



# Development of Monastic Robe (Cīvara) in The Buddha's Time

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## Abstract

Having passed away of Buddha, the monks from *Sāsana* play very importance role as head leaders of *Sāsana*. To describe such image of monks, the robes also were the core value of *Sāsana* because a monk who wears a robe is accepted as a real monk by lay devotees. Among the Four Requisites such as robe, food, shelter and medicine which allowed by the Bhdhha, there are different concepts of robe among the Buddhist monks today.

Nowadays, after changing of time and location, the robes have become differently forms and styles as each of *Mahāyana* robes and *Theravāda* robes. Although each school has look similar robes such as colour, the way of sewing but there have much more different between them. The *Theravāda* monks from Myanmar who wear robes are not similar place and school with each others. So in this study, the researcher will be analysis the robes which related to *Theravāda* monks according to *Piṭaka*.

The topic will be related monastic robe and its colour. All the data will be collected from the Buddhist scriptures. Especially, information will be searched from Vinaya Mahāvagga Pali.

*Keywords:* Monastic robe and Robe colours in the Buddhist scriptures

## Introduction

The cloth in Buddhism is known as “*cīvara, arahaddhaja, kāsāya, kāsāva*” in Pāli language which usually translated as “robe, clothing, wearing, dress” in English. The monastic robes worn by monks and nuns play one of the most important symbols of the religious life. Many passages from the Vinaya show that there was a well-defined way of dressing in Buddhist monasticism.

In the early period of the Buddha’s career, there is no clear evidence concerning the robe style of the Buddha and his disciplines, or what kind of robe was used in those days.

During the first twenty years the Buddha and his disciples wore a rag-robe called *Paṃsukāla-cīvara*.<sup>1</sup> Twenty years after, having requested by *Jīvaka*<sup>2</sup>, a royal physician, an incident occurred for the monks to accept the robes given by house-holders.<sup>3</sup> Then, the Buddha gave specific dimension and shape of robes step by step: cutting the robe-pattern of *Magadha* field.<sup>4</sup>

The Buddha permitted the use of six dyes, which are derived from roots, stems, barks, leaves, flowers and fruits.<sup>5</sup> The colour of the robes depends on the dye used which give reddish-yellow, turmeric-saffron, vivid saffron, dark maroon, burgundy-colored. Until very recently, this would have been natural vegetable dye found in the jungle from roots or trees. Nowadays chemical dyes are more used. Therefore the robes’ color varies from one place to another. Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Sri Lankan monks don robes dyed in bright saffron hues, Myanmar monks typically dress in dark maroon or burgundy – colored robes.

In the Buddha’s times, the colour of monks’ robes was uneven. The reason was in those days, people used wood and tree rubber to dye robe. Even the colors of wood of extracted jackfruit trees varied from yellowish to brownish yellow.

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<sup>1</sup>*Paṃsukūlika Cīvara* means The dust-heap robe; The ‘discarded cloth’ would be thoroughly washed and possibly beached before it could be dyed. Nowadays robes made this way are rare and only probably used by a few forest monks. (Vin. I, p. 305.)

<sup>2</sup>*Jīvaka* is a celebrated doctor, the personal physician of King *Bimbisāra* and also to the Buddha and his Community.

<sup>3</sup>Mohan Wijayaratha (tr.), **Buddhist Monastic Life**, (New York; Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 32.

<sup>4</sup>‘*Magadha-khetta*’; This was probably an extensive rice-field which at once caught the eye on account of its terraces,” and size, one might add. (Vin. I, p. 288.)

<sup>5</sup>Vin. I, p. 208.

