



## BHIKKHU AND TEMPLE

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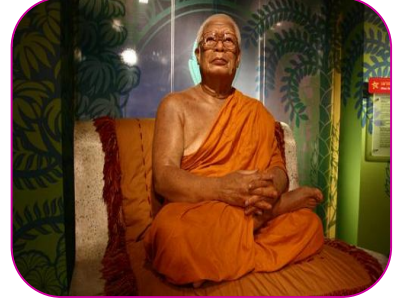
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### ABSTRACT

To become a bhikkhu, a man being at least twenty years of age needs to leave his house, go forth, and live in a state of homelessness. He is entering a new mode of living, a life of striving hard to abandon all impurities in order to attain liberation (Nibbāna). Even though the process of liberation goes through the mind, during the time of striving towards the goal the body takes an important part in the bhikkhu's life as well. To sustain his body in good conditions, a bhikkhu is allowed to use four requisites: clothing (cīvara), alms-food (pindapāta), temple (senāsana), and medicines in case of illness (gilānappaccayabhesajjapparikkhāra). In this essay, the term senāsan will be translated as lodging.

That was found in the Pāli Canon and the Buddha encouraged new ordained bhikkhus to use the shadow of a tree to fulfill his need for lodging for the rest of his life.

Idealistically, using the foot of a tree to stay or spend the night, the bhikkhu might spend less time to take care of his lodging then more time for his practicing towards the noble goal, Nibbāna. In general, a bhikkhu should depend on those four requisites as less and as simple as he could. However, the Buddha was not strict as the rest of the speech reflects that five extra types of dwellings were allowed to bhikkhus: "a dwelling-place, a curved house, a long house, a mansion, a cave."



**KEY WORDS :** Dwelling-place, Peace and Practice.

### INTRODUCTION

The teaching gives bhikkhus a choice but also infers a more materialized way of living for them as seen below. *Dīghanikāya Atthakathā* has the list above then divides into four categories:

1. *Vihārasenāsanam*: a dwelling-place (*vihāro*), a curved house (*addhayogo*), a long house (*pāsādo*), a mansion (*hammiyam*), a cave (*guhā*).
2. *Mañcapīhasenāsanam*: a bed (*mañco*), a chair (*pītham*), a mattress (*bhisi*), a pillow (*bimbohanam*).
3. *Santhatsenāsanam*: a carpet (*cimilikā*), an animal skin rug (*cammakhando*), a mat made of grass (*tinasanthāro*), a mat made of leaves (*pannasanthāro*).
4. *Okāsasenāsanam*: Where the bhikkhus are going to return.

Besides, for the bhikkhu who goes to four directions like a bird or who is practicing *dhutanga*, a suitable lodging (*senāsanam*) for him seems to be simple. He can stay at the foot of a tree (*rukhamūlam*), near a rocky mountain (*pabbatam*), in a glen (*kandaram*), in a mountain cave (*giriguham*), in a forest glade (*vanapattham*), in the open air (*abbhokāsam*), or at a heap of straw (*palālapuñjam*) to fulfill the need of lying down or sitting during the day.

In the context of the four requisites for bhikkhus, *senāsanam* has the meaning of a shelter or an abode, which means a place for bhikkhus to stay in (then they can sit or lie down) more than furniture and accessories such as bed, chair, mattress, pillow, etc. So, category number one above is applied, and then

*vihārasenāsanamis* a synonym of *lena*. For the five kinds of *lena*, in his book “*Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India: Their History and Their Contribution to Indian Culture*,”

Buddhaghosa explained that *Vihāra* as a dwelling-house with a chamber in it, well-protected and containing private lodgings; *Addhayoga* as a ‘gold-coloured Bengal House’; a *Pāsāda* as a ‘long-storey mansion’, i.e. with an upper storey completely covering the lower; a *Hammiya* as a *pāsāda* with an attic on top; a *Guhā* as a ‘hutment made of bricks or scooped out of rock or made of wood or laterite (*pamsu*)’. Other commentators make equally conjectural variations as does Buddhaghosa, especially in respect of his explanation of *Addhayoga*. It is interpreted by them as a ‘Bengali-type house with turned-up eaves looking like the wings of a *suparna* (Garuda bird)’.

He also states that “only two types have survived—the *Vihāra* and the *Guhā*”. To understand the term “*guhā*,” a visit to Mahintale, Vessagiriya, Situlpavva, Ritigala, Rājagala, etc. in Sri Lanka or further to Ajanta, Ellora, etc. in India would explain more precisely and vividly about this type of *lena*; so this essay will focus only on the term *vihāra* (dwelling-place) of the first category *vihārasenāsanam* comparing with an *ārāma* (a monastey), on how *vihāra* and *ārāma* changed and developed, and other issues such as the responsibility of a bhikkhu to his *senāsanam*, the benefits he could acquire while using it, and some rules of Pātimokkha relate to *senāsanamas* well.

