

# THE EPISODE OF ĀNANDA’S “OFFENCES”: AN ATTEMPT TO UNDERSTAND THE PARADOXES OF THE BUDDHA’S TEACHINGS

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The episode of Ānanda’s “offences” seems to be one of the most striking features of the whole post-Buddha history of Buddhism which, unfortunately, did not draw the attention of the scholars so far as it genuinely deserved. A careful investigation of the whole episode is truly needed to understand the function of the First Buddhist Council as, though unfortunately, is left by the stalwarts of Buddhism like H. Oldenberg, L. De La Vallee Poussin and R.C. Majumdar in their thorough investigation of the proceedings of the First Buddhist Council. The present researcher, by applying historical research methodology, has made a humble attempt to find out the cause of the paradoxical teachings of the Buddha contained in the *Tipiṭaka*. This researcher has scrutinized not only the episode that took place during the proceedings of the First Buddhist Council but also the general mindsets of Ānanda and Mahākassapa, their previous mutual relationship before the *Mahāparinibbāna* (great demise) of the Buddha and their personal approach towards women; the focal point of the offences attributed to Ānanda; the internal equations of the Buddhist *Samgha*; politics played behind the compilation of the *Tipiṭaka* and on the origination of the schism in the Buddhist *Samgha* in the First Buddhist Council (held three months after the Buddha’s demise) that manifested in a more clearer way in the Second Buddhist Council (hundred years after the Buddha’s demise).

## MODERN SCHOLAR’S VIEWS

Before proceeding further, let us have a look at how some of the celebrated scholars have taken up the issue of Ānanda’s offence.

Oldenberg is gravely doubtful about the historical authenticity

of the whole event of the First Buddhist Council. The linchpin of his proposal is the description found in the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*. He opines:

“Everything that the legend of the council (*Pañcasatikā Khandhaka* of *Cullavagga*) alleges as a motive for and as the background to the story about Kassapa’s proposal for holding the Council, is found here (in *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*) altogether, except that there is no allusion to the proposal itself or to the council.” (Oldenberg, 1969: xxvii)

He concludes by presenting his thesis as — “What we have here before us is not history, but pure invention and, moreover, invention of no very ancient date.” (ibid.: xxvi) Denying the whole event of the First Buddhist Council leaves no scope for Oldenberg to investigate the truth of the charges attributed to Ānanda because, of course, that is also a part of that “pure invention” in his own views.

Poussin, in his discussion over the First and the Second Buddhist Council, doesn’t pay any special attention to investigate the mutual relations of Ānanda and Mahākassapa. Most of the evidences and arguments regarding the First Buddhist Council of this great savant are meant either to prove the historical validity of the First Buddhist Council or to counter with the claims of Oldenberg’s thesis that “all the chapters of *Cullavagga* is a forgery, but a forgery well done.” (Poussin, 1976: 12) Poussin, through his extraordinary erudition in most of the pages, tires himself in the evaluation of the opinions of previous debate begun by Minayeff and Oldenberg regarding authenticity of *Cullavagga*’s account of First Buddhist Council preventing him to look deeply into common facts provided by the *Cullavagga*, *Mahāsāsaka-s*, *Dharmagupta-s*, *Mahāsāṃghika-s* and *Sarvāstivādins* regarding the First Buddhist Council and, especially, Ānanda’s offences. Relentless over concern, and over involvement of this Belgian scholar keeps him busy with the examination of historical authenticity of the First Buddhist Council and he couldn’t focus his attention towards Ānanda’s position in the whole episode.

The only noted Indian scholar who has participated in this historical debate is Majumdar in my limited knowledge. Majumdar, in his lucid style, begins the discussion with the account of *Cullavagga*. Oldenberg’s statement that the story of the First Council as it has come to us in the *Cullavagga* “is not history, but pure invention and, moreover, invention of no very ancient date” baffles Majumdar and he considers it as the “most dogmatic view of this character, based on nothing but the flimsiest grounds”. (Law, 1983:

39) This celebrated scholar, despite assigning a separate small section of approximately three pages based on *Cullavagga* and Tibetan *Dulvā* on "the part played by Ānanda", doesn't feel it necessary to examine how much true Ānanda's offences may be. However, he, very sympathetically, remarks that "the replies of Ānanda would appear generally satisfactory to most persons, and except one or two important ones, such as the admission of women into order, most of the other offences would seem to be trivial in the extreme." (ibid.: 38)

Why Ānanda's reply concerning the admission of women into order did not appear satisfactory to Majumdar is unanswered by him. This section flatly presents the account of offences attributed to Ananda and his reply of those offences, not more than that.