## Robes Before The Used of Vinaya

Before the used of *Vinaya*, there is no clear-cut evidence concerning the clothing style of the Buddha and monks, or what kind of cloth was used in those days. It is informed that Prince *Siddhattha* left the palace, had his hair cut and partook in the priest life at the bank of *Anoma* River. He led homeless life among two groups of recluses, *Samaṇa* (priest) and *Brāhmaṇa*. Having taken up the priesthood, *Samaṇa Siddhattha* approached two hermits namely *Ālara* and *Udaka*, with a view to learn the practices and reach liberation. Then *Samaṇa Siddhattha* attained eight attainments; four form trances and four formless trances. There is also no evidence of the color and clothing style that the two hermits wore and used.<sup>6</sup>

Having achieved Enlightenment, the Buddha (*Samaṇa Siddhattha*) gave his first sermon to group of five *Brahmanas*. *Koṇḍāṇṇa* had become an *Arahat* together with eight equipments of *bhikkhu* including the robe. His robe was the first robe of the order of monks. Moreover, start from *Vappa*, *Bahddiya*, *Mahānāma* and *Assaji* till the sixty of monks used and wore *Ehi Bhikkhu*<sup>7</sup> robes. But there is no evidence how style and color in *Piṭaka* dealing with *Ehi Bhikkhu* robes which wore by *Ehi Bhikkhu* monks. But, it was probably different robe from human clothes because of automatically appear of super natural power.

Later on increasing the order of monks gradually, the monks wore the robes, called “*Kāsāya nivattha* or *Kāsāva nivattha*”<sup>8</sup>. But it was not the similar kind of robes wearing nowadays because of dyeing the bark of tree in those days. There was not definitely described in Pali which color and how to sew those robes in those days of monks.<sup>9</sup>

After that, it was found that the Buddha and non-*Ehi bhikkhu* monks wore the rag robes (*Paṃsukūla*)<sup>10</sup>. In other religious systems, some ascetics wore garments made of grass or of tree bark, others were clothed in hair, in owl feathers, or deer skins<sup>11</sup>. Yet others, for

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<sup>6</sup> Assoc. Prof. Dr. Phramaha Somjin Sammapanno, **The Robe in Buddhist Scriptures**, (Thailand; Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Term Paper), p.1.

<sup>7</sup> ‘*Ehi Bhikkhu*’ means “Come, monk”; The first time that this, thought to be the oldest formula for leave to become a disciple of *Gotama*’s, is used in the *Vinaya*. The Order was not as yet in existence, and the ordination regulations were neither appointed nor was ordination separated by a period of probation from the time of a disciple’s “going forth”, *pabbajjā*, from home, or the household life, into homelessness.

<sup>8</sup> ‘*Kāsāya or kāsāva*’ means ‘dun-coloured dye-water’, ‘*Nivattha*’ means ‘cloth’.

<sup>9</sup> Ashin Paṇḍitābivamaṃsa (Myan.), **Haw Kwet Pyaw Kwet**, (Yangon: Aung Zabu, 2005), pp. 82-88.

<sup>10</sup> Vin. I, p. 289.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 305.

example the *Niganthas*, disciples of Jina *Mahāvīra* and the *Acelaka*, remained completely naked<sup>12</sup>. The members of the Buddhist Community, however, and its founder, were not willing to acknowledge nudity as a virtue, nor to imitate the mode of dress of any other ascetics. This is why they adopted a costume made up of rags that they had collected. The *Mahāvagga* does not explain the size of this robe nor how many pieces it was made of.

According to the *Vinaya*, two kinds of rag were used to make up the garments of Buddhist monks. Some were pieces of cloth collected in burial-grounds, others were scraps of material gathered in streets and near shops. Perhaps the people whose clothes corpses had been dressed in, or perhaps they threw them away in cremation-grounds specifically for ascetics to gather. The *Vinaya* describes how traveling monks, in the first years of the Community, would collect rags in cremation-grounds which they chanced to find on their way. It is possible that people deliberately threw pieces of material there for that purpose. However, the fact that monks used rags gathered in cremation-grounds did not mean that they wore dirty garments, or saw a special virtue in doing so. Even the Buddha himself, had ever picked up from the dead body of one female slave, named *Puṇṇā*.<sup>13</sup>

During twenty years of the Buddha, although the monks received for food and monastery from lay devotees, they did not receive for robes directly from them. After twenty years of Buddha, there was allowance by the Buddha to use and wear the robes which donated from lay devotees due to requesting of *Jīvaka*<sup>14</sup>. But the monks still used the rag-robe. Until now, there are some monks who wear and practice the rag-robe called '*pamsukūla dhūtaṅga*'<sup>15</sup>.