### 1. *Ārāma* and *Vihāra*(Temple)

The term *ārāma* (park, monastery) has a close relationship with *vihāra* due to the reason that an *ārāma* relates to a Bhikkhu Community (*Bhikkhusangha*), whereas *vihāra* was originally a small hut built inside an *ārāma* for one bhikkhu. Information from the Pali Canon is not sufficient to sketch the developmental process of *ārāma* and *vihāra* in chronological orders, but possible to trace how they changed from very simple forms at an earlier time to the ones more complicatedly developed later. We need to mention firstly the Bamboo Groves (*Veluvana*), which was offered by the King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha.

### 2. *Veluvana Ārāma: Offering of the King Bimbisāra*

Hearing the coming to Rājagaha of the Buddha and a group of thousand monks, the King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha with other Brahmins and lay people went to the Palm Grove (*Latthivana*) in the Suppatittha Shrine (*SuppatitthaCetiya*) to pay homage to the Buddha and to declare his becoming a follower of the Buddha. The next day, while offering food to the Buddha and his bhikkhus, the King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha thought of a place for the Buddha and his bhikkhus to stay in Rājagaha.

According to the King, that place should be “neither too far from a village nor too near, suitable for coming and going, accessible for people whenever they want, not crowded by day, having little noise at night, little sound, without folk’s breath, haunts of privacy, suitable for seclusion.” Then the King offered his pleasure park, which is the Bamboo Grove (*Veluvana*), to the Bhikkhu Community with the Buddha as its leader. The Buddha accepted the gift then said to the bhikkhus: “*O bhikkhus, I allow a park*” The Bamboo Park was the first *ārāma* of the Bhikkhu Community. At that time, that place seemed to have no dwelling-places and the bhikkhus still endured the whole day and night in the open air or in natural shelters.

When the fame of the Buddha spread out, more lay people had faith and approached the Buddha and *bhikkhus* in order to listen to the preaching. Consequently, lay people proposed material offerings to them. In such a case, without permission from the Buddha, the bhikkhus would hesitate to receive the gift and await the Buddha’s decision. As in the case of the first sixty dwelling-places (*vihārā*) offered by a wealthy merchant of Rājagaha:

### 3. *Vihāra: The First Sixty and its Development*

At that time, the Buddha was staying at Rājagaha, Veluvana, at the feeding place of the squirrels. In an early morning, a wealthy merchant, a resident of Rājagaha, came to visit the park. Seeing the monks going out from different places such as from a forest (*araññā*), from the foot of a tree (*rukhamūlā*), from

the hillside (*pabbatā*), from a glen (*kandarā*), from a mountain cave (*giriguhā*), from a cemetery (*susānā*), from a forest glade (*vanapatthā*), from the open air (*ajjhokāsā*), from a heap of straw (*palālapuñjā*), the wealthy merchant approached the monks and said that he would like to offer dwelling-places (*vihārā*) to the monks. The monks told the Buddha about the offer of the merchant then the Buddha allowed the bhikkhus five kinds of shelters; the same as dwellings for a new ordained bhikkhu mentioned above.

At first, the sixty dwelling-places (*vihārā*) offered by this merchant were perhaps very simple because the Pali Canon states that a number of sixty of such constructions were built in only a single day (*Atha kho rājagahoko setthi ekāheneva satthivihāre patitthāpesi*). They might look like a hut or a cottage. At the beginning, *vihāra* was just a single cell with the shape of either a square or a rectangular. The walls might be made of wood or clay with a space left in order to go in or out. The roof was covered with grass. Due to the inconvenience in daily activities and the intrusion of snakes, scorpion, centipedes, etc. as well as the destruction made by rats and white ants, the Buddha allowed to attach a door with a hinge to revolve, a doorknob and a door lock for the outside, a bolt to lock when staying inside, and a pin to secure the bolt.

Later, it was added a ceiling made of skins and plastered on the walls in-and-outside in order to cope with the rigidity of the weather. Windows of three kinds were also allowed in order to have the lights and wind. Going along with the windows, curtains and shutters were also allowed to keep the room free from squirrels and bats. The dwelling-place (*vihāra*) was also decorated with white, black, and red colors on the walls. Later, when it was raining, the floor was flooded then the Buddha allowed elevating the ground (*uccavatthukam*) with pilings (*cayam*) making of bricks (*itthakācayam*), stones (*silācayam*), and wood (*dārucayam*).

