

## Book Reviews

### A Comparative Study of the Prātimokṣa

By W. Pachow  
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A comparative Study of the Prātimokṣa, first published in 1955, has been republished in a revised and enlarged form under Buddhist Tradition Series. In early nineteen forties while the author was studying at Vishvabharati University, Shantiniketan, India this study was carried out for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Bombay, India. Dr. Pachow is a well known scholar who was a Lecturer in the Department of Pāli and Buddhist Studies, University of Ceylon, Sri Lanka.

The book is divided into three sections. The section one is the Introduction which is the core of the study. The section two is the comparison of the texts of the Prātimokṣa belonging to various Buddhist schools. Section three consists of appendices.

At the beginning the author draws readers' attention to the problem of authenticity of historical records in India. As history is mixed up with legends and interpolations it is difficult to determine historical facts. Recording historical events chronologically was not the practice of ancient India. Author's opinion is that this makes researcher's task difficult.

The meaning and the derivation of the word, Prātimokṣa has been explained next. First the author quotes the Pāli sources as they are more reliable and close to the original teaching of the Buddha. Three definitions of Prātimokṣa have been quoted from Pāli tradition. The first is from the Mahavagga Pāli of the Vinaya Pitaka and the other two from the post-

canonical tradition. The interpretations found in Chinese and Tibetan translations also have been examined in this section. Though the translations of definitions quoted from Pāli sources into English are not quite accurate, they do not create a problem of understanding the Pāli sentences.

There is a mistake in the etymological analysis of the word Prātimokṣa. In Pāli as well as Sanskrit we do not find a prefix. Pāti or Prāti. The prefix used in coining the word, Prātimokṣa is Prati in Sanskrit and it is Pati in Pāli. When the word is coined by adding the prefix to the noun the short vowel 'a' of pa or pra is lengthened grammatically to pronounce as Pāti or Prāti. Thus we read the word as Pātimokkha in Pāli and as Prātimokṣa in Sanskrit. The meaning of the word Pātimokkha in this context is confession of one's wrong doings *in front of each monk* assembled for the fortnightly recital of Pātimokkha rules.

Then the author examines a very controversial point regarding the Prātimokṣa, that is the number, date and the authorship of the rules. As we know the Prātimokṣa is the basic Vinaya text of all the schools of Buddhism. Regarding the number of Vinaya rules there was no consensus and this is a subject of further examination. However the author examines the numerary references found in the canonical literature. According to Sammitiya school the Tathāgata has established 420 precepts. This number is divided into three, that is in the P'o-shu-tou (Posadha) Vinaya 200, in the U-po-ti-sha (Upadesa) 120 and in the Bhikshuni Vinaya 99. These three sections amount to 419 Vinaya rules.

Sources like Pāli Nikāyas and Chinese Āgamas have also been examined to determine the correct number of Prātimokṣa rules in this section. Referring

to Pāli tradition the author points out that 150 Vinaya rules were recited in the half monthly practice of Uposatha. According to Saṃyuktāgama Sūtras (Chinese translation) the number of Vinaya rules recited was 250. There is a close similarity between the passages found in Chinese Saṃyuktāgama No.829 and Pāli Anguttara Nikāya III. 83. Author's opinion is that these numbers of Vinaya rules are correct in terms of both Pāli and Sanskrit Buddhist traditions. The examination of the number of Vinaya rules of the Prātimokṣa belonging to different Buddhist schools is extremely important.

The section three, Prātimokṣa and the Councils, is a brief examination of what happened in the councils regarding Vinaya. The author examines briefly in this section the historicity of the first council. After a careful examination of Pāli sources and Chinese translations author concludes that the First Council was a historical event. It has not been made clear in this section as to whether the Prātimokṣa existed as an independent text at the First Buddhist Council. According to early historical sources, Suttavibhanga and Khandhaka were compiled at the First Council. There is no mention made of Prātimokṣa in these sources. All the Prātimokṣa rules are included in the Suttavibhanga. For the purpose of fortnightly recital of Vinaya rules Prātimokṣa was compiled after the first council.

The section five, Differences of Interpretation, deals with the problem of understanding and interpretation of Prātimokṣa rules. According to the author this problem came up due to the ambiguity of the original meaning, the different traditional explanations handed down by schools and also occasional additions of local nature. Regarding the differences of interpretation the author points out how some Buddhist schools misunderstood and misinterpreted certain Prātimokṣa rules. For example in Sarvāstivāda V.42 and 43 'Sabhojane kule' was interpreted by the Mahāsāṅghikas and the Theravādins as 'family taking food'. The Mūla-

sarvāstivādins gave a completely different interpretation, that is, 'Whosoever Bhikshu knowing that a man and a woman are sleeping together in a house goes there and sits on a couch...' There are many such interpretations in Buddhist schools. Author has gone through all these different interpretations very carefully.

