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An In-Depth Study on the Emergence of Eighteen Early Buddhist Schools

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ABSTRACT

Abstract: This qualitative study utilizes a comprehensive library research approach, focusing on both primary and secondary sources to explore the chronological background on the emergence of early Buddhist schools. Primary sources include the canonical, chronicles and other Pāli literatures. While secondary sources include previous research articles and books written by scholars. This research discovered that the Buddhist councils held by the leading disciples after the demise of the Buddha played a significant role in the division of Buddhist order and the emergence of Buddhist schools. Buddhist councils were mainly convened to discuss and resolve controversial issues that arose within the order. Schism in the Buddhist order emerged as result of disagreements in regard to philosophical teaching and the practice of vinaya. Disagreements among the monks in the second Buddhist council led to the division of Buddhist order into two primary schools known as Theravāda and Mahāsaṅgika. From these two primary Buddhist schools, gradually eighteen Buddhist schools emerged, with twelve schools deriving from Theravāda and six from Mahāsaṅgika. This research deals with an in-depth study on the emergence of eighteen early Buddhist schools).

Keywords: Buddhist, Mahāsaṅgika, Schism, School, Theravāda

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INTRODUCTION

Buddhism is a religion founded by the Buddha in the 6th Century B.C. All the Buddha's followers followed the Buddha's teachings and practice. The community of monks was led by the Buddha himself. The Buddha did not point anyone to change his position after his demise. He instructed his followers to follow the *Dhammavinaya* because *Dhammavinaya* will be the teacher after his demise (D. II. 154). *Dhammavinaya* refers to the collection of Buddha's teachings and monastic rules for monk laid down by the Buddha. During the Buddha's lifetime, the Buddha was able to address and resolve any disputes or disagreements within the order directly. However, following his demise, the order began to experience disputes and differences of opinion for a variety of reasons.

Schism in Buddhism came into being as result of disagreements took place in the event of the second Buddhist council held by elder monks after the demise of the Buddha. It is reported in the historical literatures that there was disagreement among monks in regard to practice of *vinaya* rules and several philosophical teachings of the Buddha. The second Buddhist council led to the division of Buddhist order into two primary schools known as Theravāda and Mahāsaṅgika. As reported in the Pali literature, three months after the Buddha's passing away, the first Buddhist council was held in order to collect all the Buddha's teachings and discuss the matters arose in the order (Vin. II. 286). In the first Buddhist council, the



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discussion on minor rules permitted by the Buddha to be omitted were discussed. However, since there was no clear definition of what constituted minor rules, the elder monks decided not to change any rules laid down by the Buddha. Even though it might be inconvenient for some monks, all monks had to accept the decision since it was made by the majority of the respected elder monks (Medhacitto, 2019: 16). However, hundred years after the demise of the Buddha, the second Buddhist council was held again in order to discuss the controversial issues on *vinaya* in regard to the ten unlawful practices followed by Vajjiputtaka monks (Vin. II. 299). Those ten points are:

1. *Sīṅgilona kappā* = preserving salt in horn.
2. *Dvaṅgula kappā* = taking food when the shadow is beyond two fingers wide.
3. *Gāmaṅtara kappā* = after finishing meal, one may go to another village for another meal.
4. *Āvāsa kappā* = holding several uposathas within the same sima.
5. *Anumati kappā* = obtaining sanction after deed done.
6. *Ācinna kappā* = the custom of doing something because of the preceptor's practice.
7. *Amathita kappā* = taking unchurned milk even after the meal time.
8. *Jalogim pātum* = drinking fermented palm wine.
9. *Adasaka-nisīdanam kappā* = to use a mat without a border.
10. *Jātarūpa-rajatam kappā* = Accepting gold and silver (Vin.A. I. 33).

After thoroughly investigating each of the ten points, the elder monks confirmed that these practices did not align with the *vinaya* rules established by the Buddha. According to the elder monks, those ten points are unlawful and against to *vinaya* rules. Those ten points (*dasa vatthūni*) are:

1. *Sīṅgilona kappā* = preserving salt in horn. This was contrary to *Pācittiya* rule 38, prohibiting store of food.
2. *Dvaṅgula kappā* = taking food when the shadow is beyond two fingers wide. *Pācittiya* rule 37 forbids solid food after mid-day.
3. *Gāmaṅtara kappā* = after finishing meal, one may go to another village for another meal. *Pācittiya* rule 35 forbids over eating.
4. *Āvāsa kappā* = holding several uposathas within the same sima. *Mahavagga* II.8.3
5. *Anumati kappā* = obtaining sanction after deed done. *Mahavagga* IX 3.5
6. *Ācinna kappā* = the custom of doing something because of the preceptor's practice.
7. *Amathita kappā* = taking unchurned milk even after the meal time. *Pācittiya* rule 35 forbids over eating.
8. *Jalogim pātum* = drinking fermented palm wine. *Pācittiya* rule 51 prohibits alcohol or intoxicants
9. *Adasaka-nisīdanam kappā* = to use a mat without a border. *Pācittiya* rule 89.
10. *Jātarūpa-rajatam kappā* = Accepting gold and silver. *Nissaggiya Pācittiya* rule 18 forbids acceptance of money. (Dutt, 2007: 16).

