C. The inference from the evidence of these inscriptions has already been drawn by Prof. Rhys Davids to the effect that before the use of Pancanekayika (one well-versed in the five nikayas) suttantika (a man who knows the Suttanta by heart), Suttantakini (a feminine form of Suttantika) and Petaki (one who knows the pitaka by heart) as distinctive epithets, the pitaka and five nikaya divisions of the Pali canon must have been well-known and well-established. We say of the Pali canon because substitution of nikaya for the term 'Agama' is peculiar to the Pali tradition. The term " Pancanikaya " occurs as we saw also in the Vinaya Cullavagga (Chap. II) which we have assigned to a period which immediately preceded the Asokan age. But even presuming that the five nikaya divisions of the growing Buddhist canon were current in the third century B. C., it does not necessarily follow from it that all the books or Suttas or individual passages comprising the five nikayas were composed at that time. All that we can make bold to say that the first four nikayas were, to all intents and purposes, the complete, while the Khaddakanikaya series remained still open.

We have pointed out that this account in the Vinaya Cullavagga clearly alludes to the Digha as the first of the five nikayas as well as that the first two suttas were the Brahmajala and

Samannaphala while as to the number and succession of the remaining suttas, we are kept completely in the dark.

Straining the information supplied in the Vinaya Cullavagga we can proceed so far no doubt, that the first volume of the Digha Nikaya was mainly in the view of its compilers. Comparing the Suttas comprised in the remaining two volumes and marking the differences in theme and tone, it seems that these two volumes were later additions. The second volume contains two suttas, namely, the Mahapadhana and MahaGovinda which have been mentioned in the Cullaniddesa (p. 80) as two among the notable illustrations of the Suttanta Jatakas, the Jatakas as found in the earliest forms in Pali literature. We have already drawn attention to the earlier chronicles of the seven purohitas in the Anguttara Nikaya where it is far from being a manipulation in a Jataka form. The casting of this chronicle in a Jataka mould as we find it in the Maha-Govinda Suttanta could not have taken place in the life-time of the Buddha. The second volume contains also the Payasi Suttanta which, as shown by the previous scholars, brings the story of Payasi to the death of Payasi and his after life in a gloomy heaven. Thus suttanta contains several anecdotes forming the historical basis of some of the Jataka stories. In the face of all these facts, we cannot but agree with Prof. Rhys David who places the date of this suttanta at least half a century after the demise of the Buddha. The third volume of the Digha includes in it the Atanatiya suttanta which is otherwise described as a rakkha or a saving chant manipulated apparently on a certain passage in the then know Mahabharata. The development of these elements such as the Jataka stories and the Parittas could not have taken place when Buddhism remained in its pristine purity. These are later accrotions or interpolations, the works of fable and fiction, we mean of imaginnative poetry that crept, according to a warning given in certain passages of the Anguttara Nikaya, under the influence from outside. But there is no reason for surprise that such developments had already taken place as early as the fourth century B.C. for the passages strike the note of alarm are precisely one of those seven important tracts recommended by Asoka in his Bhabru Edict under the caption 'Anagatabhayani. The growth of these foreign elements must have caused some sort of confusion otherwise it would not have been necessary to discuss in a sutta of the Samyutta Nikaya the reasonable way of keeping genuine the utterances of the Buddha distinct from others that crept in under the outside influence and were characterised by poetical fancies and embellishments (kavikata). (Samyutta Nikaya, pt. II, p.267). We may then be justified in assigning the whole of the Digha Nikaya to a pre-Asokan age, there being no trace of any historical event or development which might have happened after King Asoka. The only exception that one has to make is only in the case of the concluding verses of the Mahaparinibbana Suttanta which were interpolated according to Buddhaghosa in Ceylon by the teachers of that island. Like the first volume of the Digha Nikaya, the whole of the Majjhima Nikaya strikes us as the most authoritative and original among the collections of the Buddha's teachings. There is no allusion to any political event to justify us in relegating the date of its compilation to a time far removed from the demise of the Buddha. If it be argued that the story