#### TEXTUAL DESCRIPTION OF ĀNANDA'S OFFENCE:

Let's have a look how different texts have described the offences of Ānanda in their accounts.

The *Pañcasatikā Khandhaka* of the *Cullavagga* presents the list of following offences (Horner, 1975: 398-407):

1. Not asking the Lord what lesser and minor rules may be abolished after his *Mahāparinibbāna*.
2. Stepping on the Lord's robe for the rainy season (*Vassikasāṭṭhikā*) while sewing it.
3. Inviting women first to honour Buddha's body after his *Mahāparinibbāna*. The Buddha's body was defiled by the tears of crying women.
4. Not praying the Master to remain in this world for a full life span (*Kalpa*).
5. Making efforts for the going forth of the women in the *Dhamma* and discipline proclaimed by the Lord.

Tibetan *Dulvā* contains the list of following offences (Rockhill, 1972: 152-154):

1. Requesting the Buddha to allow women to be admitted into the order.
2. Not praying to the Master to remain in this world for a full life span (*Kalpa*).

3. Stepping on Buddha's golden-coloured raiment for a whole day (no reason of stepping on it is given).
4. Not offering water to the Master when he was high unto death and demanded it.
5. Not asking the Lord what lesser and minor rules may be left after his *Mahāparinibbāna* during the recitation of the *Prātimoksh Sutra*.
6. Showing the *Tathāgata's* hidden privy parts to men and women of low habits.
7. Showing the golden body of the Blessed one to corrupt women which was defiled by their tears.

In the list of *Dulvā*, No. 4 and No. 6 are the offences which are not found in the account of *Cullavagga*. Rest of the offences are common except a little difference in the case of stepping on the Lord's robe by Ānanda. In the *Dulvā's* account, no reason of stepping on it is given, whereas in the *Cullavagga's* account, Ānanda's purpose is to sew it.

*Mahīsāsaka-s* (Poussin, op.cit. 6) present the list of six offences except No. 6 of the above mentioned *Dulvā's* list. *Dharmagupta-s* (ibid.) don't give place to No. 6 of the above list but add another offence as: "Buddha asked Ānanda three times to serve him as one who offers things (?) to the Buddha, but he declined him" and puts it at No. 2. *Mahāsāṃghika-s* (ibid.: 7) are almost in the accordance with the seven offences described by *Dulvā* with a slight difference in No. 3 where it renders a specific reason for Ānanda to step on the robe as to sew it. At No. 6, it speaks of the offence as—"Showing the golden-body of Blessed one..." and leaves the line in an incomplete form.

Author of these lines shall have discussion here on the basis of the *Cullavagga* and *Dulvā*, the two most important and detailed accounts of the First Buddhist Council.

#### ĀNANDA'S REPLY TO THE OFFENCES:

Before proceeding further towards the discussion, let's see how Ānanda responds to these charges.

1. On the charge of not asking the Buddha concerning lesser precepts:

*Cullavagga*: I had forgotten to ask. I don't see this as an offence of wrong doing, yet even out of faith in venerable ones; I confess that as an offence of wrong-doing.

*Dulvā*: I was overcome with grief at the prospect of losing the *Tathāgata*.

2. On the charge of stepping upon the Master's robe:

*Cullavagga*: I did not do it out of disrespect.

*Dulvā*: Because at that time there was no friendly *Bhikshu* (monk) present there to help me.

3. On the charge of getting honoured the remains of the Master's body by the women firstly:

*Cullavagga*: "Do not let these be here at a wrong time" — thinking thus I did it.

*Dulvā*: If they see the Blessed one, many of them would conceive a longing to become like him.

4. On the charge of not praying the Master to prolong his life-span:

*Cullavagga*: I was then possessed by the Evil one (*Māra*).

*Dulvā*: I was then possessed by the Evil one (*Māra*).

5. On the charge of making efforts to admit women in the Buddhist order:

*Cullavagga*: "This Mahāprajāpati Gotamī is the Lord's aunt, foster-mother, nurse, giver of milk, for when the Lord's mother passed away, she suckled him" — thinking thus I did it.

*Dulvā*: I thought of all that Mahāprajāpati Gotamī had endured, and how it was she who had nursed the Blessed one when his mother died. I only asked that women who were relatives and friends might enter the order.

6. On the charge of not offering water to the *Tathāgata*:

*Cullavagga*: Not found in *Cullavagga*.

*Dulvā*: I did not give it to him because five hundred wagons had just crossed the *Kakusthana* river and had made the water muddy.