## Robe After The Used of Vinaya

After the used of *Vinaya*, there were many lay devotees who donated for robes in line with amount of more monks. But, there is no clear-cut evidence concerning the clothing style of the Buddha and monks, or what kind of cloth was used. However, it probably supported that the monk of robes seem sewing the imitation people's clothes style of those days.

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid, p. 282.

<sup>13</sup>Mohan Wijayaratna, **Buddhist Monastic Life**, (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 32 – 33.

<sup>14</sup>This celebrated doctor, the personal physician of King *Bimbisāra* ministered to the king himself, and also to the Buddha and his community.

<sup>15</sup>'*Pamsukūla dhūtaṅga*' means one who has a habit of wearing clothes made of rags taken from a dust heap.

According to *Mahāvagga* Pali, it described that such three kinds of robes: inner robe, upper robe and double outer cloak were wore by the monks. These three kinds of robes were sewn collecting piece of clothes. But there was not evidence of measurement which piece of clothe is systematically cut for size.

Twenty years later when the time the used of *Vinaya*, a large enough number of devotees accepted that wearing a robe made up of pieces of material given by lay people was no obstacle on the path of inner progress; and so they asked the Buddha and his disciples to wear the robes they had given them, or to use material they had given. For the Buddha, the time was now ripe to change the habits of the Community and accept unused fabrics to make monastic garments. However, monks did not give up their costume made of rags completely. If he so desired, a monk could still wear rag-robes, but new rules were laid down to specify their precise dimensions and color, following those applying to robes given by lay followers.<sup>16</sup>

Just after allowance of *Magadha* paddy field robe by the Buddha that sewed five folds by *Ānada*, there was exactly appear style or shape of robe.<sup>17</sup> Henceforth, the dress of Buddhist monks and nuns began to be governed by rules; before this declaration, according to the *Vinaya*, there were no specific rules about rag-robes. Later on being requested of monks, the Buddha added the rule of the corss-seam, etc. on the robe what was needed as see the style of robe today.

In those days, lay devotees donated the good quality of robes for the monks due to their generosity. The monks received them not to be prohibit of their generosity. The clothes which had received were cut as piece of clothes and sewed them according to rule and regulation of *Vinaya* not to be in vain. To do so, the clothes were not same with lay mans' but different style of monks' wearing. Moreover, there can be no danger of thieve or robbers because of changing the original qualities.

Once permission had been given, the Community received different kinds of material from lay people. On this subject, the Buddha was more broad-minded than the other religious leaders of his time. He allowed his disciples to make use of six kinds of material: linen, cotton, silk, wool, coarse linen and hemp.<sup>18</sup> The first four were regarded, even in the Buddha's

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<sup>16</sup>Mohan Wijyaratna, **Buddhist Monastic Life**, (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 35.

<sup>17</sup>Vin. I, p. 280.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid, p. 281.

time, as valuable, and were given to the Community by wealthy followers.<sup>19</sup> Monks were only allowed to have cloth woven for them if the weavers were devout followers of the Community or very close members of their own family.<sup>20</sup>

For the robe colour, there was no clear-colour evidence concerning the original rag-robe but it was only prohibit colour that should not be dyed in robe. *Mahāvagga* Pali described that the monks wore the robe colours of blue, brown, yellowish brown, pale yellow, dark yellow, crimson or even black from the beginning of the Buddha.<sup>21</sup> As lay followers criticized these colors, the Buddha forbade monks to wear them. The *Mahāvagga* gives a list of permitted dyes: they were made from roots, tree-bark, leaves, flowers and stalks.<sup>22</sup> One or more of these ingredients would be put in a big pot with boiling water, until the water became the right colour. This process of dyeing was also intended to reduce the commercial value of the original piece of cloth.

