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HIGHER ORDINATION (UPASAMPADA)

Firstly, it is important to be aware what Higher Ordination is. In short this can be introduced as a rescue of a Samanera Bhikku or Bhikkuni (Sikkamana) from the state of Samanera and integrated into the Sangha Order of great adherents of Lord Buddha.

BHIKKHU HIGHER ORDINATION

At the start the Ordination and the Higher Ordination to those who consented for same were granted by Lord Buddha himself, which later, was permitted to be performed by the Sangha, thus the first Bhikku Higher Ordination performed by the Sangha was the Brahmin 'Radha'. The Lord Buddha rejecting the THREEFOLD (Thisaranagamana) Higher Ordination since prevailed and had enacted the Bhikkus to perform the GNAPTHI CHATHUPPAKAMMA Higher Ordination and henceforth the Bhikkus continue the Higher Ordination. (Mahavagga Page 119 – 129)

BHIKKUNI HIGHER ORDINATION

The Bhikkuni Higher Ordination had been performed by Ven. Maha Prajapathi Gothami through the acceptance of eight preserved Dhamma (Garu Dharmma) and the rest of the women that had been ordained with her had been Higher Ordained by Bhikkus as had formulated by Lord Buddha (Chulla Vagga Pali – Bhikkuni Kandhaka Page 477).

At later stage, on account of problems emerged from Endangered Dhamma (Antharaika Dhamma), the Higher Ordination of Bhikkunis to be performed firstly by Bhikkunis and secondly by Bhikkus as formulated by Lord Buddha. (Chula Vagga Pali B.K. Page 513)

MODE OF CONDUCTING THE HIGHER ORDINATION

The performance of an Act of Sangha or Discipline by the Sangha gathered to a prescribed Chapter House is said as Higher Ordination. Every Samanera could not receive Higher Ordination nor could every Bhikku grant Higher Ordination. Samanera should be qualified to receive the Higher Ordination and the Upajjaya at the same time should be qualified to grant the Higher Ordination, the qualifications for which are described in Vinaya Pitakaya of Maha Vagga. (Vinaya Pitakaya of Mahavagga Pali page 129 -171 and 179 – 193/ Chuala vagga pali B.K. 513).

Firstly the Kammachchariya among the Bhikkus or Bhikkunis present will raise the Endangered Dhamma (Mahavagga Pali page 514 – 515) and having determined that the candidate for Higher Ordination is free of endangers of Dhamma will place before Sangha the suitability of the candidate he/she for Higher Ordination if agreed (Mahavagga pali page 235, Chulavagga pali page 521)

There are 24 Endangered Dhamma for Bhikkunis (Culavagga pali B.K.page 513) that are negotiated with the Bhikkunis and having granted the Higher Ordination, secondly request the Bhikkus for their Higher Ordination (Chulavagga pali B.K.page 519) Thereafter the candidate for Higher Ordination will worship the feet of the Sangha requesting thrice the Higher Ordination (Mahavagga pali page 235 – Chulavagga pali page 521).

The Kammachchariya there after will thrice inform the Sangha of the Upajjaya and the qualification of candidate for Higher Ordination and request for the Higher Ordination by way of being silence if agreed with the request or declaring if of any objections for same. If no objections are found, the Higher Ordination is thereby confirmed.

There are 24 Endangered Dhamma for Bhikkunis as above said (Chullavagga pali B.K. page 513). At earlier stage these were consulted by Bhikkus themselves when granting Higher Ordination to Bhikkunis, but the Bhikkunis were negative of their response and who were subjected to scoffs due to sexual aspect of the contents and this problem having placed before Lord Buddha had proclaimed that the

same be consulted by Bhikkunis themselves and Higher Ordination be granted by Bhikkunis and secondly received from Bhikkus (Chullavagga pali B.K.513).