As result of this disagreement, those who are disagree with the decision taken by the elder monks, they formed a new Buddhist school they feel convenience with their practice. *Mahāvamsa* gives an account that the heretical bhikkhus, subdued by the *theras* who had held the second council, in all ten thousand, founded the school which bears the name Mahāsaṅghika (*Tehi saṃgītikārehi, therehi dutiyehi te; niggahitā pāpabhikkhū, sabbe dasasahassakā*) (Mhv. V. 2-3). Afterward, eighteen schools gradually arose from those Buddhist schools; twelve schools from Theravāda and six schools from Mahāsaṅghika (Mhv. V. 5-10). *Mahāvamsa* lists them as follows:

Table 1. Early schools Buddhist

Theravāda	Mahāsaṅghika
Mahimsāsakā (Mahīsāsaka)	Gokulika
Sabbattha (Sarvāstivāda)	Paṇṇatti (Prajñaptivāda)
Kassapiyā (Kāśyapīya)	Bahulikā (Bahuśrutīya)
Samkantika (Sankrantika)	Ekavyahārika
Sutta (Sautrāntika)	Cetiya (Caitika)
Dhammagupttika (Dharmaguptaka)	
Vajjiputtiya (Vatsīputrīya)	
Dhammuttariyā (Dharmottarīya)	
Bhadrayānika (Bhadrayāniya)	
Chandāgārikā (Sannāgarika)	
Sammitī (Samitīya)	

Sri Lankan Chronicles record that the schism in the system Sthaviravadins or Theravāda began with the appearing of Mahimsāsakā (or Mahīsāsaka) and Vajjiputtiya. Next, derived from Vajjiputtiya, the four sects of Sammitīya (or Sammatīya), Dhammuttariyā (or Dharmottarīya), Bhadrayānika (or Bhadrayāniya), and Chandāgārikā (or Sannāgarika) were formed. Later, Sabbatthavāda and Dhammaguttika arose from Mahimsāsaka. Rooted from Sabbatthavāda, Kassapīya again served as the foundation for the existence of Sankantika (or Sankrantika). The establishment of Suttavāda (or Sautrāntika) from Sankratika was the last.

However, the schism in Buddhist order if it is reviewed according to non-Theravāda sources, schism came into being as result of different opinion on doctrinal matter, particularly on the nature of arahant. Vasumitra, followed by Bhavya and Vinītadeva, wrote that on account of five prepositions propounded by Mahādeva, the Saṅgha became divided into two schools; Mahāsaṅghika and Sthaviravāda. Those five prepositions are:

1. *Arahants* are subject to temptation. (cf. Kvu. II. 1; *Atthi arahato rāgo ti?*).
2. *Arahants* may have residue of ignorance. (cf. Kvu. II. 2; *Atthi arahato aññanan ti?*).
3. *Arahants* may have doubts. (cf. Kvu. II. 3; *Atthi arahato kaṅkhā ti*)
4. *Arahants* gain knowledge through other's help. (cf. Kvu. II. 4; *Atthi arahato paravitāraṇā ti*)
5. The Path is attained by an exclamation (as 'aho' cf. Kvu. II. 3 & 4 & XI. 4). (Dutt, 1998: 22).



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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative research carried out with library approach that aims to investigate the chronological development of early Buddhist schools. Library research is understood as a series of activities relating to methods of collecting data, reading, taking notes and processing research materials (Zed, 2003: 3). According to Amir Hamzah, library research is classified as qualitative research, but in the context of library research, data is taken from exploration of library materials which are studied holistically, then analyzed based on a particular framework of thought or theory/philosophical paradigm that underlies it, then uses a certain approach in accordance with the research objectives achieved (Hamzah, 2019: 25). According to Sugiyono, literature studies are also related to theoretical studies and other references related to the values, culture and norms that develop in the social situation studied (Sugiyono, 2017: 291). By this method, the researcher collects the information relevant to the topic as much as possible from the library or literature. The sources must be relevant and academically justifiable in term of their validity and authenticity as scholarly sources such as books, journals, magazines, monographs, research reports, encyclopedias and other credible sources from online (Zaluchu: 2021: 255). The data used in this research based on primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include the canonical, chronicles and other Pāli literatures. While secondary sources include previous research articles and books written by scholars.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Eighteen Early Buddhist Schools

The Buddhist order, community of monks, at the beginning was united under the Buddha's control. After the demise of the Buddha, there was no person pointed to change the position of the Buddha. The Buddha himself, before his demise, stated that Dhamma and Vinaya should be the leader after his passing away (D. II. 154). Several councils were held after the Buddha's demise in order to settle the disputes and controversial issues in regard to Dhamma and Vinaya. As result of that councils, disagreements arose among the Buddhist monks. At the end of the second Buddhist council, the Order was divided into two schools, known as Theravāda and Mahāsaṅghika. Afterward, eighteen Buddhist schools came into existence rooted from those main schools. Twelve schools derived from Theravāda and six schools from Mahāsaṅghika.