## Monastic Robe Patterns as *Magadha* Field

The Buddha, from having achieved Enlightenment till received, the robe donated by lay people (*gahapati cīvara*) during twenty years, the monks wore inner robe, upper robe and double outer cloak but those robes were not same as the robes which systematically sewed the robes of monks nowadays. They are only such kind of rag-robe in those days that apiece of clothes picking up form junction of road and so on were sewed. Only after allowance of *gahapati cīvara* by the Buddha, there was systematically sew and use the robe.<sup>23</sup>

One day, the Buddha having stayed in *Rājagaha* for as long as he found suitable, set out on tour for *Dakkhiṇāgiri*. The Buddha saw the field of *Magadha*<sup>24</sup>, laid out in strips, laid out in lines, laid out in embankments, laid out in squares, and seeing this, the Buddha wished that the robe of monks would be sewn like the field of *Magadha* systematically. Then, the Buddha said venerable *Ānanda* to make and sew the robes of monks same as the field of *Magadha* pointing out that.

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<sup>19</sup>Vin.A. IV, p. 394.

<sup>20</sup>Vin. III, pp.256–260.

<sup>21</sup>Vin. I, p. 306.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid, p. 281.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid, p. 288.

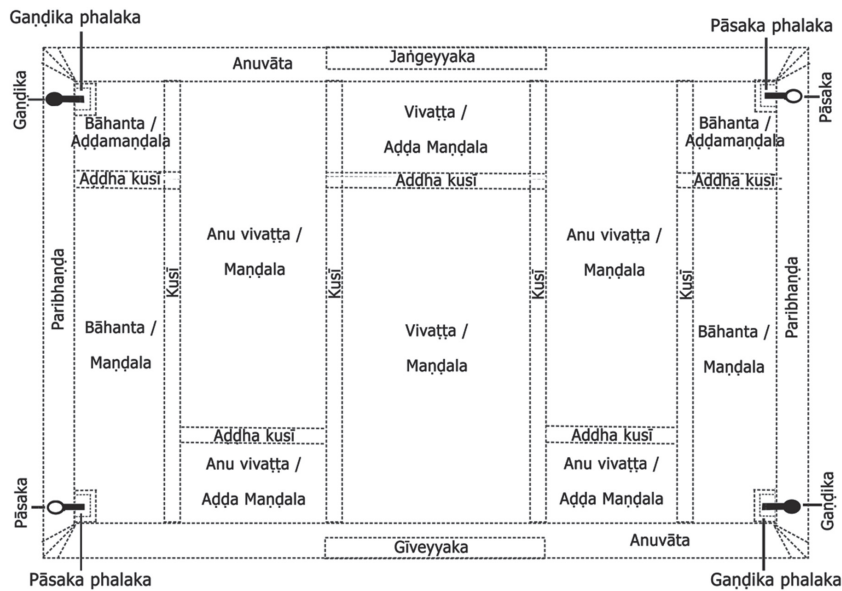
<sup>24</sup>'*Magadha-khetta*'; this was "probably an extensive rice-field which at once caught the eye on account of its terraces," and size, one might add.

When venerable *Ānanda* retruned to *Rājagaha*, he cut the fabric systematically. Then he showed the Buddha what he had made and sewed systematically a cross-seam, a short cross-seam, a circular seam, a short circular seam, a central piece and side pieces and so on. The Buddha was very pleased and saying to the monks:

“Monks, clever is *Ānanda*; monks, of great intelligence is *Ānanda*, in as much as he can understand in detail the meaning of that which was spoken of by me in brief, and can make a cross-seam (*kusi*) and can make a short cross-seam (*aḍḍha-kusi*) and can make a circular seam (*maṇḍala*) and can make a short circular seam (*aḍḍha-maṇḍala*), and can make a central piece (*vivaṭṭa*) and can make side pieces (*anu-vivaṭṭa*) and can make a neck-piece (*gīveyyaka*) and can make a knee-piece (*jaṅgeyyaka*), and can make an elbow-piece (*bāhanta*), and what is cut up must be roughly darned together, suitable for recluses and not coveted by opponents. I allow you, monks, an outer cloak that is cut up, an upper robe that is cut up, an inner robe that is cut up.”

Venerable *Ānanda* was praised by the Buddha and allowed to the monks for cutting and sewing the robes systematically as following picture.<sup>25</sup>

**The Perfect Robe Patterns of the Buddha’s Time**



<sup>25</sup> Vin. I, pp. 287 – 288; B.D. IV, pp. 407 – 409.