7. On the charge of showing the *Tathāgata*'s hidden privy parts:

*Cullavagga*: Not found in *Cullavagga*.

*Dulvā*: I thought that women, being naturally sensual, if they but saw the privy parts of the Blessed one, would they not cease being so?

Whatever may be the actual number of offences made on Ānanda, be it five as promulgated by *Cullavagga* or seven as is mentioned in *Dulvā* or six as established by *Mahāsāsaka*-s; it is a definite indication

by the vigilant observance of the offences that it was only the offence of Ānanda's efforts in making admitted the women to *Samgha*, which existed in the bottom of all the charges made on him. All other offences are not only insignificant in its nature but it also seems that those were fabricated by a group of monks or any particular influential monk just to prolong the number of offences somehow, so that even if Ānanda could escape from one offence, he could be trapped in another one. Another reason to prolong the number of offences might be not to expose the real agenda of anti-feminism of the accusers.

Ānanda seems to be aware of this strategy of accusers. He tries his best to satisfy the accusers about each and every offence. Ānanda's position is presented in a more explicit way in the Tibetan *Dulvā* than in *Cullavagga*. *Dulvā* evidently renders Ānanda's pain, from deep within, at the moment Mahākassapa excludes him from the assembly:

“Bear with me, venerable Kāśyapa. I have neither sinned against morality, the doctrine, nor against good behaviour, neither have I done aught unseemly or detrimental to the congregation. Be forbearing then, O Kāśyapa.” (Rockhill, op.cit., 152) This request of Ānanda could not melt Mahākassapa and he told him: “thou canst not be among pure-speaking men”. (ibid.: 155)

*Dulvā* speaks: “Great was Ānanda's grief”. (ibid.)

Ānanda has no regret for what he has done. He rejects the charges out rightly and emphatically claims after replying against each and every charge: “it was no wonder, nor there aught to be ashamed of, if I did not do so...” (ibid.: 152) Ānanda's answer to every charge has been convincing and justified. The admission of women in Buddhist order was the heart of all the charges and, perhaps, was the only genuine charge. It was answered by Ānanda very cleverly. It would be a wrong notion to believe that he is being defensive while he justifies his case by praising Mahāprajāpati Gotamī for nursing and suckling Gotama, but by doing so he is praising the virtues like compassion, soft-heartedness and gentleness, etc., found naturally in the creatures called women. The name of Mahāprajāpati Gotamī was used just as a symbol by Ānanda to put his case strongly favouring admission of women to the Buddhist *Samgha* and he could be successful in it.

Certainly, this achievement of Ānanda would not have been liked by many in the *Samgha*. Opening the doors of the *Samgha* for women was not an ordinary job, especially in the order, which owes most of its density to the Brahmins, who were, generally, not in the

practice of seeing the women at the parallel platform in the Brahmanical system before they entered the Buddhist *Samgha*. Undoubtedly, this incident might have hurt those puritanical monks and lay supporters of Buddhist order, who were against the admission of women in the *Samgha*. Same must have been the case with those too who had been jealous of close relations of Ānanda with the Master and his importance in the *Samgha* because of that proximity.

#### MUTUAL RELATION OF ĀNANDA & MAHĀKASSAPA

Mahākassapa, as is evident from the Pāli sources, have been over-purist and anti-feminist both in his nature and, resultantly, Mahākassapa appears as a leader and voice of those who always waited for their time and chance to frame Ānanda for his sin of making efforts to admit women in the *Samgha*. Certain facts in order to make a comparative analysis of stature of Mahākassapa and Ānanda might throw the light on the possible cause of charges attributed to Ānanda and Mahākassapa's suspicious involvement behind it.

The accounts of Pāli Literature often speak of unpleasant behaviour towards Ānanda by the side of Mahākassapa. Ānanda always paid him extreme regard and on one occasion refused to take part in an *Upasampadā* i.e. ordination because he would have to pronounce Kassapa's name and he did not consider this respectful towards Kassapa (Malasekera, 1995: 258). The most sober, humane, kind and sweet-natured character among all the disciples of the Buddha was, undoubtedly, Ānanda and probably this virtue of him brought him so close to the Blessed one. The Buddha himself would pay remarkable respect to Ānanda. All the great disciples offered their service to the Master, but were not accepted by him. Ānanda alone was left; he sat in silence. When asked why he did not offer himself, his reply was that the Buddha knows best whom to choose. When the Buddha signified that he desired to have Ānanda, the latter agreed to accept the responsibility on certain conditions. The Buddha was never to give him any choice food or garment gotten by him, nor appoint for him a separate cell, nor include him in the invitations accepted by the Buddha. For, he said, if the Buddha did any of these things, some would say that Ānanda's services to the Buddha were done in order to get clothes, good fare and lodging and be included in the invitations. Further, he was to be allowed to accept invitations on behalf of the Buddha; to bring to the Buddha those who came to see him from afar; to place before the Buddha all his perplexities, and the Buddha was