Twelve Buddhist Schools of Theravāda

1. Theravāda (Sthaviravāda)

The term '*Theravāda*' is composed of two main Pāli words; *thera* (elder) + *vāda* (teaching, doctrine). Literary, *Theravāda* means 'the teaching of elders.' It is also known as Sthaviravāda in Sanskrit. Pāli Sri Lankan chronicles date the designating of the Buddha's teachings as Theravāda from the day of the conclusion of the first Buddhist Council (*paṭhama saṅgīti*) (Malalasekera, 2011: 312). *Dīpavaṃsa* states "By these and other five hundred Elders



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(therā), who had accomplished their mission (viz. arahants), the Dhamma and Vinaya was rehearsed. The collection made by the Elders is called Theravāda” (Dpv. V. 10). *Mahāvamsa* gives similar agreement. It is reported “That reduction of the true Dhamma, which was arranged at the beginning by the Mahākassapa Thera with other Elders, is called Therīya” (Mhv. V. 1). Therefore, simply it is understood that, Theravāda means group of Elder Monks who keep the Dhamma and Vinaya as pure as the Buddha taught, rejecting the changing of Vinaya rules as proposed by Vajjiputtaka monks.

Theravāda school is known as orthodox Buddhist school as Theravādin monks always tried to keep Dhamma and Vinaya as pure as possible. In the third Buddhist council, elder group was also known as Vibhajjavāda. In the third Buddhist council, there were 60.000 heretical monks were disrobed and given jobs by the king (Mhv. V. 270). The rest of that, there were 1.000 orthodox monks who called as *Vibhajjavādins* or the followers of the original teaching of the Buddha which Ven. Moggaliputtatissa Thero declared to be original teaching of the Buddha (Mhv. V. 271-272). In the midst of this council, Ven. Moggaliputtatissa Thera set forth the *Kathāvatthupparakāraṇa* refuting the other doctrines (Mhv. V. 278). Referring to *Kathāvatthupparakāraṇa*, the teachings followed by Vibhajjavādins can be understood.

Theravāda School has Tipiṭaka Pāli as the scripture, consisting of three baskets, namely *Vinaya Piṭaka*, *Sutta Piṭaka*, and *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. As mentioned in the Tipiṭaka, the final goal of Buddha’s teaching is *Nibbāna*, which is free from suffering. Therefore, by understanding the Four Noble Truths, one can attain *Nibbāna*. In other word, becoming an Arahant is the final goal of Buddhist practice.

2. Mahīśāsakā (Mahīśāsaka)

The confusion on the origin of this school took place because there are two strong arguments. According to Pali sources, this school along with the Vajjiputtakas branched off from the Sthaviravadins and gave rise to the Sarvastivadins. However, Vasumitra tells us that this school was derived from the Sarvastivadins. The Mahīśāsaka sect is thought to have first originated in the Avanti region of India. Their founder was a monk named Purāṇa, who is venerated at length in the Mahīśāsaka vinaya.

According to the Mahīśāsakas, the Four Noble Truths were to be meditated upon simultaneously. For them the past and the future did not exist, while the present and the nine *asaṃskṛta dharmas* did. These nine *asaṃskṛta dharmas* were: (1) *pratisankhya-nirodha*, cessation through knowledge; (2) *apratisankhya-nirodha*, cessation without knowledge, i.e., through the natural cessation of the causes; (3) *akasa*, space; (4) *anenjata*, immovability; (5) *kusaladharmatathatā*; (6) *akusalaharmatathatā*, and (7) *avyakrtadharmatathatā*, that is, suchness of the dharmas that are meritorious, unmeritorious and neither the one, nor the other; (8) *mārgāṅgatathatā*, suchness of the factor of the path; (9) *pratityasamutpada tathatā*, suchness of the Law of Dependent Origination (Bapat, 1956: 104).

The Mahīśāsaka sect held that everything exists, but only in the present. They also regarded a gift to the Sangha as being more meritorious than one given to the Buddha. They disagreed with the Dharmaguptakas on this point, as the Dharmaguptakas believed that a giving a gift to the Buddha is more meritorious than giving one to the Sangha. The earlier Mahīśāsakas



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appear to have not held the doctrine of an intermediate state between death and rebirth, but later Mahīśāsakas accepted this doctrine.

3. Sabbattha (Sarvāstivāda)

Sarvāstivāda is a Buddhist sect derived from Theravada. However, their scripture is preserved in Sanskrit medium. The two term '*sarvaṃ + asti = sarvāsti*' means everything exists. This is the most significance theory they held. Here, everything means the Dhamma or the realities of the world such as Four Great Elements, Six Senses, and Eighteen Elements. According to Sarvāstivāda, each and every dhammas is absolute doctrine. A particular Dhamma has two aspects: Internal and External. The external aspect of Dhammas change according to the time past, present, and future. The internal aspect of the Dhammas is called *svabhava* or nature. This internal aspect of the Dhamma does not change in the three period of time- past, present, and future. Only the external aspect of the Dhamma change as to the time. They also believed in *nairatmya*, the absence of any permanent substance in an individual, but they admitted the permanent reality of all things.