## Allowed Six Colours of Robe in The Buddha's Time

Since the Order of monks was formed, the monks picked up, sewed and wore a piece of clothes which people threw away the place such as cemetery or other places. Because of that dyes are not allowed to use by the Buddha, the dung of cow (*chakaṇena*) and the red ochre (*paṃdhumattikā*) were used as a dyes. To using this, the color of robes were not well looking for the monks. The black-brown cow dung and the dark red ochre were not to be dyed very well. The color of dye was not irregularly and not good respect for lay men.

So, some monks reported to the Buddha that they don't like those robes that dyed with the dung of cow and the red ochre or yellow clay or copper-coloured clay. In this reason, the Buddha allowed six kinds of dyes. These are as follow;

1. Dye from roots,
2. Dye from stems or trunk,
3. Dye from bark,
4. Dye from leaves,
5. Dye from flowers and
6. Dye from fruits.<sup>26</sup>

To allow, the Buddha was not clearly mention that which roots, trunk, barks, leaves, flower and fruits dyes were suitable or not for the monks. Although he did not mention about it clearly, the professor of the commentary and sub-commentary explained that which roots, trunk, barks, leaves, flowers and fruits dyes were suitable for the monks' robes.

Some Commentaries Sub-commentaries were illustrated and analyzed as follows;

1. Among the dye of roots, dye of turmeric (*haliddiṃ*) was not suitable for the robes but others dyes were suitable.

2. Among the dye of trunks, the dyes of *Indian Madder* (*mañjīṭṭha*), *Rubia Cordifolia* (*tuṅgahāra*) and *Rottleria tinctora* were not suitable for robes but others were suitable.

3. Among the dye of barks, mangrove tree or *Dalbergia ovata*<sup>27</sup>'s bark and *Muchna Pruritis*'s bark was not suitable for robes but others were suitable.

<sup>26</sup>Vin. I, pp. 286 – 287: B.D. IV, p. 405.

<sup>27</sup>A kind of tree, the bark of which produces a mordant for indigo dye, *Dalbergia ovate*. This tree is also called '*Symplocos racemosa*'.

Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, **The Buddhist Monastic, Code. II**, (Thailand: Free Distribution, 2007), p. 23.



4. Among the dye of leaves, the dyes indigo plant or *Indigofera tinctoria* (*nīlipatta*) and *henna* tree or *Lawsnia insemis* (*allipatta*) were not suitable for robes but others were suitable.

5. Among the dye of flowers, coral tree (*Butea Frondosa*)'s flower, safflower (*kimsuka puppha*) and carthmus tinctoriu or but (*kusumbha puppha*) were not suitable for robes but others were suitable.

6. All the dyes of fruits were suitable to dye for robes.<sup>28</sup>

Out of the suitable dyes and unsuitable dyes, there were no evidences in the Commentaries and sub-commentaries that why was not suitable and why was suitable. It probably is not suitable that some dyes were bad smell and some were bad colour and some were too good colour.

Unsuitable dyes were described at the *Vinaya Vinicchaya* Sub-commentary. *Indian madder* dye and dark original colour dye that two kinds of unsuitable dye have dark red like Indian madder colour and yellow orpiment colour. Out of two unsuitable leave dyes, dye prepared from *henna* tree leaf (*Lawsonia inermis*) has yellow colour like turmeric. Dye prepared from Indigo tree leaf has brown colour. Out of two kinds of unsuitable dye prepared from flowers, the dye prepared from kinds of flowering tree's flower has dark red colour. According to the sub-commentary's explanation it can consider that the commentator and sub-commentator reject that it is "unsuitable because those lady palm, yellow orpiment, swing leaf, Indigo tree leaf and kinds of flowering tree's flower (dyes) have very dark yellow, brown, red, by explanation mainly colour."<sup>29</sup>

The Lord Buddha did not allow *cīvara* to be of a vivid or striking color and therefore *cīvara* are prohibited from having designs of animals and of flowers. A very small flower pattern which is not striking, such as pepper-flowers or a ripple pattern in a kind of silk, is allowed.

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<sup>28</sup>Vin. A. V, p. 1126.

<sup>29</sup>Vin.vn. II, p. 258.