to repeat to him any doctrine taught in his absence. If these concessions were not granted, he said, some would ask where the advantage of such service was. Only if these privileges were allowed to him, people would trust him and realize that the Buddha had real regard for him. The Buddha agreed to the conditions. Thenceforth, Ānanda served the Buddha, following him like a shadow, bringing him water and toothpick, washing his feet, sweeping his cell and so forth (ibid.: 250-251).

Ānanda was the Buddha's equal in age and it is touching to read of this old and most devoted attendant ministering to his eminent cousin, fetching him water, bathing him, rubbing his body, preparing his bed and receiving last instructions from him on various matters of importance as is shown in *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*. Once, when an elephant named *Nālāgiri*, sent on the instructions of Devadatta and maddened with drink ran on the Buddha's path to trample him, Ānanda immediately took his stand in front of the Buddha (Fausboll, 1963: 335). Also, he was like a bridge between monks and the Buddha, society and the Buddha and monks.

More than just being an attendant, Ānanda has the credit of delivering several important discourses like *Aṭṭhakanāgar Sutta*, *Sandaka Sutta*, *Bhaddekaratta Sutta*, etc. Buddhaghosa gives a list of discourses which bring out the eminence and skill of Ānanda; they are the *Sekha*, *Bāhitiya*, *Ānañjasappāya*, *Gopaka-Moggallāna*, *Bahudhātuka*, *Cūasuññatā*, *Acchariya-bbhuta*, *Bhaddekaratta*, *Mahānidāna*, *Mahāparinibbāna*, *Subha* and *Cūaniyalokadhātu* (Malasekera, op.cit. 257). Among all the disciples, this was only Ānanda who was put on highest position in five virtues by the Buddha himself namely: (1) wide knowledge, (2) retentive memory, (3) good behaviour, (4) strong resolution and (5) personal care of Buddha (Woodward, 1970: 19-20 No one else got the credit of being chief in even more than two of the virtues, including Mahākassapa who was treated as chief in only one virtue i.e. foremost among the proponents of the ascetic practices. (*Dhutavādānam*) (ibid.: 16).

In comparison to Ānanda, Mahākassapa is not known to the time of Buddha in eminence as is evident from the canonical literature of Pāli. He was just one of those many, who were counted as the disciples of the Buddha after the place of Ānanda, Sāriputta and Moggallāna. Mahākassapa's sudden emergence in the First Buddhist Council is inexplicable to any student of Pāli Buddhism and indicates the beginning of a kind of priesthoodness, which was always discarded by the Buddha. We don't have a single Sutta in the whole *Tiṭṭaka* exclusively delivered by Mahākassapa to show his scholarship. *Kassapa*

*Samyutta* portrays the presence of Mahākassapa in all of its thirteen Suttas but those sermons also are either delivered by the Master himself or by Sāriputta. Mahākassapa, however, here seems to be extremely puritanical, who was not ready to abandon the practice of *Dhutaṅgas*, even on the suggestion of the Buddha himself (Rhys Davids, 2005: 136). This uncompromising attitude probably prevented him to accept the admission of women in the Buddhist order.

*Kassapa Samyutta* gives at least two stories which noticeably show that it was not everything healthy with the relation of Ānanda and Mahākassapa. The core issue of this cold war was the open-minded nature of Ānanda in contrast to that of Mahākassapa. Malalasekera writes:

“He (Mahākassapa) was evidently sensitive to criticism, and would not address them [women] unless he felt them to be tractable and deferential to instruction. He was very reluctant to preach to the nuns” (Malasekera, op. cit., Vol. II: 480).

*Upassaya Sutta* renders the story of a nun called Thullatissā. Mahākassapa was very reluctant to deliver sermons to nuns but on one occasion, Ānanda, after requesting him three times and then making him agreed, took Kassapa to a settlement of the nuns. Mahākassapa visited the nunnery and preached to the nuns. He was probably not popular among them, for, at the end of his discourse, the nun Thullatissā was not pleased and gave vent publicly to her displeasure: “How does Kassapa think it fit to preach the Dhamma in the presence of the learned sage Ānanda? It is as if a needle-peddler were to deem he could sell a needle to a needle-maker” (Rhys Davids, op. cit., 145). Mahākassapa was indignant by her words, but Ānanda appeased him, somehow, by mollifying his anger calling Thullatissā a fool and requested him to pardon her. Malalasekera rightly says that, “it was perhaps Ānanda’s championship of women’s cause which made him popular with nuns and earned for him a reputation rivaling even that of Mahākassapa” (Malasekera, op. cit., Vol. I: 259).