By introducing this definition of the Dhamma, they could easily explain the relationship between the person and the rebirth and *kamma*. Buddhism has rejected the concept of eternal soul through the teaching of *anicca* or impermanence. At the same time, Buddhism accepts *kamma* and rebirth. By denying the concept of soul, the Buddhist followers had difficulty in establishing *kamma* and rebirth. The main question was that in the absence of a soul how the merits and sins acquired in this life can is taken to the next life. Therefore, the Sarvastivadin explained that the karma can be transmitted to the next world through the internal aspect of the Dhamma, because it exists in the three period of time, past, present and future.

The theory of three times - past, present and future – are explained variously. The different explanations were suggested by the four famous Sarvāstivāda teachers: Dharmatrata, Ghosaka, Vasumitra and Buddhadeva.

4. Kassapiyā (Kāśyapīya)

The name *Kāśyapīya* is believed to be derived from Kāśyapa, one of the original missionaries sent by King Ashoka to the Himavant country. The Kāśyapīyas were also called the *Haimavatas* (Warder, 2000: 277). Vasumitra, in his book on the Eighteen Sects, calls the Haimavatas the inheritors of the Sthaviravadins, but other authorities like Bhavya and Vinitadeva look upon this school as a branch of the Mahasanghikas (Bapat, 1956: 107). According to the *Mahāvamsa*, the Kāśyapīya were an offshoot of the Sarvāstivāda. However, according to the Mahāsāṃghika account, the Kāśyapīya sect descended from the Vibhajyavādins (Baruah, 2008: 51).

As reported in the *Kathāvatthu* commentary, the Kāśyapīyas believed that past events exist in the present in some form. As discussed by A.K. Warder in his book titled *Indian Buddhism*, the Kāśyapīya school held the doctrine that arahants were fallible and imperfect, similar to the view of the Sarvāstivādins and the various Mahāsāṃghika sects. According their view, *arhants* have not fully eliminated desires, that their "perfection" is incomplete, and that



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it is possible for them to relapse (Warder, 2000: 277). Therefore, this idea is similar to Mahāsāṃghika who denied the perfection of arahant.

5. Saṃkantika (Sankrantika)

Sankrantika school is believed to derived from Kāśyapīya school. According to the Sri Lankan chronicles, the Sarvāstivāda gives rise to the Kassapiya (Kasyapiya) School, which in turn gave rise to the Sankrantika. Then this Sankrantika school gives rise to Sautrāntika. However, in the Theravada sources itself, it is hard to find record on this Sankrantika school. *Kathavatthu* of Pali literature is silent about this school (Baruah, 2008: 52). However, the *Abhidharmakosa* and the treatise of Vasumitra record a number of doctrines of this school. As the name of the sect suggests, they believed in the transmigration (*Sankranti*) of a substance from one life to another. According to them, out of five *Skandas* of an individual, there is only one subtle *Skandha* which transmigrates, as against the whole of the *Pudgala* of the Vatsiputriya and Sammitiyas (Baruah, 2008: 52).

6. Suttantika (Sautrāntika)

The Sautrāntika or Sutradin is generally believed as a school descended from Sarvāstivāda which belong to Sthavira. The name of Sautrāntika literally means “those who rely upon Sutras (*suttas*) or Buddha’s discourses.” From its name, it indicates that this school held the Buddhist sutras as central to their views, over and above the ideas presented in the Abhidharma literature. It is also well known that this school strongly rejects the Abhidharma literature, as according to them, what is called Buddhavacana is only in the Suttas. This school is believed to have been founded by the elder Kumāralāta (c. 3rd century CE), who was also an author of a "collection of dṛṣṭānta" (*Dṛṣṭāntapaṅkti*) which is called the *Kalpanāmaṇḍitīkā*. Therefore, the Sautrāntikas were sometimes also called "disciples of Kumāralāta". However, the Sarvāstivādins sometimes referred to them as the *Dārṣṭāntika* school, meaning "those who utilize the method of examples".

The Sautrāntika criticized the Sarvāstivādins on various matters such as ontology, philosophy of mind and perception. While the Sarvāstivādin abhidharma described a complex system in which past, present, and future phenomena are all held to have some form of their own existence, the Sautrāntika subscribed to a doctrine of "extreme momentariness" that held that only the present moment existed (Buswell, 2003: 505). Jan Westerhoff explained that this doctrine of momentariness holds that each present moment "does not possess any temporal thickness; immediately after coming into existence each moment passes out of existence" and that therefore "all dharmas, whether mental or material, only last for an instant (*ksana*) and cease immediately after arising" (Westerhoff, 2018: 75).