## Prohibited Seven Colours of Robe in The Buddha's Time

If the explanations of the above commentaries and sub-commentaries are studied, the venerables of commentary and sub-commentary distinguished the dying colours allowed by the Buddha between suitable and unsuitable dyes and in that explanations, mention of the relationship (kind) and its colours of unsuitable dyes also has to be found. It may guess that the explanation about the dying colours of the venerables of commentary and sub-commentary is concerning with unsuitable dying colours from Pāli. It is because unsuitable dying colours from Pāli and some dying colours explained by the venerables of *Aṭṭhakathā* and *Ṭīkā* are same. To compare and study unsuitable colours from Pāli and *Aṭṭhakathā* and *Ṭīkā*, seven types of unsuitable dying colours prohibited by the Buddha in Pāli are mentioned together with introduction.

Once upon a time, the group of six monks was wearing the dark brown color robes dealing with six dyes by the allowance of Buddha. When the lay men saw them, they censured the monks then the monks who heard about it reported to the Buddha. So the Buddha prohibited seven kinds of robe colors. These were as follows;

1. A robe dying with entirely brown colour,
2. A robe dying with entirely yellowish colour,
3. A robe dying with entirely red colour,
4. A robe dying with entirely toddy-tree (crimson) colour,
5. A robe dying with entirely black colour,
6. A robe dying with entirely brownish – yellow (*Mahāraṅga*<sup>30</sup>) colour, and
7. A robe dying with entirely reddish – yellow (*Mahānāma*<sup>31</sup>) colour.

Among those seven types of colour, the Buddha prohibited not to use the robes dying with one kind of dye and to make wrong doing offence commit if they used.<sup>32</sup>

If the colour prohibited by the Buddha above is studied, it has to be found that some unsuitable colours explained by commentator and sub-commentator related with unsuitable dyes is concerning with unsuitable dyes. Here it is necessary to compare with how is brown

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<sup>30</sup>The Pali term '*Mahāraṅgaratta*' means that it is the colour of a centipede's back. (V.A, p. 1083)

<sup>31</sup>The Pali term '*Mahānāmaratta*' means that it is the colour of withered leaves a mixed colour. (V.A, p. 1083)

<sup>32</sup>Vin. I, pp. 306 – 307: B.D. IV, p. 438.

etc. that it is brown dye, and the explanation of commentary mention and that necessary can complete. It is compared the following about the colour of dye at the explanation of *Vinaya* commentary.

1. Brown dye is similar to flax flower or *Line* seed, *Linum Usitatissimum* (*Umā puppha*).
2. Yellowish dye is similar to *bauhinia* flower (*Kaṇikāra puppha*).
3. Reddish dye is similar to shoe flower or *hibiscus* (*Jayasumana puppha*).
4. Indian madderish dye is similar to Indian madder seed colour (*Mañjiṭṭha*).
5. Coal dye is similar to rare monkey blood or weed crow wing (*Addāriṭṭha*).
6. *Mahāraṅga* (a kind of dyes) dye is similar to the back of centipede (*Satapadi piṭṭhi*).
7. *Mahānāma* (a kind of d00yes) dye is similar to pale leaf or the sacred lotus (*Paṇḍupalāsa vaṇṇa* or *Paduma puppha vaṇṇa*).<sup>33</sup>

The seven unsuitable kinds of colour can be found mentioning compare with the colour of flower, fruit and animal. If suitable dye, unsuitable dye and colour that had said are made in brief with kinds, those five kinds of dye;

1. The turmeric root,
2. The Indian madder wood , and Jack fruit bines or *Rubia Cordifolia*,
3. The bark of *Dalbergia Ovata* tree,
4. The leaf of *Henna* Tree or *Lawsnia Insemis* and Indigo Plant or *Indigofera tinctoria*,
5. The parrot tree flower of small particle flower and safflowers.

These five kinds of dye are not suitable colour for robes. The remaining all root, wood, steam, flower and fruit dye are suitable and allowable colour for robe.