Another instance is of *Civara Sutta*. There is a story recorded here in which Mahākassapa insults Ānanda by calling him “Corn-trampler” and “despoiler of families”, and he ends up by saying “this boy does not know his own measure”. Ānanda had been touring *Dakkhināgiri* with a large company of monks, mostly youths, and thirty of those youths re-entered the householder life again. This incident gave a chance to Mahākassapa and we find him blaming Ānanda for admitting into the *Samgha* new members incapable of

observing its discipline and of going about with them in large numbers. He says to Ānanda: “Corn-trampler methinks art thou! Despoiler of the families methinks art thou! Thy following is breaking up. Thy youngsters are melting away! This ‘boy’ does not know his own measure.” (Rhys Davids, op. cit., 147). Ānanda felt badly hurt on being abused as a “boy” and makes objection, “Surely my head is growing grey hairs, your reverence, and yet I am not vexed at the venerable Mahākassapa even at this time calling me boy.” (ibid.) Mahākassapa did not stop on the objection of Ānanda and he repeated exactly the same words again.

When Thullanandā, a nun, heard that Ānanda had been chidden and pronounced “boy” by Mahākassapa, she raised her voice in protest, saying: “What now! Does Mahākassapa, who was once a heretical teacher, deem that he can chide Ānanda, the learned sage, calling him boy?” (ibid.: 148) Mahākassapa complained to Ānanda hearing her words that it was a disgraceful and thoughtless words which should not have been said to him.

This incident, says the commentary, (Woodward, 1977: 133) took place after the Buddha’s death, when Ānanda was a new arahant and he was enjoying the honour of possessing the bowl and robe of the Buddha. If the fact provided by the commentary is true, then either this incident occurred just before the commencement of the First Buddhist Council or after the First Buddhist Council. It is hard to believe that just after the Buddha’s death, when everyone in the Buddhist Saṅgha must have been thinking of compiling the Buddha’s words, these close disciples of the Buddha would have thought of delivering the sermons to the nuns. If it happened after the First Buddhist Council then it indicates continued ill behaviour by Mahākassapa towards Ānanda even after his Arahantship. It further signifies Mahākassapa’s enormous unpopularity among nuns and it manifested in the form of reaction expressed by Thullanandā. This reaction was certainly produced due to Mahākassapa’s known aversion to the nuns. It also throws the light on the fact that mutual relation of Mahākassapa and Ānanda had become more acerbic after the First Buddhist Council over the issue of women’s admission and charges made against Ānanda as a penalty for that. *Duḷvā* speaks of another mortifying behaviour by Mahākassapa with Ānanda that he initially appointed Ānanda to supply water to the Saṅgha before the commencement of the First Buddhist Council, and that also when they required it (Rockhill, op. cit., 150). Poor Ānanda, who once owned one of the highest positions in the Buddha’s disciples, had no other option than accepting it.

It was not so that after the demise of Mahākassapa, Ānanda could get freedom from the forces that never pardoned Ānanda for his liberal attitude towards women and always held responsible for breaking male-domination in the *Samgha*. There is a story in the *Dulvā* about the humiliation of Ānanda by a monk even after the demise of Mahākassapa, while he was heading the *Samgha*. In this context, that monk is reciting a *gāthā* which wrongly presents the Buddha's views. Ānanda makes correction in his *gāthā* (Pāli verse) and then, that monk went to his master and said thus: "Ānanda has grown old, and his memory is impaired; he has become broken down by old age" (ibid.: 163). His master, instead of stopping him for his derogatory remarks and telling him the correct version of the *gāthā*, instigates him saying, "Go and say, Thera Ānanda, you are again wrong" (ibid.). That monk went to Ānanda and repeated these words. The word "again" shows here that it had become a common practice by certain opponents of Ānanda to abuse and humiliate him. Ānanda's pain at this moment can be seen in his words: "Sāriputra, Mahāmaudgalyāyana have passed away, ...I stand alone; I am like an outcast" (ibid.: 164). Immediately after this incident, Ānanda decided to entrust the function of the *Samgha* to *Sāṇavāsika* and passed away.