7. Dharmagupttika (Dharmaguptaka)

It is not clear whether the Dharmaguptakas should be regarded as a subset of the Vibhajyavādins (through the Mahīśāsaka line) or a subset of the Sarvāstivādins. They tended to emphasize Vinaya and Sūtra more than Abhidharma. Their Vinaya is preserved in Chinese



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translation (the *Sifen Lü*) and became the model for monastic rules in China. Another work of great importance for the study of early Abhidharma, the *Sāriputrābhīd-harṃasāstra*, is of Dharmaguptaka provenance. This text also shows strong influence from the Mahāsāṃghika school. The connection of this school with the development of Mahāyāna is confirmed not only by the eclectic nature of this text but also by their frank criticism of the limitations of the *arhat* ideal, by their addition of Bodhisattva and Dhāraṇī Piṭakas to their canon, and by their role in the formation of Chinese monasticism, the connection of which to Mahāyāna thought owes much to the exegesis of the Chinese monk Daoxuan (596–667), founder of the Southern Mountain (Nanshan) tradition of Chinese Vinaya (Lü) studies.

8. Vajjiputtiya (Vatsīputrīya)

The origin of Vatsīputrīya School is disputable. There are number of arguments on what Vatsīputrīya School. The first argument is that this school is the very first school that split from the main Buddhist Order. It is approved with its name “Vatsīputrīya” or “Vajjiputtiya” is connected with Vajjiputtaka monks as recorded in the second Buddhist council.

Another argument is that Vatsīputrīya is an early Buddhist school which also mainly known as Pudgalavāda as it advocates the theory of “person”. The school is believed to have been founded by the elder Vātsīputra in the third century BCE. This school took its stand on passages in sacred texts which contain the word *pudgala* and contended that, without the existence of such a *pudgala*, rebirth could not be contemplated (Bapat, 1956: 107). Therefore, this school asserted that while there is no *ātman*, there exists a *pudgala* (person) or *sattva* (being) which is neither a conditioned dharma nor an unconditioned dharma. This doctrine of the person was their method of accounting for karma, rebirth, and nirvana. For the Pudgalavādins, the *pudgala* was what underwent rebirth through successive lives in samsara and what experiences nirvana.

9. Dharmuttariyā (Dharmottarīya)

Dharmottarīya is believed derived from Vatsīputrīya school. However, there is no much information about this school.

10. Bhadrāyānika (Bhadrayānīya)

Vatsīputrīya school is believed as the parent of Bhadrāyānīya school. However, there is no much information about this school.

11. Chandāgārikā (Sannāgarika)

Sannāgarika is derived from Vatsīputrīya school. Dharmottarīya, Bhadrāyānīya, Sannāgarika, Samitīya are often mentioned as the sub-school of Vatsīputrīya. However, out of these, Samitīya appears to have achieved special distinction (Baruah, 2008: 50). Therefore, the detailed information about Dharmottarīya, Bhadrāyānīya and Sannāgarika are rare to be found.



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12. Saṃmitī (Saṃitīya)

Saṃitīya school is believed to be split off from Vatsīputrīya school. Saṃitīya was established in Kosambi of Sarnath, living side by side with Vātsīputrīyas. Inscriptions have also established the existence of Saṃmitīya communities in Mathura and Sarnath between the 2nd and 4th centuries CE (Dutt, 1998: 181). As stated by Nalinaksha Dutt in his *Early History of Spread of Buddhism and Buddhist Schools*, Saṃmitīya could not prosper in pre-Christian era, but they gradually attained importance in Northern India during the Gupta period, reaching climax in the reign of Harshavardhana (Dutt, 1925: 298). The Tibetan historian Buton Rinchen Drub noted that the Saṃmitīya used Apabhraṃśa as their main language (Yao, 2012: 9). Modern philologist holds that Sauraseni Aprabhramsa which prevailed in Malwa and Gujarat was the standard Aprabhramsa dialect and that it was different from pure Sauraseni. It was very probable that Saṃmitīyas who had a Pitaka of their own handed down orally from generation to generation, committed it to writing when they flourished in Gupta period, using their medium the dialect prevalent in the place, i.e. the Apabhramsa (Dutt, 1925: 299).

According to Yuan Chwang record, this schools had a literature of its own. Most of passages cited in the *Kathavatthu* as giving view of the Saṃmitīya school have been found to be identical with passages on the subject in the Pali Sutta Pitaka. Nalinaksha Dutt said that from this point, it seems probable that Sutta Pitaka of Saṃmitīyas was a reduction of the original Pitaka which the Pali Pitaka has been derived (Dutt, 1925: 300). The remarkable doctrine of Saṃmitīyas is that regarding the nature of the “*puḍgala*”. They admitted the impermanence of material composites but at the same time held the view that there was an entity which should be distinguished from the five skandhas, but which could not exist independently of those skandhas. It served as the carrier of the five skandhas through births and rebirths of beings as the Saṃmitīyas held that there is an *antarabhava*, i.e. an intermediate state between the death of a being and its rebirths. They also agreed with the Sarvastivadins and Mahasanghikas in holding that the stage of an arahant is not immune from a fall to a lower stage and that the spiritual progress of a convert is always gradual (Dutt, 1925: 300).