of Makhadeva, as we find it embodied in the Makhadeva sutta of this Nikaya, has already assumed the form of a Jataka, of a Suttanta-Jataka, mentioned in the Cullaniddesa, it cannot follow from it that the Nikaya is for that very reason a much later compilation. For the Makhadeva story is one of those few earliest Jatakas presupposed by the Pali Canonical collection of 500 Jatakas. The literary developments as may be traced in the suttas of the Majjhima Nikaya are not of such a kind as to require more than a century after the demise of the Buddha. Now concerning the Samyutta which is a collection of kindred sayings and the third of the five nikayas, we may point out that it has been quoted by name in the milinda panda, as also in the Petakopadesa under the simple title of Samyuttaka and that as such this Nikaya had existed as an authoritative book of the Pali both the Milinda panha and the Patakapadesa go so far as to maintain that the Samyutta Nikaya had reached its final shape previous to the occurrence of Panca nekayika as a personal epithet in some of the Barhut and Sanci-inscriptions, nay, even before the closing of the Vinaya Cullavagga where we meet with the expression " Pancanikaya". In dealing with the account of the Second Buddhist Council in the Vinaya Cullavagga (Chap. XII), we have noted that a canonical authority has been alluded to as "Rajayahe uposatha Samyutte" at Rajagaha in the Uposatha Samyutta. The translators of the Vinaya Texts (pt. 11, p. 410) observe that the term 'Samyutta' "must here be used for khandhaka", the passage referred to being the Vinaya Mahavagga (II. 8.3. the Uposatha Khandhaka). But looking into the Mahavagga passage, We find that it does not fully tally with the allusion, as the passage has nothing to do with Rajagaha. In the absence of rajagaha giving a true clue to the tracing of the intended passage, it is difficult to premise that the passage which the compilers of the Cullavagga account kept in view was the khandhaka passaga in the Vinaya Mahavagga. Although we have so far failed to trace this passage also in the Samyutta Nikaya, the presumption ought to be that the intended passage was included in a Samyutta collection which was then known to the compilers of the Cullavagga. The Suttas in the Samyutta Nikaya do not refer to any political incident justifying one to place the date of its compilation far beyond the demise of the Buddha. As contrasted with the Ekuttara or Anguttara Nikaya the Samyutta appears to be the result of an attempt to put together relevant passages throwing light on the topics of deeper doctrinal importance while the former appears to be numerical groupings of relevant passage throwing light on the topics relating to the conduct of the monks and house-holders. Considered in this light, these two Nikayas must be regarded as fruits of a critical study of suttas in some previous collections.

Now coming to deal with the Ekuttara or Anguttara Nikaya, we have sought to show that its main bearing is on the two-fold Vinaya, the Gahapati Vinaya and the Bhikkhu Vinaya. This Nikaya contains a section (Mundarajavagga in the Pancaka Nipata) commemorating the name of King Munda who

reigned, as shown by Rhys Davids, in Rajagaha about half a century after the demise of the Buddha The Nikaya made within the fifty years from the Buddha's demise. There is, however, no other historical reference to carry the Mahaparinibbana compilation beyond the first century

from the Mahaparinibhana of the Buddha. The date proposed for the Anguttara Nikaya will not, we think, appear unreasonable if it be admitted that the suttas of this nikaya form the real historical background of the contents of the Vinaya texts.

We have at last to discuss the chronology of the fifteen books of the Khuddaka Nikaya, which are generally mentioned in the following order:

(1) Khuddaka Patha,
(2) Dhammapda,
(3) Udana,
(4) Itivuttaka,
(5) Sutta Nipata
(6) Vimanavatthu,
(7)Petavatthu,
(8) Thera-therigatha,
(9) Jataka,
(11) Niddesa. (Culla and Maha.)
(12) Patisanibhidamagga,
(13) Apadana,
(14) Buddha vamsa, ani
(15) Cariyapitaka.

This mode of enumeration of the fifteen books of the khuddaka Nikaya (pannarasabheda Khuddakanikaya) can be traced back to the days of Buddhaghosa (Sumangalavilasini, pt.I.,p,17). It is obvious that in this list the Cullaniddesa and the Mahaniddesa are counted as one book; while counting them as two books, the total number becomes sixteen. There is no justification for regarding the order of enumeration as being the order of chronology.