Mahākassapa, very strategically and cleverly, doesn't appear in the front while prosecution of Ānanda was going on. In *Dulvā*, he instructs Anuruddha to identify the person still subject to passions, anger, ignorance, desire or attachment. Anuruddha discovers that person as Ānanda and Mahākassapa excludes him from assembly (ibid.: 152). *Cullavagga* states that unnamed Theras blamed Ānanda in the presence of Mahākassapa (Harner, op. cit., 398). Moreover, Mahākassapa made puppet to all those who had been close to the Lord even prior to his Buddhahood. One cousin of the Buddha was entrusted the responsibility of identifying another cousin Ānanda as an offender. Then, Ānanda was given the task of charging *Brahmadaṇḍa* (a form of penalty that imposes social excommunication) to Channa, who was charioteer and a very old companion of Buddha. As a justification of this *Brahmadaṇḍa* story, it was incorporated in the *Pañcasatikā Khandhaka* that *Brahmadaṇḍa* was decreed by the Master himself before his *Mahāparinibbāna*. But this question still remains—"was it really so necessary for Buddha to decree a simple penalty like *Brahmadaṇḍa* to his very old companion and that also when he was on the death-bed?" This doubt becomes deeper by the fact that Channa episode is neither found in the *Dulvā*'s presentation of the First Buddhist Council nor in the

*Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, which exclusively deals with the last journey of the Master and presents each and every minute detail of his last words. It seems that it was actually a punishment to Channa by anti-women forces, under the leadership of Mahākassapa, for his sin of favouring nuns in a dispute between monks and nuns and, probably, the decree of the penalty was put in the mouth of the Buddha to authenticate its validity.

*Pañcasatikā Khandhaka*'s whole description flatly presents the proceedings of the First Buddhist Council and generally favours Mahākassapa and blames Ānanda which creates serious doubts about its authorship. It also doesn't seem to be just a coincidence that *Pañcasatikā Khandhaka* is preceded by *Bhikkhunī Khandhaka*, consisting of eight humiliating rules (*Garudhamma*) for nuns. The total attitude of Mahākassapa towards women puts him in the circle of doubts that he and his like-minded followers have played a major role in preparing firstly, *Bhikkhunī Khandhaka* to curb the freedom of nuns and afterwards *Pañcasatikā Khandhaka*, which justifies Ānanda's penalization with the fabrication of some other charges on him. It seems that Mahākassapa's intention to take the place of the Buddha had gravely influenced the internal relations of the monks. The *Samgha* was divided into two groups. One and probably larger group was the follower of Mahākassapa and another one was that of Ānanda, which raised the voice demanding induction of Ānanda in the First Buddhist Council. It was the first unrecorded schism in the Buddhist order which contains the roots of Second Buddhist Council also.

From the very first line of the *Pañcasatikā Khandhaka* and second paragraph of the Chapter V of *Dulvā*, Mahākassapa directly appears as a head of the order. Who selected him as a head and what was the selection procedure is still unknown. As a head of the order, he selected 499 *arahata* (worthy ones) monks and Ānanda as a 500<sup>th</sup> member on the demand of other members. Obviously, Mahākassapa would have selected like-minded monks in more numbers in the comparison of those with the neutral attitude or with the supporting attitude to Ānanda. On this occasion, a monk named Purāṇa, who was travelling in the mountain of the South with 500 monks, on reaching *Rājagṛha* and hearing about the recitation of the *Vinaya* and the *Dhamma*, and being invited to be associated with the choir, replies:

“The Dhamma and the Vinaya have been well chanted by the Theras. However, in that way that I have heard and received the

Dhamma from the mouth of the Lord himself, in the same way I will bear it in my mind." (ibid.: 402)

This was the same Purāṇa who is said to be founder of the *Mahīsāsaka* school of Buddhism, (Adhikari, 1991: 234 ) which was not only older than the *Mahāsāṃghika-s* but also the oldest, besides only the *Theravāda*, of all the orthodox and unorthodox Buddhist Schools. It appears from the above facts that there were monks like Purāṇa in the *Samgha* who were not ready to accept a new head of the *Samgha* at the place of the Buddha and they felt better to keep themselves away from the words, which was compiled as *Buddhavacana* (Buddha's words) under the headship of Mahākassapa and decided to remain separate.

Perhaps, Ānanda took it as a moral responsibility to remain in the *Samgha* despite disrespectful behaviour of Mahākassapa and his followers with him. Another reason of his remaining in the *Samgha* may be his own followers, who were liberal and open-minded and they, under the leader like Ānanda, were not ready to give up the reign of the *Samgha* in the hands of fanatic and rigid forces.