Six Buddhist Schools of Mahāsaṅghika

1. Mahāsaṅghika

The name Mahāsaṅghika or ‘Great Monastic Community’, suggests that this school represented the larger group in the previously united monastic order. Sri Lanka chronicles such as *Mahāvamsa* (Mhv. V. 4) and *Dīpavamsa* (Dpv. V. 30-31), report that this school was originated due to ten points (*dasavatthūni*) proposed by Vajjiputtakā monks in the second Buddhist council. As a result of the rejection from the elders, Vajjiputtakā monks and their supporters broke away, held another Council of their own, compiled their own Tripitaka and formed a separate school under the name Mahāsaṅghika.

According to Non-Theravāda sources, division came to be seen as resulting from issues of doctrine, particularly over the nature of arahant. Vasumitra, followed by Bhavya and Vinītadeva, writes that on account of five prepositions propounded by Mahādeva, the Saṅgha became divided into two schools; Mahāsaṅghika and Sthaviravāda. Those five prepositions are:



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- Arahants* are subject to temptation. (cf. Kvu. II. 1; *Atthi arahato rāgo ti?*).
- Arahants* may have residue of ignorance. (cf. Kvu. II. 2; *Atthi arahato aññanan ti?*).
- Arahants* may have doubts. (cf. Kvu. II. 3; *Atthi arahato kañkhā ti*)
- Arahants* gain knowledge through other's help. (cf. Kvu. II. 4; *Atthi arahato paravitāraṇā ti*)
- The Path is attained by an exclamation (as 'aho' cf. Kvu. II. 3 & 4 & XI. 4) (Dutt, 1998: 22).

Mahāsaṅghika's main purpose was to grade down the position of Arahant. For this purpose, they upgraded the normal position of the Buddha to superior divine and eternal. Mahāsaṅghikas believed in a plurality of Buddhas as supramundane. Therefore, they redefined the concept of the Buddha. Chandima Wijebandara (Wijebandara, 2010: 18-20), has summarized the concept of the Buddha as follows:

- The Buddha is a supramundane (*lokuttara*) being who appeared in this world in supramundane way. His body and also his physical, verbal and mental actions were bereft of impurities (*asrva visamyukta*). His body had nothing worldly (*laukika*) and was indestructible purity only (*anasravamatra*).
- His material body (*rupakaya*) is unlimited as a result of unlimited merits. He can appear anywhere in a created body (*nirmita kaya*).
- Buddha's life stretch is unlimited (*ananta ayush*). He lives as long as sentient beings live.
- His divine power (*tejas, prabava*) is unlimited and therefore he can appear anywhere in the world, heaven, or hell, simultaneously. However, Mahāsaṅghika denied the story of the Buddha preaching Abhidhamma to gods.
- He is never tired of enlightening sentient beings and awakening pure faith (*visuddha sraddha*) in them. His compassion is limitless and therefore never enter Nibbana.
- His mind is always in meditation and therefore never sleeps nor dreams.
- He is *ekaksana citta* (instantaneous knowing). He can comprehend everything at present and needs no thinking in answering any question.
- The Buddha's birth was *opapatika* (spontaneous birth sans intercourse by parents). He sat cross legged in the womb of Maya and preached gods from there. Remained free from impurities of the womb he issued himself forth from the right side of mother's body without piercing it. He had no lust, and therefore Rahula also was conceived *opapatika*.
- All his bodily movements and actions like walking, eating, sleeping, putting on robes, etc. all were for following the ways of the world (*lokanuvartana*).

According to Vinitadeva (8th Century AD), the Mahāsaṅghikas employed Prākṛit for their literary medium (Bapat, 1956: 111). The same statement given by Buston. According to him, Mahāsaṅghika claimed Mahākāśyapa as their founder, and that the language of their Piṭaka was Prākṛit (Dutt, 1998: 61). The *Mahavastu*, as already observed, is in mixed Sanskrit, by which is meant a variety of Prākṛit. There is therefore no room for doubt that the literature of this school was Prākṛit (Bapat, 1956: 111). In the Mahāsaṅghika school, instead of *Nikāya*, *Sutta Piṭaka* was divided into *Āgamas* (Dutt, 1998: 61).



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As mentioned in the Sri Lanka chronicle, *Dīpavaṃsa*, Mahāsaṅghikas rejected texts such as *Parivāra*, *Abhidhammapakaraṇa*, *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, *Niddesa*, and the *Jātakas* (Dpv. V. 37). References to the canon of Mahāsaṅghikas are found in the inscriptions discovered at Amarāvati and Nāgārjunikoṇḍa (Dutt, 1998: 59). There is no room for doubt about the existence of a *Sutta Piṭaka* in at least three *Nikāyas*; *Dīgha*, *Majjhima* and *Samyutta* (Ibid). And there occurs the expression *pañca-mātuka*, which denotes Abhidhamma texts.