In connection with the Khuddaka Nikaya, Buddhaghosa mentions the following facts of great historical importance. He says that the Dighabhanakas classified the books of the Khuddaka Nikaya under the Abhidhamma Pitaka enumerating them in the following order:

1 - Jataka,
2 - Mahaniddesa,
3 - Cullaniddesa,
4 - Patisambhidamagga,
5 - Suttanipata,
6 - Dhammapada
7 - Udana,
8 - Itivuttaka,
9- Vimanavatthu,
10- Petavatthu
11- Therigatha,

and leaving out of consideration the four books, namely, the Cariyapitaka, the Apadana, the Buddhavamsa and the Khuddakapatha. Buddhaghosa informs us thak the Majjhimabhanaka list contained the names of 15 books counting the Cariyapitaka, the Apadana and the Buddhavamsa as the three books in addition to those recognised by the Dighabhanakas (Sumanangalavilasini, Pt.I., p.15) It is important to note that the Majjhimabhanaka list has taken no cognisance of the Khuddakapatha mentioned as the first book in Buddhanaka list was drawn up, the Khuddaka Nikaya comprised just 12 books and when the Majjhima Nikaya list was made it came to comprise altogether 15 books, the Mahaniddesa and the Cullaniddesa having been counted as two books instead of as one. It is also easy to understand that from that time on ward the traditional total of the books of the Khuddaka Nikaya became known as fifteen, and so strong was this tradition that to harmonise with it, the sixteen books had to be somehow counted as fifteen, the Mahaniddesa and the Cullaniddesa being treated as a single book. From this we may proceed to show that the Khuddakapathe appearing as the first book of the Khuddaka Nikaya in Buddhaghosa's list, is really the last book taken into the Khuddaka Nikaya sometime after the Majjhimabhhanaka list recognising 15 books in all had been closed. We need not be surprised if the Khuddakapatha was a compilation made in Ceylon and was given a place among the books of the Khuddaka Nikaya either immediately before the commitment of the Pali Canon to writing during the reign of King Vattagramani or even after that, although before the time of Buddhaghosa. The commentaries of Buddhaghosa are our oldest authorities that mention the Khuddakapatha as a canonical book. It does not find mention in the Milinda Panha nor in any other work, canonical or ex-canonical, which was extant before the time of Buddhagosa. The text is made up of nine lessons or short readings all culled certain earlier canonical sources, the arrangement of these lessons being such as to make it serve as a very useful handbook for the beginners and for the clergy ministering to the needs of the laity. The consideration of two points may suffice to bear out our contention. The first point is that the first lesson called the saranattaya presents a developed mode of refuge formula of the Buddhists which is not to be found precisely in this form anywhere in other portions of the Pali canon. As for the second point we may note that the third lesson called the Dvattimsakara (the thirty-two parts of the body) enumrrates mattake matthalungam which is not to be found in the list furnished in the Mahasatipatthana Suttanta of the Digha Nikaya, the Satipatthana Sutta of the Majjhima Nikaya and numerous other discourses.

We have seen that the Buddhavamisa, the Cariyapitaka and the Apadana are the three books which found recognition in the list of the Dighabhanakalist, Majjhimabhanakas and were taken no notice of in the Apart from other arguments, one has to presume that these three books were complied and received into the canon after the list was once known to have been complete with 12 books. These three books, as far as the subject matters go, are interconnected, the Buddhavamsa enumerating the doctrine of pranidhana us an essential condition of the Bodhisatta life, the Cariyapitaka enumerating the doctrine of cariya or

practices of a Bodhisatta and the Apadana the doctrine of adhikara or competence for the attainment of the higher life. These three books presuppose a legend of 24 previous Buddhas which is far in excess of the legend of six Buddhas contained in other portions of the Canon. The Buddhavamsa and the Cariyapitaka present a systematic form of the Bodhistta idea that was shaping itself through the earlier Jatakas and the Apadana furnishing the previous birth stories of the theras and the theris cannot but be regarded as a later supplement to the Thera-Theri-gatha.