The section six, Saikṣa Dharmas, is a comparative study of Sekhiyā rules. These rules are not categorized under any penal section in the Buddhist Vinaya. These are considered as minor rules which deal with mannerliness of the Buddhist Sangha. The breach of these rules are not considered punishable. In all texts of Prātimokṣa, the number of Sekhiyās (Saikṣa Dharmas) is enumerated as more than one hundred. All the Sekhiyā rules belonging to Vinaya of different schools have been studied comparatively by the author.

In the section seven an attempt has been made to trace the origin of the Buddhist practice of Prātimokṣa recital. Here the reader's attention is drawn to early Brāhmaṇa and Śramaṇa practice of Darśapūrṇamāsa sacrifice. At these practices people used to gather and ascetics expounded their teachings. According to author, this practice served two purposes; one was social intercourse and the other propagation of religion. Buddhist Sangha did not follow the Brahmana practice of Darśapūrṇamāsa. Instead they followed the fortnightly recital of Prātimokṣa rules at the Uposatha assembly.

Part two of the book is entirely devoted to comparative study of Prātimokṣa. This section is extremely technical as the author compares the Prātimokṣa rules one by one from Pārājikas to Adhikaraṇasamathas. In this study seven versions of Prātimokṣa are compared, namely Sarvāstivāda, Theravāda, Dharmaguptika, Mahāsāṅghika, Mūlasarvāstivāda, Kasyapiya, and Sammitīya.

Part three of the book consists of five appendixes. Appendix one is a classification of the Prātimokṣa rules of the

Sarvāstivāda school. Appendix two describes Pātyantika rules not found in the Sarvāstivāda tradition but found in other texts. Appendix three is a classification of the Saikṣa Dharmas of the Sarvāstivāda school. Appendix four is a numerical comparison of all Prātimokṣa rules of different schools of Buddhism. Appendix five, the Prātimokṣa and Vinaya, is a short description of origin of Vinaya, Prātimokṣa and the Vinaya literature. Author has attempted to emphasize the opinion that Prātimokṣa was compiled during the life time of the Buddha. We do not find any mention made of the Prātimokṣa at the First Council. Suttavibhanga comprising of all Prātimokṣa rules and Khandhaka were compiled at the First Council. It is true that the word Pātimokkha occurs in early Pāli texts, it is in the context of Prātimokṣa practice. Later on Prātimokṣa text was compiled as a manual by extracting all Vinaya rules from Suttavibhanga to facilitate handling at the Upostha assembly.

In conclusion I would like to say that 'A Comparative Study of the Prātimokṣa' is a thorough examination of the Buddhist monastic Vinaya rules. The author has carefully studied and compared the Chinese, Tibetan, Sanskrit and Pāli versions of the Prātimokṣa belonging to different Buddhist schools. The present work is a valuable contribution to the vast field of Buddhist studies.

– *Kottegoda S. Warnasuriya*

## **Buddhist Thoughts and Ritual**

**Edited by David J. Kalupahana**  
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Buddhist Thought and Ritual, a collection of essays first published in 1991, has been republished after ten years (i.e. 2001). The present work is edited and reviewed by Prof. David J. Kalupahana who is a well known scholar of Buddhism.

The collection consists of thirteen scholarly presentations written on Buddhist philosophy and practices. The essays are divided into two parts. Part one includes six essays on Buddhist philosophy and part two seven essays on Buddhist practices and rituals.

The first essay is on the Buddhist Doctrine of Anatta, a controversial subject, contributed by Y. Karunadasa. Y. Karunadasa has examined the extreme views of eternalism and nihilism current in India during the time of the Buddha. The idea of soul as a metaphysical entity was accepted by most philosophical and religious traditions of India. The author has made a commendable attempt to show how the Buddha advocated the middle way position free from the idea of soul.

The second article, Pratītyasamutpāda and Renunciation Mystery, contributed by the editor is an interesting presentation. The author has examined how the Buddha renounced the idea of self or substance either in the subject or the object.

R. D. Gunaratna's essay, Space, Emptiness and Freedom (Ākāsa, Śūnyatā and Nibbāna) is an examination of conception of space in both Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism. Gunaratna discusses Ākāsa in its cosmological sense and he points out how Ākāsa was reduced to a mere Paññatti (mental construction) in later Buddhist thought.

P. D. Premasiri in "The Social Relevance of the Buddhist Nibbāna Ideal," has emphasized the fact that Nibbāna is not only the other worldly life-denying and salvation ideal but also it has a lot to do with this world. He rejects the idea that it has nothing to do with this life and maintains that Nibbāna introduces the kind of ideal that is necessary for the promotion of a better and harmonious world order.

Sanath Nanayakkara's essay on the Bodhisattva Ideal rejects the western misconception that the Bodhisattva ideal is purely Mahāyāna in its origin. He clearly