2. Kukkuṭika (Gokulika)

Kukkuṭika or Gokulika is a Buddhist school split off from the Mahāsaṅghika, which was known to exist in Pāṭaliputra, even having alternate names linking them to the Kukkuṭrāma monastery there (Baruah, 2008: 47). This school also appears in other names, such as *kukkuṭika*, *kukulika*, *kaukkuṭika*, *kaurukullaka* and *gokulika* (Warder, 2000: 235). Literally, the name *Gokulika* means "Cinder", and it refers to the doctrine that all conditioned phenomena necessarily involve suffering, and that they are like an "inferno of ashes" (Baruah: 2008: 47). According to Vasumitra, in regard to doctrinal matters, Ekavyāvahārika, Kukkuṭika, and Lokottaravāda are indistinguishable. He added that 48 theses were held in common by these three Mahāsaṅghika sects. Of these 48 special theses, 20 points concern the supramundane nature of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas (Sree Padma, 2008: 56). According to the *Samayabhedoparacanacakra*, these four groups held that the Buddha is able to know all *dharmas* in a single moment of the mind. In the *The Buddhist Theory of Self-Cognition*, Zhihua Yao says that:

“In their view, the Buddha is equipped with the following supernatural qualities: transcendence (*lokottara*), lack of defilements, all of his utterances preaching his teaching, expounding all his teachings in a single utterance, all of his sayings being true, his physical body being limitless, his power (*prabhāva*) being limitless, the length of his life being limitless, never tiring of enlightening sentient beings and awakening pure faith in them, having no sleep or dreams, no pause in answering a question, and always in meditation (*samādhi*).” (Yao, 2005: 11).

3. Paṇṇatti (Prajñaptivāda)

Prajñaptivāda was originated from Mahāsaṅghikas. They claim that they are in a line of descent from one of the Buddha's disciples, Mahākātyāyana. They are recorded as having taken up residence in the Himalayas. According to Tāranātha, the Prajñaptivādins continued to flourish in Magadha through the Pala Empire as late as the 10th century CE. A. K. Warder writes that the Prajñaptivādins were not known to have left Buddhism's original territory (Warder, 2000: 282).

The name *Prajñaptivāda* refers to their doctrine that phenomena are the product of conceptualization (Skt. *prajñapti*) (Sree Padma, 2008: 68). The Prajñaptivādins distinguished between conventional truth (Skt. *saṃvṛti*) and ultimate truth (Skt. *paramārtha*), and between reality (Skt. *tattva*) and mere concepts (Skt. *prajñapti*). As stated by Vasumitra, the Prajñaptivādins viewed all conditioned phenomena as being mere concepts or notions (Skt. *prajñapti*), and therefore they were considered to be suffering. Contrary to



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the Sarvāstivādins, the Prajñaptivādins did not view the skandhas or the five elements as suffering. Instead these were viewed as existing merely as nominal entities without any ultimate existence (Walser, 2005: 220).

The Prajñaptivādins held that the Buddha's teachings in the various *piṭakas* were nominal (Skt. *prajñapti*), conventional (Skt. *saṃvṛti*), and causal (Skt. *hetuphala*) (Dutt, 1998: 118). Therefore, all teachings were viewed by the Prajñaptivādins as being of provisional importance, since they cannot contain the ultimate truth (Harris, 1991: 98). As stated by Nalinaksha Dutt in his *Buddhist Sects in India*, Prajñaptivādins view of the Buddha's teachings is very close to the fully developed position of the Mahāyāna sūtras (Dutt, 1998: 118).

4. Bahulikā (Bahuśrutīya)

The term *Bahuśrutīya* literally means "those who have heard much," or "well-learned." In the *Samayabhedoparacanacakra*, the Vasumitra's history, it is recorded the following explanation of the name and characteristics of the Bahuśrutīya sect:

- a. Broadly studying the *Tripitaka*
- b. And profoundly comprehending the Buddha's words;
- c. It is by these virtues that they are referred to
- d. By the name, the "Bahuśrutīya" sect.

According to a monk named Paramārtha, who lived in the 6th-century in Ujjain central India, the founder of the Bahuśrutīya sect was named Yājñavalkya (Warder, 2000: 267). In Paramārtha's account, Yājñavalkya is said to have lived during the time of the Buddha, and to have heard his discourses, but was in a profound state of *saṃādhi* during the time of the Buddha's parinirvāṇa. After Yājñavalkya emerged from this *saṃādhi* 200 years later, he discovered that the Mahāsāṃghikas were teaching only the superficial meaning of the sūtras, and he therefore founded the Bahuśrutīya sect in order to expound their full meaning (Ibid). According to Paramārtha, the Bahuśrutīya School was formed in order to fully embrace both "conventional truth" and "ultimate truth." According to Vasumitra, the Bahuśrutīyas considered the Buddha's teachings of impermanence, suffering, emptiness, *anātman*, and Nirvāṇa to be supramundane, while his expositions on other subjects were to be considered mundane (Dutt, 1998: 117).