Besides the Thera-Theri gatha, the Vimanavatthu or the book of stories of heaven is just another canonical work which is presupposed by the Apadana.

It is important to note that the Vimanavatthu contains one story, namely, the story of Serissaka, the incident of which, according to the story itself, took place hundred years, calculated by human computation from the death of the chieftain Payasi. "

Manussakam Vassasatam atitam Yadagge kayamhi idhuappanno " (Vimanavatthu, P.T. S., p. 81).

The Payasi Suttanta of the Digha Nikaya clearly shows that the death of Payasi could not have taken place until a few years after the Buddha's demise.

Thus going by the consideration of this point, we are compelled to assign a date of its composition to an age ahead of a century and a half from the demise of the Buddha. So the canonisation of this book could not have taken place earlier than the time of the third Buddhist Council, we mean the time of King Asoka. Our suggestion for the date of the Vimanavatthu will gain in significance as we consider the contents of the Petavatthu, the book of stories of hell. We have noticed about that in all the three lists of the books of the Khuddaka Nikaya the name of the Petavatthu stands after that of the Vimanavatthu.

From the occurrence of certain common stories, a suggestion has already been made that it was somehow an offshoot of the Vimanavatthu. Now in one of the stories (Petavatthu, IV. 3, p. 57)(1), we have allusions to the Moriya(Maurya) king, who is identified in the commentary with king Asoka (2). If this construction of the word Moriya is correct, it leaves no room for doubt that the Peta Vatthu, as we now have it, was a post-Moriyan or post-Asokan compilation.

The Cullaniddesa is a canonical commentary of the Khaggavisana sutta and the Parayana group of sixteen poems, all of which find place in the anthology called the Sutta Nipata. We have sought to show that the Cullaniddesa indicates a stage of development of the Pali canon when the Khaggavisana sutta hang on the Parayanavagga as an isolated poem, without yet being included in a distinct group such as the Uragavagga of the Sutta Nipata. Though from this line of argument it follows that the Cullaniddesa is earlier than the Sutta-Nipata, it cannot at the same time be denied that it is posterior not only to such Suttanta-Jatakas as the Mahapadaniya, Mahagovinda, Mahasudassaniya and the Maghadeva suttanta contained in the Digha and Majjhima Nikayas but also to a collection of 500 Jatakas (Pancajatakasatiani)

(Culianiddesa, p.80). As such the Cullaniddesa cannot be dated much earlier than the reign of Asoka.

The Mahaniddesa too is a canonical commentary on the atthaka group of sixteen poems forming the fourth book of the Sutta-Nipata. As shown before the exegeses attempted in this book were all modelled on an earlier exegesis of Mahakaccana in the Samyutta Nikaya. If this canonical commentary came into existence when the Atthakavagga was yet current as an isolated group, the date of its composition cannot but be anterior to that of the Suttanipate. A clear idea of the date of this work can be fomed from its list of places visited by the Indian seagoing merchants. The Mahaniddesa list clearly points to a time when the Indian merchants carried on a sea-borne trade with such distant places as Java in the east and Paramayona in the west and it alludes as well as to sea route from Tamali to Java via Tambapanni or cetlon which was followed in the 5th century A. D. by the Chinese pilgrim, Fa-Hien. We can expect to come across such a list only in the Milinda Panha which may be dated in the 1st or 2nd century A. D. Such a wide expansion of India's maritime trade as indicated in the Mahaniddesalist would seem impossible if the book was a composition much earlier than the second century B. C. Now turning to the Suttanipata we have been inclined to place it later than the two books of the Niddesa on the ground that when it was compiled, the Atthakavagga and the Parayanavagga came to represent two distinct books of a comprehensive anthology and the Khaggavisana sutta ceased to be a stray poem hanging for its existence on the Parayana group. But our main reason for dating it posterior to the Cullaniddesa is that the Parayanavagga in the Suttanipata is prefaced by a prologue which is absent from the Cullaniddesa scheme. Similarly the Nalakasutta perhaps known originally as Moneyya sutta as evidenced by the titles suggested in Asoka's Bhabru Edict as a prologue clearly anticipating the poetical style of Asvaghosa's Buddhacarita. In spite of the fact that the suttas embodied in it were gleaned from earlier collections, the Sutta-nipate scheme of anthology does not seem to have been carried into effect before the 2nd century B.C.