We come to know by the records of different Buddhist texts that these were Upāli and Ānanda who narrated the *Vinaya* and *Dhammā*\* respectively and it was remembered by other *Arahata-s*. It is beyond the domain of common understanding that such a huge collection especially that of *Sutta*, can be recited by any one person. Moreover, *Sutta Piṭaka* contains several discourses delivered by the disciples like Sāriputta, Moggallāna, etc. and by Ānanda himself. It has varieties of ideas, which are very often contradictory to each other. A student who has read realistic stories of the *Suttas* like *Brahmajāla*, *Sāmaññaphala*, *Ambaṭṭha*, *Kālāma* and *Mahāparinibbāna*, etc., can never believe that the texts like *Buddhavaṃsa*, *Apadāna* and *Cariyāpiṭaka*, etc., can also be narrated by the same person who recited the former *suttas*. Same words can be said regarding Buddhist standpoint towards women also. The Buddha who congratulates King Pasendi for becoming father of a girl child by saying- "Some women are indeed better than men. Bring her up, King, There are women who are wise, and virtuous ..." (Rhys Davids, 1979: 111) is illustrated implementing eight humiliating rules for nuns in the *Bhikkhunī Khandhaka*, while admitting them to *Samgha*. These contradictions raise serious question concerning the authenticity of the words which were compiled as a *Buddhavacana*.

## FIRST BUDDHIST COUNCIL AS A FOUNDATION OF THE SECOND BUDDHIST COUNCIL

There was certainly a role of other members of the First Buddhist Council apart from Ānanda and Upāli in the incorporation of different portions in the *Sutta Piṭaka* and *Vinaya Piṭaka*, which they added as per their own agenda and outlook. Mahākassapa and his followers must have been dominating and they could be successful in imposing firstly, the Eight rules (*Aṭṭha Garudhamma*) like portions in the *Bhikkhuvā Khandhaka* and afterwards, in prosecuting Ānanda on the basis of that. Several other portions would have been added by this group. Therefore, it would not be exaggeration to say that the *Tipiṭaka* came before us in the form of a mixture of at least two kinds of views: (i) Words presented by Ānanda and his followers; (ii) Words presented by Mahākassapa and his followers. Mahākassapa and his followers seemingly have played a major role in incorporating the humiliating rules and words to women. It was Ānanda's position in the *Samgha* and his degrading experiences after the Buddha's *Mahāparinibbāna* probably, which gave a reason for his followers to revolt against then existing *Samgha* which, technically known as *Theravāda*, was being governed by the followers of Mahākassapa. It may be said with certain amount of possibility that this group began to separate themselves from the *Samgha* soon after Ānanda's demise and manifested in due course of time in the form of revolt by *Vajjian* monks of *Vesāli* (Vaishali) causing the need of Second Buddhist Council.

Let's take a look at the possible arguments in the favour of above statement. These arguments although help us to make just a hypothesis of the background story of the Second Buddhist Council, not to reach a final thesis; even then, this hypothesis might lead us towards a new discussion, which could probably explore some new dimensions in post-*Mahāparinibbāna* history of Buddhism.

Ānanda seems to have very special relation with Vaishali. After being excluded by Mahākassapa, Ānanda directly went to Vaishali and his attendant was a local monk named *Vrijiputra*. *Dulvā* claims that this was he, whose instructions guided Ānanda to attain Arahantship (Rockhill, op. cit., 155). When he decided to pass away, he proceeded towards Vaishali, because if he had passed away in Magadha, the *Vajjians* would have been deprived from a portion of his relics because of their unhealthy relations with King *Ajātashatru*. Finally, he passed away in the middle of the river Ganges flowing between both the countries. The monks of Vaishali built a

caitya and placed half of his body-relics therein (ibid.: 167). There is an instance in the *Kathāvatthu* that *Vajjiputtaka*s are involved in a controversial point with the *Theravādins* regarding the person who taught the Dhamma and they claim that it was actually Ānanda who, after learning Dhamma from the "created shape", taught the Dhamma on this earth (Aung, 1974: 325). This created shape was sent by the Exalted one, who actually lives in the city of Delight. *Aññhakanāgara Sutta* tells us that having heard the sermon of Ānanda, a householder named *Aññhakanāgara* of Vaishali built a precious vihāra in Vaishali exclusively for Ānanda (Horner, 1977: 18). Another example is that of *Ratana Sutta*. It was preached at Vesāli on the invitation of the inhabitants of there, who begged the Buddha to rid the city of various dangers which had fallen upon it (Fausboll, 1998: 36-39). According to the commentaries, the Buddha first taught the Sutta to Ānanda and asked him to go round the city, accompanied by the *Licchavi* princes, reciting the Sutta and sprinkling water from the Buddha's bowl. Immediately all the evil spirits fled from the city and the people recovered from their diseases (Smith, 1915: 278). The inhabitants felt indebted to Ānanda for his holy act to take the pain of reciting the Sutta and moving around the city to protect them.