The Higher Ordination Vinaya Karmaya will be concluded after making aware the Bhikku of the 4 Nishaya Dhamma and Bhikkuni of the 2 Nishaya Dhamma and 8 Akaraneeya Dhamma (Mahavagga pali page 238/ Chullavagga pali B.K.531).

At early stages Higher Ordination had been granted individually. On account of a debate of 2 disciples of Ven. Maha Kassapa Thera, as to the first Higher Ordination of the two, the Lord Buddha had permitted that two or three may be given Higher Ordination at the same time under one Kammachariya (Anusasana) and Upajjaya (Mahavagga pali page 231) which includes Bhikkuni too.

Any of the higher ordained Bhikku or Bhikkuni since then has the privilege of participating all Acts of Sangha thus commencing the age of his /her Priesthood and efficiency.

In here, reciting and making observe 5,8 or 10 precepts will not take place, but Higher ordained Bhikku or Bhikkuni will encompass with virtuous morals or the higher precepts accordingly. These higher precepts are described in the Bhikkhu Bhikkuni Prathimokkha Canon and listed as 227 stanzas for Bhikku and 311 for Bhikkuni.

MY INVESTIGATIONS

Sentence of Act of Higher Ordination of two or three at a time does not appear in Disciplinary canons of some Countries like Sri Lanka and Thailand, but in Burma this sentence of act of Higher Ordination is included in their canons. Hence one could bring debate as to invalidity of granting Higher ordination of two or more in the countries of Sri Lanka and Thailand as the sentence of act is not in the canons. But

what is important is the permission given for same by Lord Buddha. It is the responsibility of the Maha Sangha to adjust same to suit the countries that of Burma.

The Higher Ordination could be granted if requested to a higher ordained Bhikku who had left the order and re-ordained (Mahavagga pali page 243), but this is not applicable to higher ordained Bhikkuni (Chullavagga pali B.K.page 535) This should be considered by Well read.

The Higher Ordination is a Sangha Convention. The convention is carried by the Sangha gathered at the Chapter House at the time. For this purpose, consent or approval of other Sangha else where will not necessary.

Any objection towards the Higher Ordination of the candidate concerned should be placed then and there before the Sangha in the Chapter House and will not serve any purpose of any objections elsewhere later.

Also such Higher Ordination granted shall not be invalidated which has not been included in Disciplinary canon. It is the responsibility of the higher ordained Sangha to safe guard his position or destroy.

Bhikkuni Higher Ordination by the Bhikkus were allowed in earlier stages, but in keeping with the embarrassing nature that would face by the Bhikkuni, Bhikkunis could grant the Higher Ordination and subsequently be referred to Bhikkus for their Higher Ordination as mentioned above. This clearly confirms that the Higher Ordination of Bhikkuni should be effected by Bhikkus and hence the preliminary rule had not been invalidated. On the other hand if Bhikkunis find no problem over the consultation of the endangered Dhamma Higher Ordination of Bhikkuni by Bhikku is faultless.

Further more, if the preliminary stipulation to grant Higher Ordination of Bhikkuni by Bhikkus is deemed invalid by some one, with that of Higher Ordination granted by Both Sangha, and hence clarifications is needed to ascertain whether invalidation is applicable to the Higher Ordination to women of Ven. Maha Prajapathigothami granted by Bhikkus . Such invalidation should not occur is my acceptance.

It is seen that some Seamese Sect of Sangha In Sri Lanka (except Rangiri Dambulu Chapter of Siamese Sect) strongly consider the clan during the course of Higher Ordination. The observation of the birth clan of a prospective candidate

for Higher Ordination is not included in the Endangered Dhamma. Hence it is to mention that this is a later addition to Higher Ordination functions which is contrary to Buddha Teaching.

The Sangha of Theravada, Mahayana and Thanthrayana etc. tradition will carry out their Higher Ordination in accordance with the different Sangha traditions pertaining to their countries. One rule or system in each Sangha tradition or country cannot be expected. But only the carrying out things within the Higher Ordination is the prime nectar.

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