With colour, these seven kinds of colour;

1. Dark brown colour like a flax (clematis) flower or petal flower,
2. Yellowish colour like a *Bauhinia* flower,
3. Reddish colour like a shoe flower or *Hibiscus* flower,
4. Entirely dark brown and red brown (maroon) like a seed of Indian Madder (*Rubia Cordifolia*),
5. Dark black colour like a wed wing of crown,

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<sup>33</sup>Vin.A, V, p. 1084.

6. Entirely dark reddish colour and gloomy colour like a hermit's robe and the back of centipede and

7. Pale yellow colour like a pale leaf or the sacred lotus flower.

These seven kinds of colour are not suitable for robe and the remaining colours are suitable for robe.

## The Buddha and His Disciple's Robe Colours

To analyze the color of Buddha and *Mahākassapa Thera* according to *Dīgha Nikāya* Commentary described that “*Suvaṇṇavaṇṇe cīvare*”<sup>34</sup> in Pali what means “the Buddha's robe colour is similar to gold colour or saffron”. In addition, according to *Samyutta* Commentary, *Udāna* Commentary and *Majjhima Nikāya* Commentary defined that the colour of inner robe of Buddha was similar to coral flower color and double outer cloak was similar to the colour of banyan tree's bud.<sup>35</sup>

Furthermore, *Vinaya* Commentary described that “the robe color of Buddha is red (*ratta paṃsukūla*).”<sup>36</sup> After that, *Dhīgha Nikāya* Commentary also illustrated that “the color of inner robe of Buddha is red (*suratta dupaṭṭaṃ*) and upper robe is rain cloud colour (*megha vaṇṇaṃ*).”<sup>37</sup>

Herein the explanation of sub-commentary, and some translation in Myanmar version need to be studied about original Pali, “*Suratta dupaṭṭaṃ, Megha vaṇṇaṃ*”. Thereon, the word of ‘*suratta dupaṭṭaṃ*’ can be translated into “an outer cloak dyed with dyed material well” according to *Sīlakkhandha* sub-commentary because it explains that “*Suratta dupaṭṭaṃ'ti rajanena sammā rattaṃ diguṇaṃ antaravāsakaṃ*”.

The *Sīlakkhandha* sub-commentary defined the word ‘*megha vaṇṇaṃ*’ in Pali that “*Meghavaṇṇaṃ'ti ratta meghavaṇṇaṃ sañjā pabānurañji tamegha saṅkāsaṃ'ti attho*”.<sup>38</sup> Then new *Sīlakkhandha* sub-commentary defined it in Pali “*Surañjitabhāvena isakaṃ kaṇṇhavaṇṇāya meghavaṇṇaṃ*”.<sup>39</sup> Out of those two sub-commentaries, According to old

<sup>34</sup>D.A. I, p. 58.

<sup>35</sup>S.A. III, p. 46: Ud.A. p. 411: M.A. III, p. 20.

<sup>36</sup>Vin.A. I, p. 240.

<sup>37</sup>D.A. II, p. 366.

<sup>38</sup>**Sīlakkhandhavagga Ṭikā (Old)** (Myan.), (Yangon:Religious Affairs, 1988), p. 361.

<sup>39</sup>**Sīlakkhandhavagga Abhinava Ṭikā (New)** (Myan.), (Yangon: Religious Affairs, 1980), pps. 194, 369.

sub-commentary, the word ‘*megha vaṇṇam*’ can be translated that “cloud colour attached with twilight colour”. Then according to the new sub-commentary, it can be translated that “having cloud colour because it is dyed well, it has a little black colour”. Even those two sub-commentaries are studied and the Myanmar ancient *Sayadaws* translated into Myanmar respectively that is “Similar cloud colour”,<sup>40</sup> “Having cloud colour”,<sup>41</sup> and “Having red cloud colour.”<sup>42</sup>

Based on Commentary and Sub-commentaries above, it has to consider that if the Buddha’s robe colour is studied, it has ruddy colour like the golden colour.<sup>43</sup> Entirely red colour and dark brown colour should not be worn looking at the words that ‘*suratta dupaṭṭam*’ and ‘*ṭsakam kaṇha vaṇṇā*’. That in, because the Buddha prohibited those two kinds of colours. So it can consider that the Buddha’s robe colour was not very ruddy (scarlet colour) and brown colours, and only ruddy colour (only suitable red colour) like red golden colour and twilight colour should be.