During the time of the Buddha, and even up to his death, the Vajjians of Vaishali were a very prosperous and happy community. The Buddha attributed this to the fact that they practiced the seven factors of welfare (*Satta Aparihāṇiya Dhamma*) in their social life (Rhys Davids, 2000: 80). These seven generally throw the light on the democratic, virtuous and rational nature of *Vajjians* and out of these seven, one is about their respectful behaviour towards women. It was during the Buddha's stay in Vaishali that Mahāprajāpati Gotamī followed him with five hundred other *Sākya* women, and, with the help of Ānanda, obtained permission for women to enter the *Samgha* (Horner, 1975: 352-353). Probably, she deliberately chose this place having realized the fact that local condition of freedom and honour to women might influence the Master to grant them permission. We find the example of Ambapālī who, despite being a courtesan of Vaishali, had obtained a very high status in the society. Ambapālī, *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* says, was offered by the *Licchavi* princes a huge amount of money and wealth in exchange of transferring the opportunity of offering the meal to the Buddha but she refused saying: "Even if you were to give me Vaishali together with its territories, I could not give up the opportunity to offer this meal" (Rhys Davids, op. cit., 103). This statement shows her free

status in the Vajjian society, which renders a glimpse of women's position also, in general.

*Vajjians*, because of their special respect towards women community and prosecution of their beloved Ānanda on this very ground by the post-*Mahāparinibbāna Saṅgha*, felt hurt and it would have formed a mine of differences between them and the then *Saṅgha*. After Ānanda, who was a link between different segments of the *Saṅgha*, passed away; those who had closeness with Ānanda and were bound to stay with the over purists of the *Saṅgha* just because of Ānanda's presence there, must have become more vocal. These differences became wider and deeper in the future years and lastly, approximately hundred years after the Buddha's death, the Second Buddhist Council was called in Vaishali and a large number of Vajjian monks were expelled. The ten points (*Dasa Vatthu*) (Horner, op. cit., 407) might have been used as a justification to expel the dissents and the historicity and truth of those ten points is still needed to be examined. This move hardly damaged the religious and social position of them because of their enormous following. They formed a separate sect, named *Mahāsāṃghika*, numbering ten thousand monks and held a recital of their own.

#### CONCLUSION

The findings of the preceding lines may be summarized in the following points:

1. The real cause of the charges attributed to Ānanda lies in his "crime" of making efforts to admit women in the *Saṅgha*. All other offences were trivial in nature and were added with the real offence just to exclude Ānanda somehow.
2. The thoughts existing in the *Tipiṭaka* can be divided in two major categories: forward-looking ideas and backward looking ideas. First was of Buddha's own words supported by Ānanda and his

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\* *Dulvā* renders the opposite order. It says that "Mahākassapa decided that in the forenoon the *gathas* of the Sūtras will be recited, and in the afternoon the Sūtanta, the Vinaya, and the Abhidharma will be taken into consideration. Then Bhikkhus asked which of the Sūtanta, the Vinaya and the Abhidharma would be collated first, and Mahākassapa decided that the Sūtanta should first receive their attention." The first Sutta Ānanda recited here is *Dharma Chakrapravartana Sutra*, not *Brahmajāla Sutta* like in Pāli tradition (Rockhill, 1975: 156-7).

followers and another of Mahākassapa and his followers. Ānanda's standpoint was liberal, democratic and based on equality of the caste and sex but the standpoint of Mahākassapa and his followers was orthodox, rigid, caste-minded and in the favour of male-domination. The roots of these two may be searched in the mindsets of participants of the First Buddhist Council.

3. *Tipiṭaka* despite being the most authentic source of comprehending the Buddha's teachings could not be saved from the large amount of stuff inserted by Mahākassapa and his like-minded monks. They were angry with Ānanda for his liberal attitude and after the Buddha's death they incorporated eight restrictions (*Aṭṭha Garudhamma*) on nuns and several derogatory remarks for women in the *Tipiṭaka* to make the status of nuns inferior to monks. The Buddhist monks of the same mindset could be successful in giving Buddhism a Brahmanical shape and sidelined the true followers of the Buddha in the later period.
4. The huge tree of schism, which appeared in the Second Buddhist Council, was already planted in the First Buddhist Council. These two should not be seen completely distinct from each other. The grand cause of the Second Buddhist Council was already existent in the First Buddhist Council in subtle form.

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