With regard to the Jatakas as a book of the Khuddaka Nikaya, we have just seen above that the Cullaniddesa points to a canonical collection of 500 Jatakas. That five hundred was the original total of the Jatakas is proved on the one hand by the 500 Jataka representations witnessed by Fa-Hien round the Abhayagiri monastery of Ceylon and on the other band by the mechanical multiplication of the stories in order to raise the total from 500 to 550 from the days of Buddhaghosa. The Milinda Panha alludes to the existence of the repeaters of the Jatakas apart from the repeaters of the five Nikayas. We are unable to decide whether the Milinda reference is to the canonical books of the Jatakas or to a commentary collection which was then in existence. The numerous illustrations of the jatakas on the ancient Buddhist railings such as those at Barhut and Bodhagaya, unmistakably presuppose the existence of the legendary story of the Buddha's life past and present. But the canonical collection of 500 Jatakas referred to in the Cullaniddesa appear to be earlier than the scriptural basis of the

Buddhist sculptures and whatever the actual data of composition might be it was certainly later than that of the Suttanta Jatakas scattered throughout the first four Nikayas.

We may say indeed that the canonical collection took a definite shape near about the early Maurya period. The Thera-Theri-Gathas are two companion anthologies of the stanzas that are supposed to have been uttered by the theras and theris surrounding the Buddha during the lifetime of the Master, or at least shortly after his death. (Theragabha Oldenberg's preface, XI).

"The separate uddanas or indices which occur regularly at the end of each nipata and at the end also of the whole work, and give the names and numbers of the theras (and the theris) and the number of verses in each chapter and in the whole work respectively seem to be based on a recension or condition of the text different from that which now lies before us " (Ibid, p.XIV). In the opinion of Dhammapala, the commentator, the Theragatha anthology had reached the final shape not earlier than the time of Asoka. He points out that the Thera Tekicchakari whose gathas are embodied in the Theragatha lived under King Bimbisara, the father of Dhammasoka. He further adds that the verses uttered by this thera were received into the canon by the fathers who assembled in the third Buddhist Council. Dhammapala attributes some of the gathas to Vitasoka, the younger brother of Dhammasoka and certain other verses to Tissakumara, the youngest brother of King Asoka. If we can at all depend for chronology on the information supplied by Dhammapala, the anthologies of Thera-Theri-gatha must be taken as compilations that had received their final shape at the Third Buddhist Council and not before.

The Pali Dhammapada is just one and undoubtedlly the earliest of the six copies of the anthologies of the Dhammapada class. The earliest mention of the Pali Dhammapada by name is to be found in the Milinda Panha which is a composition of the first or second century A.D. From the mere fact that there were certaiu quotations in the Kathavatthu and Mahaniddesa of stanzas now traceable in the Dhammapada, no definite conclusion can be drawn as to the actual date of its composition. The Dhammapada hardly includes any stanzas that might be supposed to have been drawn upon the canonical collection of Jatakas. But as shown by the editors of the Prakrit Dhammapada there are a few gathas which were evidently manipulated on the basis of the gathas in the Jatakas. Similary it cannot be maintained that the Dhammapada contains any stanzas that were diretly derived from the Suttanipata, for the suttas which singled out as the source of some of the gathas of the Dhammapada are to be found also in such earlier collections as the Digha or the Majjhima or the Samyutta or the Anguttara. The Thera and Theri-gathas are the two anthologies of the Khuddaka Nikaya which appear to have been presupposed by the Dhammapada. As regards external evidence, there is only one tradition, namely, that a powerful discourse based on the Appamadavagga of the Dhammapada served to attract the attention of King Asoka to Buddhism, clearly pointing to the existence of the Dhammapada as a distinct anthology as early as the third century B.C.