The Myanmar translator *Sayadaws* gave each conclusion about the Buddha’s robe colour and the most venerable *Mahā Ganddhā Yon Sayadaw* (1899 – 1977) gives his conclusion about that although it is said, “red cloud colour”, it is not ruddy red colour and it should be only dull red colour like deep jack fruit colour, pale banyan tree herb colour.<sup>44</sup> It has to be observed that the most venerable *Pakhukku Sayadaw* (1877 – 1958) and *Visuddhā Yon Sayadaw* (1838 – 1916) gave their conclusion about that it should be only suitable ruddy colour.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>U Nandavamsa (Nay Yinn Sayadaw) (Myan.), **Silakkhandhavagga Aṭṭhakathā Translation, Vol. I**, (Yangon: Han Thar Wadi, 1952), p. 361.

<sup>41</sup>Visuddhā Yone Sayadaw (Myan.), **Silakkhanda Aṭṭhakathā Translation, Vol. 1**, (Mandalay: Padaythar Press, 1957), p. 194.

<sup>42</sup>Pakhukku Sayadaw (Myan.), **Silakkham Aṭṭhakathā, Translation, Vol. 2**, (Yangon: Religious Affairs, 1986), p. 560.

<sup>43</sup>‘*Ratta*’ means “dyed”, “coloured”. ‘*Dūratta-vaṇṇa*’ means “difficult to dye or badly dyed”. Therefore, ‘*suratta*’ means “high red colour, more like crimson”. Sometimes it comes near a meaning like “shiny, shining, glittering” (as in ‘*ratta-suvaṇṇa*’ “the glittering gold”). (Pali – English Dictionary, P.T.S)

<sup>44</sup>Mahāgandhā Yon Sayadaw (Myan.), **Silakkham Bhāsāṭīkā, Vol. 1**, (Yangon: Religious Affairs, 1986), p. 263.

<sup>45</sup>Pakhukku Sayadaw (Myan.), **Silakkham Aṭṭhakathā, Translation, Vol. 2**, (Yangon: Religious Affairs, 1986), p. 560.

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## Conclusion

There are different believes such as Christianity, Muslim, Hinduism and Buddhism in the world. Among them, in Buddhism, there are two kinds of Buddhism: called Theravada Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism. There are five Theravada countries. They are Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Lao and Cambodia and the monks from different countries have different style of wearing the robes.

The Theravada Buddhist monks are not the same in characteristics such as in robes, in robe wearing style and in color of robes one another as different countries and different places although they are practicing *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* under the same title of *Theravāda* Buddhism. Even the characteristics of Myanmar *Theravāda* Monks are not the same one school to another and they are different slightly. In fact, we all are one under the Buddhism however we wear the different styles of robes.

To analyze the teachings of Buddha throughout the whole 45 years, it can be found that outer appearances are not matter but only inner development is matter. To follow and practice the Buddha teaching is needed no matter how different the outer appearances are. As long as one who follows and practices the teachings of Buddha can be called the disciples of the Buddha even though how different wearing style of robes.

When these mighty rivers, like the *Gaṅga*, the *Yamuna*, the *Acīravatī* and the *Sarabhu* etc reach the great Ocean, they lose their former names and designations, and are reckoned just as the great Ocean. In the same way, there are many different names of monks around the world such as; the Chinese Mahayana Buddhist monks, the Japanese *Shinto* Buddhist monks, the Tibetan *Lama* Buddhist monks, the Thai *Theravāda* Buddhist monks and the Myanmar *Theravāda* Buddhist monks and so on. Although they have different names and different styles of robes wearing when they enter under the name of Buddha's *Sāsana* the original names are disappeared but there is only one name remained called Buddhist monks.

Then, the Buddha there said “the Great Ocean has only one taste, that of salt”. Just as the great ocean has only one taste, that of salt; even so has this teaching and discipline only one taste, the taste of liberation, *Nibbāna*. In the same way, they can enjoy and feel together only the same taste of *Nibbāna* if follow and practice the teachings of Buddha no matter how different names are, no matter how different styles of robes wearing are and no matter how existence.

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