A staircase (*sopānam*) was also allowed by the Buddha to be made of bricks, stones, and wood. Due to the reason that some bhikkhus fell when ascending, a balustrade (*ālambanabāham*) was allowed to construct for protection. The privacy of bhikkhus inside their dwelling-places was also considered by the Buddha as mentioned in the Pāli Canon: When a multitude of people came to visit a monastery, they were curious about the bhikkhus' living conditions then tried to look inside their dwelling-places. The bhikkhus were uncomfortable to lie down to take rest. The Buddha at first recommended a curtain (*tirokaranim*) then later a half-wall (*addhakuttakam*) but both did not solve the problem of being probed by visitors.

Finally, an inner room of three kinds—a squared-room (*sivikāgabbham*), a rectangular room (*nālikāgab-bham*), or a storey (*hammiyagabbham*) was allowed to build either in a corner or in the middle of the place depending on how small or big it was respectively. A canopy (*vitānam*) was also allowed in order to keep the dirt or insects falling down from the roof into the room. From a single cell, the dwelling-place (*vihāra*) developed through the course of time to have more space and constructions for the convenience of its users.

Not only the inside structure of the dwelling-place developed but its surrounding was also constructed: a verandah in front (*ālindam*), a covered terrace (*paghanam*), an inner court (*pakut-tam*), a verandah roofing (*osārakam*), and two kinds of screens, one was moveable (*samsarana-kitikam*) and one could be drawn (*ugghātanakitikam*). A *vihāra* also had a fence (*pākāram*) made of bricks (*itthakāpākāram*), stones (*silāpākāram*), or wood (*dārupākāram*). The fence had a porch (*kotthakam*) and the construction of this porch had its history of development similar to other constructions. First, the foundation of the porch was low then rose up; a door was added with other items such as a hinge, a doorknob, a door lock, etc. A drain was also dug up in order to draw the water away in case that the floor was swampy and sprinkling sand or spreading flagstones did not solve the problem.

That was setting of a dwelling-place (*vihāra*) for each individual bhikkhu. Besides, An *ārāma* had its development with many constructions built for the functioning of the whole Bhikkhu Community as well.

#### 4. Constructions in a Monastery (*Ārāma*)

An attendance hall (*upatthānasālā*) perhaps was firstly built to serve the Bhikkhu Community. At the time of the Buddha, the bhikkhus who lived in the same place had their meal together. Due to sitting in the

open air, their health was struck by the hot or cold weather. The Buddha was informed then he gave permission to build an attendance hall (*upatthānasālā*) for the sake of the whole Community. The attendance hall at first perhaps was built as a one-big-room house; but later the ground was elevated having staircase and balustrade, a ceiling was added, the walls were plastered both sides and colored, etc. and the end of the list was a bamboo or a cord for hanging robes.

Other constructions mentioned in the Pali Canon such as a hall for the drinking water (*pānīyasālā*), a shed for the drinking water (*mandapam*), a hall for fire (*aggisālā*), a bathroom (*jantāghara*), a toilet (*vaccakuti*) shared similar developmental history. At first, they were simple but later were reinforced for convenience and their serviceability: their ground was elevated having staircase and balustrade, etc. We have come to an illustration that a monastery (*ārāma*) has the area of a park, inside it are many dwelling-places (*vihāra*) for individuals and other constructions to serve the whole Bhikkhu Community.

A hedge (*vātam*) and a porch (*kotthaka*) were created to mark the boundary of a monastery (*ārāma*). The Pali Canon explains the case that goats and animals entered the monastery and injured the little plants. Due to its vast area, natural materials were preferred such as three kinds of hedges allowed by the Buddha: a hedge of bamboos (*veluvātam*), a hedge of thorns (*kandakavātam*), or a ditch (*parikham*). The hedge had a porch (*kothakam*) having two doors interlaced with stakes and thorns (*apesimyamakakavātam*), an arc for ornament above the doors (*toranam*), and a bar to close the doors (*paligham*). The porch was also had its developmental history similar to the one of a dwelling-place (*vihāra*).

As the time passed, with the permission from the Buddha the architecture of a monastery (*ārāma*) was added more constructions one by one till being completed.

## 5. *Ārāma* and *Vihāra* to the Present

We have approach the two terms: *vihāra* and *ārāma*, translated as dwelling-place and monastery respectively, from their very simple forms then through their development to become more comfortable and convenient places for the bhikkhus.

For the word *ārāma*, we have two English translations: “park” and “monastery” due to the differences between the two offerings: The former was the gift of the King Seniya Bimbisāra, the Bamboo Grove (*Veluvana*) and the Buddha called it as *ārāma*, indeed, it was a “park,” or a “pleasure garden” without any building to serve the bhikkhus; and the later, a monastery offered to the Buddha by Anāthapindika after a period of time, indeed had many kinds of constructions and was also called *ārāma*. There are other *ārāma*-s offered to the Buddha and the Bhikkhu Community mentioned in the Pali Canon such as Jīvakārāma at Rājagaha, Kukkutārāma and Ghositārāma at Kosambī, Nigrodhārāma at Kapilavatthu but the *ārāma* of Anāthapindika was perhaps the most famous one where the Buddha spent nineteen rain retreats and delivered many important sermons.