5. Ekavyāhārika

The Ekavyāhārikas School was emerged from Mahāsāṃghika sect. A.K. Warder notes that the Ekavyāhārikas were hardly known in later times and may have simply have been considered part of the Mahāsāṃghika (Warder, 2000: 281). The name of the Ekavyāhārikas refers to their doctrine that the Buddha speaks with a single and unified transcendent meaning (Sree Padma, 2008: 67).

According to Paramārtha, the Ekavyāhārikas accepted the Mahāyāna sūtras as the words of the Buddha (*buddhavacana*). The Ekavyāhārikas held that sentient beings possessed an originally or fundamentally pure mind, but that it has been encumbered and obscured by suffering. This conception of the nature of the mind as being fundamentally the same as that of



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the Buddha, has been identified with the Mahāyāna doctrines of Buddha-nature and the Buddha's Dharmakāya.

6. Cetiya (Caitika)

The Caitikas proliferated throughout the mountains of South India, from which they derived their name. In Pali writings, members of this sect and its offshoots were generally referred to as the *Andhakas*, meaning "of Coastal Andhra". The Caitikas split off from the main Mahāsāṃghika school probably in the 1st or 2nd century BCE. *Śāriputraparipṛcchā Sūtra* dates the formation of the Caitikas to 300 years after the Buddha.

K. Warder holds that the Mahāyāna "almost certainly" first developed from the southern Mahāsāṃghika schools of the Āndhra region, among monastic communities associated with the Caitikas and their sub-sects (Warder, 2000: 313). The southern Mahāsāṃghika schools such as the Caitikas advocated the ideal of the bodhisattva, the bodhisattvayāna, over that of the arahant or śrāvakayāna, and they viewed arahants as being fallible and still subject to ignorance (Sree Padma, 2008: 44). The main Caitika school, along with the Aparasāilas and Uttarasāilas, all emphasized the transcendental and supernatural character of the Buddha.

The Caitika schools rejected the post-Asokan texts that were in use by the Anuradhapura Maha Viharaya tradition such as the *Parivara*, the six books of Abhidharma, the *Patisambhidamagga*, the *Niddesa*, some Jataka tales, some verses, and so on (Sujato, 2012: 51). For example, the Caitikas claimed that their own Jataka tales represented the original collection before the Buddhist tradition split into various lineages (Warder, 2000: 286-287).

CONCLUSION

Schisms and divisions within a religion are a common and natural phenomenon. Schism in the religion can emerge due to different interpretation on the teaching or the practice of the followers. In Buddhism too, the emergence of various Buddhist schools was due to some disagreements among the community concerning philosophical teaching and the practice of *vinaya*. In the Buddha's time, the Buddha was able to resolve any disputes or disagreements within the order directly. However, following his demise, the order began to experience disputes and differences of opinion for a variety of reasons. Social changes and cultural environments could lead to the different interpretation and the application of the Buddha's teaching. The Buddhist councils held by the monks after the Buddha's demise played pivotal role for the emergence of Buddhist schools. Disagreements among the monks in the second Buddhist council led to the division of Buddhist order into two primary schools known as Theravāda and Mahāsaṅghika. From these two primary Buddhist schools, gradually eighteen Buddhist schools emerged, with twelve schools deriving from Theravāda and six schools from Mahāsaṅghika. As result of different interpretation on some points of *Dhammavinaya*, each school hold different and special theory and practice. Theravāda came to be known as an orthodox Buddhist school, preserving *Dhammavinaya* as pure as possible to attain the *Nibbāna* or final liberation as Arahants. Mahimsāsakā has view that the past and the future did not exist, only the present and the nine *asaipskrta dharmas*. Sabbattha or Sarvāstivāda holds the view that everything exists. They believe that Dhamma has two aspects: Internal and External. The external aspect of



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Dhammas change according to the time past, present, and future. The internal aspect of the Dhammas is called *svabhava* or nature, which does not change in the three period of time- past, present, and future. Kāśyapīya holds the view that arahants were fallible and imperfect. Saṃkantika believed in the transmigration (*Sankranti*) of a substance from one life to another. Suttantika are those who rely upon Sutras (*suttas*) or Buddha's discourses. Dhammagupttika are those who tended to emphasize Vinaya and Sūtra more than Abhidharma. Vajjiputtiya is known as Pudgalavāda as it advocates the theory of "person". Dharmottarīya, Bhadrāyānīya, Sannāgarika, Samitīya are often mentioned as the sub-school of Vatsīputrīya. Mahāsaṅghika represents the great monastic followers. Kukkuṭika or Prajñaptivāda refers to their doctrine that phenomena are the product of conceptualization (Skt. *prajñapti*). Bahuśrutīya was formed in order to fully embrace both "conventional truth" and "ultimate truth." The Ekavyāvahārikas held that sentient beings possessed an originally or fundamentally pure mind, but that it has been encumbered and obscured by suffering. Caitikas advocated the ideal of the *bodhisattva*, the *bodhisattvayāna*, over that of the arahant or *śrāvakayāna*, and they viewed arahants as being fallible and still subject to ignorance.

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