Itivuttaka, the Udana and the Patisambhidamagga are the remaining three books of the Khuddaka Nikaya of which the date of composition must depend upon mere conjecture till accidentally we obtain any reliable date. The Itivuttaka is a book of questions of genuine sayings of the Buddha, making no reference to any canonical work or to any historical event ascertaining its date, though it seems that it was the result of an afterthought, of a critical study of the authentic teachings of the Buddha in a certain light and for a specific purpose. The Udana is a curious medley of legends and historical records, presented in a particular setting with a view to emphasising some opinions of the Buddha on certain controversial matters. The Patisambhidamagga presents a systematic exposition of certain important topics of Buddhism, and as such it deserves to be classed rather with the books of the Abhidhammapitaka than with those of Suttanipata. It is quite possible that before the development of the extant Abhidhamma pitaka, it passed as one of the Abhidhamma treatises, Concering there three books the utmost that we can say that they are mentioned even in the list of the Dighabhanakas, being counted there as three among the twelve books of the Khuddaka Nikaya, and that if the tradition about this list is at all credible, these three books must have existed when the list was drawn up, say, in the second century B. C.

The results arrived at concerning the chronology of the Pali canonical literature are presented in the subjoined table.

(1) The simple statements of Buddhist doctrines now found, in identical words, in paragraphs or verses recurring in all the books.
(2) Episodes found, in identical works, in two or more of the existing books.
(3) The Silas, the Parayana group of sixteen poems without the prologue, the atthaka group of four or sixteen poems, the sikkhapadas.
(4) The Digha, Vol. I, the Majjhima, the Samyutta, the Anguttara, and earlier Patimokkha code of 152 rules.
(5) The Digha, Vols. II & III, the Thera-Theri-Gatha, the collection of 500 Jatakas, the Suttavibhanga, the Partisambhidamagga, the Puggala-pannatti and the Vibhanga.
(6) The Mahavagga and the Cullavagga, the Patimokkha code completing 227 rules, the Vimanavatthu and Petavatthu, the Dhammapada and the Kathavatthu.
(7) The Cullaniddesa, the Mahaniddesa, the Udana, the Itivuttaka, the Suttanipata, the Dhatukatha, the Yamaka and the Patthana.
(8) The Buddhavamsa, the Cariyapitaka and the Apadana.
(9) The Parivarapatha.
(10) The Khuddakapatha.

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Addendum
Comparison between Rhys Davids and BORI

RHYS DAVIDS	BORI

1	The simple statements of Buddhist doctrine now found, in identical words, in paragraphs or verse recurring in all the books.	1	The simple statements of Buddhist doctrines now found, in identical words, in paragraphs or verses recurring in all the books.
2	Episodes found, in identical words, in two or more of the existing books.	2	Episodes found, in identical works, in two or more of the existing books.
3	Silas **Parayana** Octades Patimokkha.	3	Silas **Parayana** group of sixteen poems without the prologue, Atthaka group of four or sixteen poems Sikkhapadas.
4	***Digha*** **Majjhima** **Anguttara** **Samyutta**	4	***Digha*** (Vol. I) **Majjhima** **Samyutta** **Anguttara** Earlier Patimokkha code of 152 rules.
5	Sutta-Nipata **Thera-and Theri-Gathas** Udanas Khuddaka Patha	5	Digha (Vols. II & III) **Thera-Theri-Gatha** Collection of 500 Jatakas Suttavibhanga Partisambhidamagga Puggala-pannatti Vibhanga
6	Vibhanga Khandhkas	6	Mahavagga Cullavagga Patimokkha code completing 227 rules Vimanavatthu and Petavatthu Dhammapada and Kathavatthu
7	The Jatakas Dhammapadas.	7	Cullaniddesa Mahaniddesa Udana Itivuttaka Suttanipata Dhatukatha Yamaka Patthana.
8	Niddesa Itivuttakas Patisambbhida.	8	Buddhavamsa Cariyapitaka Apadana.
9	Peta and Vimana-Vatthus Apadana Cariya-Pitaka Buddha-Vamsa.	9	Parivarapatha.
10	Abhidhamma books (the last of which is the Katha-Vatthu, and the earliest probably the Puggala-Pannatti.)	10	Khuddakapatha.