Whereas the term *vihāra* at the beginning was applied to a single-room house built inside the area of *ārāma* as the first sixty at the Bamboo Grove, Rājagaha. Later, due to the demand of giving instruction of preceptors or of living dependently to a senior or new ordained bhikkhus, it seemed that at least two bhikkhus lived together in the same *vihāra* as the term *saddhivihārika* implied. Then we can visualize that a *vihāra* must have bigger size and at least two single cells (*parivena*) built inside for two bhikkhus living together. In later time, the structural design of a *vihāra* seemed to be developed to become the entire structure of a building for a group of many bhikkhus more than two. In his book, Sukumar Dutt gives a sketch of Pippala Vihāra at Taxila (India) built around the first or second century AD. There are around thirty cells built side by side having the form of a square and surrounding a court at the center; each cell has a front door looking out to see the court and turns its back out. At one side of the square, there is a porch in the middle that opens to the outside world.

So, it is safe to conclude that *ārāma* has a larger area with many separate constructions for the use of the Bhikkhu Community. Whereas *vihāra* is a large building having a courtyard for the residence of one or more bhikkhus depending on how many sleeping rooms (*parivena*-s) it has. *Vihāra* can be erected inside an

*ārāma* or on its own place but its landscape is not big as that of an *ārāma*. I feel more confident about this conclusion after reading the book “*The Origin and the Early Development of Buddhist Monachism*” of Patrick Olivelle.

For a resident bhikkhu (*āvāsiko*), besides other responsibility with his monastery, he should show his hospitality to the coming bhikkhu following the rules depending on the other’s seniority. If the coming one is a senior, the resident bhikkhu should greet him then receive his bowl and robes to place at a proper place. He should offer him water for drinking then water for washing. He should help him to clean his sandals also.

If the coming is a junior, he should be greeted and show the other where to sit, to put down his bowl and robe, where to get the water to drink, etc. In both cases, a lodging should be arranged and other necessary information should be provided such as where to get the water, the locations of the bathroom, the toilet, etc., where should go for alms, etc. Even for the bhikkhu who lives in a forest (*ārāññako*) still has the responsibility for his lodging. He should reserve the water for drinking and washing, kindling wood, and a place to put on the fire. He should also have a cane for walking and knowledge about the constellations. When he goes to the village for alms, his lodging should be closed the door and all the windows.

## CONCLUSION

### TheWalk on the Middle Path

Lay people living in their houses often have the thought: “*This is my house, this is my family;*” then a bond occurs. In the case of a bhikkhu who, feeling comfortable in his monasteries and getting acquainted with it, should realize that such an attachment might arise in his mind. Knowing that, the Buddha kept reminding his bhikkhus that they must use their four requisites wisely in order to avoid taints arising. In the case of lodging, the bhikkhu should remind him that he uses the lodging for the purpose of avoiding cold and heat; for the purpose of avoiding contact with flies, mosquitoes, wind, the sun, and snakes; and for the sake of dispelling the jeopardy of the weather; and for the purpose of practicing meditation.

That is one part of the *Paccayasannissitasīla*, which is the duty of a bhikkhu whenever he has contact-either receiving from donors or during three times of using: before, while, of after-with any of the four requisites: clothing, alms food, lodging, medicines in case of illness. And *Paccayasannissitasīla* is just one part of the four disciplines that a bhikkhu needs to observe in order to purify him (*Catupārisuddhisīla*): *Paccayasannissitasīla*: the discipline relates to four requisites, *Pātimokkhasamvarasīla*:the discipline of restraining in the monastic codes, *Indriyasamvarasīla*:the discipline of restraining his faculties, *Ājīvapārisuddhisīla*: the discipline of purifying his livelihood.

And observing the four kinds of disciplines (*sīla*) above is the basic duty of a bhikkhu before going to higher levels of training his mind to enter trance (*samādhi*) then go further to acquire wisdom (*paññā*).

To conclude, lodging (*senāsanam*) keeps the bhikkhu in the state of well- being to follow the Middle Path of the Buddha, but they might become the cause for him to committe offences in case of carelessness, or in a form of attachment which hinder his spiritual progress. So, in case of lodgings, a bhikkhu whenever using it should be cautious about the *Pātimokkha* rules and realize if attachment arises in order to keep his mind in a peaceful state for higher practice. And he should always remind himself that the purpose of his going forth from his householder life into homelessness or a life without a family not for the purpose of pursuing materials of the worldly life but to aim at the noble goal of becoming awakened and enjoying the real emancipation.

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